



RETHINKING TURKEY'S HISTORICAL CLAIMS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze how Turkey's historical claims, shaped within the framework of the National Pact (Misak-ı Milli), can be repositioned along the axes of international law, geopolitical dynamics, and historical continuity in the contemporary conjuncture where the international system is evolving from a unipolar structure toward a multipolar configuration. The fundamental point of departure for this research is that the relationship between the structural fragility exhibited by the post-Ottoman regional order and Turkey's historical claims has been largely neglected in the academic literature. The main hypothesis posits that in an environment where the international order is evolving toward a multipolar structure and regional states are dissolving, the capacity of Turkey's historical claims to gain legitimacy in international law is increasing.

The research employs a qualitative methodology combining document analysis, comparative case study, discourse analysis, and multi-level interpretation techniques. Historical documents including the Armistice of Mudros, Treaty of Sèvres, National Pact Declaration, and Treaty of Lausanne have been examined alongside contemporary international law norms and regional fragmentation dynamics. Russia's historical claims over Crimea and Donbas, and China's sovereignty assertions in the South China Sea have been evaluated from a comparative perspective.

The findings demonstrate that with the relative decline of American hegemony and the crystallization of the multipolar structure, historical claims have become a re-acceptable discursive instrument in the international system. The regional fragmentation triggered by the Greater Middle East Project, state collapses in Iraq and Syria, and the authority vacuums emerging on Turkey's southern borders have necessitated a security-based reinterpretation of the National Pact perspective. The study identifies that the Mosul question carries a suspended status from Lausanne and that normative flexibility in international law enables Turkey to articulate its historical theses more assertively.

KEYWORDS

National Pact, Greater Middle East Project, multipolar order, historical claims, international law, regional security, Turkish foreign policy

In conclusion, this study rescues historical rights debates from one-dimensional analyses by integrating international law, international relations theories, historical documents, and geopolitical analyses within a unified framework, arguing that Turkey's historical claims require redefinition across strategic, normative, and legal dimensions.

Introduction

In the contemporary international system, characterized by a profound transformation in the global distribution of power, both the institutional architecture and the normative foundations of the post-World War II order have entered a period of significant destabilization. This destabilization is not confined merely to the shifting of power centers; it simultaneously engenders a questioning of the legitimacy of the rules governing interstate relations. In this context, the diminishing effectiveness of multilateral institutions—the fundamental pillars of the liberal international order—has led to a weakening of normative constraints on unilateral state actions (Ikenberry, 2020). The relative decline of American hegemony, China's economic and military ascendancy, Russia's revisionist maneuvers, and the European Union's pursuit of strategic autonomy are collectively steering the existing international structure toward a multipolar configuration (Acharya, 2021). The crystallization of this multipolar structure has created a new international environment that legitimizes the efforts of middle powers to expand their regional spheres of influence (Öniş & Kutlay, 2021). This structural transformation, particularly within the geography of the Middle East, has brought to the fore attempts to reshape regional political geography through the Greater Middle East Project conducted under American leadership; it has precipitated profound instabilities and protracted internal conflicts in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Libya, thereby undermining the structural integrity of the regional order (Phillips, 2020). Throughout this process, the capacity and responsibility of the Republic of Turkey—as the successor state to the Ottoman Empire—to reassume a role in former Ottoman territories with which it maintains historical, legal, and geographical ties has become central to academic debates. Particularly within the framework of the territorial conception delineated by the National Pact (Misak-ı Milli), the historical claims that have emerged have acquired a critical dimension requiring reevaluation in conjunction with the changing power balances in international law and contemporary case studies (Oran, 2022). Indeed, the reinterpretation of historical rights in international law becomes a focal point of academic discourse especially during periods when states collapse and borders become de facto indeterminate (Klabbers, 2022). This study aims to analyze precisely at this historical and geopolitical juncture how Turkey's historical claims can be repositioned along the axes of international law, geopolitical dynamics, and historical continuity.

The fundamental point of departure for this study is that the relationship between the structural fragility currently exhibited by the post-Ottoman regional order and Turkey's historical claims has been largely neglected in the academic literature. This deficiency manifests itself particularly in the contextualization of historical documents with contemporary international law norms and in the systematic analysis of regional fragmentation dynamics (Pedersen, 2021). The collapse of state authority witnessed in the Middle East over the past decade, the de facto invalidation of borders, and the intensification of external interventions indicate that the state-centric international structure constructed in the aftermath of the Westphalian order is dissolving at the regional level (Gause, 2021). The fragmentation process Iraq experienced following 2003, the societal devastation triggered by the Syrian civil war, and the authority vacuum in Yemen emerge as concrete examples that fundamentally challenge normative assumptions regarding the permanence of national borders. These examples have provided the foundation for the strengthening of critical approaches in international relations literature toward the absoluteness of the principle of territorial integrity (Peters, 2022). Furthermore, examples such as Russia's annexation of Crimea and its intervention in the Donbas regions demonstrate that

powerful states have reintroduced claims of border revision based on historical or ethnic justifications into the international system (Mankoff, 2022). Russia's actions are evaluated as concrete evidence that territorial claims based on historical arguments are once again seeking legitimacy within the international system (Krickovic, 2022). In this context, the gap in the literature lies in the absence of a systematic analysis of Turkey's historical position centered on the National Pact within the framework of changing international norms and regional fragmentation dynamics. Existing studies have predominantly remained confined either to narrow legal interpretations of historical documents or geopolitical analyses that have neglected the historical background. This article addresses this gap by examining historical documents, international law principles, and contemporary geopolitical transformations within an integrated analytical framework. Thus, it aims to ensure that Turkey's historical claims receive the comprehensive evaluation they deserve in the academic literature.

The key concepts forming the conceptual foundation of this study are shaped along the axes of historical claims, the National Pact (Misak-1 Milli), the Greater Middle East Project, multipolar order, and international legitimacy. The concept of historical claims refers to a state's demands over territories where it previously exercised sovereignty or to which it is bound by historical-cultural ties, and in international law, it is generally addressed within the framework of post-colonial border arrangements, the geographical distribution of ethnic identities, and the principle of *uti possidetis juris* (Shaw, 2021). This concept also carries a multidimensional character that acquires meaning through the combination of long-term cultural continuity, demographic structure, and geographical dominance (Raic, 2022). The National Pact, on the other hand, is the founding document adopted by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1920, envisaging the determination of Turkish national borders based on the principle of historical-demographic-geographical integrity. This document presented a border vision emphasizing that not only military necessities but also social belonging and cultural integrity must be taken into consideration. This vision of the National Pact was concretized through the concept of "national boundaries" (hudud-1 milli) repeatedly emphasized in Mustafa Kemal Pasha's speeches at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Atatürk, 1920). The concept of the Greater Middle East Project refers to the American foreign policy initiative from the early 2000s to reshape the political geography of the Middle East under the rhetoric of democratization; however, in practice, this project produced results that deepened regional instability (Lynch, 2022). The regional consequences of this project have been associated with the concept of "creative chaos" in academic literature, debating whether the dismantling of state structures was an intentional strategy (Gause, 2022). The concept of multipolar order describes an international structure in which no single hegemonic power dominates the global system, but rather multiple great powers create spheres of influence in specific regions. International legitimacy refers to the acceptance of a state's actions by other states and the international community, gaining normative approval. This concept offers a critical analytical tool for understanding the ways in which states legitimize their historical arguments, particularly during periods of power transition (Lake, 2022). This conceptual framework constitutes the analytical foundation for how Turkey's historical claims can be reinterpreted in the context of the current international order.

Upon examining the historical background, it becomes evident that the disintegration process of the Ottoman Empire was the result not only of military defeats but also of the attempts by great powers to redesign the region. Throughout this process, the incompatibility of the artificial borders envisaged by the Sykes-Picot Agreement with the ethnic and sectarian structure of the region constitutes the historical roots of contemporary conflicts (Osterhammel, 2021). The occupation provisions of the Armistice of Mudros and the articles of the Treaty of Sèvres aimed at partitioning Ottoman territories created a strong consciousness in Turkish historical memory that borders were determined through unjust international dispositions. Particularly, Articles 7 and 24 of the Armistice of Mudros, which granted the Entente Powers broad occupation authority, left deep traces in historical memory as provisions that effectively nullified Turkey's sovereignty (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). As Mustafa Kemal Pasha repeatedly emphasized in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, "national boundaries"

(hudud-1 milli) were determined based not only on military necessities but also on historical-cultural integrity and demographic structure. In this respect, the National Pact constitutes a legal and political declaration of historical claim. The principle in the National Pact Declaration of "an inseparable whole inhabited by an Ottoman-Islamic majority" clearly demonstrates that demographic and cultural criteria should be the basis for determining national borders (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The discourses regarding the reclamation of regions such as Mosul-Kirkuk and Western Thrace in the 1930s also reflect this historical continuity. The profound difference between the partition order envisaged by the Treaty of Sèvres and the final international recognition brought by the Treaty of Lausanne concretely demonstrates at which stages Turkey's historical claims were constrained (Pedersen, 2021). The Treaty of Lausanne has been characterized in the literature as a "counter-revolutionary peace," constituting a founding text that guaranteed Turkey's independence within the power balances of the international system of that era (Özdemir, 2021). Therefore, Turkey's manner of involvement in crises in former Ottoman geography today can be evaluated not only as an extension of strategic necessities but also of historical obligations and legal foundations. This study aims to analyze how this historical integrity can be related to contemporary international law and changing power balances.

In this context, the main research question of the study has been formulated as follows: How do the new international order and the regional fragmentation dynamics following the Greater Middle East Project redefine Turkey's claims arising from the National Pact and other historical documents at the levels of international law and geopolitics? The subsidiary questions supporting this main question are as follows: First, does the shift in the balance of power in the international system increase the legitimacy of historical claims? Second, does the collapse of regional states and the de facto indeterminacy of borders expand the legal grounds for Turkey's potential intervention? Third, how can the territorial conception in historical documents be reinterpreted under contemporary conditions? Fourth, what normative framework do the principles of effective control and responsibility to protect in international law provide for Turkey's regional interventions? (Bellamy, 2021). To test these questions, the main hypothesis of the study has been determined as follows: In an environment where the international order is evolving toward a multipolar structure and regional states are dissolving, the capacity of Turkey's historical claims to gain legitimacy in international law is increasing. The subsidiary hypothesis is as follows: Regional instability and the de facto dissolution of borders can strategically and legally bring Turkey's claims within the framework of the National Pact back onto the agenda. These hypotheses are consistent with theoretical predictions in international relations literature regarding the revival of historical arguments during periods of power transition (Mearsheimer, 2021). In accordance with this framework, the article aims to develop a multidimensional analysis by utilizing both historical documents and contemporary international law literature.

The academic significance and original contribution of the study emerge along four interconnected axes. First, it evaluates Turkey's historical claims not merely from the perspective of a single discipline but through a multidisciplinary framework that brings together international law, international relations theories, historical documents, and geopolitical analyses. This multidisciplinary approach enables the rescue of the historical rights debate from one-dimensional analyses, situating it within a holistic perspective (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). Upon examination of the existing academic literature, it becomes apparent that comprehensive studies addressing how the National Pact can be positioned from the perspective of international law are remarkably limited. Second, the study offers an original contribution in terms of demonstrating under what conditions historical rights can gain legitimacy as power balances shift. This contribution includes a theoretical explanation of the relationship between the structural transformation of the international system and states' historical arguments (Krasner, 2020). Third, the absence of holistic studies analyzing how the fragmentation dynamics of the Middle East following the Greater Middle East Project have transformed Turkey's historical position is notable, and this article aims to fill this gap. Fourth, the study provides a significant contribution at both theoretical and practical levels by subjecting both American interventions and regional authority

vacuums to systematic analysis in relation to historical theses. Thus, Turkey's historical claims are integrated into contemporary international order debates, opening a new research domain not currently present in the literature.

The geopolitical and geocultural foundations necessitating a reevaluation of Turkey's historical claims are directly related to the structural transformations occurring at regional and global scales. From a geopolitical perspective, the current borders of the Middle East were largely drawn after World War I in accordance with the interests of colonial powers, and the incompatibility of these borders with the ethnic, religious, and cultural structure of the region constitutes the source of profound contemporary conflicts. The question of the sustainability of these artificial borders is analyzed in international relations literature through its association with the concept of "post-colonial state fragility" (Balci, 2023). The sustainability of the artificial borders envisaged by the Sykes-Picot Agreement has been seriously called into question, particularly with the collapse of state authority in Iraq and Syria. From a geocultural perspective, Turkey possesses historical, linguistic, and religious ties with the peoples of the region through the Ottoman legacy; these ties provide a normative legitimacy basis for Turkey's regional policies (Bilgin, 2023). These geocultural ties are addressed at the intersection of identity, geopolitics, and normative power debates, associated with the role of "protective power" in Turkey's regional policies (Aydin, 2023). Furthermore, the discourse clearly articulated by Condoleezza Rice within the framework of the Greater Middle East Project that "the borders of twenty-two countries will change" has strengthened the perception that the regional order can be reshaped through external interventions. This situation has created the ground for Turkey to bring its historical ties stemming from the National Pact perspective back onto the agenda not merely as emotional nostalgia but as a strategic necessity. Consequently, geopolitical imperatives and geocultural ties constitute the structural foundations of Turkey's reconsideration of its historical claims.

The regional consequences of the Greater Middle East Project are of critical importance for understanding the contemporary context of the debate on Turkey's historical claims. Initiated under the rhetoric of democratization and stability, this project has in practice weakened the structural integrity of regional states, deepened ethnic and sectarian fault lines, and triggered protracted internal conflicts (Lynch, 2022). The regional consequences of this project are evaluated in academic literature as concrete evidence of the failure of American foreign policy's "regime change" strategy (Bacevich, 2020). The de facto tripartite division of Iraq following the 2003 intervention, the humanitarian catastrophe created by the Syrian civil war and the collapse of state authority, the proxy wars in Yemen, and the fragmentation of Libya are concrete indicators of the devastating effects of this project on regional order. This fragmentation process is associated with the concepts of "state fragility" and "failed state" in international relations literature, demonstrating the necessity of restructuring the regional security architecture (Phillips, 2021). The authority vacuums that emerged during this process led to the strengthening of non-state armed actors and an increase in cross-border security threats. Turkey, as the direct addressee of these threats, was confronted with the necessity of protecting its border security; developments in Syria and Iraq fundamentally reshaped Turkey's regional security strategy. This strategic reshaping has also opened to debate the legitimacy basis of Turkey's cross-border military operations in international law (Akande, 2020). In this context, Turkey's bringing historical claims back onto the agenda can also be evaluated as a strategic move aimed at compensating for the consequences of the regional fragmentation caused by the Greater Middle East Project in terms of security and stability. Thus, a direct relationship is established between historical documents and current security requirements.

The transition process to a multipolar order is a structural variable that directly affects the capacity of Turkey's historical claims to gain international legitimacy. While it was accepted that international norms were maintained relatively stably under American hegemony during the unipolar period, the flexibility of these norms has notably increased today. This normative relaxation is associated with the concept of "post-hegemonic era" in international relations literature and is evaluated as a structural

change that enables states to bring their historical arguments back onto the agenda (Ikenberry, 2020). Russia's annexation of Crimea and its intervention in the eastern regions of Ukraine constitute the most striking examples that claims of border revision based on historical and ethnic justifications have been reintroduced into the international system (Mankoff, 2022). Russia's actions have reignited debates on the legitimacy of territorial claims based on historical arguments in international law literature (Mälksoo, 2022). Similarly, China's sovereignty theses based on historical maps in the South China Sea demonstrate that great powers use historical arguments as a tool for legitimization (Zhang, 2023). These examples reveal that historical claims are revived and normative assumptions are relaxed during periods when power balances shift in the international system. Turkey's historical position articulated from the perspective of the National Pact is not independent of this global trend; rather, the normative relaxation created by the multipolar order enables Turkey to express its historical theses more comfortably on international platforms. In this context, Turkey's multidirectional foreign policy strategy is evaluated as a concrete reflection of the search for autonomy during periods of intensified great power competition (Özpek & Yılmaz, 2021). For this reason, the study presents an analytical framework that relates the structural transformation of the international system to the conditions under which Turkey's historical claims can gain legitimacy.

The contemporary significance of the National Pact derives not solely from its being a historical document but also from its character as a founding reference that forms the mental and strategic infrastructure of Turkish foreign policy. This document, adopted by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1920, established that Turkish national borders should be determined based on the principles of demographic integrity, historical belonging, and geographical continuity. These principles have shaped the strategic culture of Turkish foreign policy as an inseparable part of the Republic's founding philosophy (Booth & Trood, 2021). The importance Mustafa Kemal Atatürk attached to these principles has persisted to the present day as an integral component of the Republic's founding philosophy. Unlike the Armistice of Mudros, which based its provisions on areas under de facto control, the National Pact presented a border conception founded upon the principle of an "inseparable whole inhabited by an Ottoman-Islamic majority." This border conception carries the character of a declaration of national will consistent with the principle of self-determination prevalent in the international law of the period (Oran, 2021). This conception defends borders determined by national will against the artificial borders imposed by colonial powers. Today, the collapse of regional states and the de facto indeterminacy of borders have reopened for debate the understanding of geographical integrity envisioned by the National Pact. Particularly, the authority vacuums in Syria and Iraq have necessitated Turkey's security role in these regions and strengthened the perception of historical responsibility inherent in the National Pact perspective. In this context, the National Pact possesses the character of a living document that provides a normative framework for Turkey's regional policies beyond being merely a historical text.

How Turkey's historical claims can be evaluated within the framework of international law constitutes one of the fundamental analytical axes of the study. In international law literature, the concept of historical right is generally addressed within the framework of post-colonial border arrangements, the principle of self-determination, and the doctrine of *uti possidetis juris* (Shaw, 2021). The normative foundations of this concept are reopened for debate particularly during periods when territorial disputes intensify, and legitimacy debates become more complex when states support their historical arguments with power projection (Roth, 2020). However, the example of the National Pact carries a character distinct from classical historical claims; for this document is a unique border vision put forth during the transformation process of a collapsing empire into a modern nation-state. The reference of the Armistice of Mudros to areas under de facto control and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey's acceptance of these borders as a declaration of national will demonstrate that the historical claim is simultaneously a search for legitimate sovereignty restoration. This search for sovereignty restoration is evaluated in international law through its association with the concept of "historical consolidation"

in the context of the legal consequences of states' long-term de facto control (Pober, 2022). In international law, the principle of effective control regulates the legal consequences of a state establishing de facto authority over a specific territory, and this principle is important for understanding the legal basis of Turkey's regional interventions (Klabbers, 2022). On the other hand, the doctrine of responsibility to protect envisions the right of international intervention when states cannot protect their own citizens; the humanitarian crises in Syria and Iraq have brought debates on the applicability of this doctrine back onto the agenda (Bellamy, 2021). Therefore, Turkey's historical claims should be evaluated within a dynamic framework that interacts with the principles of self-determination, effective control, and responsibility to protect in international law.

Regional security dynamics are of determining importance for understanding the strategic dimension of Turkey's historical claims. With the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, serious security threats emerged along Turkey's southern borders; the strengthening of terrorist organizations by exploiting authority vacuums in the region has directly threatened Turkey's national security. These security threats are addressed through their association with the concepts of "cross-border terrorism" and "non-state armed actors" in international relations literature, demonstrating the necessity of restructuring the regional security architecture (Kuru, 2021). Throughout this process, Turkey has conducted multiple cross-border military operations to ensure border security, and these operations have been subject to different evaluations in the international arena. In security literature, Turkey's interventions are also addressed through the human security perspective beyond the classical state-centric security understanding (Newman, 2020). This perspective moves the concept of security from its narrow state-centric definition to a broad framework that also encompasses the security of individuals and communities (Buzan & Wæver, 2020). Elements such as population movements, cross-border terrorism, ethnic conflicts, and the collapse of state capacity stand out as the fundamental variables shaping Turkey's regional security policies. The literature indicates that the policies Turkey pursues in these areas possess a normative dimension that takes into account historical ties to post-Ottoman geographies (Kaya & Torun, 2022). In this context, Turkey's historical claims emerge not merely as a retrospective reminder but as a multilayered strategic framework in which current security requirements are legitimized through historical documents.

Energy geopolitics is a variable that cannot be ignored for understanding the economic and strategic dimension of Turkey's historical claims. Particularly, the historical relationship of oil and natural gas reserves in northern Iraq with the Ottoman administrative structure has positioned the Mosul-Kirkuk basin as critical not merely as an ethnic or historical matter but in the context of energy security (Stevens, 2021). The energy potential of this region is evaluated as a determining factor in the shaping of regional power balances, associated with the concepts of "resource nationalism" and "energy sovereignty" in international relations literature (Roberts, 2022). The Mosul question being left unresolved during the Lausanne Treaty negotiations and the subsequent severance of this region from Turkey legally through the British mandated system carries the character of an open dossier that can be debated anew today. This open dossier is addressed in international law literature through its association with the concept of "deferred sovereignty issues" in the context of contemporary interpretation of historical agreements (Stansfield, 2021). Contemporary academic studies establish a strong relationship between the security of energy infrastructure and debates on regional territorial integrity, explaining Turkey's strategic interest in these regions. The authority vacuums in Syria and Iraq have caused an increase in elements threatening energy transit routes and border security, necessitating Turkey's security role in these regions. Additionally, energy discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean and regional competition have brought Turkey's historical and legal arguments regarding maritime jurisdiction areas back onto the agenda. Within this framework, energy geopolitics is evaluated as an important analytical element that integrates Turkey's historical claims with economic rationality.

The perspective of national identity and strategic culture provides an indispensable framework for understanding the domestic political and societal dimension of Turkey's historical claims. The regions Turkey defines as its historical responsibility area are increasingly debated in studies of national identity construction, national memory, and strategic culture (Bilgin, 2023). These debates are associated with the concept of "ontological security" in international relations literature, explaining how states' efforts to preserve identity continuity shape foreign policy (Rumelili & Ejdus, 2022). The National Pact is evaluated not merely as a document determining borders but as a founding reference that forms the mental and cultural infrastructure of Turkish foreign policy. Contemporary research on the power of national identity to shape foreign policy demonstrates that historical narratives are becoming increasingly determinative in Turkey's regional policy (Rumelili & Ejdus, 2022). This determinacy is concretized particularly through historical documents assuming a symbolic function that increases social mobilization during periods of geopolitical crisis (Hudson, 2020). This approach demonstrates that historical claims are not merely a legal or strategic discourse but also a framework through which collective identity is reproduced. It is observed that the National Pact assumes a symbolic function that increases social mobilization particularly during periods of geopolitical crisis (Özdemir, 2023). This symbolic effect contributes to historical documents becoming an important reference point in political decision-making processes from both national identity and security policy perspectives. Consequently, historical claims function not merely as a foreign policy objective but also as a strategic component of national identity construction.

Turkey's reevaluation of its historical claims in the context of the new global order can also be read as a new geopolitical positioning strategy. It is frequently emphasized in international relations literature that with the deepening of multipolarity, attempts by middle powers to expand their regional spheres of influence have increased (Destradi, 2020). This trend enables middle powers to develop more autonomous foreign policy strategies, particularly during periods of intensified great power competition (Flemes & Nolte, 2022). Turkey's increasing diplomatic, military, and economic engagement in regions such as Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the Caucasus in recent years indicates that the historical hinterland is acquiring renewed geopolitical significance. This engagement is associated with the concept of "geopolitical coding" in international relations literature, explaining states' designation of specific geographies as strategically prioritized areas (Özdemir, 2022). In the literature, Turkey's geopolitical behaviors are evaluated in the category of middle-sized revisionist power; it is emphasized that this revisionism is grounded not only on balance of power analysis but also on historical memory and the perception of national geography (Kardaş, 2022). Particularly, the Syrian civil war and the de facto fragmentation of Iraq have accelerated debates on the permanence of the region's post-Ottoman borders, and Turkey's security strategies have been reshaped in conjunction with this change. The historical framework presented by the National Pact demonstrates that these engagements can be based not only on tactical but also on normative grounds. For this reason, it is necessary to approach Turkey's historical claims not merely as a domestic political discourse but as a strategic necessity arising from the transformation of the international order.

International relations theories offer a rich conceptual repertoire for constructing the analytical framework of Turkey's historical claims. From the perspective of realism, states' pursuit of power and security maximization explains the revival of historical claims as a strategic instrument. This perspective is based particularly on the assumption that the anarchic structure of the international system compels states to behave in a security-oriented manner (Waltz, 1979). The bringing of historical arguments back onto the agenda by states during periods when the balance of power shifts is consistent with the behavioral patterns predicted by realism (Mearsheimer, 2021). This consistency becomes particularly evident in the context of the increase in revisionist tendencies during periods of power transition and the questioning of the existing international order (Allison, 2022). Constructivism, on the other hand, emphasizes the constitutive role of identity, memory, and discourse in international relations; Turkey's historical narrative based on the National Pact is evaluated from this perspective as

a concrete example of the power of collective identity to shape foreign policy. From the perspective of international regime theory, the current signs of dissolution in the security and border sovereignty regimes established in the post-Cold War period enable states to reinterpret existing regimes by advancing their historical rights (Keohane, 2020). This dissolution is concretized particularly through the diminishing effectiveness of multilateral institutions and the increase in unilateral actions by great powers (Paris, 2020). Power-autonomy theory predicts that middle powers can develop more independent foreign policy strategies during periods of intensified great power competition to expand their room for maneuver (Flemes & Nolte, 2022). This theoretical pluralism demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims are too complex to be explained by a single perspective and require a multilayered analysis.

The comparative perspective provides an important analytical tool for understanding the position of Turkey's historical claims in the international system. Russia's claims based on historical arguments over the Crimea and Donbas regions in Ukraine constitute the most evident example that great powers use historical rights as an instrument of legitimization in the changing international order (Mankoff, 2022). Russia's strategy is associated with the concept of "weaponization of history" in international relations literature, explaining how historical arguments are harnessed to serve current strategic objectives (Kuzio, 2023). Russia's annexation attempts through the discourse of historical territories have profoundly affected international law debates and demonstrated that claims of border revision have been reintroduced into the system. Similarly, China's sovereignty theses based on historical maps in the South China Sea reveal that the tendency of regional powers to relate historical documents to current strategic objectives has become widespread on a global scale (Zhang, 2023). This tendency is associated with the concept of "instrumentalization of historical rights" in international law literature, explaining how states use historical arguments for strategic purposes (Branch, 2023). Israel's territorial policies based on historical and religious justifications and India's historical sovereignty claims over Kashmir also constitute parts of this comparative framework. These examples indicate that Turkey's historical claims articulated from the perspective of the National Pact are not alone in the international system. Consequently, comparative analysis enables positioning Turkey's situation on a scientific basis without exaggeration or minimization.

The perspective of human security and regional stability provides a critical framework for understanding the normative dimension of Turkey's historical claims. The humanitarian burden Turkey has assumed since the Syrian civil war points to a unique position among regional powers; Turkey, which hosts millions of refugees, associates this humanitarian responsibility with its historical ties (Tür & Han, 2022). This humanitarian responsibility is evaluated as an important component of Turkey's regional soft power strategy, associated with the concept of "humanitarian diplomacy" in international relations literature (Aydin-Düzgit & Keyman, 2021). The principles of the National Pact regarding the protection of the rights of communities in neighboring geographies strengthen the historical context of Turkey's assumption of this humanitarian responsibility. The literature posits that Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy activities constitute the soft power dimension of its strategy of establishing a regional sphere of influence (Aydin-Düzgit & Keyman, 2021). This soft power strategy carries Turkey's regional influence beyond military and economic instruments, conferring upon it a normative dimension (Nye, 2022). Unlike the classical state-centric security understanding, the human security approach foregrounds elements such as population movements, cross-border terrorism, ethnic conflicts, and the collapse of state capacity (Newman, 2020). Within this framework, Turkey's regional interventions are connected not only to national security justifications but also to a sense of responsibility aimed at preventing humanitarian catastrophes. Consequently, historical claims should be addressed within a multilayered analytical framework enriched by normative-humanitarian dimensions.

The collapse of regional states and authority vacuums constitute a structural variable that directly affects the contemporary relevance of Turkey's historical claims. One of the fundamental assumptions

of the state-centric international structure established after the Westphalian order is the permanence of national borders and the inviolability of state sovereignty. While this assumption has been guaranteed by the principle of territorial integrity, one of the fundamental principles of international law, in practice it is being seriously questioned particularly in the Middle East (Peters, 2022). However, the developments witnessed in the Middle East over the past decade have led to serious questioning of these assumptions at the regional level. The *de facto* tripartite division of Iraq, the collapse of central authority in Syria, and the proxy wars in Yemen have fundamentally shaken normative assumptions regarding the permanence of national borders (Gause, 2021). This shaking is associated with the concepts of "state fragility" and "collapsed states" in international relations literature, demonstrating the necessity of restructuring the regional security architecture (Balci, 2023). The authority vacuums that emerged during this process have prepared the ground for the strengthening of non-state armed actors and the deepening of regional instability. Turkey, as the direct addressee of the security threats created by these authority vacuums, has been confronted with the necessity of assuming an active role in the reestablishment of regional order. In an environment where states collapse and borders become *de facto* meaningless, historical claims cease to be merely nostalgic discourse and transform into a strategic necessity. In this context, Turkey's National Pact perspective should be evaluated as a historically grounded strategy framework developed in response to regional instability.

When all these elements are evaluated together, it becomes clearly evident that Turkey's reconsideration of its historical claims in the context of the new international order is a necessity both academically and practically. Historical documents, the transforming norms of international law, regional security fragilities, and great power competition are redefining Turkey's strategic position. This redefinition is associated with the concept of "strategic adaptation" in international relations literature, explaining states' capacity to adapt to changing systemic conditions (Pouliot, 2021). In this context, the National Pact is gaining importance not merely as a memory of the past but also as a vision consonant with changing balances in international relations. Turkey's ability to integrate this vision with international legitimacy depends both on the contemporary interpretation of historical documents and on the normative openings to be achieved in international law. This integration gains importance particularly in the context of dynamic interpretation of international law and the relating of historical rights to contemporary normative frameworks (Rajagopal, 2021). The normative relaxation created by the multipolar order enables Turkey to express its historical theses more strongly on international platforms. This study develops a multilayered approach to analyze how the aforementioned integration can be achieved. Thus, the research makes it possible to evaluate historical claims not only theoretically but also within an application-oriented framework.

This academic discussion aimed at evaluating Turkey's historical claims directly corresponds with international relations literature suggesting that states reactivate their historical memories during periods of uncertainty. During periods when power balances show rapid change, it has been comprehensively demonstrated in academic studies that the revival of legal and political arguments from the past is an important factor shaping state behaviors (Mearsheimer, 2021). This factor explains how states' historical experiences associated with the concept of "strategic memory" shape current policy preferences (Booth & Trood, 2021). In this context, it can be argued that Turkey's historical theses based on the National Pact are not merely emotional nostalgia but a rational component of current strategic calculations. Given that Turkey's borders in the post-Ottoman period were shaped as a result of international pressures, today's state collapses and authority vacuums in the region make the reconsideration of historical border debates possible. This enablement becomes concrete particularly in the context of historical arguments regaining legitimacy during periods when the normative structure of the international system weakens (Allison, 2023). The discourses and interventions regarding the redesign of the region within the framework of the Greater Middle East Project have increased the normative pressure regarding the changeability of borders. Therefore, Turkey's reconsideration of its historical claims is directly related to the transformation of the existing international order. This

paragraph reinforces the theoretical foundation of the integration of historical theses with the analytical framework.

The theoretical structure presented by the study aims to explain Turkey's historical theses at the intersection point of international law and international relations theories. While the legitimacy of historical claims is evaluated in international law within the framework of both the principle of self-determination and the principle of effective control, in international relations literature, these claims are generally analyzed through power distribution, regional competition, and security motivations (Krasner, 2020). This dual evaluation necessitates addressing both the normative and strategic dimensions of the historical rights debate together (Krasner & Risse, 2020). Turkey's approach based on the National Pact offers an integrated structure that can be explained through the conceptual tools of these two fields. Particularly since the collapse of central authority in states like Syria and Iraq has led to borders becoming de facto meaningless, Turkey's historical and security-based theses are gaining greater international visibility. This visibility becomes evident particularly with the increase in regional instability and the collapse of traditional security architecture (Lynch, 2023). The border conception of the National Pact, confirmed by historical documents, can open a new interpretive space in contemporary international law debates. For this reason, the study develops a holistic approach that reframes the historical rights debate by drawing attention to the gaps in theoretical literature. Thus, the theoretical contribution of the article becomes evident through its relating of historical documents to contemporary theoretical debates.

The multilayered theoretical synthesis approach completes the methodological and theoretical foundation of this study by acknowledging that Turkey's historical claims are too complex to be explained by a single theory. Turkey's rights discourse based on the National Pact is intertwined with realism's logic of power and security, with constructivism's emphasis on identity, memory, and discourse, with international law's principles of historical right and effective control, with geoeconomics' perspective of regional economic networks, and with critical security's expanded threat definitions. This intertwinement is associated with the concept of "theoretical eclecticism" in international relations literature, demonstrating that complex phenomena cannot be explained by a single perspective (Nolte, 2021). This multilayered structure shows that Turkey's historical rights are shaped by both internal dynamics (identity, historical memory, strategic culture) and external dynamics (collapsed states, multipolarity, great power competition). The founding text character of the National Pact continues to serve as the central reference point strengthening the theoretical integrity of these claims. This central reference point is increasingly examined in academic literature as one of the fundamental documents shaping the strategic culture of Turkish foreign policy (Altun & Kasapoğlu, 2021). Similarly, documents such as Lausanne and Montreux constitute important parts of the theoretical synthesis as examples where Turkey can defend its historical rights at the level of international law. This theoretical framework demonstrates that for Turkey to emerge as a regional order-building actor in the current international order, it must redefine its historical claims within an integrity of strategic, normative, and legal dimensions.

One of the important contributions of this article is filling the methodological and conceptual gap in the literature by evaluating Turkey's historical claims through a multidisciplinary analysis framework. The study presents a holistic approach rarely encountered in academic literature by bringing together international law, international relations theories, historical documents, and geopolitical analyses. This holistic approach is consonant with contemporary academic trends emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary methodology in understanding complex international phenomena (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). Existing studies on how the National Pact can be positioned from the perspective of international law are limited, and this article provides an original contribution particularly in terms of revealing the conditions under which historical rights can gain legitimacy as power balances shift. This original contribution becomes concrete in the context of relating historical documents to contemporary international norms and the systematic analysis of regional dynamics (Özkan, 2022). Furthermore, the

absence of comprehensive studies analyzing how the fragmentation dynamics of the Middle East following the Greater Middle East Project have transformed Turkey's historical position is notable. This article subjects both American interventions and regional authority vacuums to systematic analysis in relation to historical theses. Thus, Turkey's historical theses are integrated into contemporary international order debates, opening a new research domain not currently present in the literature. In this respect, the study fills an important gap at both theoretical and practical levels.

In conclusion, this study aims to produce a comprehensive answer to the question of how the new international order and regional fragmentation dynamics following the Greater Middle East Project redefine Turkey's historical claims centered on the National Pact. The research analyzes how the normative relaxation created by the multipolar order offers new opportunities to Turkey's historical theses and under what conditions the state collapses in the region can legitimize these theses. This analysis presents an original analytical framework situated at the intersection point of international relations and international law literatures (Krasner, 2020). The expected contributions of the study can be summarized as follows: First, to provide Turkish foreign policy with a strategic perspective by addressing historical rights debates together with the transformation of contemporary international norms; second, to construct a theoretical bridge not currently present in the literature by demonstrating that the National Pact can be reinterpreted within contemporary international law literature; third, to reveal the usability of historical claims as a strategic instrument through dynamics such as regional security threats, the strengthening of non-state actors, humanitarian crises, and energy geopolitics; fourth, to provide a scientific foundation for policymakers suggesting that Turkey can integrate its historical framework with international legitimacy. These contributions strengthen the applied dimension of the study by offering dual value toward both academic literature and policy-making processes (Aydin, 2023). Thus, the study aims to make a lasting contribution to both academic literature and Turkey's long-term foreign policy doctrine.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic literature addressing the reconsideration of Turkey's historical claims within the framework of new international order debates has entered a period of notable revitalization, particularly in conjunction with the Greater Middle East Project strategies of American foreign policy following 2003. This revitalization has not remained confined merely to the transformation of regional politics; it has simultaneously followed a parallel trajectory with the intensification of debates in international relations theories concerning power transition, hegemonic instability, and revisionist state behavior. This parallel trajectory largely corresponds with the predictions of hegemonic order theorists examining the process of dissolution of American unipolarity and explains the structural foundations of regional powers' quests for autonomy (Cooley & Nexon, 2020). The academic literature, while analyzing the effects of the international system's evolution from unipolarity toward multipolarity on regional revisionist demands, evaluates Turkey's historical positioning based on the National Pact as a strategic variable (Özpek & Yılmaz, 2021). The problem of "how the multipolar order offers new opportunities to Turkey's historical theses," which lies at the center of the research question presented in the Introduction, has found a broad field of discussion in the literature along the axes of the redistribution of regional power balances and the flexibilization of normative structure. This field of discussion has been enriched particularly by studies examining the crisis of the liberal international order and has presented a theoretical framework regarding the behavioral patterns of middle powers during periods of hegemonic transition (Flockhart, 2022). Studies demonstrate that the regional border change discourse frequently raised by the American administration of the period within the scope of the Greater Middle East Project triggered instabilities, and that the conflicts in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen were an inevitable consequence of this transformation (Gause, 2020). In this context, the academic literature emphasizes that Turkey's historical claims are not merely an emotional discourse; rather, they possess the character of a geopolitical reality that has acquired

renewed meaning in the changing security environment. Indeed, as stated in the Introduction, the weakening of Pax Americana and the process of dissolution of the liberal international order have opened the door to a period in which states bring their historical arguments back onto the agenda. In the new geopolitical environment, Russia's annexation attempts of various regions of Ukraine through the discourse of historical territories has profoundly shaken international law debates and reshaped normative evaluations regarding the legitimacy of historical rights (Mankoff, 2022). Russia's actions have reignited debates on the legitimacy of territorial claims based on historical arguments in international law literature, and these debates have also added new dimensions to the academic evaluation of Turkey's National Pact perspective (Mälksoo, 2022). Similarly, it is observed that Turkey's National Pact perspective has become the subject of new interpretations in the literature, particularly in the context of rereading the Lausanne and Sèvres debates. Within this framework, historical treaty texts are being reevaluated together with contemporary international relations theories; academic debates concerning Turkey's regional role are expanding with acquired theoretical depth. In the literature, the scope and legal character of the National Pact are addressed within a multidimensional framework, particularly in conjunction with international law concepts of self-determination, the principle of border inviolability, and historical rights. Upon examination of the correspondence in the literature of the concept of historical claims that forms the conceptual foundation in the Introduction, it becomes apparent that this concept is not limited merely to claims based on the past; rather, it carries a multilayered character that acquires meaning through the combination of long-term cultural continuity, demographic structure, and geographical dominance (Shaw, 2021; Raic, 2022). This multilayered structure of the concept of historical right is directly related to "historical title" debates in international law doctrine and constitutes the legal basis of states' legitimacy claims based on the past (Roth, 2020). Sources indicating that the text of the National Pact was based on the areas of de facto military control in the Armistice of Mudros signed on October 30, 1918, clearly demonstrate both the strategic and legal character of this document. The concept of "national boundaries" (hudud-ı milli) repeatedly emphasized in Mustafa Kemal Pasha's speeches at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey demonstrates that this historical vision was concretized as a founding reference. Contemporary academic studies indicate that this document is not merely a political program specific to the National Struggle period; it also possesses the character of a strategic vision that defines Turkey's historical geographical reference framework (Çolak, 2022). Çolak's (2022) study focusing on the relationship between geopolitical memory and identity analyzes the central position of the National Pact in Turkish strategic culture from a historical geography perspective and explains the revival of this document in contemporary foreign policy discourse. It is observed that this vision is directly connected to debates concerning demographic structure, historical governance traditions, and the establishment of the post-Ottoman order in regions such as Mosul, Kirkuk, and the Aleppo line (Yılmaz, 2023). The aim of "relating historical documents to contemporary international law norms" presented in the Introduction is evaluated in the literature particularly in the context of the National Pact's partial compatibility with the principle of self-determination. The literature also contains comprehensive analyses indicating that while the Treaty of Lausanne constitutes the foundation of Turkey's international legitimacy, some elements of the National Pact did not find complete correspondence in Lausanne (Oran, 2021). Oran's (2021) evaluation regarding Lausanne's place in the international legal order systematically demonstrates the historical and legal foundations of Turkey's sovereignty domains and analyzes the relationship between the National Pact and Lausanne within a normative framework. Particularly, the Mosul question was evaluated as a process that remained unresolved during the Lausanne negotiations and concluded against Turkey through League of Nations decisions. This historical process constitutes the historical background for matters of an "open dossier" character emphasized in the Introduction becoming subject to debate anew today. For this reason, the contemporary literature converges on the necessity of subjecting the Lausanne, Sèvres, and Mudros texts to an integrated reading when evaluating Turkey's historical rights arguments.

The regional transformation literature demonstrates that with the crystallization of the multipolar order, the normative structure of international law has weakened and great power competition has transformed into a framework that re-legitimizes historical claims. This finding directly corresponds with the main hypothesis presented in the Introduction: "The normative relaxation created by the multipolar order provides a broader legitimacy basis for Turkey's historical claims." This normative relaxation is associated with the concept of "post-hegemonic order" in international relations theory and is explained through the weakening of constraints on the unilateral actions of great powers (Allison, 2023). Parallel to the relative decline of American hegemony, China's rise, Russia's aggressive regional policies, and the European Union's quest for strategic autonomy have directly affected Turkey's security environment (Ikenberry, 2020). As stated in the Introduction, the diminishing effectiveness of multilateral institutions—the fundamental pillars of the liberal international order—has led to a weakening of normative constraints on unilateral state actions. The loss of effectiveness of these multilateral institutions has been concretized particularly through the diminishing capacity of the United Nations Security Council to intervene in regional crises and has expanded the autonomous action spaces of middle powers (Paris, 2020). The literature, in this context, evaluates Turkey's geopolitical behaviors within the classification of "middle-sized revisionist power" and emphasizes that this revisionism is grounded not only on balance of power analysis but also on historical memory and the perception of national geography (Kardaş, 2022). This evaluation presents a perspective consonant with constructivism's emphasis on identity, memory, and discourse within the theoretical framework of the study. Particularly, the Syrian civil war and the de facto tripartite division of Iraq have accelerated debates on the permanence of the region's post-Ottoman borders, and Turkey's security strategies have been reshaped in conjunction with this transformation. The collapse of state structures in Syria and Iraq is evaluated as the beginning of a new era characterized by the concept of "post-order" in the literature on regional fragmentation (Hinnebusch, 2022). Additionally, international law literature demonstrates that the ways in which states defend their historical border claims have begun to rely not only on legal texts but also on discourses of human rights, human security, and regional stability (Klabbers, 2022). This normative transformation is directly related to the process of "questioning the legitimacy of rules governing interstate relations" emphasized in the Introduction. For this reason, Turkey's historical claims are analyzed in contemporary literature with legal, geopolitical, and normative dimensions. This multidimensional approach prepares the ground for rereading the National Pact texts in the context of the modern international order.

A significant portion of the literature examines the effects of the Armistice of Mudros, Sèvres, and Lausanne on regional order within a comparative framework. This comparative approach constitutes the academic foundations of the "bridge established between historical documents and modern international law" presented in the Introduction. The construction of this bridge is supported particularly by historical-legal studies examining the continuities and ruptures between the international law norms of the post-World War I period and contemporary norms (Cassese, 2020). There exist evaluations that the Armistice of Mudros effectively nullified Turkey's sovereignty, particularly because Articles 7 and 24 granted the Entente Powers broad occupation authority. As stated in the Introduction, the occupation provisions of this armistice created a strong consciousness in Turkey's historical memory that borders were determined through unjust international dispositions. The Treaty of Sèvres, on the other hand, is interpreted in modern academia as an attempt to establish a regional order that negated states' historical rights and was based on ethnic segregation (Ginio, 2020). The attempt of this treaty to partition Ottoman territories according to ethnic and religious identities is characterized in contemporary analyses as a regional ethnic engineering project (Fromkin, 2021). Fromkin's (2021) reassessment of the legacy of the post-Sèvres order demonstrates how this treaty constituted the structural foundations of regional instability and explains the historical roots of contemporary border debates. In contrast, the Treaty of Lausanne has been defined as a founding text that guaranteed Turkey's independence within the power balances of the international system of the

period and has been characterized in the literature as a document establishing a new international status (Pedersen, 2021). It is emphasized that Lausanne rejected the fragmentary structure envisaged by Sèvres and established a realist order that took into account variables such as demographic structures, state capacity, and security balances in the region (Özdemir, 2021). Özdemir's (2021) study reassessing Lausanne demonstrates the central position of this treaty in a century of sovereignty and border debates, providing an important historical-legal framework for contemporary regional policies. Contemporary studies emphasize that the comparative analysis of these three documents is essential for understanding Turkey's current strategic behaviors. Particularly, the severance of Mosul and Kirkuk from Turkey as envisaged in Sèvres, Lausanne's failure to produce a definitive solution on this matter, and the intervention of the British mandate system occupy extensive space in the literature on Turkey's historical claims. This historical process supports the approach emphasized in the Introduction that "Lausanne is not a final border agreement but presents a political framework that can change according to international power balances." Additionally, the analysis of differences between the substantive provisions in these treaties and contemporary international law principles (such as self-determination and territorial integrity) constitutes an important dimension of the literature. The analysis of these differences is enriched particularly by contemporary studies questioning the resilience of the territorial integrity principle against new fragmentation pressures (Peters, 2022).

In new international order debates, there exists a robust academic literature suggesting that the Greater Middle East Project increased regional fragilities. This literature supports the finding presented in the Introduction that "the Greater Middle East Project produced results that deepened regional instability under the rhetoric of democratization." These studies demonstrate that the project, under the rhetoric of democratization and stability, actually deepened the ethnic and sectarian fault lines of regional states and weakened state capacity (Lynch, 2022). Lynch's (2022) comprehensive study on the new fragmentation process of the Middle East analyzes the dissolution of regional order from a structural perspective and provides a systematic analysis of the strengthening of non-state actors. This process, associated with the concept of "creative chaos" in the Introduction, has brought debates on whether the dismantling of state structures was an intentional strategy to the center of the academic agenda (Gause, 2022). Gause's (2022) evaluation of the regional disorder of the Middle East explains the structural origins of this chaotic environment and discusses future scenarios. The literature emphasizes that the authority vacuums that emerged after the occupation of Iraq created serious security threats along Turkey's southern borders, and that this situation directed Turkey to reevaluate its historical responsibilities within the framework of the National Pact. This evaluation corresponds with the proposition in the subsidiary hypothesis of the study that "authority vacuums and non-state threats can support Turkey's historical claims on security grounds." Similarly, the Syrian civil war necessitated Turkey's making new strategic evaluations in the context of border security, the refugee problem, and the power competition of regional actors (Stewart, 2021). Studies examining the dynamics of international competition in Syria demonstrate how this conflict has reshaped the regional balance of power and how it has affected Turkey's strategic calculations (Phillips, 2020). Throughout this process, Turkey's historical rights arguments are discussed in the literature not merely as a foreign policy discourse but also as an alternative order conception for ensuring regional stability. Academic studies remind that Turkey is a state that has made territorial arrangements based on historical-legal grounds, as in the Hatay example, and relate these historical examples to the search for order in Syria and Iraq (Deringil, 2020). Additionally, the literature indicates that the normative changes of the new international order have made Turkey's arguments more visible. The finding emphasized in the Introduction that "a new international environment legitimizing the efforts of middle powers to expand their regional spheres of influence" directly corresponds with this literature finding (Öniş & Kutlay, 2021). Thus, the National Pact has risen to the position of a central reference point not merely as a historical document but in debates on the reconstruction of regional order.

In international law literature, two fundamental approaches stand out regarding the validity of states' historical claims: the positivist approach and the historical-moral durability approach. The positivist approach emphasizes adherence to the status quo determined by international agreements for existing borders, while the historical-moral approach argues that peoples can claim rights in specific geographies on the basis of historical continuity (Roth, 2020). Roth's (2020) study reassessing the normative foundations of historical title systematically analyzes the tension between these two approaches and comprehensively addresses the position of historical rights in international law. This theoretical distinction constitutes the legal dimension of the discussion presented in the Introduction that "international law requires reevaluation together with changing power balances and case studies." In the Turkish context, these debates have acquired a more pronounced character particularly in regions with disputed post-Ottoman status such as Mosul and Kirkuk. The intersection point of the principle of self-determination and the principle of effective control emphasized in the Introduction constitutes one of the fundamental axes of debate forming the legal legitimacy basis of Turkey's historical claims in the literature (Crawford, 2019). Crawford's (2019) comprehensive work on the principles of international public law examines the applications of the right to self-determination in post-colonial contexts and addresses the relationship of this principle with historical claims within a theoretical framework. The literature evaluates Mosul's remaining as the only major unresolved issue at Lausanne and the League of Nations' decision in favor of one of the great powers of the period as a clear example of power balances prevailing over law (Pedersen, 2021). This historical process supports one of the fundamental arguments of the study: the normative structure of international law is not independent of changes in the distribution of power. On this matter, documents clearly demonstrating that the National Pact delineated borders and that Mosul and Kirkuk were included in Turkey's national border conception on both geographical and demographic grounds are frequently used in academic analyses. Particularly, contemporary studies on the ethnographic structure of Kirkuk demonstrate that the region remains a determining element in debates on historical belonging (Stansfield, 2021). Stansfield's (2021) evaluation of Iraq's political fragmentation demonstrates the multilayered identity structure of Kirkuk and the strategic importance of this structure in regional power balances. For this reason, it is stated in the literature that Turkey's historical claims are at the center of international law debates and that the matter has come back onto the agenda in connection with contemporary geopolitical developments.

The regional security literature evaluates the authority vacuums that have emerged on Turkey's southern and eastern borders not merely as a threat element but also as a strategic opportunity in terms of redefining historical responsibility and spheres of influence. This evaluation directly corresponds with the subsidiary hypothesis presented in the Introduction: "Regional instability and the de facto dissolution of borders can strategically and legally bring Turkey's claims within the framework of the National Pact back onto the agenda." This process of bringing back onto the agenda is conceptualized as an "authority vacuum filling" mechanism in state-building and fragile states literature, and the ways regional powers intervene in these vacuums are systematically examined (Call, 2021). Particularly after the Syrian civil war, the division of the region into cantons, militia groups, and foreign power spheres of influence has opened to question the sustainability of the post-Ottoman border architecture (Lynch, 2022). The finding emphasized in the Introduction that "the state-centric order established after Westphalia is dissolving at the regional level" is strongly supported by these literature findings. Lynch's (2023) recent study on fragmentation and realignment processes after the Arab Spring evaluates the long-term effects of this structural transformation and presents scenarios regarding the future of regional order. In this context, it is observed that Turkey's military operations (Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, Peace Spring) are interpreted in the literature not merely as security-based but also as attempts to preserve regional order and restructure Turkey's historical spheres of influence (Stewart, 2021). This mode of interpretation concretizes the integration between realism's logic of power and security and constructivism's emphasis on historical memory within the theoretical framework of the study.

Academic studies indicate that in these policies, Turkey refers as legal basis both to international counter-terrorism norms and to the "negative sovereignty" situation arising from the transfer of authority vacuum in the region to non-state actors (Krasner & Risse, 2020). The concept of negative sovereignty refers to a situation where a state cannot establish de facto control over its territories and this vacuum is filled with elements threatening international security, providing an important analytical tool in explaining the legitimacy basis of Turkey's cross-border operations. Additionally, it is stated that the emphasis on the southern border in the National Pact plays an important role in explaining why ethnic and political changes in northern Syria are evaluated as an existential issue for Turkey. It is observed in the literature that this framework is supported by comparative analyses indicating that a similar historical-legal mechanism was operated in the process of Hatay's incorporation into Turkey (Deringil, 2020). Deringil's (2020) historical analysis of the Hatay struggle demonstrates the diplomatic dimensions of this process and the legitimization strategies within the international law framework of the period, offering important comparative lessons for today. Consequently, Turkey's historical claims possess the character of a dynamic element that articulates not only with the past but also with the contemporary security architecture.

Contemporary studies on historiography and diplomatic documents are reevaluating the impact of post-Ottoman treaties on regional order and particularly demonstrating that Sèvres was designed as a regional ethnic engineering project. This finding places the emphasis on "geographical fragmentation imposed by the Treaty of Sèvres" in the Introduction on an academic foundation. Gino's (2020) study on post-imperial border-drawing processes analyzes the ethno-political engineering in the post-Ottoman Middle East from a historical perspective and demonstrates the lasting effects of this engineering. Contemporary analyses indicating that the Treaty of Sèvres was an attempt to partition Ottoman territories according to ethnic and religious identities explain why the applicability of this treaty was extremely low (Fromkin, 2021). The provisions regarding Kurdistan and Armenia envisaged in Sèvres appeared disconnected from the political realities of the period and seem to have ignored the complex demographic structure living in the region. The disregard of this complex demographic structure reflects the structural problems of post-colonial border-drawing processes and explains the historical roots of contemporary ethnic conflicts (Rajagopal, 2021). In contrast, the Treaty of Lausanne established a much more realistic order and created a new international status by taking into account variables such as demographic structures, state capacity, and security balances in the region (Özdemir, 2021). As stated in the Introduction, "while the order envisaged by Sèvres presented an architecture aimed at fragmenting state sovereignty, Lausanne laid the foundation of regional status quo as a founding document that consolidated Turkey's international recognition." The literature emphasizes that this sharp difference between Sèvres and Lausanne is of determining importance when evaluating Turkey's historical claims. This comparative perspective is consonant with the principle of "bringing together historical documents and contemporary academic analyses" in the methodological approach of the study. For the order envisaged by Sèvres presented a design aimed at fragmenting nation-state sovereignty, while Lausanne constituted the foundation of regional status quo as a founding text that guaranteed Turkey's international recognition. Consequently, the academic literature states that the comparative analysis of these two treaties provides an essential contextual framework for understanding Turkey's current rights claims. This contextual framework constitutes the theoretical basis for debates on how Turkey's historical theses can be positioned in international law.

In new international order debates, multipolarity is viewed as a transformation space in which regional powers bring their historical arguments back to the fore. This finding directly corresponds with the argument presented in the Introduction that "the crystallization of the multipolar structure has created a new international environment legitimizing the efforts of middle powers to expand their regional spheres of influence." The structural analysis of this international environment is enriched by studies focusing on the comparative examination of regional powers and presents theoretical frameworks aimed at determining Turkey's position among these powers (Nolte, 2021). China's establishment of

new connectivity networks in Eurasia through its Belt and Road Initiative, Russia's near abroad doctrine, Iran's regional influence expansion, and the Gulf monarchies' reshaping of security architecture directly affect Turkey's strategic calculations (Fulton, 2022). Fulton's (2022) study on the impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative on Middle East geopolitics demonstrates how these new connectivity networks are reshaping regional power balances and evaluates Turkey's position in this transformation. The process of "relative decline of American hegemony" emphasized in the Introduction is evaluated in the literature as a structural condition expanding the room for maneuver of these regional actors. In this context, the literature emphasizes that Turkey's historical rights discourse is not merely an emotional policy oriented toward the past but a rational strategic stance that evaluates the power vacuums offered by the multipolar order (Kardaş, 2022). This evaluation supports the finding in the theoretical framework of the study that "historical claims are shaped by both internal dynamics and external dynamics." Additionally, Turkey's tendency to redefine its mission of establishing peace and order in post-Ottoman geographies through the role of "protective power" is addressed in the literature at the intersection of identity, geopolitics, and normative power debates (Bilgin, 2023). This tendency is concretized through "Turkey's increasing diplomatic presence in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Balkans, and the Caucasus" as stated in the Introduction. Bilgin's (2023) study on Turkey's geopolitical identity and regional order-building analyzes this identity-strategy relationship from a critical perspective and evaluates different scenarios regarding Turkey's regional role. These analyses demonstrate that Turkey's historical claims provide a comprehensive perspective aimed not merely at territory but also at the restructuring of regional stability. The renewed visibility of the National Pact framework in contemporary political discourse demonstrates that this process has academic foundations. For this reason, the literature reevaluates Turkey's claims in the context of multipolarity and demonstrates that this is closely related to the quest for legitimacy in the international system.

The intensification of great power competition and regional conflicts in international relations has necessitated the reexamination of Turkey's historical claims from the perspectives of international law and political science literature. This necessity derives from the finding presented in the Introduction that "the relationship between the structural fragility currently exhibited by the post-Ottoman regional order and Turkey's historical claims has been largely neglected in the academic literature." Addressing this deficiency requires the creation of a new research agenda that integrates the perspectives of state fragility and order collapse in regional security studies with historical rights debates (Balci, 2023). Particularly, the new security environment that has emerged in the context of Syria, Iraq, and the Eastern Mediterranean has brought the legal and historical foundations of Turkey's borders and regional influence to the center of academic debates (Gause, 2020). The energy competition and maritime jurisdiction debates in the Eastern Mediterranean demonstrate that the ways Turkey defends its historical rights have acquired new dimensions. These new dimensions are enriched particularly by studies examining the intersection points of maritime law and exclusive economic zone debates with historical sovereignty claims (Roberts, 2022). Studies emphasizing the historical depth of Turkey's regional policy demonstrate that this approach provides a multilayered framework in normative, strategic, and international law terms (Oran, 2021). The necessity of a "multidisciplinary analysis framework" stated in the Introduction is confirmed by these literature findings. The literature states that the classical norms that accept post-Ottoman borders as sacred and immutable have now weakened and that a period has been entered in which states more frequently resort to historical arguments (Klabbers, 2022). This normative transformation is directly related to the concept of "normative relaxation created by the multipolar order" in the main hypothesis of the study. This situation has nourished academic debates in the direction of reinterpretation of the National Pact and strengthening Turkey's historical-legal position under conditions of regional instability. Additionally, attention is drawn to the fact that the international law-based approach Turkey applied in the Hatay example during the Atatürk period carries precedent character for today (Deringil, 2020). Consequently, the literature

emphasizes that Turkey's historical claims require reevaluation in the dimensions of regional peace, national security, and international legitimacy.

Contemporary studies on the limits of the concept of historical right in international law indicate that this concept is not limited merely to claims based on the past; rather, it acquires meaning through the combination of long-term cultural continuity, demographic structure, and geographical dominance (Shaw, 2021). This multidimensional definition concretizes the correspondence in the literature of the concept of historical claims that forms the conceptual foundation in the Introduction. Shaw's (2021) comprehensive work on the fundamental principles of international law systematically demonstrates the normative basis of historical rights and evaluates the position of these rights in contemporary international law. When evaluated from Turkey's perspective, it is observed that the National Pact provides a holistic framework that brings together these three elements. The text of the National Pact advocated an integrity based on popular will in regions inhabited by Ottoman-Islamic majorities, and this approach demonstrates partial compatibility with the principle of self-determination today (Crawford, 2019). Studies examining the relationship of historical title with the evolving concept of self-determination demonstrate the intersection points and areas of tension between these two principles and provide a theoretical basis for the legal evaluation of Turkey's claims (Raic, 2022). The literature demonstrates that debates on historical rights in international law come to the fore particularly during periods when territorial disputes intensify, and that international legitimacy debates acquire a more complex character when states support such claims with power projection (Klabbers, 2022). This finding places the phenomenon of "revival of legal and political arguments from the past during periods when power balances show rapid change" emphasized in the Introduction on an academic foundation. Russia's resort to historical arguments in its Crimea and Donbas policy is viewed as a contemporary example of this approach, and similarly it is stated that Turkey's development of legal and strategic arguments on the basis of the National Pact is comparable with international examples (Mankoff, 2022). Studies examining the instrumentalization of history in Russia's revisionist policies provide a systematic analysis of the use of historical arguments as legitimization tools in international relations and offer a comparative perspective with the Turkish case (Kuzio, 2023). This comparative perspective constitutes the foundations in the literature of the "comparative case study" method in the methodological approach of the study. Within this framework, the literature emphasizes that Turkey's historical claims are normatively not merely a regional demand but also a strategic discourse related to the opportunities presented by transformation in the international system. The weakening of the principle of border sanctity and the strengthening of multipolarity have given new academic momentum to historical rights debates. Consequently, the evaluation of Turkey's theses not only in historical context but also within the framework of the legal and political conditions of the new order is becoming increasingly widespread in the literature.

The geopolitical literature emphasizes that the increasing fragility on Turkey's southern and eastern borders necessitates its being discussed anew in connection with historical claims. This necessity constitutes the academic reflection of the problem of "collapse of regional states and de facto indeterminacy of borders" presented in the Introduction. Studies examining the changing logic of territory and geopolitical conflict analyze the structural causes of border fragility and demonstrate the relationship of this fragility with historical claims (Branch, 2023). Particularly, Iraq's largely losing its central authority with the post-2003 occupation and the deepening of ethnic-sectarian divisions have rendered the status of the Mosul-Kirkuk line even more indeterminate (Stansfield, 2021). The process of "de facto tripartite division of Iraq" stated in the Introduction is evaluated in the literature as a concrete indicator of this indeterminacy. Studies on Iraq's political fragility and the future of Kirkuk demonstrate the multilayered identity structure of this region and its strategic importance and explain the context of Turkey's policies toward the region (Hiltermann, 2022). These developments are interpreted in the literature as the incongruity between Turkey's "de facto security environment" and "historical geographical border conception" becoming increasingly visible. The fact that Articles 7 and

24 of the Armistice of Mudros constituted the starting point for the fragmentation of Ottoman sovereignty and that Mosul became a contested dossier are addressed in contemporary academic analyses as rupture points of historical continuity. Additionally, it is stated in international relations literature that regional powers' re-establishing relationships with their historical spheres of influence has become even more widespread, particularly with the increase in non-state armed actors (Gause, 2020). This finding corresponds with the proposition in the subsidiary hypothesis of the study that "non-state threats can support Turkey's historical claims on security grounds." Studies on the future of regional security order in the Middle East demonstrate how the strengthening of non-state actors is reshaping regional balances and how this transformation is affecting Turkey's strategic calculations (Gause, 2021). For this reason, the literature states that Turkey's security policies cannot be evaluated independently of the historical rights perspective; rather, this perspective provides strategic depth. Thus, the National Pact is positioned as a reference framework that maintains its contemporary relevance in both security and international law studies.

Another field of debate in the literature regarding Turkey's historical claims is the perspective of human security and regional stability. This perspective is directly related to the conditions enabling the reinterpretation of the "responsibility to protect" principle stated in the Introduction (Bellamy, 2021). Bellamy's (2021) comprehensive study on world peace evaluates the evolution of the responsibility to protect principle and the role of this principle in states' intervention justifications, providing a theoretical framework for Turkey's humanitarian intervention discourse. Numerous studies indicate that Turkey's interventions in Syria and Iraq are connected not only to national security justifications but also to a sense of responsibility aimed at preventing regional humanitarian catastrophes (Kaya & Torun, 2022). Kaya and Torun's (2022) study on Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy and regional influence demonstrates how this humanitarian dimension is intertwined with strategic calculations and explains the multidimensional nature of Turkey's regional policy. The subject of "humanitarian burden undertaken by Turkey" emphasized in the Introduction is placed on an academic foundation by these literature findings. Within this framework, the human security approach, unlike the classical state-centric security understanding, foregrounds elements such as population movements, terrorism, ethnic conflicts, and the collapse of state capacity (Newman, 2020). This approach is consonant with the perspective of "expanded threat definitions of critical security" in the theoretical framework of the study. It is stated in the literature that the policies Turkey pursues in these areas possess a normative dimension that takes into account historical ties to post-Ottoman geographies. The principles of the National Pact regarding the protection of the rights of communities in neighboring geographies strengthen the historical context of Turkey's assumption of this humanitarian responsibility. Simultaneously, it is emphasized that examples in which international legitimacy mechanisms were operated, as in the process of Hatay's incorporation into Turkey, constitute precedents for Turkey's possible future claims (Deringil, 2020). While the importance of the Treaty of Lausanne as the fundamental text in the international definition of Turkey's borders is preserved, studies viewing the reevaluation of this text as necessary in the environment of regional instability are also increasing. For this reason, the literature demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims are related not merely to regional power politics but also to normative-humanitarian dimensions.

The Greater Middle East Project literature occupies an important place in debates on Turkey's historical claims because among the central objectives of this project was the reorganization of the region's political map. This finding supports the argument of "BOP's claim to reshape regional political geography" presented in the Introduction. The declarations by the American administration of the period that the borders of twenty-two countries in the region could change are evaluated in the literature as the symbolic summary of the Greater Middle East Project's attempt to restructure the region on ethnic and sectarian bases (Gertler, 2021). Gertler's (2021) report reassessing the Greater Middle East Project and American grand strategy comprehensively analyzes the objectives and consequences of this project and demonstrates the project's contribution to regional instability. The concept of "creative

chaos" stated in the Introduction constitutes the academic correspondence of this discourse. Academic studies demonstrate that despite using the rhetoric of democratization, the Greater Middle East Project dismantled state structures in the region, triggered civil wars, and accelerated fragmentation. This process supports one of the fundamental arguments of the study: the sustainability of borders drawn through external intervention is open to question under conditions of regional instability. Studies debating the end of the transition paradigm in the Middle East critically evaluate the real consequences of the democratization discourse and demonstrate the relationship of this discourse with regional instability (Carothers & Brown, 2021). In this context, the literature states that Turkey's bringing the National Pact perspective back onto the agenda is a strategic move aimed at compensating for the consequences of the regional fragmentation caused by the Greater Middle East Project in terms of security and stability. The historical failures of Mudros and Sèvres are frequently emphasized in academic analyses as offering contemporary lessons on the unsustainability of externally drawn borders. Additionally, in the literature, the increase in Turkey's effort to construct its own regional vision in the post-Greater Middle East Project period is related to the expansion of autonomy accompanying multipolarity (Öniş & Kutlay, 2021). This relation corresponds with the argument of "middle powers' efforts to expand their regional spheres of influence" emphasized in the Introduction. Studies examining the quest for autonomy in the foreign policies of regional powers evaluate the structural conditions and limits of this autonomy and provide a theoretical framework for explaining Turkey's strategic behaviors (Flemes & Nolte, 2022). For this reason, the Greater Middle East Project literature is viewed as the epistemological foundation of Turkey's historical claims as both a reaction and an attempt to construct a new order.

Academic studies conducted in recent years demonstrate that Turkey's historical claims occupy an important place not only in normative, strategic, and geopolitical dimensions but also in terms of identity construction. This finding supports the perspective of "constructivism's emphasis on identity, memory, and discourse" in the theoretical framework of the study. Studies examining the relationship between identity and Turkish foreign policy demonstrate the role of historical narratives in foreign policy formation and explain how these narratives shape strategic behaviors (Çevik & Sevin, 2022). The regions Turkey defines as its "historical responsibility area" are increasingly debated in studies of national identity, national memory, and strategic culture (Bilgin, 2023). The argument of "the power of historical memory to shape foreign policy" stated in the Introduction is placed on an academic foundation by these literature findings. This literature emphasizes that the National Pact is not merely a document determining borders but also a founding reference that forms the mental and cultural infrastructure of Turkish foreign policy. This founding text character of the National Pact is increasingly examined in academic literature as one of the fundamental documents shaping the strategic culture of Turkish foreign policy (Altun & Kasapoğlu, 2021). Studies on Turkey's national identity and the role of historical claims in foreign policy provide a systematic analysis of this relationship and demonstrate the theoretical foundations of the identity-strategy connection (Özdemir, 2023). Additionally, contemporary research on the power of national identity to shape foreign policy demonstrates that historical narratives are becoming increasingly determinative in Turkey's regional policy (Rumelili & Ejdus, 2022). This approach demonstrates that historical claims are not merely a legal or strategic discourse but also a framework through which collective identity is reproduced. The increase in national identity-based foreign policy practices with the multipolar order is evaluated in the literature as an important analytical tool for explaining Turkey's strategic behaviors. Thus, historical rights debates have transformed into an academic field enriched from the perspectives of both international relations theory and identity studies.

Another axis that stands out in the literature on Turkey's historical claims is energy geopolitics and natural resource management debates. This axis constitutes the academic correspondence of the subjects of "energy transit routes and border security" stated in the Introduction. Studies examining energy geopolitics and changing regional alliances demonstrate the strategic importance of energy

resources and the role of these resources in regional power balances (Roberts, 2022). Particularly, the historical relationship of oil reserves in northern Iraq with the Ottoman administrative structure has rendered the Mosul-Kirkuk basin a determining subject not merely as an ethnic or historical matter but also in the context of energy security (Stevens, 2021). Stevens's (2021) report on the energy geopolitics of the Middle East demonstrates the strategic importance of this region's energy resources in global energy security and how this importance shapes regional politics. The Mosul question being left unresolved in the Treaty of Lausanne and the subsequent determinative role of the political decision of the great powers of the period is examined as an example of how international power balance affects law in the context of energy geopolitics. Contemporary studies establish a strong relationship between energy infrastructure security and regional territorial integrity debates, explaining Turkey's strategic areas of interest toward these regions. The dynamic of "changing energy geopolitics" emphasized in the Introduction is confirmed by these literature findings. This literature indicates that in the new multipolar system, with the increasing fragility of energy supply chains, Turkey can articulate its historical rights arguments more visibly (Fulton, 2022). Additionally, the intersection of China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia's energy-centered near abroad policies with regional border debates has opened Turkey's position to reevaluation in international relations literature. Consequently, energy geopolitics finds extensive space in the literature as a powerful analytical tool in the reconceptualization of historical claims in the contemporary context. This analytical tool provides a perspective consonant with "geoeconomics' perspective of regional economic networks" in the theoretical framework of the study.

Contemporary security studies demonstrate that Turkey's historical claims are being redefined in the context of hybrid threats, non-state actors, and cross-border conflict dynamics. This process of redefinition directly corresponds with the argument of "increasing regional security threats and strengthening of non-state actors" presented in the Introduction. Comprehensive studies examining the evolution of international security studies demonstrate the expansion of the concept of security and how this expansion affects state behaviors (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). The authority vacuums in Syria and Iraq, the territorial gains of terrorist organizations, and the permanent presence of foreign military forces in the region demonstrate that Turkey's southern borders cannot be explained through a classical sovereignty approach (Lynch, 2022). The process of "collapse of state authority and de facto invalidation of borders" emphasized in the Introduction is a concrete indicator of these literature findings. Studies on the collapse of states and societal transition in the Middle East comprehensively analyze the causes and consequences of this structural transformation and present scenarios regarding the future of regional security (Phillips, 2021). In the literature, this situation points to a process in which Turkey evaluates the National Pact framework not merely as a historical reference but also as a strategic framework for the sustainability of security architecture (Stewart, 2021). The fact that Article 7 of the Armistice of Mudros granted "occupation authority in case of danger" and its use as a legal tool that collapsed Ottoman sovereignty has been frequently used in contemporary literature to explain the historical roots of the fragilities created by external intervention. Within this framework, the academic literature emphasizes that Turkey's cross-border operations are not merely security-based but a strategy developed for the purposes of historical continuity and preservation of regional order. Additionally, it is stated that with the proliferation of hybrid conflict models, states have resorted more to historical legitimacy sources and that Turkey must also be evaluated as part of this trend (Krasner & Risse, 2020). For this reason, the literature demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims are being reinterpreted in a manner consonant with the contemporary security paradigm.

The critical literature shaped along the axes of identity, history, and geography evaluates Turkey's claims from post-colonial and critical geopolitics perspectives. This perspective constitutes an important dimension of the multilayered theoretical synthesis approach in the theoretical framework of the study. Studies examining the contemporary development of critical geopolitics question the assumptions of traditional geopolitical discourse and prepare the ground for a critical evaluation of

Turkey's regional policy (Dodds, 2022). These studies emphasize that the post-Ottoman order was largely shaped through the intervention of external powers and that the borders in the region were drawn in accordance with the interests of external actors rather than the historical continuities of local communities (Bilgin, 2023). The finding of "borders being determined through unjust international dispositions" stated in the Introduction constitutes one of the fundamental arguments of this critical literature. In this context, the Treaty of Sèvres is evaluated in the literature as a classical example of post-colonial fragmentation projects. Sèvres's attempt to divide Ottoman territories according to ethnic and religious identities is characterized as a design reflecting the regional interests of the imperialist powers of the period. Studies presenting a critique of post-colonial international law question the assumptions of the Western-centered legal order and offer alternative perspectives, illuminating the position of Turkey's historical rights discourse within this critical framework (Rajagopal, 2021). Critical approaches interpret Turkey's defense of the National Pact framework as part of processes of "indigenous geographical consciousness" and "historical subjectification" in contemporary international relations. Additionally, studies indicating that with the dissolution of the Western-centered order the capacity of regional states to produce foreign policy based on their own historical references has increased provide an important theoretical basis for explaining the transformation in Turkey's foreign policy (Rumelili & Ejdus, 2022). This literature posits that Turkey's historical rights discourse signifies not merely a strategic stance but also an identity-based counter-position and the reconstruction of regional belonging. Consequently, critical approaches contribute to the diversification of the literature by examining Turkey's claims within a normative, cultural, and post-colonial framework.

The literature on the future of regional order evaluates Turkey's historical claims as part of a multilayered transformation process. This evaluation directly corresponds with the aim presented in the Introduction of "repositioning Turkey's historical claims within international law, geopolitics, and historical continuity in the context of the new global order." Studies examining the transformation of international order hierarchy and legitimacy demonstrate the structural foundations of this multilayered transformation and evaluate the role of regional powers in this transformation (Lake, 2022). In the multipolar world, the competition among power centers such as the United States, Russia, China, and the European Union has prepared the ground for regional powers to use their historical references more visibly; Turkey has also stood out in the literature as an important actor in this trend (Ikenberry, 2020). The process of "crystallization of the multipolar structure" stated in the Introduction constitutes the structural background of this literature finding. Studies on great power competition and the transformation of international order demonstrate how this competition shapes regional dynamics and how it creates opportunities for middle powers (Allison, 2022). Academic studies state that Turkey's historical claims do not contradict a regional peace vision; rather, they provide an order perspective that can contribute to the restabilization of states experiencing collapse in post-Ottoman geographies (Özpek & Yılmaz, 2021). This finding strengthens one of the main arguments of the study: historical claims can be reinterpreted within a framework that supports rather than threatens regional stability. The tension and complementarity relationship between the Lausanne and National Pact texts is one of the fundamental analytical frameworks explaining Turkey's historical border and sovereignty perception in the literature. Additionally, it is stated in the literature that Turkey conducts a multilayered diplomacy based on historical ties in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Middle East, and that this can be viewed as a "historical integration strategy" within the new international order (Kardaş, 2022). Within this framework, the National Pact has transformed not merely into a border document but into a normative and strategic framework contributing to the reconstruction of Turkey's position in the international system. Consequently, the literature evaluates Turkey's claims together with debates on the future of regional order.

In conclusion, the literature also debates whether Turkey's historical claims are compatible with practical foreign policy instruments alongside international law, geopolitical, and identity-based

analyses. This debate constitutes the practical dimension of the aim of "relating historical documents to contemporary international law norms" presented in the Introduction. Studies examining classical and contemporary theories of foreign policy analysis systematically evaluate the role of historical arguments in foreign policy formation and demonstrate the practical consequences of these arguments (Hudson, 2020). These studies evaluate Turkey's diplomatic initiatives, cross-border operations, humanitarian aid activities, and positioning in international organizations in a manner consonant with the historical rights framework (Oran, 2021). Oran's (2022) comprehensive work on Turkish foreign policy systematically demonstrates the role of historical documents and claims in foreign policy formation throughout the process extending from the War of Independence to the present. The goal of "Turkey's emergence as a regional order-building actor" emphasized in the Introduction depends on the effective use of these practical foreign policy instruments. Additionally, it is stated in the academic literature that the support of Turkey's historical-legal arguments with international legitimacy mechanisms (United Nations resolutions, humanitarian intervention norms, counter-terrorism frameworks) confers normative weight on these claims. The rereading of texts such as Mudros, Sèvres, and Lausanne in contemporary analyses from the perspective of legal integrity provides an important methodological foundation for studies examining the validity of Turkey's historical claims. Studies examining reviving sovereignty claims in contested regions evaluate how these claims are related to international legitimacy mechanisms and their practical consequences (Dixon, 2023). Additionally, the comparison of the diplomatic methods used in the process of Hatay's incorporation into Turkey with contemporary regional examples constitutes an important portion of the literature evaluating the future applicability of Turkey's historical rights strategies (Deringil, 2020). This comparative approach is consonant with the "comparative case study" method in the methodological framework of the study. Nevertheless, the literature emphasizes that historical claims can transform into a sustainable foreign policy instrument only when they are consonant with objectives of international legitimacy and regional stability. This emphasis seeks the answer to the question stated in the Introduction of "how Turkey can integrate its historical framework with international legitimacy." Thus, the academic literature addresses Turkey's historical claims within a holistic framework encompassing theoretical, practical, and normative dimensions, constituting the fundamental findings of this study's literature review.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research question presented in the Introduction concentrated on how the multipolar order opens new legitimacy spaces for Turkey's historical claims centered on the National Pact and under what conditions regional state collapses render these claims meaningful. In the literature review, it was emphasized that while this question constitutes a multidimensional field of discussion in the academic literature, a theoretical bridge needs to be constructed between historical documents and contemporary international law principles. In this context, the fundamental aim of the theoretical framework is to establish an integrated analytical structure capable of explaining Turkey's historical claims from both international relations theories and international law perspectives. This integrated structure is grounded in the principle of "theoretical eclecticism" to comprehend the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon and brings together the explanatory powers of different theoretical traditions (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010). The theoretical foundation of the study is based on the assumption that a single theoretical approach would be insufficient to explain such a complex phenomenon; therefore, realism, constructivism, regional security complex theory, international law approaches, and critical security studies will be evaluated together. This theoretical pluralism has become an indispensable tool for understanding complex geopolitical phenomena as a methodological approach increasingly accepted in the discipline of international relations (Lake, 2022). The relative decline of American hegemony, China's rise, and Russia's aggressive regional policies are fundamentally transforming the structure of the international system, and this transformation is preparing suitable ground for middle powers to

bring their historical arguments back onto the agenda (Ikenberry, 2020). Consequently, this section will constitute the analytical backbone of the study by demonstrating the theoretical foundations of Turkey's rights discourse within the framework of the National Pact.

The conceptual understanding of the new international order primarily requires the examination of the dissolution process of the liberal hegemonic structure established in the post-Cold War period. As stated in the Introduction, the legitimacy of the unipolar order that had been dominant since the 1990s began to weaken with the 2008 global financial crisis and the subsequent regional crises. This process is evaluated as the beginning of a new era characterized by the concept of "post-order" in international relations literature (Hinnebusch, 2022). This concept describes a period in which the fundamental assumptions of the state-centric international system that has persisted since Westphalia are being questioned, the permeability of borders has increased, and non-state actors have assumed determining roles (Fawcett, 2017). Particularly, the power vacuums that have emerged in the Middle East geography, the fragmentation of states, and the *de facto* invalidation of borders are the most evident indicators of this dissolution process. Condoleezza Rice's declarations in 2006 that the borders of twenty-two countries in the region would be reshaped are interpreted in the literature as the political implementation domain of the concept of "Creative Chaos" (Gause, 2022). The interventions carried out within the framework of the Greater Middle East Project have actually accelerated regional fragmentation by dismantling state structures under the rhetoric of democratization. This fragmentation process has been associated with the concepts of "failed states" and "fragile states" in academic literature, bringing to the agenda the necessity of restructuring the regional security architecture (Rotberg, 2004). In this context, evaluating Turkey's historical claims requires not merely a normative preference but a theoretical framework that also takes into account the structural changes in the power distribution of the international system. Historical documents such as the Armistice of Mudros, the Treaty of Sèvres, the National Pact, and the Treaty of Lausanne constitute the fundamental reference points of this theoretical framework (Shaw, 2021). Thus, the relationship between the transformation of international order and the theoretical foundations of historical rights constitutes the main axis of the study.

Realist theory provides a powerful framework for explaining Turkey's historical claims based on the National Pact by accepting that states are engaged in the pursuit of security and power maximization. According to Kenneth Waltz's structural realism approach, anarchy is permanent in the international system and states' security strategies are shaped by systemic pressures (Waltz, 1979). The fundamental assumption of structural realism is that states act with a survival motive and that changes in power distribution directly shape state behaviors; this perspective provides a critical framework for understanding Turkey's responses to changes in the regional security environment (Waltz, 1979). As emphasized in the literature review, the collapse of states such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Libya has created serious power vacuums in the region, thereby expanding Turkey's historical, security-based, and geographically legitimate intervention areas. The interpretation of the National Pact borders—which were based on regions Turkey *de facto* controlled when the Armistice of Mudros was signed in 1918—as a "historical security belt" is grounded on a realist foundation, primarily due to Turkey's southern borders being threatened by *de facto* instability and subsequently by the emergence of direct threats to national security in these areas. This security belt concept is consonant with the "buffer zone" logic predicted by defensive realism and demonstrates that states engage in the pursuit of stability in peripheral geographies to protect their own borders (Walt, 1987). The evaluation of regions such as Mosul, Kirkuk, and Hatay within the framework of security and historical rights in Mustafa Kemal Pasha's speeches at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey confirms this strategic approach with historical documents. The offensive realism variant of realism explains Russia's intervention in Ukraine based on historical rights claims as a contemporary example of systemic power politics (Mearsheimer, 2021). Offensive realism argues that states do not merely content themselves with protecting their security but tend toward power maximization when opportunity structures emerge; this perspective

explains why states bring their historical arguments back onto the agenda during periods when power vacuums emerge (Mearsheimer, 2001). The bringing of historical arguments back onto the agenda by states during periods when the balance of power shifts is consonant with the behavioral patterns predicted by realism. This theoretical perspective demonstrates that Turkey's claims are not merely a matter of historical memory but are also grounded on a rational security logic.

Constructivist theory provides the opportunity to explain Turkey's historical claims not only through material power elements but also through national identity, historical memory, collective meanings, and normative continuity. According to the fundamental assumption put forth by Alexander Wendt, the structure of the international system is constructed socially rather than materially; therefore, states' interests are also shaped by their identities (Wendt, 1999). Wendt's famous thesis that "anarchy is what states make of it" emphasizes that the structure of the international system is not given and is continuously reconstructed through states' interactions; this perspective provides a critical framework for understanding how Turkey's historical identity narratives shape foreign policy behavior (Wendt, 1992). The National Pact, whose conceptual foundation was established in the Introduction, is not merely a border document within Turkey's national identity but also the symbolic foundation of the state's founding covenant; for this reason, it creates a normative binding force in political memory. The emphasis on "de facto and de jure inseparable integrity" in the text of the National Pact constitutes one of the fundamental layers of Turkey's perception of identity and sovereignty in the international system. This identity-sovereignty connection is related to the concept of "ontological security" emphasized by constructivism; states act with the motive of protecting not only their physical but also their identity-based security (Mitzen, 2006). Constructivist analysis also helps explain how the discourses of other actors in the region, particularly the United States, the European Union, and Russia, have transformed Turkey's identity-based security perceptions. As stated in the literature review, the power of national identity to shape foreign policy has become an increasingly important analytical tool for explaining Turkey's regional behaviors (Rumelili & Ejdus, 2022). This approach provides the opportunity to address Turkey's historical claims not merely as power politics but also in the context of normative and cultural continuity. Thus, the study establishes a multilayered theoretical framework by utilizing realism and constructivism together.

International law theories present a determining dimension in the evaluation of Turkey's historical claims; for historical treaties and concepts of de facto control play important roles in legitimizing states' territorial demands. The contemporary academic studies emphasized in the literature review demonstrate that the concept of historical right is not limited merely to claims based on the past; rather, it acquires meaning through the combination of long-term cultural continuity, demographic structure, and geographical dominance (Shaw, 2021). The concept of historical right in international law has been addressed in various decisions of the International Court of Justice and has been associated with the principles of "historical consolidation" and "uninterrupted exercise of sovereignty" in the context of states' territorial claims (Crawford, 2019). The classical legal approach explaining states' rights over territory addresses the principles of "as you possess in war" (uti possidetis), the right to self-determination, effective control, and the concept of historical right together. This conceptual plurality demonstrates that a single principle is insufficient in resolving territorial disputes and that historical, demographic, geographical, and political factors need to be evaluated together (Raic, 2022). The fact that the National Pact was based on the area of de facto control as of October 30, 1918, can be interpreted in modern legal literature as an early example of the concept of effective control. The presence of indirect influence of National Pact principles in the determination of borders in the Treaty of Lausanne is among the elements strengthening the legal foundation of Turkey's historical rights. Russia's controversial use of historical rights discourse in international law in examples such as the 2008 Georgia crisis, the 2014 Crimea annexation, and the post-2022 Ukraine intervention demonstrates that this concept also functions as a strategic instrument by states (Klabbers, 2022). This comparative perspective provides an important analytical tool for understanding the position of Turkey's National

Pact-based claims in the international system. Consequently, evaluating Turkey's claims through both historical and contemporary elements of international law constitutes a critical part of the theoretical foundation of this study.

Regional security complex theory provides an integrated framework that is both geographical and security-based in the analysis of Turkey's historical claims. This theory, developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, posits that security dynamics produce more intensive interaction in geographically interconnected regions and that the weakening of state authority in areas where borders have dissolved leads to the reshaping of security at the regional level (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). According to this theory, security complexes refer to areas where "patterns of amity and enmity" are geographically clustered and assume that security dynamics in a region directly affect the behaviors of states remaining within that region's borders (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). As demonstrated in the literature review, the security vacuums that emerged with the collapse of central authority in countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon have necessitated Turkey's establishment of a comprehensive security strategy extending beyond its own borders. This situation constitutes the contemporary correspondence of the security-rights axis drawn in the National Pact; particularly the Mosul-Kirkuk line, northern Syria, and the Aleppo-Katma region, as they carried security significance in historical documents, are also among Turkey's strategic priority areas today. The distinctive structure of the Middle East regional security complex enables the rapid transformation of states' internal instabilities into cross-border threats, and this situation has led Turkey to make "cross-border security" a strategic priority (Hinnebusch & Ehteshami, 2014). The phenomenon of regional instability and collapse of state capacity emphasized in the Introduction constitutes the concrete foundations of this theoretical perspective. The declarations that countries in the region could be fragmented within the framework of the Greater Middle East Project have increased the fragility of the regional security complex and triggered Turkey's strategic depth policies (Fuller, 2020). The authority vacuum that emerged in northern Syria has necessitated Turkey's reconsideration of its historical ties in this region within both a strategic and socio-political framework. Within the scope of this theory, Turkey's historical claims are evaluated not merely as a reflection of historical memory but also as an inevitable consequence of regional security logic.

Systemic transition theories provide an important analytical tool in explaining the emergence of the new international order; for the weakening of the United States' position as global hegemon and China's rise have made it possible for regional powers to gain strategic space. Power transition theory predicts that periods when the existing hegemon's power relatively decreases and rising powers gain the capacity to reshape the system create instability and uncertainty in the international system (Organski & Kugler, 1980). The process of transition to multipolarity presented in the Introduction constitutes one of the fundamental foundations of this theoretical perspective. Within this framework, Turkey's historical claims can be evaluated not merely as a retrospective reassessment but also as an effort to reposition within the opportunity structures created by power transitions (Allison, 2023). China's expanding sphere of influence through the Belt and Road Initiative is deepening economic and geopolitical competition in the Middle East and relatively reducing the military-political weight of the United States in the region. This multipolar competitive environment enables middle powers to implement "multiple balancing" strategies and allows Turkey to expand its room for maneuver by developing simultaneous relations with different great powers (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2021). As stated in the literature review, the rise of Russia and China has provided Turkey with the opportunity to adopt a multidirectional foreign policy, and this has prepared the ground for historical claims to be expressed more comfortably in the international arena (Bilgin, 2022). The acceptance of the National Pact as Turkey's "political existence boundary" after the fragmentation imposed by the Armistice of Mudros is acquiring renewed meaning today with the geopolitical space offered by the period of power transition. The transition to multipolarity is also creating an environment in which state-centric flexibility has increased in the interpretation of international law and is strengthening the legitimacy

basis of historical rights discourses (Cooley & Nexon, 2020). Thus, the theoretical explanation of Turkey's historical claims can be directly related to the restructuring of the global power hierarchy. The critical geopolitics approach foregrounds the discourse-power relationship in understanding Turkey's historical claims along the National Pact axis. According to this theory, geography is not natural data but a politically produced narrative, and states construct their security strategies by reinterpreting space (Dalby, 2022). Critical geopolitics rejects traditional geopolitics' "objective" understanding of geography, arguing that space is discursively constructed and that this construction process reflects power relations; this perspective provides a critical framework for understanding how maps and border narratives become political instruments (Ó Tuathail, 1996). Turkey's reference to the National Pact in contemporary strategic discourse signifies not merely a historical return but the reconstruction of spatial belonging in national memory. The expression of the Aleppo-Katma-Mosul line as "an inseparable whole" in the National Pact's drawing of southern borders carries an important reference character in Turkey's cross-border security politics today. The debate on "redrawability of borders" emphasized in the Introduction, when evaluated from a critical geopolitics perspective, is viewed as part of a process of discursive space production. The discursive interventions of the United States within the scope of the Greater Middle East Project have also transformed the spatial conception in the Middle East; the idea that borders are not permanent has become embedded in international discourse (Gregory, 2020). This discursive transformation is associated with the concept of "geopolitical imagination," contributing to understanding how states view the world and how this view shapes policy preferences (Agnew, 2003). Since critical geopolitics literature argues that states produce legitimacy by reconstructing space through discourse, Turkey's combination of its historical rights framework with security discourses enhances the explanatory power of this theoretical approach. Thus, Turkey's historical claims can be interpreted within the critical geopolitics framework as an organic part of a process of both discursive and practical re-spatialization.

Post-colonial international relations theory provides the opportunity to address Turkey's historical claims particularly within the framework of the colonial legacy of the post-Ottoman regional order. As demonstrated in the literature review, the fact that post-Ottoman Middle East borders were largely shaped by the Sykes-Picot order, Sèvres designs, and mandate regimes clearly demonstrates that the region's border problems are products of external intervention (Osterhammel, 2021). Post-colonial theory emphasizes that the borders drawn by Western powers during the colonial period ignored the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural realities of regional peoples and that these artificial borders constitute one of the fundamental causes of the conflicts experienced today (Said, 1978). The provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres aiming to partition Anatolia and its surroundings are a classical example of the territorial and sovereignty conception of the region being attempted to be determined by external actors. Post-colonial literature interprets regional states' defense of their own historical rights as an effort to transcend the legacy of colonial drawings; from this perspective, Turkey's stance based on the National Pact carries the character of an objection to hegemonic border designs (Acharya, 2022). This objection is associated with the quest for "epistemic independence" emphasized by post-colonial literature, reflecting the effort to develop alternative perspectives against Western-centric international order narratives (Acharya, 2014). The fact that countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon possess a political structure susceptible to fragmentation exposes the fragility of the artificial borders of these states created during the colonial period. The historical failures of Mudros and Sèvres are frequently emphasized in academic analyses as offering contemporary lessons on the unsustainability of externally drawn borders. In the context of this theory, Turkey's historical claims are evaluated not merely as a retrospective reassessment but also as a search for an alternative regional order against the structural blockages created by the colonial border regime. Thus, Turkey's position acquires meaning in the post-colonial international relations perspective as an expression of the struggle for regional subjectification.

Normative international relations theory provides the opportunity to evaluate Turkey's historical claims through the concepts of "rightfulness" and "legitimacy." This theory argues that not only the distribution of power but also norms and ethical arguments are determining in international politics (Erskine, 2021). Normative theory emphasizes that international relations are not merely about power struggle and that states' behaviors must also be evaluated within the framework of justice, legitimacy, and ethical principles; this perspective provides a critical framework for understanding the moral dimension of historical claims (Frost, 1996). It is possible to view Turkey's claims within the framework of the National Pact as a normatively legitimate demand since they were historically based on popular will; for the National Pact envisaged the determination of borders based on the will of the local majority population. The concept of international legitimacy, whose conceptual foundation was established in the Introduction, lies at the center of this theoretical perspective. International legitimacy refers to the acceptance of a state's actions as just and appropriate by other states and the international community, and this acceptance includes not only legal but also moral and political dimensions (Clark, 2005). The increasing dysfunction of the United Nations system and the erosion of normative structures by great power competition have brought a period in which international norms are being redefined; this situation enables states to use "historical justice" discourses more visibly (Zarakol, 2022). The state structures that collapsed after the Arab Spring have demonstrated that the international community's capacity to reconstruct legitimate authority is limited and have made regional actors' intervention with normative justifications more acceptable. As stated in the literature review, Turkey's arguments toward the establishment of regional peace, security, and stability are evaluated as a second layer grounding historical claims on a normative foundation. Consequently, normative theory complements Turkey's historical rights discourse with both moral and legal legitimacy dimensions.

Comprehensive security theory makes it possible to evaluate Turkey's historical claims not merely in their military dimension but together with economic, societal, and human security dimensions. This approach, developed by the Copenhagen School, argues that the concept of security needs to be expanded beyond the military dimension and proposes the joint evaluation of political, economic, societal, and environmental security sectors (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998). The finding emphasized in the Introduction that regional instability has expanded Turkey's national security parameters constitutes the concrete foundations of this theoretical perspective. It is frequently emphasized in academic literature that the instability in the region has deeply affected Turkey's economic security; elements such as the interruption of energy lines, migration flows, and border terrorism have expanded the definition of national security (Kardaş, 2023). The historical membership of regions within the National Pact borders as part of Turkey's economic and logistical hinterland, when combined with contemporary security threats, provides a strong theoretical foundation for the comprehensive security approach. The fact that the Treaty of Lausanne initially limited Turkey's authority over the Straits and that the Montreux Convention later expanded these authorities in Turkey's favor constitutes an empirical example for the idea of "recoverability of historical security rights." This historical example demonstrates that states can find opportunities to expand their sovereignty domains with changing international conditions and strengthens the theoretical foundation of Turkey's expectations within the National Pact perspective (Deringil, 2020). This approach provides a strategic model suggesting that historical rights can be recovered when international conditions permit, as also observed in Hatay's incorporation into Turkey in 1939. As stated in the literature review, energy geopolitics and natural resource management debates have rendered the Mosul-Kirkuk basin a critical subject not merely as an ethnic or historical matter but also in the context of energy security (Stevens, 2021). Today, the authority vacuum in Syria and Iraq necessitates Turkey's development of comprehensive strategies in the context of energy security, border security, and demographic security. For this reason, comprehensive security theory provides an integrative framework for analyzing Turkey's historical claims within a multidimensional national interest definition.

Strategic culture theory is particularly useful in evaluating Turkey's historical claims because it argues that states' foreign policy behaviors are the products of long-term historical experiences and collective strategic memory (Booth & Trood, 2021). The concept of strategic culture refers to the totality of values, norms, beliefs, and historical experiences that shape states' security and defense policies and provides a critical framework for understanding how this cultural accumulation affects foreign policy preferences (Johnston, 1995). The security threats Turkey has faced since the dissolution process of the Ottoman Empire, border losses, and international pressures are among the fundamental elements determining modern Turkey's strategic culture. The embedding of the National Pact—whose conceptual foundation was established in the Introduction—as a "founding geopolitical text" in state memory is one of the most evident indicators of this cultural continuity. The concept of "national boundaries" (hudud-ı milli) repeatedly emphasized in Mustafa Kemal Pasha's speeches at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey is the expression of this strategic culture concretized with historical documents (Atatürk, 1920). This concept demonstrates that Turkey's understanding of national borders is not merely a legal framework but also an inseparable part of collective identity and historical memory (Altun & Kasapoğlu, 2021). According to the strategic culture approach, Turkey's contemporary regional engagements are products of behavioral patterns guided not only by current threat perceptions but also by historical experiences. Within this framework, Turkey's development of forward-looking strategies in the authority vacuum in northern Iraq or in the conflict environment in northern Syria can be explained by strategic reflections formed to ensure that historically experienced losses are not repeated. As stated in the literature review, modern research on the power of national identity to shape foreign policy demonstrates that historical narratives are becoming increasingly determinative in Turkey's regional policy (Bilgin, 2023). Additionally, this theory demonstrates that states prioritize their own historical geographies in security terms; this situation is clearly observed in Turkey's discursive sensitivities toward regions such as Mosul, Kirkuk, Aleppo, and Western Thrace. Thus, the strategic culture approach demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims are grounded not only on rational interest analysis but also on long-term historical memory.

The geopolitical coding approach classifies states' foreign policy orientations according to four main categories: these categories defined as "self," "ally," "enemy," and "neutral" shape states' threat perceptions and opportunity evaluations (Dodds, 2022). This coding process provides a critical framework for understanding how states perceive the world and how this perception guides foreign policy preferences, explaining the formation processes of geopolitical visions (Gearóid Ó Tuathail & Agnew, 1992). In this context, Turkey's geopolitical coding toward the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean emerges as a composite of historical memory, ethnic-demographic attachment, and security risks. The regions specified in the National Pact are evaluated as "strategic security areas" in Turkey's geopolitical coding; authority vacuums emerging in these areas are naturally included in the threat classification. The border change projects within the scope of the Greater Middle East Project presented in the Introduction have led Turkey to code these areas more carefully and have strengthened the perception that regional order can be reshaped through external interventions. This perception has contributed to Turkey's development of a defensive reflex against external interventions by updating its historical sensitivities characterized as "Sèvres syndrome" (Guida, 2008). The geopolitical coding approach also argues that states' discourses carry the aim of strengthening their strategic positions in the international environment; within this framework, Turkey's definition of crises in Iraq and Syria as "national security threats" stems from these regions carrying a special position in the context of historical belonging. Russia's interventions with historical rights claims toward Ukraine, emphasized in the literature review, demonstrate that great powers develop similar strategic narratives in the geopolitical coding process. This comparative perspective reveals that Turkey's historical discourse follows a parallel pattern with the behaviors of other actors in the international system. Thus, Turkey's historical claims can be explained in consonance with the behavioral patterns predicted by geopolitical coding theory.

International regime theory is particularly important in evaluating Turkey's historical claims because the rules and norms that enable states to cooperate in specific areas undergo change together with the transformations the system undergoes. Regime theory defines international regimes as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area" and explains how these regimes shape state behaviors (Krasner, 1983). It has been demonstrated by numerous studies that the international regimes shaped under United States leadership in the post-Cold War period are showing signs of dissolution today, particularly in the areas of security, human rights, and border sovereignty (Keohane, 2020). The diminishing effectiveness of multilateral institutions and the increase in great powers' unilateral actions stated in the Introduction are concrete indicators of this dissolution process. In this dissolution environment, states tend to reinterpret existing regimes by advancing their historical rights. This tendency is associated with the concept of "regime change" predicted by regime theory, reflecting a period in which existing norms and rules are being questioned and new arrangements are being sought (Young, 1982). Turkey's tendency to preserve National Pact principles strategically if not legally within the legal regime established by Lausanne can be evaluated as an example of "normative durability" in the context of regime theory. The weakening of regimes increases states' capacity to produce independent policies by relying more on their own national interests; this situation constitutes the theoretical foundation of Turkey's more autonomous behavior in regional security policies. As stated in the literature review, the failure of the United States' efforts to transform Middle East regimes within the framework of the Greater Middle East Project initiative has demonstrated that international regimes cannot be easily reconstructed through external interventions (Carothers & Brown, 2021). Thus, Turkey's historical claims can be viewed in the light of regime theory as a reflection of the flexible space created by the dissolution process of international order.

Power-autonomy theory is an important approach used to explain middle powers' efforts to expand their own policy spaces in the international system. According to this theory, states can develop more independent foreign policy strategies during periods when great power competition intensifies to expand their room for maneuver (Flemes & Nolte, 2022). This theory is associated with the "peripheral realism" approach developed particularly in the Latin American and South Asian contexts, explaining middle powers' efforts to reduce their dependencies on great powers and create autonomous policy spaces (Escudé, 1992). Turkey's increasingly growing autonomy quest since the 2000s is dependent both on dissatisfaction with the costly consequences of the United States' interventions in the region and on power shifts in the international system. The process of transition to the multipolar order presented in the Introduction constitutes the structural conditions of this autonomy quest. It can be said that the National Pact endows the autonomy orientation with historical continuity as a founding national framework, for this document emphasizes that Turkey's national border definition should be determined by its own will rather than through external interventions. This emphasis is consonant with Turkey's adoption of the principle of "complete independence" as the fundamental pillar of its foreign policy since its founding period and demonstrates the historical roots of the contemporary autonomy quest (Oran, 2001). As stated in the literature review, Turkey's increasing diplomatic presence in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Balkans, and the Caucasus has produced a normative and strategic influence in post-Ottoman heritage areas (Bilgin, 2022). Power-autonomy theory also posits that states integrate their historical memories into foreign policy behavior; in this respect, Turkey's direct involvement in developments in Iraq and Syria is related to the increase in autonomous decision-making capacity. In the contemporary era when great power competition (United States–China–Russia) is creating regional vacuums, Turkey's more visible expression of its historical claims acquires meaning within this theoretical framework. Thus, the power-autonomy approach interprets Turkey's historical claims as an organic extension of an independent foreign policy strategy.

State-building and regional order theories demonstrate that Turkey's historical claims are related not only to the national level but also to the regional stability perspective. The weakening of state capacity

in the Middle East, the becoming permeable of borders, and armed groups' substitution of state functions directly affect Turkey's security domain (Balci, 2023). This process of affectation is associated with the concept of "security spillover," explaining how instability in one state spills over to neighboring states and transforms regional security dynamics (Lake & Morgan, 1997). The phenomenon of collapse of state authority and regional fragmentation emphasized in the Introduction constitutes the concrete foundations of this theoretical perspective. For this reason, Turkey's regional order conception includes an approach that historically targets the reorganization of the Ottoman hinterland on the basis of peace and stability. The demographic, cultural, and economic integrity of the regions specified in the National Pact provides a historical foundation for this order conception. This historical foundation reflects the experience of coexistence of ethnic and religious communities in the region as the legacy of the Ottoman millet system and explains the cultural dimension of Turkey's regional order vision (Karpat, 2001). State-building literature has demonstrated that the security costs of countries surrounding collapsed states are higher compared to stable states; this situation theoretically supports Turkey's strategies for combating instability in neighboring geography (Call, 2021). As stated in the literature review, Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy activities and strategy of establishing a regional sphere of influence constitute the soft power dimension of this order-building approach (Aydin-Düzgit & Keyman, 2021). Turkey's occasional emphasis on the role of "regional peace provider" demonstrates that historical claims correspond with the objective of regional order-building. Thus, state-building and regional order theories evaluate Turkey's historical claims not merely as oriented toward the past but as a constitutive element of future regional stability.

Critical security studies evaluate Turkey's historical claims not merely through military threat perceptions but in the context of the "social construction" of security. According to this approach, security discourses are discursive instruments states use to legitimize their policies and carry the aim of protecting specific referent objects (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). Critical security studies argue that security is constructed discursively rather than being an objective reality and explain how a subject is made into a security issue through the concept of "securitization" (Wæver, 1995). Turkey's definition of National Pact regions as a "historical security belt" makes possible the expansion of national interests through a discursive threat definition, as predicted by critical security theory. The central importance of the Aleppo-Katma-Mosul line determining the southern borders of the National Pact in the security context both in 1918 and today strengthens this discursive continuity. Hybrid threats, non-state actors, and cross-border conflict dynamics presented in the Introduction are concrete indicators of the expansion of the security concept. This expansion is associated with the rise of the concept of "human security," demonstrating that security needs to be evaluated not only from a state-centric but also from an individual-centric perspective (Newman, 2020). The humanitarian, demographic, and societal security effects created by the Syrian civil war in Turkey have demonstrated that security has acquired meaning beyond the military dimension. Critical security literature evaluates states' creation of legitimacy space through discourse in the face of such multidimensional security threats as a natural process (Floyd, 2021). The finding emphasized in the literature review that Turkey's cross-border operations are not merely security-based but a strategy developed for the purposes of historical continuity and preservation of regional order is consonant with this theoretical perspective. Within this theoretical framework, Turkey's historical claims are grounded on a holistic framework nourished not only by traditional military security but also by an expanded security definition.

Regional power theory, while explaining Turkey's historical claims, emphasizes states' capacity to assume an "order-building" role in their own peripheral geographies. According to academic literature, regional powers become determining actors in their surroundings through military capacity, diplomatic agility, and historical-cultural ties (Nolte, 2021). The concept of regional power requires a state to carry a leadership claim in its own region, to play a determining role in regional issues, and to possess the capacity to regulate extra-regional actors' access to the region (Prys, 2010). Turkey's increasing influence capacity in the Middle East, Caucasus, and Balkans strengthens its regional power position

in consonance with its historical geography. The increase in Turkey's military capacity, expansion of its economic networks, and elevation of its diplomatic flexibility stated in the Introduction are concrete indicators of this regional power position. Since the strategic areas determined by the National Pact present the geographical depiction of Turkey's historical hinterland, regional power literature theoretically explains why these areas are prioritized for Turkey. This priority is associated with the concept of "strategic hinterland," demonstrating that states turn toward geographies to which they are historically bound to expand their own security and welfare domains (Cohen, 2015). The fragmentation-susceptible state structure of Iraq and Syria can be evaluated as a structural factor facilitating Turkey's establishment of security and sphere of influence. The pursuit of policies with historical rights claims by Russia in its own near abroad, as demonstrated in the literature review, shows that regional powers can use such instruments for the purpose of producing legitimacy (Krickovic, 2022). This comparative perspective demonstrates that Turkey's historical discourse is not unique in the international system but rather corresponds with the common behavioral patterns of regional powers. Consequently, Turkey's historical rights discourse is consonant with the geopolitical positioning and order-building capacity predicted by regional power theory.

The geo-economic approach makes it possible to understand Turkey's historical claims in the context of economic geopolitics rather than security. This theory, which argues that energy arteries, trade routes, and regional economic networks have become the most determining elements of international politics today, explains Turkey's effort to redefine its economic interaction areas in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean (Scholvin & Wigell, 2022). The concept of geo-economics reflects a period in which states use economic instruments to achieve geopolitical objectives and economic relations have become the new arena of power struggle; this perspective provides a critical framework for understanding the strategic importance of energy resources and trade routes (Luttwak, 1990). The historical inclusion of critical transportation and production centers within the Ottoman economic system in the National Pact regions is leading to these regions acquiring renewed strategic importance for Turkey today. The energy resources of Mosul and Kirkuk emphasized in the literature review are associated with Turkey's independent energy security objective in modern geo-economic analyses; in this context, it is observed that historical rights are combined with economic value (Stevens, 2021). This combination is associated with the concept of "resource nationalism," demonstrating how states' sovereignty claims over natural resources are combined with national identity and historical rights discourses (Mares, 2010). The phenomenon of changing energy geopolitics stated in the Introduction increases the contemporary relevance of this theoretical perspective. Since northern Syria constitutes the intersection point of trade routes between Turkey and the Levant, the instability in this region directly affects Turkey's economic security parameters. Additionally, the intersection of China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia's energy-centered near abroad policies with regional border debates has opened Turkey's position to reevaluation. According to geo-economic theories, states legitimize their regional influence quests by combining their economic interests with historical-spatial contexts. Turkey's historical rights discourse is thus supported not merely by political but also by an economic rationality in this respect.

The multilayered theoretical synthesis approach completes the theoretical foundation of this study by acknowledging that Turkey's historical claims are too complex to be explained by a single theory. The necessity of a multidisciplinary analysis framework presented in the Introduction constitutes the fundamental rationale of this synthesis approach. This rationale is consonant with the "analytical eclecticism" approach increasingly accepted in the discipline of international relations and targets a more comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena by bringing together the strengths of different theoretical traditions (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010). Turkey's rights discourse based on the National Pact is intertwined with realism's logic of power and security, constructivism's emphasis on identity, memory, and discourse, international law's principles of historical right and effective control, geo-economics' perspective of regional economic networks, and critical security's expanded threat

definitions. This intertwinement is associated with the concept of "theoretical pluralism" in international relations literature, demonstrating that complex phenomena cannot be explained by a single perspective (Nolte, 2021). This pluralism emphasizes the importance of interparadigmatic dialogue and demonstrates that different theoretical traditions can offer complementary explanations (Lake, 2022). This multilayered structure demonstrates that Turkey's historical rights are shaped by both internal dynamics (identity, historical memory, strategic culture) and external dynamics (collapsed states, multipolarity, great power competition). The founding text character of the National Pact continues to serve as the central reference point strengthening the theoretical integrity of these claims. Similarly, documents such as Lausanne and Montreux constitute important parts of theoretical synthesis as examples where Turkey can defend its historical rights at the level of international law. As stated in the literature review, the importance of interdisciplinary method in understanding complex international phenomena consolidates the academic foundation of this synthesis approach (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). This theoretical framework demonstrates that for Turkey to emerge as a regional order-building actor in the contemporary international order, it must redefine its historical claims within an integrity of strategic, normative, and legal dimensions. Thus, the study enables the explanation of Turkey's historical claims in the context of the new international order through a multidimensional theoretical analysis and prepares a strong conceptual foundation for the research methodology section.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted a qualitative research approach to understand how the regional transformations that emerged following the new international order and the Greater Middle East Project have affected Turkey's historical claims. This approach is founded upon an interpretive understanding and is predicated on comprehending the meanings carried by events and documents within their contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The fundamental reason for preferring the qualitative method is that the meanings carried by documents such as the National Pact, the Armistice of Mudros, the Treaty of Sèvres, and the Treaty of Lausanne are of a nature that can only be comprehended through interpretation within their historical contexts rather than merely through numbers. These documents carry both legal and political value as texts that concretize the border conceptions and sovereignty claims that were shaped during Turkey's founding process. Since quantitative methods would prove inadequate in revealing the layers of meaning contained in such documents, the qualitative approach has been the most appropriate choice for this study. The question presented in the Introduction—"how the multipolar order offers new opportunities to Turkey's historical theses"—necessitates understanding how these documents can be reinterpreted today. Additionally, the regional fragmentation dynamics and state collapses emphasized in the literature review section require the evaluation of historical documents together with contemporary international conditions. For this reason, the research methodology has been established upon a holistic reading approach that brings together historical sources with contemporary academic literature. Through this approach, the study aims to render Turkey's historical claims meaningful with both the data of the past and the geopolitical realities of today.

In the first stage of the research, a document analysis based on the examination of historical documents was conducted. Document analysis refers to the careful reading of the contents of official texts prepared in the past and the revelation of the meanings carried by these texts. The documents examined in this method consist of primary sources obtained from international treaties, official declarations, and state archives. Within this framework, first the Armistice of Mudros dated October 30, 1918, was addressed; it was determined that this text was based on the regions the Turkish army de facto held under control at that time. Subsequently, the articles of the National Pact Declaration were examined, and it was observed that this text was founded upon the principle of "integrity that is settled by an Ottoman-Islamic majority and the separation of which is inconceivable" (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres envisaging the partition of Ottoman territories and the framework of

the Treaty of Lausanne recognizing Turkey's independence in the international arena were evaluated comparatively. The fundamental criterion in the selection of these documents was their being texts that directly affected Turkey's historical border conception and carried binding force in the context of international law. This comparison demonstrates under what conditions Turkey's historical claims were constrained and which documents constitute the foundation of these claims. The concept of historical continuity emphasized in the theoretical framework section has been placed on a concrete foundation through this document analysis.

In the second stage, a case study method based on comparing the historical claims of different countries was applied. Case study refers to the detailed examination of specific events or situations and their comparison with one another. In this method, the content of historical arguments, positioning within the framework of international law, and changes in regional power balances were determined as comparison criteria. Within the scope of this method, Russia's historical territory arguments advanced regarding the Crimea and Donbas regions in Ukraine and China's sovereignty claims based on the past in the South China Sea were examined. These examples demonstrate that states tend to bring their historical arguments back onto the agenda during periods when the power balances of the international system shift. As stated in the literature review section, Russia's historical territories discourse has profoundly affected international law debates. This comparison demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims articulated from the National Pact perspective are not alone in the international system. The reason for the selection of these cases is that both their contemporaneity and their direct relation to structural transformations in the international system correspond with the research question. Thus, Turkey's position has been placed within an academic framework without exaggeration yet without minimization. The comparative case study has formed a suitable ground for testing the predictions of the realism and constructivism theories presented in the theoretical framework.

In the third stage, the discourse analysis method was applied. Discourse analysis refers to the examination of the meanings contained in political statements, official declarations, and international discourses, as well as the effects produced by these discourses. In this method, not only what the discourses say but also in what context and within which power relations they were produced was evaluated (Fairclough, 2015). This method was used particularly in the analysis of regional restructuring discourses articulated during the Greater Middle East Project process. The declarations by authoritative and influential persons from the American administration of the period that the borders of twenty-two countries in the Middle East could change occupied the center of this discourse analysis. Turkey's official discourses from the same period, containing emphasis on regional stability, peace, and commitment to National Pact borders, were also examined. In the theoretical framework section, the importance of constructivism's emphasis on identity and discourse was stated; discourse analysis has enabled the application of this theoretical approach to the research. Through this method, how Turkey's historical claims are perceived in the international arena and in what discursive context these claims acquire meaning has been understood. Discourse analysis has also been an important tool in explaining why historical rights discourses have revived with the crystallization of the multipolar structure (Ikenberry, 2020).

In the fourth stage, both legal evaluation and geopolitical situation examination were conducted together. Legal evaluation refers to the comparison of the rights definitions contained in historical documents with contemporary international law principles; geopolitical situation examination refers to the evaluation of security conditions in the region, conflict areas, and weakening of state capacity. The reason for using these two approaches together is that historical claims possess both normative and strategic dimensions; a single perspective would prove inadequate in capturing this complexity. The principle of "societal unity and geographical integrity" put forth by the National Pact was compared with the principle of self-determination in international law (Klabbers, 2022). The sovereignty framework granted to Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne demonstrates similarity with the principle of preservation of existing borders (*uti possidetis*) in international law. Internal conflicts in the region,

areas where state authority has weakened, and border indeterminacies were included in the geopolitical situation examination. The subsidiary question presented in the Introduction—"does the collapse of regional states and the *de facto* indeterminacy of borders expand the legal grounds for Turkey's potential intervention?"—was tested at this stage. This evaluation has demonstrated under what conditions a possible rights claim by Turkey could gain international acceptance and under what conditions it could generate reaction. Thus, the research has proceeded with a balanced approach taking into account both legal realities and dynamics in the field.

In the fifth stage, a spatial evaluation based on the comparison of historical maps and geographical data was conducted. Spatial evaluation refers to the comparison of maps and border lines drawn in different periods with one another to make historical changes visible. In this evaluation, the regions the Turkish army *de facto* held under control on the day the Armistice of Mudros was signed were taken as the basis (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). The articles of the National Pact concerning southern and eastern borders were evaluated side by side with contemporary Syria, Iraq, and Caucasus borders. The maps used in this comparison were obtained from official archives of the period and documents published by international organizations. This method does not present a perspective merely reflecting nostalgia for the past; rather, it concretizes the continuity between historical context and contemporary international order. While making map comparisons, contemporary data concerning population distribution, conflict intensity, and state capacity in the region were also taken into account. The geopolitical coding approach emphasized in the theoretical framework section has been transformed into application through this spatial evaluation. Thus, not only the emphasis on historical rights but also contemporary realities in the field have been included within the scope of analysis. This technique has contributed to understanding the multilayered structure of border debates following the Greater Middle East Project.

In the sixth stage, a multidimensional interpretation approach was adopted in the data analysis process. Multidimensional interpretation refers to the joint evaluation of legal, political, historical, and societal elements without reducing them to a single perspective. In this approach, both state behaviors and international documents and discourses were addressed as units of analysis; thus, micro and macro levels were evaluated together. Since the crystallization of the multipolar structure of the new international order has caused both expansion and contraction tendencies to be observed together in international law applications, the analysis was designed in a manner taking into account this complex structure (Ikenberry, 2020). When evaluating Turkey's historical claims, the sovereignty framework brought by the Treaty of Lausanne was compared with the effects of the fragmentation order envisaged by the Treaty of Sèvres (Pedersen, 2021). Additionally, the extent to which the regional restructuring discourses of the American administration during the Greater Middle East Project period (Lynch, 2021) corresponded with implementations in the field was analyzed based on the findings of the literature review. The main hypothesis presented in the Introduction—namely the prediction that "in an environment where the international order is evolving toward a multipolar structure and regional states are dissolving, the capacity of Turkey's historical claims to gain legitimacy is increasing"—was tested through this multidimensional analysis. This approach has prevented the study from remaining limited by relying on a single discipline and has enabled a more comprehensive evaluation of Turkey's regional position.

In the seventh stage, geopolitical situation modeling was conducted. Geopolitical situation modeling refers to the joint evaluation of power balances in the region, military capacities, conflict areas, and border change tendencies to predict possible developments. In this modeling process, the military capacities and conflict intensities of actors in the region were addressed as fundamental indicators (Ghosn et al., 2022). How the National Pact borders can be reinterpreted in light of contemporary geopolitical conditions was examined through these indicators. What kinds of consequences the *de facto* power vacuums emerging in regions where state structures have weakened, such as Iraq, Syria, and the Caucasus, could produce for Turkey was discussed. The realist theory's emphasis on security

and power maximization presented in the theoretical framework section has been concretized through this modeling. This modeling has increased the predictive capacity of the study by enabling the reading of historical data together with contemporary security dynamics. This modeling has demonstrated that historical claims do not remain merely as an abstract discourse; rather, they carry the character of a dynamic security subject with correspondence in the field. Turkey's governance over the Straits through the Montreux Convention and the process of Hatay's incorporation into Turkey through peaceful means were also among the historical references of the modeling (Montreux Convention, 1936). This method has strengthened the strategic dimension of the research.

In the eighth stage, a value and principle-based analysis was conducted. Value and principle-based analysis refers to the evaluation of whether Turkey's historical claims are founded not only on power politics but also on international principles and legitimacy concepts. In this analysis, first the principle of self-determination, territorial integrity, and the concept of human security were addressed (Cassese, 2020). The principle of "societal unity and cultural harmony" put forth by the National Pact was evaluated by comparison with these international principles (National Pact Declaration, 1920). In this evaluation, the extent to which the principles in historical documents correspond with contemporary international law norms and at which points they diverge was determined. Additionally, whether Turkey's discourse of contributing to regional peace offers a unifying approach contrary to the fragmented order envisaged by the Greater Middle East Project was analyzed. The emphasis on normative continuity of constructivism in the theoretical framework section has been transformed into application through this stage. This value-based evaluation has been an important tool for testing the possibility of historical claims gaining legitimacy in international law. Thus, the study has given place not only to power balances but also to moral and legal foundations. This method has formed the conceptual ground for the policy framework to be developed in the conclusion and recommendations section.

In the ninth stage, a triangulation technique was applied to increase the reliability of the research. Triangulation refers to increasing the robustness of findings obtained by using different types of sources together. This technique is a strategy commonly used to strengthen internal consistency and the credibility of results in qualitative research (Patton, 2015). Within this framework, historical documents, contemporary academic studies, and international organization reports were used together. When the primary historical data provided by texts such as Mudros, Sèvres, and Lausanne were compared with contemporary academic studies (Oran, 2022; Özdemir, 2021), it was observed that the results rest on a more robust foundation. Through this verification method, both how the border and sovereignty debates of the past have been carried to the present and how contemporary international power balances have affected these debates have been demonstrated more distinctly. Additionally, critical academic studies concerning the Greater Middle East Project process were evaluated together with field research examining societal and political transformations in countries of the region (Dalacoura, 2021). The academic gap identified in the literature review section was sought to be filled through this triangulation technique. Triangulation has provided a holistic perspective that simultaneously includes theoretical, historical, and applied dimensions in the research. This method has significantly strengthened the scientific consistency of the study.

There are some points that need to be stated regarding the limitations of the research. First, since the study is based on the interpretation of historical documents, different interpretive traditions may reach different conclusions. Second, the Russia and China examples selected as comparative cases may not fully reflect Turkey's situation, because each state's historical and geopolitical context is unique to itself. Third, since some documents concerning the Greater Middle East Project process are not publicly available, the discourse analysis has remained limited only to accessible sources. Despite these limitations, the triangulation technique and the use of multiple methods have been applied to increase the reliability of findings. Additionally, the study has aimed to present an objective evaluation within a historical and academic framework rather than advocating a specific political view.

Finally, a plain and comprehensible language has been adopted throughout the research process. The fundamental reason for this preference is the necessity of expressing complex historical and geopolitical processes in a manner that everyone can understand without compromising scientific accuracy. Throughout the methodology section, concepts have been kept as clear as possible and technical details have been simplified in a manner that does not complicate meaning. This simplification has been made with the aim of enabling the study to reach a broad readership; however, academic standards have been preserved. In order to ensure the replicability of the research, each stage has been clearly defined and access information for the sources used has been provided. A regular connection has been established between inferences made from historical documents and information obtained from contemporary literature, and methodological continuity has been ensured. The objective stated in the Introduction of "carrying reference character for policymakers as well" has been supported through this plain expression preference. This approach aims for the results to be accessible not only to academic circles but also to decision-makers and the public. Thus, the research methodology has been designed in a manner that will increase both scientific and societal impact. This framework will enable a more effective interpretation of the results to be presented in the findings section of the study.

5. FINDINGS

The first finding of the research demonstrates that the evolution of the international system toward a multipolar structure has created a structural ground for Turkey to articulate its historical claims. The relative decline of American hegemony and the rising influence of China and Russia, emphasized in the Introduction, have relaxed the normative pressures in the international system and opened new windows of opportunity for the regional claims of middle powers. As predicted by hegemonic stability theory, the weakening of the hegemonic power that provides order in the international system enables the questioning of existing normative structures and the rise of revisionist demands (Ikenberry, 2020). As predicted by the power transition theory addressed in the theoretical framework, the bringing of historical arguments back onto the political agenda during periods when the hegemonic order weakens becomes an ordinary strategy (Mearsheimer, 2021). As stated in Organski and Kugler's power transition model, systemic power shifts increase states' capacities to challenge the status quo and prepare the ground for the reformulation of historical demands (Organski & Kugler, 1980). Document analysis demonstrates that there exists a distinct parallel structure between the 1920 conditions when the National Pact was proclaimed and the present day; in both periods, regional order became indeterminate and Turkey was confronted with the necessity of redefining its sovereignty domain (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated in the literature review, Russia's attempts to legitimize territorial claims based on historical arguments in Crimea and China's in the South China Sea confirm that historical rights have become a re-acceptable discursive instrument in the international system (Mankoff, 2022; Zhang, 2023). In this context, Turkey's historical theses within the framework of the National Pact, when evaluated together with the normative flexibility offered by the multipolar order, have acquired a more visible and debatable character in the international arena. Consequently, systemic transformation emerges as a structural factor expanding the legitimacy ground of Turkey's historical claims.

The second finding demonstrates that the Greater Middle East Project structurally weakened regional states, thereby creating an environment conducive to Turkey's bringing its historical claims back onto the agenda. The discourse analysis explained in the research methodology section has revealed that the declarations by the American administration of the period that the borders of twenty-two countries in the region could change were used as a strategic discourse (Lynch, 2021). The fragmentation of Iraq following 2003, the Syrian civil war, and the protracted conflicts in Yemen and Libya have led to the erosion of the Westphalian order at the regional level and have weakened normative assumptions regarding the permanence of borders. As stated in Rotberg's framework of state failure, the concept of sovereignty loses its de facto meaning in geographies where central authority has collapsed, and this

situation expands the intervention capacities of neighboring states (Rotberg, 2004). As predicted by the critical security approach addressed in the theoretical framework, security threats have acquired a character that transcends traditional borders in areas where state authority has collapsed, and a ground has emerged legitimizing Turkey's cross-border interventions (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). As emphasized in Dalacoura's analysis regarding the regional order following the Arab uprisings, the collapse or weakening of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East after 2011 has led to the intensification of regional power struggle and the increase in external interventions (Dalacoura, 2021). The regional fragmentation dynamics emphasized in the literature review have renewed the geopolitical importance of the surroundings of Mosul, Kirkuk, and Aleppo located on the southern line of the National Pact. Document analysis confirms that the regions the Turkish army de facto held under control on the date the Armistice of Mudros was signed largely correspond with this geography (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). These findings confirm that the regional fragmentation created by the Greater Middle East Project has formed a geopolitical ground supporting Turkey's historical claims.

The third finding demonstrates that the National Pact is not merely a historical document but also presents a geographical framework that corresponds with the principle of self-determination in international law. Document analysis demonstrates that the first and second articles of the National Pact Declaration emphasized that regions where the Ottoman-Islamic population constituted the majority form an inseparable integrity (National Pact Declaration, 1920). This principle corresponds to the demographic and cultural foundations of the right to self-determination accepted in international law. As stated in Cassese's comprehensive analysis regarding the right to self-determination, this principle is applicable not only to colonial peoples but also, under specific conditions, to the reevaluation of the status of communities that historically demonstrate integrity (Cassese, 2020). The international law perspective addressed in the theoretical framework has demonstrated that the legitimacy of historical rights is grounded not only on past documents but also on principles such as effective control and societal belonging (Klabbers, 2022). As emphasized in Shaw's framework of international law, historical claims rest on a stronger legal ground in situations where elements of effective control, historical continuity, and societal attachment are present together (Shaw, 2021). As stated in the literature review, Iraq's ethnic and sectarian fragmentation following 2003 has created an appropriate context for Turkey's historical theses in the regions within the scope of the National Pact to be reopened to international debate (Hiltermann, 2022). The comparative case study demonstrates that Russia used historical rights, ethnic protection, and security justifications in an inherent manner in its national strategy in the Crimea and Donbas examples (Mankoff, 2022). This situation reveals that Turkey's historical claims, rather than conflicting with international political norms, have become parallel with an increasingly widespread strategic practice. Thus, the National Pact presents a framework that can be reevaluated in the context of both historical legitimacy and contemporary international law.

The fourth finding demonstrates that the post-Ottoman border order established with the invalidation of the Treaty of Sèvres and the entry into force of the Treaty of Lausanne was not a completed process. Document analysis has revealed that the articles of the Treaty of Sèvres aiming to partition Turkey and particularly the divided structures envisaged for the eastern and southern borders were eliminated with Lausanne (Treaty of Sèvres, 1920; Treaty of Lausanne, 1923). However, Lausanne's failure to resolve the Mosul question and its leaving it to the League of Nations demonstrates that this treaty was not a final border arrangement but a political framework shaped according to the power balances of the period. As stated in Oran's comprehensive study on the history of Turkish foreign policy, while the Treaty of Lausanne ensured Turkey's recognition in the international system, it left some critical issues unresolved, particularly Mosul, and this situation left a permanent trace on Turkey's foreign policy agenda (Oran, 2001). As stated in the literature review, contemporary academic studies demonstrate that approaches arguing that Lausanne presents a political ground that can change according to international power balances are gaining weight (Zürcher, 2020; Pedersen, 2021). As emphasized in

Pedersen's analysis regarding the League of Nations period, the border order established after the First World War reflects the interests of great powers, and the permanence of this order depends on the continuation of the said power balances (Pedersen, 2021). The concept of historical continuity addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that these documents are not static texts but structures that can be reinterpreted according to changing conditions. The collapse of state authorities by the civil wars that erupted in Syria and Iraq after 2011 has concretely demonstrated that Lausanne's southern border order has been *de facto* eroded. In this context, the rise of non-state actors in the field has strengthened the necessity of security-centered redefinition on Turkey's southern borders. Consequently, Lausanne emerges not as a fixed geographical framework but as a political ground open to reevaluation in a changing security environment.

The fifth finding confirms that Turkey possesses the capacity to recover its historical rights through diplomatic and legitimate means when international conditions are favorable, as observed in the Hatay example. Document analysis reveals that the process of Hatay's incorporation into Turkey in 1939 was a successful diplomatic model that ensured the partial completion of the National Pact borders. The annexation process of Hatay was completed with a plebiscite conducted under the supervision of the League of Nations and the quest for international legitimacy, and this situation is an early indicator of Turkey's capacity to defend its historical claims within the framework of international law (Oran, 2001). As stated in the literature review, the Hatay example constitutes concrete evidence demonstrating that Turkey was able to gain acceptance for its historical, demographic, and security-based arguments in the eyes of the international community (Oran, 2022). The constructivist approach addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that historical identity and collective memory are important factors shaping foreign policy preferences (Wendt, 2019). As stated in Wendt's social constructivist theory, states' identity structures are shaped not only by internal processes but also by international interactions and historical experiences; this situation makes possible the legitimization of foreign policy preferences with historical references (Wendt, 1999). In this context, the Hatay model demonstrates that Turkey's rights quest within the framework of the National Pact presents not merely a discursive but an implementable strategic roadmap. The comparative case study has revealed that the applicability of this model in regions such as Mosul, Kirkuk, or Northern Syria depends on regional power balances and the evolving norms of international law (Phillips, 2020; Gunter, 2021). Field data confirms that Turkey uses the historical responsibility discourse as a strategic instrument while intervening in humanitarian and security crises in the region. In light of these findings, the Hatay example is evaluated as empirical evidence supporting the feasibility of Turkey's developing a policy based on historical claims in the new international order. In conclusion, the foreign policy approach based on historical rights emerges not merely as a nostalgic discourse but as a strategic model that has been successfully tried from past to present.

The sixth finding demonstrates that the Mosul question continues to exist as an unfinished problem area in both the National Pact and contemporary international law debates. Document analysis demonstrates that the Mosul problem, which could not be resolved in the Lausanne negotiations, resulted against Turkey due to the British mandated administration and energy policies of the period (Treaty of Lausanne, 1923). The failure to resolve the Mosul question at Lausanne clearly demonstrates the determining effect of the great powers of the period's priorities of access to energy resources in shaping regional order (Sluglett, 2019). The fact that Mosul was under Turkish military control when the Armistice of Mudros was signed constitutes a legal basis strengthening Turkey's historical theses over this region (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). The definition of Mosul, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah as an inseparable integrity where the Ottoman-Islamic majority lived in the text of the National Pact further consolidates this situation (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated by Stevens in the framework of the resource curse concept, regions possessing rich energy resources have historically been geographies open to external interventions and border disputes; Mosul constitutes a typical example of this situation (Stevens, 2021). As stated in the literature review, particularly the political

fragmentation of Iraq following 2003 has rendered the status of Mosul a renewed strategic debate area for Turkey (Hiltermann, 2022). The geoconomics perspective addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that Mosul-Kirkuk oil has been at the center of international power struggles since the beginning of the twentieth century (Sluglett, 2019). These findings demonstrate that Turkey's historical claims over Mosul have acquired renewed meaning in the context of contemporary geopolitics. In conclusion, the Mosul question continues to occupy the center of Turkey's foreign policy agenda in both historical and contemporary security contexts.

The seventh finding demonstrates that the security vacuum created by the Syrian civil war on Turkey's southern borders corresponds at a high level with the geographical integrity defined in the National Pact. The spatial-historical map comparison explained in the research methodology section confirms that the articles of the National Pact concerning southern borders encompass Aleppo and its surroundings. As stated in Buzan and Wæver's regional security complex theory, geographical proximity is a determining factor in the spread of security threats, and instability in border regions directly affects the security perceptions of neighboring states (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The gaining of power by terrorist organizations with the collapse of state capacity in Syria has deepened the threat environment for Turkey in terms of border security and regional stability (Stein, 2021). As predicted by the critical security approach addressed in the theoretical framework, security threats have acquired a character that transcends traditional state borders, and a ground has formed legitimizing Turkey's cross-border operations (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). When evaluated in the framework of Wæver's securitization concept, Turkey's definition of threats on its southern borders as an existential security issue has formed a discursive ground legitimizing the adoption of extraordinary measures (Wæver, 1995). Document analysis has revealed that the expression of the right to intervene in situations threatening security in Article 7 of the Armistice of Mudros demonstrates similarity with the doctrine of cross-border legitimate self-defense against terrorist threats in contemporary international law (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). As emphasized in the literature review, the authority vacuum in northern Syria has facilitated Turkey's interventions for both humanitarian and security purposes (Tür & Han, 2022). These findings clarify the historical and strategic foundations of Turkey's quest to reorder its southern borders through military and diplomatic means. Consequently, the Syrian crisis constitutes a contemporary reflection of the National Pact's southern vision.

The eighth finding demonstrates that the transition to multipolarity in the international system has created a favorable environment for Turkey to articulate its historical claims. The relative decline of American hegemony, the increase in Russia's military activism, and the expansion of China's economic influence emphasized in the Introduction have fundamentally transformed the power distribution of the Middle East (Acharya, 2021). As stated in Ikenberry's analysis regarding the crisis of the liberal international order, the loss of legitimacy of the American-led order strengthens alternative order quests and revisionist demands (Ikenberry, 2020). This transformation has weakened the status quo-oriented border understanding that was dominant throughout the unipolar period. The comparative case study has demonstrated that Russia's military operations conducted with historical rights and security-based arguments in Ukraine have shown that historical claims have become a re-perceivable policy instrument in the international system (Mankoff, 2022). As emphasized in Zarakol's analysis from the non-Western order perspective, the Eurocentric foundations of the current international order are being questioned and the demands of historically marginalized actors are gaining greater visibility (Zarakol, 2022). As predicted by the realism theory addressed in the theoretical framework, states show a tendency to bring their historical arguments back onto the agenda during periods when the hegemonic order weakens (Mearsheimer, 2021). As stated in the literature review, the failure of the regional transformation processes targeted by the Greater Middle East Project has revealed the necessity for Turkey to establish its own security architecture (Bacevich, 2020). These findings demonstrate that Turkey now evaluates its historical claims together with the strategic opportunities offered by the multipolar order rather than merely as a nostalgic discourse. In conclusion, systemic transformation

strengthens the legitimacy of Turkey's rights quest along the National Pact axis in the context of global examples.

The ninth finding demonstrates that Turkey's objective of protecting regional energy security is directly connected with its historical claims. Document analysis demonstrates that Mosul and Kirkuk within the scope of the National Pact are better understood in terms of strategic importance when the region's rich oil and natural gas reserves are taken into account (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated by Scholvin and Wigell in the framework of geoeconomics, the use of economic instruments for strategic purposes is becoming widespread in the twenty-first century, and control over energy resources directly determines states' regional influence capacities (Scholvin & Wigell, 2022). The geoeconomics perspective addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that control over energy resources is one of the fundamental factors determining states' regional spheres of influence (Tagliapietra, 2021). Today, developments in the Eastern Mediterranean energy basin have made the economic dimension of Turkey's cross-border geostrategic projection even more evident. The expanding scope of the energy security concept has led states to define not only access to resources but also transit routes and infrastructure projects as strategic priorities (Stevens, 2021). As stated in the literature review, it is a known fact that Mosul-Kirkuk oil has been at the center of international power struggles since the beginning of the twentieth century (Sluglett, 2019). The authority dispersion in northern Iraq is evaluated as an important factor threatening energy supply security (Hiltermann, 2022). The multilevel interpretive analysis explained in the research methodology section confirms that energy security is a structural element strengthening Turkey's rights quest within the framework of the National Pact. These findings demonstrate that the energy-geopolitics connection constitutes a logical component of Turkey's historical claims. Thus, energy security concerns concretize the economic foundations of the historical rights discourse.

The tenth finding demonstrates that Turkey's humanitarian responsibility and regional order-building capacity carry historical depth. Document analysis has revealed that the principles of the National Pact concerning the protection of the rights of Muslim communities in neighboring geographies provide a historical direction to contemporary Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy and crisis management policies (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated in Bellamy's analysis regarding the concept of responsibility to protect, states' intervention in cross-border humanitarian crises can be evaluated not only as moral but also as a strategic necessity in terms of regional stability and national security (Bellamy, 2021). The continuation of Turkey's cultural, economic, and societal ties in the post-Ottoman region has enabled Ankara to assume an effective role in crisis regions (Aydin-Düzgit & Keyman, 2021). The constructivist approach addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that historical identity and collective memory are important factors shaping states' perceptions of responsibility (Wendt, 2019). As emphasized in Rumelili and Ejodus's analysis from the ontological security perspective, states struggle not only with physical but also with identity-based threats; the historical responsibility discourse serves the preservation of ontological security in this context (Rumelili & Ejodus, 2022). The regulatory character of the Treaty of Lausanne in international terms and the responsibilities Turkey assumed in accordance with this treaty have constituted the legal foundation of Turkey's capacity to produce regional stability (Treaty of Lausanne, 1923). As stated in the literature review, in modern academic literature, Turkey's role in crisis regions such as Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine is defined with a responsibility-based regional power approach (Bilgin, 2022). These findings demonstrate that Turkey evaluates its historical claims not merely as territorial acquisition but also in the context of regional order-building capacity. Consequently, the historical rights discourse possesses a normative framework that the international community can accept.

The eleventh finding demonstrates that Turkey's cross-border military operations are shaped not merely by security justifications but at the intersection of historical claims and regional stability perspectives. The discourse analysis explained in the research methodology section demonstrates that operations toward northern Syria following 2016 were presented in official discourse within the framework of

both the elimination of terrorist threats and the reestablishment of regional order. As stated in Akande's analysis regarding the use of force against non-state actors, international law is evolving toward expanding the scope of the right to legitimate self-defense against terrorist threats; this situation provides legal ground for states' cross-border operations (Akande, 2020). Document analysis has revealed that the National Pact's reference to the Aleppo-Katma line strengthens the historical context of Turkey's policies toward this region (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The linking of the occupation justification in Article 7 of the Armistice of Mudros to threat assessment demonstrates parallelism with the developing preventive legitimate self-defense debates in contemporary international law (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). As predicted by the critical security approach addressed in the theoretical framework, the threats created by non-state actors are legitimizing intervention forms that transcend the traditional sovereignty understanding (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). As emphasized in Balci's analysis regarding regional security order, the spread of state fragility in the Middle East necessitates regional powers' assuming security-producing roles (Balci, 2023). As emphasized in the literature review, Turkey's cross-border operations have become a determining factor in regional power balances (Stein, 2021). This finding demonstrates that historical claims are being reinterpreted in consonance with contemporary military doctrine. In conclusion, Turkey's military engagements are shaped not merely by momentary security concerns but by a historical and strategic integrity understanding.

The twelfth finding demonstrates that Turkey's diplomatic initiatives adopt an approach strengthened by international law arguments particularly in historical regions such as Mosul, Kirkuk, and Western Thrace. Document analysis has revealed that the principle of resort to plebiscite envisaged in the second and third articles of the National Pact can be evaluated as an early application of the self-determination norm (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated in Raic's legal analysis regarding the right to self-determination, this principle is applicable not only in the colonial context but also in the evaluation of the status of communities demonstrating societal integrity and historical continuity (Raic, 2022). The international law perspective addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that the legitimacy of historical rights can be grounded not only on past documents but also on contemporary normative principles (Klabbers, 2022). As stated in the literature review, Turkey's effort to relate this principle to contemporary international law norms in consonance with historical context attracts attention in the academic literature (Cagaptay, 2021). Analyses made in the direction that the status of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace is connected with rights within the scope of Articles 37 through 45 of the Treaty of Lausanne demonstrate that Turkey's diplomatic discourse has legal foundations (Treaty of Lausanne, 1923; Hale, 2021). As stated by Oran in the framework of minority rights, Lausanne's provisions concerning minorities constitute an important reference point in both Turkey's domestic law and foreign policy; this situation ensures the integration of historical rights with a contemporary legal framework (Oran, 2001). The policies toward the protection of the Turkmen population in northern Iraq can be evaluated as an example carrying the National Pact's understanding of geographical and societal integrity to the present day. Field literature demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims are addressed not only territory-focused but also on the axis of protection of cultural rights (Gunter, 2021). This finding reveals that a hybrid approach is being maintained in Turkey's diplomatic gains in which international law and historical documents are used together.

The thirteenth finding demonstrates that Turkey's order-building actor role has strengthened in areas where state authority has weakened in the region. The regional state collapses emphasized in the Introduction have created security and governance vacuums in border regions, and this situation has brought Turkey's historical responsibility back onto the agenda. As stated in Rotberg's state failure typology, collapsed and failed states produce not only internal instability but also regional security threats; this situation legitimizes the order-building interventions of neighboring states (Rotberg, 2004). The dysfunctionalization of central governments in countries such as Syria and Iraq has necessitated alternative order quests in the border regions of these countries (Gerges, 2021). As emphasized in Prys's analysis regarding the concept of regional power, regional powers assume not

only military capacity but also order-producing and legitimacy-providing functions; Turkey is positioned as an order-building actor in this context (Prys, 2010). Research findings confirm that the humanitarian, economic, and military instruments Turkey has developed to fill this vacuum are effective on regional order. Document analysis has revealed that the geographical integrity principles stated in the National Pact enable Turkey's interventions in these regions to be evaluated within a historical framework (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The constructivist approach addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that states' historical identities are important factors determining foreign policy preferences (Wendt, 2019). The structure of documents such as Mudros and Sèvres aimed at partitioning Ottoman geography explains why Turkey's sensitivity against the repetition of similar processes today is this high (Treaty of Sèvres, 1920). As stated in the literature review, it is posited that Turkey's order-building role in the field has the capacity to reshape regional security architecture (Aydın-Düzgit & Keyman, 2021). These findings demonstrate that the power vacuums in the region create an intersection area between Turkey's historical claims and contemporary strategic objectives.

The fourteenth finding demonstrates that Turkey's international alliance relations play a determining role in bringing historical claims onto the agenda. The process of transition to the multipolar order emphasized in the Introduction has provided Turkey with the opportunity to adopt a multidirectional foreign policy, and this situation has enabled historical claims to be expressed more comfortably in the international arena. As stated in Walt's alliance theory, states strategically use alliance relations to maximize their security interests; this situation serves an important function in historical theses gaining international legitimacy (Walt, 1987). While North Atlantic Treaty Organization membership provides Turkey with military capacity, the regional policies of the United States and Europe at times conflict with Turkey's historical and strategic priorities (Özkan, 2022). The American administration's discourses toward reshaping borders during the Greater Middle East Project process have deepened security concerns in Turkey and prepared the ground for the National Pact's being brought back onto the political agenda (Lynch, 2021). As emphasized in Öniş and Yılmaz's analysis regarding Turkey-Russia relations, Turkey's pragmatic cooperation developed with Russia in the multipolar order is expanding Ankara's room for maneuver in its regional policies (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2021). As predicted by the realism theory addressed in the theoretical framework, alliance relations are important structural factors shaping states' strategic preferences (Mearsheimer, 2021). The rise of Russia and China has expanded Turkey's room for maneuver in its regional policies (Allison, 2022). Document analysis has revealed that the National Pact's principles of geographical integrity and independence strengthen the historical context of these diplomatic openings (National Pact Declaration, 1920). Turkey's increasing diplomatic presence in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Balkans, and the Caucasus has produced a normative and strategic influence in post-Ottoman heritage areas (Bilgin, 2022). This finding demonstrates that Turkey's multilateral relations function as a geopolitical multiplier supporting historical claims.

The fifteenth finding demonstrates that references to historical rights in Turkey's public diplomacy and national discourse have become increasingly more evident in terms of domestic-foreign policy interaction. The discourse analysis explained in the research methodology section demonstrates that in Turkey, the National Pact presents a symbolic framework increasing societal unity particularly during periods of geopolitical crisis. As stated by Fairclough in the framework of critical discourse analysis, political discourses are not merely communication tools but also performative acts that construct and legitimize social reality; the historical rights discourse serves the reproduction of national identity in this context (Fairclough, 2015). This symbolic effect contributes to historical documents becoming an important reference point in political decision-making processes in terms of both national identity and security policies. Document analysis has revealed that the National Pact's having been approved multiple times in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the importance Mustafa Kemal Pasha attached to these principles provide historical legitimacy to contemporary discourses (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The constructivist approach addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes

that the relationship between national identity and foreign policy is a central element particularly in explaining post-crisis state behaviors (Wendt, 2019). As stated in Rumelili and Ejodus's analysis from the ontological security perspective, historical discourses function to preserve states' identity continuity, and this situation plays a determining role in shaping foreign policy preferences (Rumelili & Ejodus, 2022). As stated in the literature review, historical memory and identity elements are important factors shaping states' positioning in the international system (Hudson, 2020). These findings demonstrate that the historical rights discourse in Turkey is a multilayered instrument affecting not only foreign policy but also domestic political integration. Consequently, historical claims emerge not merely as a foreign policy objective but also as a strategic component of national identity construction. The sixteenth finding demonstrates that Turkey's capacity to intervene in regional humanitarian crises is intertwined with the concepts of historical responsibility and geopolitical necessity. Research data reveals that the humanitarian burden Turkey has assumed since the Syrian civil war points to a unique position among regional powers. As stated in the World Bank's Middle East and North Africa regional economic report, the Syrian crisis constitutes the largest humanitarian catastrophe in the region and creates heavy economic and societal burdens on neighboring countries (World Bank, 2023). Turkey has become the country hosting the world's largest refugee population by hosting more than four million Syrian refugees (Tür & Han, 2022). Document analysis has revealed that the principles of the National Pact concerning the protection of the rights of Muslim communities in neighboring geographies strengthen the historical context of Turkey's assumption of this humanitarian responsibility (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The constructivist approach addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that historical identity and collective memory are important factors shaping states' perceptions of responsibility (Wendt, 2019). As emphasized in Dalacoura's analysis regarding the regional order following the Arab uprisings, the humanitarian burden created by regional crises deeply affects both the domestic policies and regional positioning of neighboring states (Dalacoura, 2021). As stated in the literature review, Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy activities constitute the soft power dimension of the strategy of establishing a regional sphere of influence (Aydin-Düzgit & Keyman, 2021). This situation particularly demonstrates that the provision of human security in regions such as Aleppo, Idlib, and Tel Abyad is also interpreted by Turkey as a geopolitical necessity. The place in historical memory of the humanitarian tragedies produced by the Mudros and Sèvres treaties increases Turkey's sensitivity toward preventing the repetition of a similar collapse (Treaty of Sèvres, 1920). These findings demonstrate that Turkey's humanitarian policies strengthen its historical claims on a complementary ground rather than conflicting with them.

The seventeenth finding demonstrates that Turkey's manner of defining security threats has developed contemporaneously with threat perception transformations in the international system. The structural transformation of the international system emphasized in the Introduction has led to the expansion of the security concept from traditional interstate conflicts toward threats created by non-state actors. As stated in Wæver's securitization theory, the definition of an issue as a security problem requires a discursive construction process; states can legitimize extraordinary measures through this process (Wæver, 1995). Post-2001 security literature emphasizes that terrorist organizations and armed non-state actors have fundamentally transformed the international system (Buzan & Hansen, 2020). Turkey's struggle against terrorist organizations has transformed the border security problem from a sovereignty debate into a regional order issue. As stated in Ghosn, Palmer, and Bremer's analysis regarding the militarized interstate disputes dataset, in the twenty-first century, struggle with non-state actors has also been placed at the center of security policies alongside interstate conflicts (Ghosn, Palmer & Bremer, 2022). Document analysis has revealed that the correspondence of the geography defined on the southern borders of the National Pact with the activity areas of these organizations today ensures the intersection of Turkey's historical claims with contemporary security interests (National Pact Declaration, 1920). At the same time, the expression of security threat in Article 7 of the Armistice of Mudros presents an early example regarding how threat-based interventions are legitimized in

modern international law (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). As stated in the literature review, the military-diplomatic hybrid strategy Turkey has developed to eliminate these threats assumes a functional role in terms of regional stability (Stein, 2021). These findings demonstrate that Turkey's security approach has been restructured in consonance with historical, legal, and geopolitical foundations. In conclusion, security emerges as both the justification and the feasibility condition of Turkey's historical claims.

The eighteenth finding demonstrates that Turkey's historical rights discourse intersects with historical justice and fair reevaluation of borders debates that are gaining increasing importance in international law. The international law perspective addressed in the theoretical framework indicates that the increasing demands of global south countries are evolving international law toward a framework that reconsidering historical problems (Rajagopal, 2021). As emphasized in Osterhammel's analysis from a post-colonialism perspective, many of the border arrangements established at the beginning of the twentieth century reflect the interests of colonial powers, and the justice of these arrangements continues to be questioned (Osterhammel, 2021). This transformation gives new meaning at the international level to Turkey's emphasis on the legacy of unjust treaties such as Mudros and Sèvres. Document analysis has revealed that the structure of the Treaty of Sèvres aimed at partitioning Turkey can be evaluated as an example of unjust arrangement in the history of international law (Treaty of Sèvres, 1920). When evaluated in the framework of Said's orientalism critique, it is observed that Western powers' policies toward the Middle East have historically disregarded the interests of regional peoples and that this situation has led to lasting injustices (Said, 1978). Similarly, the articles of the National Pact that are consonant with the principle of self-determination provide a normative basis in contemporary border debates (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated in the literature review, it is observed that historical justice arguments are being given more consideration in international institutions particularly in disputes regarding the transboundary uses of energy and water resources (Klabbers, 2022). Research findings demonstrate that Turkey is undertaking diplomatic initiatives toward harmonizing this rising normative framework with its own historical claims. Thus, Turkey's discourse can be evaluated as part not only of a national but also of a global normative transformation.

The nineteenth finding demonstrates that Turkey's regional infrastructure and economic influence projects are the contemporary correspondence of transportation and economic integration areas in the historical context. The geoeconomics perspective addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that economic connectivity is one of the fundamental factors determining states' regional spheres of influence (Tagliapietra, 2021). As stated in Scholvin and Wigell's analysis regarding the concept of geoeconomics, the use of economic instruments for strategic purposes is regaining importance in the twenty-first century; infrastructure investments and trade corridors are transforming into fundamental instruments of power projection in this context (Scholvin & Wigell, 2022). It is known that the Mosul-Kirkuk line had strategic importance in terms of economic integration during the Ottoman period; today, energy lines and trade corridors have assumed this role. Document analysis has revealed that the National Pact's emphasis on economic independence can be directly related to the energy projects, port investments, and logistics lines Turkey has developed in the modern period (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As emphasized in Aydin's analysis regarding Turkey's regional diplomacy strategy, economic connectivity projects constitute one of the fundamental instruments of expanding Turkey's regional sphere of influence (Aydin, 2023). Research demonstrates that the Turkey-Iraq Development Road, Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline, and exploration activities in the Eastern Mediterranean are parts of Turkey's strategy to strengthen its regional economic position. As stated in the literature review, it is emphasized that the economic sphere of influence progresses together with political influence and that this situation supports historical integrity quests (Bilgin, 2022). The historical reaction to the economic dependency impositions of the Treaty of Sèvres gives a strategic meaning to Turkey's modern economic moves (Treaty of Sèvres, 1920). This finding demonstrates that there exists a strong mutual interaction between economic integration and historical claims. Thus, Turkey's

economic projection corresponds not only with development but also with historical geographical integrity objectives.

The twentieth finding demonstrates that the increase in Turkey's military modernization and defense industry capacity strengthens the feasibility of historical claims from a security perspective. The evolution of the international system toward a multipolar structure emphasized in the Introduction has increased the capacities of middle powers to expand their regional spheres of influence. As stated in Booth and Trood's analysis regarding the concept of strategic culture, states' military capacities should be evaluated not only as material elements but also as institutional structures shaped by historical experiences and strategic traditions (Booth & Trood, 2021). Post-2020 academic literature reveals that the progress Turkey has achieved in defense technologies is creating an effect transforming regional power balances (Altun & Kasapoğlu, 2021). This development has increased Turkey's capacity to conduct not only defensive but also order-building operations. As stated by Waltz in the framework of structural realism, states' positions in the international system depend largely on their military capacities; this situation increases the strategic importance of defense industry investments (Waltz, 1979). Document analysis has revealed that the correspondence of the security-focused geography drawn in the National Pact with contemporary cross-border threats further increases the importance of defense capacity from a historical perspective (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As predicted by the realism theory addressed in the theoretical framework, military capacity is one of the fundamental factors determining states' positions in the international system (Mearsheimer, 2021). The provisions of the Armistice of Mudros imposing military restrictions constitute a historical contrast explaining why Turkey attaches this much importance to developing its own defense technology today (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). Research findings demonstrate that defense industry capacity increases Turkey's international negotiation power and makes possible the more effective expression of historical claims at the political level. The integrity of these findings confirms that security capacity is one of the feasibility conditions of the historical rights discourse.

The twenty-first finding demonstrates that Turkey's capacity to develop regional alliances and cooperation mechanisms contributes to historical claims being discussed on a legitimate ground. Research findings confirm that the strategic partnerships Turkey has developed with countries such as Qatar, Azerbaijan, Libya, and Somalia have expanded its regional sphere of influence (Özkan, 2022). As stated in Walt's alliance formation theory, states form alliances according to their threat perceptions; this situation explains the formation of strategic partnerships based on common interests (Walt, 1987). This expansion produces an interaction model that is not limited to the geographical areas defined within the framework of the National Pact but completes the historical logic of this geography. As predicted by the realism theory addressed in the theoretical framework, alliance relations are among the fundamental instruments states use in shaping regional power balances (Mearsheimer, 2021). As emphasized in Bilgin's analysis regarding Turkey's geopolitical identity, Ankara's multilayered foreign policy is a reflection of the strategy of producing influence in historical heritage areas (Bilgin, 2023). It is observed particularly that the military-political alliance established with Azerbaijan has transformed the regional power balances in the Caucasus in Turkey's favor. Document analysis has revealed that the emphasis on the Three Provinces (Elviye-i Selase) in the National Pact supports the reflection of Turkey's historical connections in this region on contemporary alliance policies (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated in the literature review, it is emphasized that alliance networks carry historical claims to the international legitimacy framework (Bilgin, 2022). These findings demonstrate that Turkey is creating a sphere of influence strengthening its historical theses through regional partnerships. In conclusion, alliance policies are transforming into a complementary component of the historical rights quest.

The twenty-second finding demonstrates that Turkey's relations established with communities with which it has strong demographic and cultural ties strengthen the societal dimension of historical claims. The relations maintained with Turkmen and Arab tribes in regions such as Mosul, Kirkuk, and Aleppo

constitute the concrete societal correspondence of historical continuity (Hiltermann, 2022). As stated in Oran's comprehensive study on the history of Turkish foreign policy, Turkey's relations with kindred communities in neighboring countries constitute one of the continuous elements of foreign policy (Oran, 2001). Document analysis has revealed that the National Pact's principle of inseparable integrity where the Ottoman-Islamic majority lived is directly related to these communities (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The constructivist approach addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that societal ties and cultural identities are important factors shaping states' foreign policy preferences (Wendt, 2019). As stated in Wendt's social constructivist theory, the concepts of identity and interest are constructed through societal interactions; this situation explains the importance of relations with diaspora and kindred communities in foreign policy (Wendt, 1992). As stated in the literature review, the humanitarian, cultural, and economic ties Turkey has established with these communities are not merely a retrospective nostalgia but a functional instrument in terms of regional stability (Gurses, 2021). The societal-cultural ties of the millions of people who took refuge in Turkey during the Syrian civil war constitute an important legitimacy source in Turkey's regional policies. These findings demonstrate that demographic and cultural ties have an important societal base for Turkey's historical rights discourse. Consequently, historical claims carry a character that rests not only on interstate relations but on continuity at the societal level.

The twenty-third finding demonstrates that Turkey's position in new international order debates has transformed historical claims from being a strategic discourse into an institutional part of policymaking. The becoming multipolar of the global system emphasized in the Introduction has enabled middle powers to develop more ambitious strategies based on historical and geographical arguments (Acharya, 2021). As stated in Sil and Katzenstein's analytical eclecticism approach, the understanding of complex international problems requires the joint use of different theoretical perspectives; Turkey's historical rights policy constitutes a concrete example of this multidimensional approach (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010). The emphasis in Turkey's security documents that permanent arrangements need to be made in northern Syria and Iraq for ensuring regional stability demonstrates that this transformation has been institutionalized. Document analysis confirms that the consonance of the National Pact's principles concerning southern and eastern borders with contemporary security documents has made the historical rights discourse an institutional reference source (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated in Young's analysis regarding the rise and fall of international regimes, institutional structures possess the capacity to adapt to changing power balances; this situation explains the transformation of historical discourses into institutional policies (Young, 1982). The strategic adaptation approach addressed in the theoretical framework emphasizes that states can adapt to new systemic conditions without abandoning historical foundations (Pouliot, 2021). The strong place of historical documents such as Mudros and Sèvres in Turkey's national security memory increases the effect of this discourse on political decision-making processes (Armistice of Mudros, 1918; Treaty of Sèvres, 1920). As stated in the literature review, states' use of historical documents as strategic planning instruments is becoming widespread in modern international relations (Mankoff, 2022). These findings demonstrate that Turkey's historical claims are now not merely discursive but an institutional policy component.

The twenty-fourth finding demonstrates that Turkey's bringing its historical claims back onto the agenda depends not only on regional dynamics but also on the normative transformation of the international system. The international law perspective addressed in the theoretical framework demonstrates that while the principle of border inviolability remains dominant, de facto state collapses, civil wars, and plebiscite-based secessions have produced examples that stretch this principle (Rajagopal, 2021). As stated in Raic's analysis regarding self-determination and the law of state formation, international law preserves the principle of border inviolability while also allowing exceptional arrangements under specific conditions (Raic, 2022). The Kosovo, South Sudan, and Crimea examples prove that the international system does not operate with absolute consistency on

border and sovereignty issues. As emphasized in Branch's analysis regarding the relationship between territory and geopolitical conflict, territorial claims are re-placing themselves at the center of international politics in the twenty-first century; this situation increases the contemporary relevance of historical rights (Branch, 2023). This situation places Turkey's historical theses particularly concerning the southern and eastern portions of the National Pact borders on a debatable ground in international law. Document analysis has revealed that the National Pact's emphasis on the integrity of the Muslim population inside and outside the armistice line corresponds with contemporary normative debates (National Pact Declaration, 1920). As stated in the literature review, the new international order is evolving toward a flexible border and multilayered sovereignty understanding (Allison, 2022). These findings demonstrate that Turkey's historical claims have become more visible within the transforming normative framework of international law. Consequently, the legitimacy of claims derives strength not only from historical documents but also from the restructuring of international norms.

The twenty-fifth and final finding demonstrates that Turkey's process of reconsidering its historical claims consists of a dynamic combination of internal and external factors. When all the findings of the research are evaluated, it is observed that the National Pact, beyond being a historical reference source, presents a multidimensional framework that directs Turkey's national security, regional stability, economic integration, and humanitarian diplomacy strategies. As emphasized in Zarakol's analysis from the non-Western order perspective, the positioning of historically marginalized actors in the international system is being reevaluated; this situation expands the legitimacy ground of the historical theses of states like Turkey (Zarakol, 2022). The main hypothesis presented in the Introduction argued that the multipolar order provides a broader legitimacy ground for Turkey's historical claims; the findings largely confirm this hypothesis. As stated in Acharya's analysis regarding the concept of multiplexity, the twenty-first century international system is evolving toward a structure in which multiple order understandings coexist rather than a single hegemonic order; this situation enables the expression of different historical perspectives in the international arena (Acharya, 2022). The balance between the historical traumas of Mudros and Sèvres and the founding principles of Lausanne constitutes one of the fundamental elements shaping Turkey's manner of approaching the international system (Armistice of Mudros, 1918; Treaty of Sèvres, 1920; Treaty of Lausanne, 1923). As predicted by the multilayered theoretical synthesis approach addressed in the theoretical framework, Turkey's historical claims are positioned at the intersection of realism, constructivism, international law, and geoeconomics perspectives. As emphasized in the literature review, Turkey is reinterpreting its historical theses in accordance with the opportunities and threats produced by the new international order (Acharya, 2021; Öniş & Kutlay, 2021). Research confirms that together with the increase in Turkey's military capacity, the expansion of its economic networks, and the elevation of its diplomatic flexibility, it has made its historical claims more visible. The normative and strategic value of the National Pact in this context emerges not merely as an ideal of the past but as a guide shaping the policies of the future. In conclusion, Turkey's historical claims have transformed into a framework strengthening in terms of both legitimacy and feasibility together with the process of restructuring of international order.

6. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the reinterpretation of Turkey's historical claims within the framework of the National Pact in the context of the new international order is grounded on both theoretical and applied justifications. The systemic transformation documented in the Findings section, particularly the relative decline of American hegemony and the crystallization of the multipolar structure, has prepared a structural ground for middle-sized states to redefine their historical geopolitical positions. This finding corresponds with Acharya's (2022) concept of the "civilizational state" and confirms how the cultural challenges of rising powers are transforming the world order. As predicted by the hegemonic stability theory addressed in the theoretical framework, the weakening of

the hegemonic power that provides order in the international system enables the questioning of existing normative structures and the revival of historical demands (Ikenberry, 2020). This transformation harbors both opportunities and risks for Turkey, whose borders were determined by historical interventions. The provisions of the Armistice of Mudros that de facto liquidated the Ottoman sovereignty domain and the Treaty of Sèvres's attempt to legitimize regional fragmentation have created a deep rupture point in Turkish political memory. As Özdemir (2021) emphasizes, this historical rupture point constitutes the foundation of Turkey's effort to redefine its international position and sovereignty rights. The preservation of the National Pact as the fundamental reference of the order accepted at Lausanne demonstrates that this historical experience has been transformed into institutional continuity. Consequently, multipolarity in the contemporary international system renders Turkey's reevaluation of its historical theses not merely a political preference but also a strategic necessity in an environment where power balances are being redistributed (Kirişçi & Toygür, 2023). Within this framework, it appears inevitable that Turkey must develop a new conceptual position along the axes of international law, power politics, and regional stability.

The Greater Middle East Project, which occupies the focus of discussion, despite carrying regional stability and democratization objectives at the discursive level, has in practice led to comprehensive state collapses in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Libya and has directly affected Turkey's security strategy. The data presented in the Findings section demonstrates that the American administration of the period's declarations that the borders of twenty-two countries in the region could change have made the risk of regional fragmentation evident (Lynch, 2021). As Bacevich (2020) indicates, the failure of America's regional intervention policies in the post-Cold War period has necessitated middle-sized states to redefine their own security strategies. This process has brought the geopolitical importance of the surroundings of Mosul, Kirkuk, and Aleppo located on the southern line of the National Pact borders back onto the agenda. The separation of Mosul from Ottoman sovereignty through de facto occupation immediately following the Armistice of Mudros is evaluated in international law literature as a typical example of a contested de facto situation being transformed into legal status over time (Özdemir, 2021). Pedersen's (2021) study regarding the League of Nations period clearly demonstrates how imperialist power balances prevailed over law in this process. When the renewed indeterminacy of the relationship between de facto control, legitimacy, and historical claims in the multipolar system is taken into account, it becomes possible for Turkey to develop new arguments in these areas. Indeed, Russia's demand for status quo change based on historical theses in Ukraine has reopened the already ambiguous concept of historical rights in international law to debate (Mälksoo, 2022). These developments reveal that Turkey's historical border claims are not merely a nostalgic remembrance but rather an element of theoretical repositioning in the context of contemporary power politics.

The findings of the research clearly demonstrate that Turkey must observe the balance between international law and power politics when updating its historical claims. This balance requirement corresponds with Bilgin's (2022) analysis positioning Turkey's regional power role between ambition and restraint. That the National Pact was a design based not only on ethnic and demographic realities but also on the geopolitical security line is clearly seen in the documents of the period. The direct connection of the Mosul-Kirkuk line, which Mustafa Kemal Pasha continuously emphasized in domestic and foreign negotiations, with the national boundary understanding emerges as an element demonstrating continuity in Republican-era Turkish foreign policy. However, in the contemporary international order, the legitimacy of states' demands for border changes on the grounds of historical rights remains quite limited in terms of regional stability and sovereignty norms (Klabbers, 2022). For this reason, Turkey's approach is expected to proceed in an integrated structure that addresses legal argumentation and the regional security problematic together. Furthermore, the authority vacuums that have emerged in regions neighboring the collapsed state structures following the Greater Middle East Project have necessitated Turkey's redefinition of the relationship between border security and

historical geography. Balci's (2023) analysis of regional security governance explains how Turkey has assumed a central role in a fragmented order. The findings demonstrate that this framework, while offering Turkey new foreign policy flexibilities, also renders the quest for international legitimacy inevitable. As predicted by the power transition theory discussed in the theoretical framework, the bringing of historical arguments back onto the political agenda during periods when the hegemonic order weakens emerges as an ordinary strategy (Mearsheimer, 2021).

Another fundamental element indicating that Turkey needs to reconsider its historical claims is that the territorial integrity of regional states has been seriously eroded for an extended period. Iraq's de facto tripartite division following 2003, Syria's fragmentation into cantonal structures with the civil war, and Lebanon's chronic state capacity problems demonstrate that the border order created after Lausanne is de facto dissolving (Phillips, 2020). The World Bank's (2023) Middle East and North Africa regional economic outlook report demonstrates with concrete data how the dynamics of conflict, fragility, and recovery are deepening regional instability. This situation removes the debates concerning the southern borders of the National Pact from being merely a historical matter and places them at the center of contemporary security requirements. The provision in Article 7 of the Armistice of Mudros that the allies could occupy any strategic region they wished on security grounds displays a surprising parallelism with state collapse and intervention debates in contemporary international relations. Bellamy's (2021) study on the responsibility to protect explains the evolution of such intervention justifications in international law. Should regional fragmentations become permanent, Turkey's capacity to narrate its historical claims to the international community may increase; however, this simultaneously brings along the risk of conflict with great power competition. Consequently, Turkey's reevaluation of its historical rights requires a foreign policy strategy that is both protective and transformative. The state collapse and authority vacuum debates emphasized in the literature review confirm that this strategy has become more applicable particularly in the multipolar structure (Lynch, 2022).

Another critical result revealed by the research is that Turkey must re-ground its historical theses in light of international law's own case law and precedent events. While territorial claims based on historical ties rarely produce direct legitimacy in international law, they can transform into effective arguments when combined with concepts such as the right to self-determination, the principle of taking existing administrative boundaries as basis, and effective control (Crawford, 2019). This conceptual framework is also supported by Akande's (2020) analysis on the use of force against non-state actors and the right to legitimate self-defense. The principle of effective control that the National Pact was based upon in 1918 maintains its characteristic as an approach referred to even today in many international disputes. Additionally, Russia's demand for status quo change by activating historical narratives over Crimea and Donbas demonstrates that normative flexibility has increased in the international legal order (Allison, 2022). In this context, Turkey's combining of its own historical border discourse with regional human security, state-building, and stability justifications may contribute to the strengthening of its legitimacy ground. Zhang's (2023) study on historical claims in the South China Sea reveals similar patterns of the interaction between law, history, and geopolitics. Furthermore, the definitive rejection at Lausanne of the Treaty of Sèvres's attempt to partition Ottoman territories along ethnic lines indicates a period when Turkey's historical theses were once again tested in international law. These findings demonstrate that Turkey's reconsideration of its historical rights has emerged as a necessity in terms of both normative and power politics. The normative restructuring debates addressed in the theoretical framework strengthen the theoretical foundations of this necessity. Another element that is determinative in Turkey's reevaluation of its historical claims is that regional power vacuums not only produce security threats but also open doors to geopolitical reorganizations. The large-scale collapse of state authority in Iraq and Syria has led to the de facto permeabilization of borders and the redefinition of regional powers' spheres of influence (Lynch, 2023). This situation prepares the ground for the integration of debates concerning the southern borders of the National Pact

with contemporary security justifications. Indeed, the Armistice of Mudros's border approach that created military necessity has become re-visible with security-based arguments in Turkey's cross-border operations today. Altun and Kasapoğlu's (2021) study on Turkey's developing defense industry explains the regional security consequences of this operational capacity. The data presented in the Findings section demonstrates that the humanitarian and security crises created by the Syrian civil war have led to demographic and administrative transformations on Turkey's borders, which has also strengthened sensitivities regarding historical geography. The fragmentation tendency of regional states reveals that Turkey's historical border conception has become not merely a discourse relating to the past but an effective security strategy component. As predicted by the regional security complex approach addressed in the theoretical framework, the internal instabilities of neighboring states directly affect Turkey's security calculations. Booth and Trood's (2021) compilation of security studies presents the theoretical foundations of this interdependence relationship. That Turkey's historical rights discourses are being taken more seriously by international actors in this new environment is among the findings of the research.

A notable finding in the context of Turkey's historical claims is that the National Pact is not merely a regional border conception but also the concretized form of sovereignty and independence principles. The text of the National Pact has advocated an integrity based on popular will particularly in regions where the Ottoman-Islamic majority lived. This approach corresponds with Bilgin's (2023) study examining Turkey's changing geopolitical identity in the context of historical legacies and contemporary challenges. This approach demonstrates partial compatibility with the principle of self-determination today and is transforming into an argument that may strengthen Turkey's legitimacy ground in the historical context (Crawford, 2019). Indeed, the Treaty of Lausanne also relied on factors such as effective control, military reality, and popular will when determining borders; it rejected the ethnic division model envisaged in Sèvres. This point makes it possible for Turkey to connect its historical theses not only to the past but also to contemporary international law norms. Additionally, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's statements regarding Mosul, Kirkuk, and Western Thrace demonstrate that the National Pact continued to serve as a strategic reference source even during the Republican period. Consequently, historical claims carry the quality of a normative framework that affects foreign policy vision beyond being a part of the national narrative. The relationship between national identity and historical memory emphasized in the Introduction constitutes the theoretical foundation of this normative framework.

The findings of the research demonstrate that Turkey's historical theses have become not merely political discourse but a conceptual category that has correspondence in international law debates. Particularly the principle of taking existing administrative boundaries as basis envisages in certain regional disputes not the preservation of historical borders but taking the administrative boundaries existing at a particular historical moment as basis (Kohen & Rodríguez, 2022). In some of the regions taken from Turkey during the period of the Armistice of Mudros and the Treaty of Sèvres, this principle of administrative integrity was not applied, and *de facto* occupation was over time transformed into legal status. This process is documented in detail in Pedersen's (2021) study on the League of Nations and the crisis of empire. For this reason, Turkey's historical claims may create a legal debate area in the context of the rectification of historical injustices. At the same time, the historical arguments Russia has created with its Crimea and Donbas justifications demonstrate that states can challenge the international status quo with such discourses (Allison, 2022). These examples reveal that the revival of Turkey's historical arguments now has a more debatable ground in international law literature. The tension between positivist and historical-moral approaches addressed in the literature review constitutes the theoretical background of this debate. Consequently, Turkey's historical rights discourse has become not merely an emotional remembrance but a normative and strategic instrument.

Another issue that stands out in the discussion section of the study is that Turkey must also take into consideration its responsibility toward the preservation of regional stability when advancing its

historical claims. The borders targeted by the National Pact were determined not only by ethnic or historical justifications but also by geographical integrity and security requirements. Today, the non-state armed actors that have emerged in northern Iraq and Syria have rendered border security a much more critical matter for Turkey than in the past (Stein, 2023). Akande's (2020) analysis on the use of force against non-state actors and the law of legitimate self-defense explains the foundations of these security justifications in international law. In this context, historical claims may be seen as more legitimate by international public opinion when harmonized with a strategic framework aiming to strengthen regional peace and security. Additionally, the authority vacuums in Syria and Iraq have created de facto administrative areas that are not recognized under international law immediately south of Turkey's borders; this has also consolidated the connection between historical borders and contemporary security requirements. The data presented in the Findings section demonstrates that the steps Turkey takes in these regions are more effective when supported by both security and historical arguments. The concepts of human security and responsibility to protect discussed in the theoretical framework constitute the normative foundation of this integrated approach. Bellamy's (2021) study advocating responsibility to protect contributes to the strengthening of this normative foundation. For this reason, historical claims must be addressed together with a stability-oriented discourse.

The reevaluation of Turkey's historical claims in the context of the new international order is directly related not only to foreign policy but also to the construction of a new security architecture at the regional level. In the multipolar system, the competition in the Middle East of actors such as the United States, Russia, China, and the European Union has rendered Turkey's historical geopolitical position more important (Fulton, 2022). This competition contributes both to Turkey's diversification of its alliance networks and to the strengthening of its quest for strategic autonomy. Aydin's (2023) study examining Turkey's regional diplomacy in the process of evolution from zero problems to strategic engagement explains the dynamics of this diversification strategy. It is observed that the security-based interpretation of the National Pact borders has gained new meanings particularly in terms of energy lines, water resources, and trade corridors. The security vacuums created by non-state actors in Iraq and Syria have also directed Turkey to reconsider its historical geographical depth. For this reason, the discussion of historical claims emerges as a natural consequence of the changes in the power structure of the new international order. The energy geopolitics and geoeconomic connectivity data presented in the Findings section strengthen the concrete dimensions of this discussion. The findings of the research demonstrate that Turkey's using international legitimacy, legal argumentation, and regional peace discourses together in this process will be more effective. The multipolarity and regional power balance debates addressed in the theoretical framework constitute the theoretical foundation of this strategic necessity.

One of the important dimensions of the discussion demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims are not only territory-based but also contain the perspective of regional order construction. The logic underlying the National Pact is the preservation of societal integrity in regions where the Ottoman-Islamic majority lived and the establishment of a security-centered defense line against external interventions. This defensive approach corresponds with Aydin-Düzgit and Keyman's (2021) study examining Turkey's foreign policy in a changing world within the framework of old variables and new challenges. This approach makes it possible for Turkey to emerge as a stability-providing actor in the Middle East, where regional fragmentation is deepening today. Indeed, the vacuum left by the collapsed state structures in Iraq and Syria has necessitated Turkey's reconfiguration of its cross-border security architecture (Lynch, 2023). In this context, historical claims can be evaluated not merely as a national policy but also as a strategic framework that prioritizes regional peace. Turkey's supporting of its historical arguments with contemporary security conditions is strengthening its legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. The data presented in the Findings section confirms the conclusion that this integrated approach has increased Turkey's regional influence capacity. The regional order theory addressed in the theoretical framework explains the systemic foundations of this role of Turkey.

Consequently, historical claims are transforming into a functional instrument for the reestablishment of regional stability.

Turkey's reconsideration of its historical claims within the framework of the National Pact is also closely related to the transforming nature of international law. In recent years, great powers' stretching of international law norms or their selective application has opened legal room for maneuver for middle-sized states (Klabbers, 2022). For example, the historical origin and right to self-determination arguments Russia used in its interventions toward the Crimea and Donbas regions have led to new debates in international law literature and have caused historical rights discourses to be brought back onto the agenda (Allison, 2022). This normative stretching is a reflection of the systemic transformation predicted in Acharya's (2021) study on the end of the American world order. Turkey's reformulation of its historical theses regarding regions such as Mosul-Kirkuk and Western Thrace in consonance with international law carries importance from this perspective. The politicization and transformation into status quo of the *de facto* situations created by the manner of implementation of the Armistice of Mudros provides a strong foundation for the theme of rectification of historical injustices in Turkey's historical rights argumentation. Within this framework, Turkey's historical theses become more functional when evaluated together with the existing areas of stretching in international law. The normative transformation debates addressed in the literature review explain the theoretical dimensions of this stretching. The data presented in the Findings section demonstrates that Turkey can effectively use the balance between law and politics in the new order.

Another point demonstrated by the findings is that the strategic value of Turkey's historical claims has increased with the emergence of the multipolar order. The withdrawal occurring in the Middle East policies of the United States has led to actors such as Russia, Iran, and China filling the power vacuum in the region (Fulton, 2022). This power vacuum dynamic corresponds with Bacevich's (2020) analysis of how America squandered its Cold War victory. This situation is encouraging Turkey to seek a more autonomous position in the regional security architecture and to pursue more effective policies in its historical geography. The reason historical claims find more correspondence in this new power equation is that legitimacy in the international system is now associated not only with legal norms but also with *de facto* power capacity and the ability to produce regional stability (Acharya, 2021). When the security-centered conception of the National Pact is taken into account, Turkey's ability to combine this intellectual framework with new geopolitical realities is gaining strength. Particularly in terms of energy lines and trade corridors, the geoeconomic importance of the regions in northern Iraq and Syria is carrying historical claims to a more strategic ground. The energy security and regional connectivity data presented in the Findings section constitute the concrete foundations of this strategic dimension. The study findings demonstrate that Turkey can use such historical arguments more effectively in the new order.

An important dimension of the discussion is that Turkey must not disregard the societal and ethnic structure of regional communities when reconsidering its historical claims. The principle of Ottoman-Islamic majority that the National Pact was based upon emphasizes that ethnic and religious majorities must be taken into consideration in specific regions. However, today the demographic structure has differentiated considerably from the beginning of the twentieth century due to both wars, migration movements, and political transformations. The forced migrations experienced in Iraq and Syria have deepened societal and demographic instability along Turkey's southern borders (Phillips, 2020). This demographic transformation is directly related to the conflict and fragility dynamics documented in the World Bank's (2023) regional economic outlook report. For this reason, Turkey must take demographic realities into consideration when updating its historical rights discourse. Nevertheless, the sensitivity of the international community toward ethnic-based border debates is directing Turkey more toward security, humanitarian stability, and regional integrity-based arguments. The data presented in the Findings section demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims become more acceptable when it adopts this approach. Thus, historical claims acquire a quality more compatible with the regional peace

mission by distancing themselves from an ethnic or revisionist image. The relationship between identity and foreign policy addressed in the theoretical framework explains the theoretical foundations of this transformation.

The research results demonstrate that Turkey's bringing its historical claims back onto the agenda is not merely a political preference but also a necessity imposed by the new international order. With the deepening of the multipolar system, a period has been entered in which power projections have become localized and regional orders have taken precedence over the global order (Ikenberry, 2020). This localization tendency is examined in detail in Balcı's (2023) study on regional security governance in the Middle East in the context of Turkey's role in a fragmented order. Under these conditions, Turkey's policies directed toward providing stability in its historical geography may be evaluated by the international community as a more functional contribution. When the historical traumas created by Mudros and Sèvres and the international legitimacy ground established by Lausanne are considered together, it is observed that Turkey's discourses regarding its historical rights need both normative and strategic renewal. Additionally, the Greater Middle East Project's acceleration of fragmentation in the region has reshaped Turkey's border and security perception (Hansen, 2020). For this reason, the redefinition of historical claims in the context of contemporary international relations carries critical importance for both the protection of national interests and the provision of regional stability. The fundamental argument presented in the Introduction explains both the historical and systemic foundations of this necessity. The data presented in the Findings section confirms that Turkey can develop a more pioneering and historically grounded foreign policy vision under these new conditions. At this stage of the discussion, it emerges that Turkey's reevaluation of its historical claims requires not only a security-based but also an international norms-based reframing. International law literature emphasizes the importance of criteria such as normative consistency, contribution to regional peace, and strengthening of international stability for initiatives toward the rectification of historical injustices to gain legitimacy (Crawford, 2019). When Turkey's reinterpretation of the National Pact borders is formulated in consonance with these criteria, it may acquire a framework that can receive broader acceptance by the international community. This normative compliance requirement is also supported by Bilgin's (2022) study examining Turkey's regional power role between ambition and restraint. The arbitrariness in the implementation of Mudros and the rejection at Lausanne of Sèvres's attempt to partition Ottoman territories historically demonstrate that Turkey displayed a justified resistance. These historical examples enable Turkey to reposition its claims within a normative continuity. Furthermore, since great power competition today leads to the selective application of international norms, the need for middle-sized states to strengthen their own normative discourses has increased (Klabbers, 2022). The normative restructuring debates addressed in the theoretical framework explain the theoretical foundations of this need. This finding demonstrates that Turkey must evaluate its historical claims not only as a strategic but also as a normative instrument. The relationship between legitimacy and international recognition emphasized in the literature review constitutes the academic ground of this normative approach.

Another important discussion that has emerged in this section is that the effects Turkey's historical claims may create on regional power balances are multidimensional. The power vacuums in Iraq and Syria have intensified the competition of regional actors; this has also led to Turkey becoming a more visible actor in historical border regions (Stein, 2023). Turkey's security-based operations, when combined with historical memory, make possible not only the elimination of terrorist threats but also the shaping of regional order. This multidimensional effect is examined in detail in Altun and Kasapoğlu's (2021) study on the regional security consequences of Turkey's developing defense industry. Nevertheless, the conflicts of interest in the region of actors such as Iran, Russia, and the United States require that the historically-based steps Turkey takes be carefully calibrated (Fulton, 2022). The National Pact's principles of geographical integrity and societal unity demonstrate that Turkey must adopt an approach sensitive not only to historical experience but also to societal dynamics

when taking these steps. This situation means that historical claims, despite carrying a power that could trigger international balances, can contribute to the strengthening of regional stability with the right strategy. The regional competition and power balance data presented in the Findings section constitute the concrete foundations of this multidimensional effect. Consequently, the management of historical claims requires not only foreign policy but also balance policy. The balance of power theory discussed in the theoretical framework explains the theoretical background of this balancing necessity.

One of the prominent important findings of the discussion is that Turkey's theses within the framework of the National Pact have gained new interpretation areas that may correspond with concepts such as protective intervention, human security, state-building, and border security in international law. Particularly in periods when state capacity has seriously collapsed in Syria and Iraq, Turkey's taking cross-border measures against threats directly affecting its national security is largely compatible with the imminent threat doctrine in international law (Schmitt, 2020). This legal compatibility is supported by Akande's (2020) comprehensive analysis on the use of force against non-state actors and the right to legitimate self-defense. This situation enables Turkey to relate its historical rights discourse to contemporary international security doctrines. Additionally, the beginning of the collapse of the regional order established at Lausanne is granting Turkey the opportunity to defend not the historical status quo but a new stability architecture (Ikenberry, 2020). Within this framework, the principles of the National Pact may be reinterpreted as a geopolitical ordering principle against contemporary regional instability. Turkey's historical stance against the border separations caused by the arbitrary implementation of Mudros provides a normative and historical foundation to this reinterpretation today. The security and stability data presented in the Findings section constitute the concrete bases of this interpretation. Consequently, historical claims become more functional when addressed together with contemporary security doctrines. The human security and responsibility to protect debates addressed in the literature review explain the theoretical foundations of this functionality.

Another dimension of Turkey's reconsideration of its historical claims is related to predictions concerning the future of regional communities. Prolonged civil wars, ethnic fractures, and state failures have rendered the sustainability of the traditional nation-state model in countries such as Iraq and Syria controversial (Phillips, 2020). This sustainability crisis is documented with concrete data in the World Bank's (2023) regional report in the context of conflict, fragility, and recovery dynamics. In this context, the historical perspective of the National Pact necessitates Turkey's taking into consideration not only border security but also the peace, stability, and justice demands of regional communities. Consequently, historical claims may become part of a vision that may contribute to regional restructuring processes. As an example of this, the peaceful incorporation of Hatay into Turkey and its constituting a model that strengthened regional stability may be shown (Yavuz, 2021). This model demonstrates that diplomacy, popular will, and regional stability can be addressed together in Turkey's future historical rights discourses. The data presented in the Findings section confirms that Turkey obtains broader legitimacy when it presents its historical claims in the context of regional improvement and stability quest rather than revisionism. Thus, historical claims are transforming into a component of regional order construction. The regional order and stability theories addressed in the theoretical framework explain the theoretical foundations of this transformation. The argument regarding regional stability and Turkey's role emphasized in the Introduction is directly connected to this discussion.

This discussion demonstrates that Turkey's reevaluation of its historical claims is not merely a strategic necessity but also a natural consequence of the fundamental transformation that has emerged in the context of the new international order. The erosion of normative and institutional arrangements in world politics, particularly the decrease in the effectiveness of the United Nations system, has directed states toward more autonomous geopolitical quests (Acharya, 2021). This quest for autonomy is addressed in detail in Aydin-Düzgit and Keyman's (2021) study examining Turkey's foreign policy in a changing world within the framework of old variables and new challenges. In this context, Turkey's historical claims are no longer merely a national past narrative but a part of the strategy of creating

space for itself in the changing international system. The authority vacuums and fragile state structures in the region are making Turkey's historical depth and regional role more visible. The reinterpretation of the National Pact in this new geopolitical context offers Turkey a wide room for maneuver in terms of security, diplomacy, and normative discourse production. However, the success of this process depends on the condition that Turkey does not disregard international law and regional stability principles (Klabbers, 2022). The data presented in the Findings section demonstrates that the new international order both encourages and constrains Turkey's reconsideration of its historical claims. The systemic transformation and normative restructuring debates addressed in the theoretical framework explain the theoretical foundations of this dual dynamic. Consequently, Turkey's historical rights discourse requires a balanced strategy between opportunities and limitations.

The intersection point of cultural continuity and strategic geography constitutes an important discussion area in addressing Turkey's process of reconsidering its historical claims. Many regions located on Turkey's southern and southeastern borders have historically been evaluated within the cultural and economic hinterland of Anatolia; in the National Pact, this approach was clearly documented. This cultural continuity is addressed in depth in Bilgin's (2023) study examining Turkey's changing geopolitical identity in the context of historical legacies and contemporary challenges. Today, the fragmentation of the societal fabric in Iraq and Syria has led to the disruption of the natural structure of this hinterland and has demonstrated that regional stability has become unsustainable (Phillips, 2020). In this context, Turkey's historical claims present not only a border matter but also a perspective toward the preservation of the region's cultural and socioeconomic integrity. In contrast, the sensitivity of the international community regarding ethnic and sectarian tensions in the region necessitates Turkey's careful direction of its historical rights discourse. The addressing of strategic geography and cultural continuity together may contribute to Turkey's developing a more holistic foreign policy framework. The societal and cultural connectivity data presented in the Findings section constitute the concrete foundations of this holistic approach. This finding demonstrates that historical claims require an expansion that includes not only security-centered but also cultural and humanitarian dimensions. The relationship between identity and foreign policy addressed in the theoretical framework explains the theoretical foundations of this cultural dimension. The post-Ottoman heritage areas debate emphasized in the literature review constitutes the academic ground of this cultural continuity.

This stage of the discussion demonstrates that Turkey's historical claims must be evaluated not merely as a reflection of the past but also as an effective instrument in the construction of the future regional order. In the multipolar system, as the interventions of great powers in the Middle East are becoming increasingly limited, the room for maneuver of regional actors is expanding (Fulton, 2022). This expanding room for maneuver corresponds with Aydin's (2023) study examining Turkey's regional diplomacy in the process of evolution from zero problems to strategic engagement. In this context, Turkey is positioned as a prominent actor due to both its military capacity, its diplomatic network, and its historical ties. The fact that the geographies to which the National Pact provides reference are today in a geopolitically fragile state creates both risk and opportunity for Turkey. For this reason, historical claims may provide a framework in regional restructuring and repair processes. However, the formulation of this framework in a manner consonant with international law, peaceful, and stability-producing carries critical importance (Crawford, 2019). The data presented in the Findings section confirms that Turkey can articulate its historical theses more effectively in the international arena to the extent that it achieves this balance. The argument regarding Turkey's regional role presented in the Introduction is directly connected to this discussion. The regional order and balance of power theories addressed in the theoretical framework explain the theoretical foundations of this future-oriented perspective. Consequently, historical claims must be repositioned as a strategic instrument that shapes the future rather than remaining stuck in the past.

The coming to the fore of Turkey's historical claims in the context of the new international order simultaneously demonstrates that the role of historical memory in Turkey's national identity

construction has strengthened. The preservation of the National Pact throughout the Republican period as both an ideal and a security reference reveals that historical memory is effective in foreign policy behaviors (Yavuz, 2021). This historical memory dynamic is addressed in Bilgin's (2022) study examining Turkey's regional power role between ambition and restraint in the context of the relationship between national identity and strategic behavior. Worldwide, the role that historical memory plays in international politics is not a situation specific to Turkey alone, and similar tendencies are observed in the foreign policies of states such as Russia, China, and India (Acharya, 2021). This tendency demonstrates that historical rights discourses have now become an area where national identity and strategic vision unite rather than a revisionist intention. In Turkey as well, the central role of the National Pact in memory ensures that foreign policy decisions rest on a long-term historical framework. The combination of this framework with the new international order may contribute to Turkey's developing a more predictable and continuous foreign policy. The national identity and historical memory data presented in the Findings section constitute the concrete foundations of this relationship. The findings of the research demonstrate that historical memory is becoming increasingly determinative in strategic behavior production. The identity theory and strategic culture debates addressed in the theoretical framework explain the theoretical foundations of this determinativeness. The relationship between national identity and foreign policy emphasized in the literature review constitutes the academic ground of this discussion.

Another important result revealed by this research is that Turkey's historical claims may function as an early warning mechanism for possible future crisis areas. The political fragility in northern Iraq, the cantonal structurings in Syria, and the competition in the Eastern Mediterranean demonstrate that Turkey is once again confronted with historical geopolitical challenges (Stein, 2023). The multidimensional nature of these challenges is examined in detail in Balci's (2023) study on regional security governance in the Middle East in the context of Turkey's role in a fragmented order. The instability in the regions indicated by the National Pact is re-strengthening Turkey's historical and security-based approaches regarding these areas. Within this framework, historical claims present an analysis framework not only as a foreign policy discourse but also in terms of crisis management and risk prediction. The memory of the fragmentation experiences lived during the Mudros and Sèvres periods makes Turkey more careful and strategic against similar dynamics today. For this reason, Turkey's historical perspective is a valuable data production area for the adaptation of national security policies to the future. The regional instability and security threat data presented in the Findings section constitute the concrete foundations of this early warning function. The findings of the research confirm that historical claims can be used as a strategic guide in the applied policymaking process. The security studies and strategic foresight debates addressed in the theoretical framework explain the theoretical foundations of this function. The objective of the research carrying a reference quality for policymakers emphasized in the Introduction is directly connected to this discussion.

In conclusion, this final stage of the discussion demonstrates that Turkey's reconsideration of its historical claims is becoming increasingly meaningful due to both historical necessities, regional realities, and changes in global power balances. This multilayered necessity corresponds with Acharya's (2022) analysis of how the cultural challenges of rising powers are transforming the world order. The multipolar structure of the new international order makes it possible for states to take more initiative regarding their own historical and strategic areas (Ikenberry, 2020). Turkey's reevaluation of the National Pact framework is for this reason a rational response given to both the transformation of the international system and the increase in regional instability. This framework offers Turkey a strong foreign policy ground from historical, strategic, and normative perspectives. However, the success of historical claims will depend on criteria such as international legitimacy, regional diplomacy, legal consistency, and capacity to produce stability (Klabbers, 2022). The importance of these criteria is emphasized in Crawford's (2019) comprehensive study on state formation and recognition in international law. The findings of this research demonstrate that Turkey can effectively use its historical

rights arguments to the extent that it observes these criteria. The hegemonic stability, power transition, regional security complex, and normative restructuring theories addressed in the theoretical framework explain the theoretical foundations of this discussion in an integrated manner. The academic gap identified in the literature review has been considerably filled with this discussion section. Thus, Turkey demonstrates that it possesses the power to transform its historical identity into a strategic advantage in the new international order. The fundamental argument and research question presented in the Introduction have been confirmed and deepened with this discussion section.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has demonstrated that Turkey's reevaluation of its historical claims originating from the National Pact has emerged as both a strategic necessity and a legal possibility in the twenty-first century, when global power distribution is undergoing a fundamental transformation. This conclusion presents an original contribution that goes beyond the fragmented approaches existing in the literature by addressing historical documents, international law norms, and contemporary geopolitical dynamics within an integrated analytical framework. The findings of the research demonstrate that with the relative weakening of American hegemony, the rise of China, and Russia's revisionist moves, the international system is evolving toward a multipolar structure; and that this evolution has created a distinct stretching in normative frameworks (Acharya, 2021). The main hypothesis presented in the Introduction, namely the prediction that the multipolar order provides a broader legitimacy ground for Turkey's historical theses, has been largely confirmed through the historical documents, comparative case analyses, and literature analyses examined throughout the research. The auxiliary hypothesis that "authority vacuums and non-state threats may support Turkey's historical claims on security grounds" has also been confirmed with concrete data in the Syria and Iraq examples. The National Pact borders, which are based on the regions the Turkish army de facto held under control on October 30, 1918, the date the Armistice of Mudros was signed, have ceased to be merely a historical reference and have also come to constitute the foundation of contemporary security strategies (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The state collapses, civil wars, and authority vacuums in the region have created direct security threats on Turkey's southern and southeastern borders; this situation has necessitated the National Pact perspective's gaining strategic depth (Phillips, 2020). This conclusion strengthens the fundamental thesis of the study and confirms that Turkey needs a proactive rights protection strategy in the new international order.

The second fundamental conclusion the study has reached is that the Greater Middle East Project has transformed the region into both a risk and an opportunity area. The data comprehensively analyzed in the literature review and findings sections has revealed that Condoleezza Rice's declarations that the borders of twenty-two countries in the region could change did not remain merely as discourse; on the contrary, it was concretized with the de facto collapse of state structures in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen (Gause, 2022). This fragmentation process indicates that the state-centered order established after Westphalia is eroding at the regional level. As predicted by the realist perspective addressed in the theoretical framework section, states enter the quest for security maximization in the anarchic environment of the international system; this situation renders Turkey's repositioning in its historical hinterland a rational strategy (Waltz, 1979). The research has demonstrated that the authority vacuums formed after the Greater Middle East Project have created security threats in Turkey's historical geography; however, at the same time, it has formed a ground for historical claims to become more visible in the international arena (Lynch, 2022). The fact that the Armistice of Mudros carries the quality of a temporary document aimed at limiting Turkey de facto rather than legally indicates its capacity for reinterpretability today (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). Similarly, the fact that the Sèvres draft never entered into force and the applicability of Lausanne remained dependent on the stability of regional order provides legal bases for Turkey to update its historical theses (Pedersen, 2021). In this context, the political turbulence triggered by the Greater Middle East Project requires the strategic use of historical bases for Turkey to place its regional rights quests on more solid ground.

The findings of the research support with concrete data that Turkey possesses legitimate claims based on historical, geographical, and demographic ties in regions such as Mosul, Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, and Western Thrace. The text of the National Pact clearly states that these regions are defined as "an inseparable integrity inhabited by the Ottoman-Islamic majority and legally indivisible" (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The fact that the Mosul question was left unresolved in the Lausanne negotiations and referred to the League of Nations does not mean that Turkey's historical right over this region has been eliminated; on the contrary, it carries the quality of "a suspended status" in international law (Oran, 2021). This finding is an important discovery demonstrating that the principle of *uti possidetis juris* in international law is not absolute and can be reinterpreted with the change of historical conditions (Crawford, 2019). The data presented in the Findings section demonstrates that the political fragmentation of Iraq following 2003 has transformed the status of Mosul into a renewed strategic debate area for Turkey (Hiltermann, 2022). International law literature states that historical rights can be brought back onto the agenda particularly in areas where state capacity has collapsed (Raic, 2022). In an environment where the United Nations system has lost its functionality, the ability of great powers to impose their own historical claims on the international system is expanding Turkey's capacity to develop legal arguments for its historical rights in a similar manner. For this reason, Turkey must meticulously analyze regional collapse dynamics and evaluate strategic opportunities while defending its historical rights doctrine.

Another important conclusion revealed by the study is that it has become a necessity for Turkey to assume a stability-producing role in its own historical hinterland against security threats in the geographies targeted within the scope of the Greater Middle East Project. The authority vacuum formed after the civil war in Syria has directly threatened Turkey's border security; this situation has rendered the "forward defense" approach inevitable in national security doctrine (Demir, 2022). The data emphasized in the Findings section demonstrates that Turkey's cross-border operations make possible not only the elimination of terrorist threats but also the shaping of regional order. This finding reveals that Turkey's historical claims are not merely a retrospective nostalgia but rather a rational reflection of contemporary security requirements (Kardaş, 2022). The process of Hatay's incorporation into Turkey through peaceful methods in 1939 proves as a historical example that legitimate unification models based on plebiscite, *de facto* control, and historical belonging are applicable in international law (Deringil, 2020). The National Pact's definition of "places remaining outside as an inseparable whole if they possess a Turkish element" reveals that the historical ties between communities living in northern Syria and Turkey must be taken into consideration (National Pact Declaration, 1920). Contemporary international relations literature identifies that states' tendency to reconstruct historical security corridors has strengthened (Phillips, 2021). This conclusion indicates that Turkey must reposition both its own borders and the destabilized areas surrounding it from a security perspective. Another critical conclusion revealed by this research is the necessity for Turkey to develop a multilayered strategy in the diplomatic, legal, and academic arenas as the new international order is being formed. As predicted by the theoretical synthesis approach addressed in the theoretical framework section, Turkey's historical claims are positioned at the intersection of realism, constructivism, international law, and geoeconomics. This multilayered theoretical approach constitutes one of the original contributions the study presents to the literature; it demonstrates that historical rights debates cannot be explained by a single theoretical perspective. In the current environment where normative frameworks are stretching in the international system, great power competition is intensifying, and regional conflicts are becoming chronic, it appears possible for Turkey to ground its claims not only with historical references but also with the principles of "responsibility to protect," "state failure," and "regional security" in international law (Bellamy, 2022). The historical legitimacy of the borders stated in the National Pact strengthens Turkey's legal position when evaluated together with the temporary or invalid character of documents such as Mudros and Sèvres (Treaty of Sèvres, 1920; Treaty of Lausanne, 1923). China's Belt and Road strategy, Russia's revisionist policies,

and American hegemony's regional restructuring attempts are directing Turkey to become more proactive due to its geographical position (Ikenberry, 2020). For this reason, Turkey should use its historical rights discourse as both a legitimizing and strategic instrument in the context of international law, regional stability, and global power balances. This conclusion supports the general hypothesis of the study and constitutes a solid conceptual foundation for subsequent recommendations.

For Turkey's future-oriented rights quests to rest on a rational ground, the historical context of the National Pact must be reconceptualized from an international law perspective. The historical context in which the National Pact was proclaimed carries the quality of a declaration of a nation's will to determine its own destiny and maintains its compatibility with regional realities today as well (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The emergence of this document simultaneously with the Wilson Principles and its presenting a legitimacy ground based on the right to self-determination constitutes an important normative basis in terms of international law (Shaw, 2021). Contemporary international relations literature reveals that states have redefined their historical border claims not merely as a nostalgic element but within the framework of national security and geopolitical necessities (Branch, 2023). In this context, Turkey's historical claims have gained greater visibility together with the shifts occurring in the power balances of the new international order. The collapse of state capacity in Iraq and Syria has led to borders losing their functional meaning; this situation has opened the way for Turkey to assume a reordering role in its historical corridors (Kaya, 2022). Nevertheless, Turkey's expressing its claims in consonance with universal principles on diplomatic and legal grounds will strengthen its legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. As emphasized by the constructivist approach addressed in the theoretical framework section, states' identity and history-based discourses possess the capacity to transform international norms (Wendt, 1999). Consequently, the study indicates the necessity of placing the historical rights doctrine within a framework compatible with contemporary international law.

The study has conspicuously revealed the importance of Turkey's using the principles valid in international law together with contemporary examples when defending its historical rights. Russia's forcing of the international system by using "historical belonging" theses regarding the Crimea and Donbas regions, while not constituting a direct precedent for Turkey, has demonstrated how normative frameworks can be stretched (Mankoff, 2022). On the other hand, China's historical sovereignty claims over Taiwan concretize how great powers transform historical discourses into foreign policy instruments (Zhang, 2023). Nevertheless, Turkey's adopting an approach that prioritizes peaceful methods and international legitimacy mechanisms, unlike these examples, will strengthen the ethical and legal foundations of its historical rights quest. These examples are an indicator that the relationship between power and law in the international system is increasingly taking on a more pragmatic structure. When evaluated from Turkey's perspective, the historical, cultural, and geographical belonging ties in areas such as Mosul, Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, and Western Thrace constitute a strong foundation for legal debates (National Pact Declaration, 1920). Additionally, the National Pact's findings regarding the population majority in these regions still carry a character open to debate when compared with contemporary demographic structure. The comparative case study applied in the research methodology section has demonstrated that Turkey's addressing its historical rights arguments together with contemporary examples will increase both academic and legal legitimacy.

One of the conclusions reached within the scope of the study is that Turkey must develop a multilayered policy not only in the international arena but also at the regional level when defending its historical rights. The authority vacuums in Syria and Iraq are leading to local actors gaining power and the intensification of Turkey's security concerns (Gerges, 2021). The fact that the areas controlled by Ottoman armies following the Armistice of Mudros were proclaimed as "national boundaries" in the National Pact demonstrates that the instability in these regions today constitutes both a historical and strategic context for Turkey (Armistice of Mudros, 1918). At the same time, the fact that the Mosul question postponed at Lausanne was not bound by a definitive international law provision creates a

theoretical possibility for Turkey to bring these issues back onto the agenda in the future (Oran, 2021). The human security approach emphasized in the literature review section reveals that Turkey's policies in these regions must be evaluated not only from the perspective of national security but also from the perspective of the welfare of regional communities (Newman, 2020). When the historical ties of the Turkmen, Arab, and Kurdish populations in the region are also taken into consideration, it is possible for Turkey to increase its influence capacity in these areas with multidimensional instruments such as humanitarian aid, security cooperation, economic investment, and cultural diplomacy. The data presented in the Findings section confirms that Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy activities constitute the soft power dimension of the strategy of establishing a regional sphere of influence (Aydin-Düzgit & Keyman, 2021). Consequently, Turkey's historical rights discourse requires not only a legal but also a socio-political strategy.

Another important conclusion the research has reached is the necessity for Turkey to strengthen its institutional and academic capacity in order to transform the fractures in the international system into opportunities. The structure of the new international order, full of uncertainties, has intensified the need for states to carry their own historical theses to the international arena in a more visible and effective manner (Acharya, 2021). Turkey can strengthen its diplomatic initiatives by readdressing the claims in historical documents such as the National Pact with both normative and strategic discourse (National Pact Declaration, 1920). Nevertheless, the correct conveyance to world public opinion of the historical context of a document such as Sèvres that never entered into force and did not produce legal consequences will consolidate Turkey's legitimacy position (Treaty of Sèvres, 1920). In this context, it carries critical importance for Turkey to republish historical documents at international academic standards, transfer archive materials to digital media, and increase its visibility on multilingual academic platforms. Contemporary international relations literature particularly emphasizes the strategic importance of middle-sized powers' increasing their "narrative-building capacity" as the new order is being formed (Nye, 2022). It carries critical importance for Turkey to increase its academic production, expand its international law expertise capacity, and develop multilingual diplomatic discourse in this context. The objective of "relating historical documents to contemporary international law norms" stated in the Introduction can only be realized with this institutional strengthening. For this reason, the study evaluates Turkey's institutional capacity as an inseparable component of the historical rights quest.

The conclusions also demonstrate that Turkey must effectively use international legitimacy mechanisms when advancing its historical claims in the new international order. The progressive dysfunctionalization of the United Nations system and great power competition's erosion of normative structures are opening a rights-seeking area for Turkey through alternative diplomatic channels (Bellamy, 2022). In this context, it carries great importance for Turkey to prepare comprehensive academic, diplomatic, and legal dossiers explaining the place of the National Pact in international law. Correctly interpreting the historical context of documents such as Mudros and Lausanne will strengthen the positions Turkey advances and provide more solid ground in international platforms (Pedersen, 2021). In this process, Turkey's training experts who have gained experience in international law courts and arbitration mechanisms will strengthen the legal dimension of historical claims (Klabbers, 2022). Additionally, assuming a more active role in regional organizations will contribute to Turkey's defending its claims without isolation (Aydin, 2023). Contemporary international law literature emphasizes that states must support their claims not only with power but also with the capacity to produce legitimacy (Sterio, 2020). As predicted by the English School perspective addressed in the theoretical framework section, while the norms of international society shape states' behaviors, states also possess the power to transform these norms (Bull, 1977). In this case, Turkey's using both diplomatic and normative instruments simultaneously emerges as a strategic necessity.

One of the important recommendations of the study is that Turkey should advance its historical claims not merely reactively but with a holistic strategy as the new international order is being formed. As

geopolitical competition sharpens in the multipolar power distribution, states' capacity to transform their historical rights discourses into foreign policy instruments has become determinative (Acharya, 2021). Turkey's reexamination of historical belonging and population ties on a scientific basis in the geographies determined within the framework of the National Pact will enable the development of strong arguments at the international level. Indeed, the demographic and geographical data from the period when the National Pact was proclaimed clearly reveal that a significant portion of the regions in question possessed an Ottoman-Islamic majority (National Pact Declaration, 1920). Today, the weakening of state authority in Iraq and Syria is creating opportunity areas for Turkey to consolidate its historical ties in these areas with humanitarian, cultural, and economic instruments (Gürkan, 2024). This recommendation constitutes a concrete step aimed at filling the gap identified in the literature review section that "Turkey's historical claims have not been systematically examined." Within this framework, it is recommended that Turkey intensify academic data production, field studies, and international archive research. The document analysis and comparative case study applied in the research methodology section are of a quality that can constitute the methodological framework for such studies. Thus, Turkey will be able to present its historical theses to the international community in a stronger and more objective manner.

Another fundamental recommendation is that Turkey systematically reorganize its historical claims in consonance with international law norms by increasing its legal argumentation capability. Historical rights doctrines in international law can come back onto the agenda particularly in areas where state capacity has collapsed and in de facto authority vacuums (Raic, 2022). For Turkey, the suspended legal status of regions such as Mosul and Kirkuk at Lausanne constitutes debate areas that may be carried to international processes in the future. The leaving of the final status of Mosul to the League of Nations in the Lausanne negotiations did not mean that this matter was absolutely closed; it was only postponed due to the power balances of the period (Pedersen, 2021). The principle of *rebus sic stantibus* in international law envisages that treaties can be reevaluated in case conditions change fundamentally; this principle provides a legal basis for Turkey's historical claims. When the temporary provisions of the Armistice of Mudros and the border determinations of the National Pact are read together, important elements that will strengthen Turkey's legal theses emerge (Armistice of Mudros, 1918; National Pact Declaration, 1920). Contemporary international law literature emphasizes that states must systematically use historical documents to legitimize their international rights quests (Sterio, 2020). The international law perspective addressed in the theoretical framework section has demonstrated how the principles of the right to self-determination and *uti possidetis juris* can be related to Turkey's theses. For this reason, it is recommended that Turkey reorganize both its historical and legal discourse with a holistic methodology.

Another critical recommendation revealed by the research is that Turkey must increase its soft power and diplomatic capacity alongside hard power elements in the new international order. At the regional level, humanitarian aid, cultural diplomacy, and initiatives to establish ties with religious and ethnic communities will create a legitimacy area compatible with Turkey's historical claims (Nye, 2022). The authority vacuums experienced in post-Ottoman geographies are facilitating Turkey's reestablishing relations with communities in its historical hinterland. The National Pact's emphasis on "the inseparable integrity of places inhabited by the Ottoman-Islamic majority" is increasing the strategic value of the diplomatic and cultural ties to be developed with communities in the region today (National Pact Declaration, 1920). Turkey's demonstrating presence in these regions with economic development projects, education programs, and health investments will both strengthen regional stability and ensure the consolidation of the historical rights discourse on societal ground (Phillips, 2021). It was revealed in the Findings section that energy geopolitics is a determinative variable in Turkey's regional strategy; in this context, energy infrastructure investments and transit corridor projects should be evaluated as strategic instruments that will increase soft power capacity (Stevens, 2021). The data presented in the Findings section confirms that Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy activities constitute the soft power

dimension of the strategy of establishing a regional sphere of influence (Aydin-Düzgit & Keyman, 2021). This approach reveals that hard power policies will not be sufficient alone; a multidirectional strategic framework is mandatory. Consequently, Turkey's historical rights quest should be based on policies that prioritize the welfare and stability of regional peoples.

Another recommendation of the study is that Turkey should develop a broad-based diplomatic coalition strategy when defending its historical claims in international platforms. Assuming a more effective role in regional organizations and international institutions will facilitate Turkey's defending its own theses without isolation (Aydin, 2023). In a period when the United Nations system is progressively becoming dysfunctional, the strengthening of alternative diplomatic networks will increase Turkey's maneuverability (Bellamy, 2022). When historical documents are examined, particularly the National Pact's emphasis on a solution based on the will of the peoples in the region presents a strong argument that can be used in contemporary diplomatic initiatives (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The geopolitical coding approach addressed in the theoretical framework section reveals the potential of Turkey's historical connections in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Middle East to be transformed into contemporary cooperation mechanisms (Özkan, 2022). Additionally, Turkey's establishing multilateral security and cooperation mechanisms in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Middle East will place historical rights debates in a solution-oriented context rather than conflict. The academic studies emphasized in the literature review section demonstrate that medium-sized states increase their international influence through regional coalitions (Branch, 2023). As predicted by the English School approach addressed in the theoretical framework section, states that move within the norms of international society receive broader acceptance (Bull, 1977). For this reason, the expansion of Turkey's diplomatic capacity should be an inseparable element of the historical rights quest.

The conclusions demonstrate that Turkey must synthesize both security-centered and humanitarian-based approaches when advancing its historical claims in the context of the new international order. The state collapses experienced in Iraq and Syria have revealed the necessity for Turkey to pursue a historical depth strategy for border security (Demir, 2022). However, this strategy should be a multidirectional policy that takes into account not only military methods but also population mobility, humanitarian crises, and regional sociological transformations. This multidirectional approach will consolidate Turkey's regional power position while also strengthening its legitimacy in the eyes of the international community; thus, historical claims will be perceived not as a revisionist demand but as a constructive contribution toward the establishment of regional stability. The principle of cultural, religious, and sociological integrity taken into consideration in the determination of the National Pact borders carries the quality of a historical guide for the policies to be implemented in these regions today (National Pact Declaration, 1920). Additionally, Turkey's assuming a stability-providing role in cross-border regions will be received more positively by the international community and will increase its legitimacy (Gürkan, 2024). Contemporary power politics has rendered states' using security and humanitarian approaches together a strategic necessity (Nye, 2022). The data presented in the Findings section confirms that Turkey's capacity to intervene in regional humanitarian crises is intertwined with the concepts of historical responsibility and geopolitical necessity. For this reason, Turkey's historical claims should be supported with a multidimensional, adaptable, and peace-oriented strategy.

This study has revealed that the new strategy Turkey will develop from the National Pact perspective must be based on a framework that will contribute not only to national security but also to international peace and stability. The state collapses, civil wars, and proxy wars in the region necessitate sustainable peace initiatives in Turkey's historical hinterland (Gerges, 2021). It is possible for Turkey to develop policies that prioritize regional peace based on the principles of "geographical integrity" and "the will of the peoples" that the National Pact has presented (National Pact Declaration, 1920). This approach positions Turkey's historical rights quest not merely from the perspective of the protection of national interests but also from the perspective of the reconstruction of regional order; thus, it presents a legitimacy framework that the international community can accept. Additionally, Turkey's assuming a

more active role in diplomatic resolution processes carries great importance in terms of both regional stability and international legitimacy. Contemporary international relations literature emphasizes that active participation in peace processes strengthens states' international position (Bellamy, 2022). As predicted by the English School perspective addressed in the theoretical framework section, states that move within the norms of international society and contribute to peace receive broader acceptance (Bull, 1977). For this reason, Turkey should support its historical claims not only with geopolitical but also with peace-oriented discourse. This approach will strengthen Turkey's position in the region and ensure its perception as a more effective actor in the international arena.

One of the recommendations of the study is also that Turkey should better ground its own theses by increasing academic and institutional production in the field of international law. Comprehensive studies analyzing how documents such as the National Pact and Lausanne are positioned in international law will provide scientific bases that will strengthen Turkey's discourse (Treaty of Lausanne, 1923). Additionally, when contemporary examples are examined, it is observed that states invest in intensive academic production to support their revisionist demands (Mankoff, 2022). Turkey must similarly increase its scientific capacity through universities, think tanks, and law centers. In this context, the establishment of interdisciplinary research centers that bring together the disciplines of international law, history, and international relations will strengthen Turkey's scientific production regarding historical claims in quality and quantity. This capacity will ensure that Turkey's theses are presented in a more persuasive manner both in international platforms and in bilateral relations (Sterio, 2020). At the same time, Turkey's digitizing historical documents and opening them to access by international researchers will increase academic interaction and raise the visibility of historical claims in the scientific arena. The filling of the academic gaps emphasized in the literature review section will only be possible with such institutional investments. For this reason, the study recommends that Turkey's academic production capacity be evaluated as a strategic power element.

Another critical recommendation revealed by the research is that Turkey must give more weight to economic integration and regional development projects in the context of the new international order. Economic dependency relationships and regional development projects will increase Turkey's influence by creating a soft power effect in historical rights debates (Nye, 2022). Active participation in reconstruction processes in Iraq and Syria will strengthen Turkey's presence based on historical and socioeconomic ties in these regions and consolidate its legitimacy. Since the geographies determined by the National Pact are historically regions with intensive economic interaction with Anatolia, it is possible for these connections to be reconstructed with contemporary projects (National Pact Declaration, 1920). The geoeconomics perspective addressed in the theoretical framework section emphasizes that economic dependency relationships can be an effective instrument in the legitimization of historical claims; however, this instrument must be used in a manner based on peaceful and mutual benefit principles. Turkey's energy corridor policies, trade routes, and cross-border development moves will both protect national interests and contribute to regional stability. The data presented in the Findings section confirms that energy geopolitics is a determinative variable in Turkey's regional strategy (Stevens, 2021). Contemporary international relations literature demonstrates that economic integration is a critical instrument in the resolution of political disputes (Branch, 2023). Consequently, Turkey's historical rights discourse should be supported with policies that center on economic cooperation.

Another important conclusion of the study is that Turkey must develop its strategic communication capacity within the new international order. Historical claims can be effective when conveyed correctly not only through diplomatic channels but also through international public opinion and media (Aydin, 2023). Turkey's correctly narrating the historical context of the National Pact, the character of Sèvres that never entered into force, and the matters Lausanne suspended in global communication networks carries strategic importance in an age when information wars are effective (Treaty of Sèvres, 1920; Treaty of Lausanne, 1923). This strategic communication should not remain limited to defending

Turkey's theses alone; it should also present a comprehensive narrative framework that includes a vision of regional peace, stability, and development. Contemporary international relations literature defines narrative-building capacity as one of the elements of national power (Nye, 2022). For this reason, Turkey must make its own theses visible in cooperation with multilingual publications, international media platforms, academic conferences, and global think tanks. Additionally, the effective use of digital diplomacy tools will strengthen Turkey's position in global discourse. As emphasized by the constructivist approach addressed in the theoretical framework section, states' identity and history-based discourses possess the capacity to transform international norms (Wendt, 1999). Thus, Turkey will be perceived as an actor that not only defends rights claims but also presents a vision of regional peace and stability.

This study has certain limitations, and the clear statement of these limitations is mandatory in terms of scientific honesty. First, since the research is predominantly based on historical documents and secondary sources, it has not been supported with field research data; this situation limits the testing of findings with contemporary societal realities. Second, since the study is written from a Turkish perspective, the viewpoints of other actors in the region (such as Iraq, Syria, Iran) could not be adequately represented. Third, due to the dynamic nature of international law, the legal analyses of the study may be affected by normative frameworks that change over time. These limitations present important openings for future research: field research examining the effects of Turkey's historical claims on the perceptions of regional peoples, multilateral studies that comparatively address the perspectives of different actors, and long-term research that follows the evolution of international law will enrich this field (Hudson, 2020). Additionally, the opening of the National Pact to international researchers through digital archive studies will increase academic production in this field in quality and quantity.

In conclusion, this study has comprehensively demonstrated that Turkey's reconsideration of its historical claims is a strategic need in terms of both the nature of the new international order and regional dynamics. When documents such as the National Pact, Mudros, Lausanne, and Sèvres are evaluated together, it is observed that Turkey's legal and historical arguments possess strong foundations (National Pact Declaration, 1920; Armistice of Mudros, 1918; Treaty of Lausanne, 1923). In addition to this, the evolution of the contemporary international order toward a multipolar structure has created an environment in which states can bring their historical rights discourses back onto the agenda (Acharya, 2021). The main hypothesis presented in the Introduction, namely the prediction that the multipolar order provides a broader legitimacy ground for Turkey's historical theses, has been confirmed through the historical documents, comparative case analyses, and literature evaluations examined throughout the research. This confirmation constitutes the foundation of the original contribution the study presents to the literature; it presents a new analytical framework regarding how historical rights debates can be related to contemporary international norms. Turkey's developing a holistic, multidimensional, and diplomatically strong strategy in this process carries critical importance in terms of both national interests and regional peace. This strategy should address the historical rights doctrine by synthesizing it with international law, regional stability, economic integration, humanitarian diplomacy, and security policies. Such an approach will both increase Turkey's international legitimacy and ensure that it becomes a more effective actor within the new international order. Ultimately, historical rights are not merely a legacy of the past but the cornerstones of a strategic vision that will shape the future regional order, and the construction of this vision within the framework of the principles of peace, stability, and mutual respect will serve the common interest of both Turkey and the peoples of the region.

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