

# Bound Together

## The Secularization of Turkey's Literary Fields and the Western Promise of Freedom

*Bound Together* takes a new look at twentieth-century Turkey, asking whether its current condition was inevitable; what it will take for Turkish women and men to regain their lost freedoms; and what the Turkish case means for the prospects of freedom and democracy elsewhere. Contrasting the country's field of poetry, where secularization was the joint work of pious and nonpious people, with its field of the novel, where the usual Turkish pattern prevailed, it inquires into the nature of western-nonwestern difference.

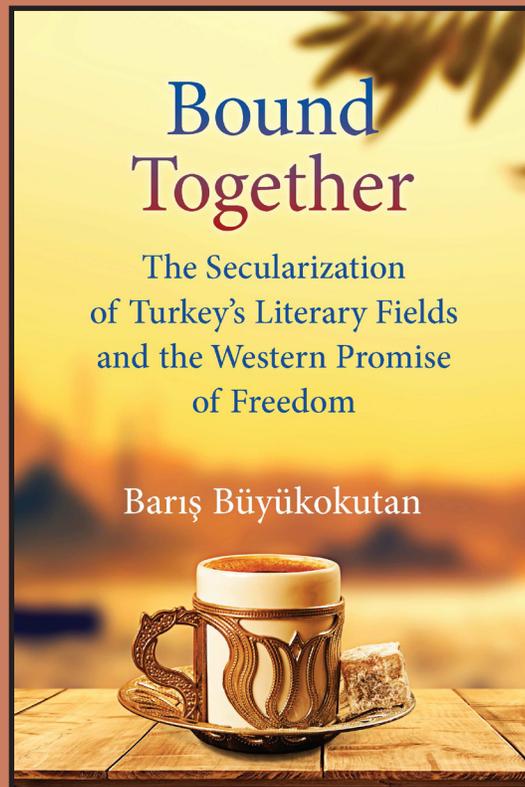
Turkey's poets were more fortunate than its novelists were, *Bound Together* finds, for two reasons. First, poets were slightly better at developing the idea of the autonomy of art from politics. While piety was a marker of political identity everywhere, poets were better able than novelists to bracket political differences when assessing their peers as the country was bitterly polarized politically as the century wore on. Second, and more importantly, poets of all stripes were more connected to each other than were novelists. Their greater ability to find and keep one another in coffeehouses and literary journals made it less likely for prospective cross-aisle partnerships to remain untested propositions. Such partnerships made writers better able to pursue their career objectives—in other words, with such ties they were freer.

The freedom that the West enjoys due to secularization is therefore not an unattainable goal in other regions of the world. Nor is it the fruit of a particularly difficult political undertaking involving the capture and the taming of the state: all it takes is for ordinary people to be bound together in the semiformal institutions of civil society.

**Barış Büyükokutan** is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Koç University.

"...highly original and stimulating. *Bound Together* argues that the secular can arise in non-Western contexts, opposing a broad literature. It therefore also promotes a novel conceptualization of west/non-west difference." - Elise Massicard, Research Professor, National Center for Scientific Research, Paris

"... incisive study of how Turkey's literary fields mediated between everyday life and high politics focuses on a heretofore unnoticed factor shaping secularization while providing a strikingly original synthesis of field theory, social networks, and civic spheres."—Ronald Breiger, Regents Professor, University of Arizona



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