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The roles of subnational and non-state actors in environmental governance :
Japan, Russia, and the northern fur seal conservation and management
in the North Pacific

(環境ガバナンスにおける地方公共団体および非国家主体の役割—日本、ロシア、および
北太平洋におけるキタオットセイ保護管理を事例として—)

Introduction

The fourfold growth in the global population over the past century, coupled with the rapid advancements in industrial fishing and the harvesting of marine wildlife, including mammals, since the 19th century, has significantly increased human pressure on the world's oceans. This pressure has been further intensified by the expansion and diversification of other marine activities, including navigation, military operations and weapon testing, resource extraction, construction, underwater cables, and waste disposal, impacting both coastal and pelagic areas.

The resulting dramatic decline in marine wildlife abundance and the degradation of the marine environment appeared as a striking illustration of the “tragedy of the commons.” As shown in the seminal work of Hardin (1968), if numerous independent individuals have unrestricted access to a finite, valuable resource (marine wildlife is a prime example), they will tend to overuse it, and, as exploitation technologies further improve, may end up depleting it. Even after the significant extension of national jurisdiction over coastal waters and the continental shelf, nearly two-thirds of the ocean surface remains beyond national jurisdiction, comprising the high seas. Therefore, much of the ocean may be viewed as part of the global commons.

Scientific progress and the rising awareness of the complexity and interconnected nature of marine ecosystems, along with the rise of independent states in the post-colonial era and democratization processes within many states, have led to the emergence of the concepts of environmental and marine governance. Governance is commonly understood as collective decision-making and policy implementation aimed at avoiding or reducing negative impacts and enhancing optimal outcomes.

The complexity of marine ecosystems is mirrored by the diversity of human actors involved in marine governance as stakeholders at different levels: local, regional, global, or national and international. In recent decades, scholarly attention has increasingly focused on

n the interactions between these actors, expanding the scope of research beyond central governments (states as actors) to include subnational government bodies, affiliated organizations, private companies and their associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and indigenous communities. However, the relative recency of this scholarly interest should not be taken to imply that these actors were absent or unimportant in earlier international efforts for marine wildlife conservation and management.

The North Pacific is a characteristic example of a marine area governed by numerous agreements, organizations and networks, shaped by a diverse range of actors and collectively forming a regime complex. The groundwork for this complex was laid by two successive northern fur seal (NFS) conservation and management regimes involving Japan, Russia/USSR, the US, and Canada. The 1911 Convention served as a model for later agreements on transboundary fish stocks. The North Pacific Fur Seal Commission, created by the 1957 Convention, set a significant precedent for regional scientific advisory bodies in marine living resource management. These two regimes, created soon after the Russo-Japanese War and during the Cold War, respectively, underscore the potential of environmental cooperation even amidst international tensions.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 significantly impacted global, regional, and bilateral economic and environmental interstate relations, including the North Pacific marine governance complex. Given the present crisis and its repercussions on Russia's ties with its North Pacific neighbors, and the general trend of the rising influence of subnational government bodies (SNGs) and non-state actors (NSAs) in environmental governance, it is pertinent to revisit the NFS regimes as the precursors to the later multilevel multi-stakeholder governance structures. The potential of SNGs and NSAs in developing and maintaining environmental cooperation channels in the North Pacific is also worth exploring.

This study identified the Japanese and Russian/Soviet actors within the NFS regimes and elucidated their roles. Using Putnam's (1988) "two-level game" framework and drawing on the recent leadership studies, I analyzed their interactions at both international and domestic levels. At the supra-state level, I assessed their influence in establishing and dismantling these regimes against the backdrop of broader marine wildlife conservation and management arrangements, and environmental governance evolution in general. At the sub-state level, I scrutinized the interests, tactics and channels of these actors, contextualized within broader domestic and international policy goals, and their contribution to the achievement of these goals by exercising various types of leadership.

At the theoretical level, this study aimed to clarify SNGs and NSAs' roles in environmental governance, including times when interstate relations are strained, and in the evolution of conservation philosophies and strategies. At the empirical level, this study filled a lacuna in research on the Japanese–Russian part of the North Pacific marine wildlife conservation and management regimes and contributed to obtaining a more complete picture of environmental governance in this region, particularly the emerging multilevel multi-actor governance structures and their cross-border effects.

Chapter 1

In Chapter 1, I reviewed recent scholarship on environmental governance and wildlife

conservation in search of the appropriate analytical tools and methods, and the previous studies and other materials related to the NFS regimes.

From the field of wildlife conservation and management, I borrowed the concepts of units, goals, approaches, strategies, and underlying philosophies, along with the values ascribed to wildlife in human society and its legal status. I trace the evolution of conservation and management goals from species-specific, such as the **maximum sustainable yield (MSY)**, to those goals cognizant of economic and ecological factors, such as the **optimum sustainable population (OSP)**, and the associated concept of the **potential biological removal (PBR)** level. The latter two are related to **ecosystem-based management (EBM)**, an integrated approach to the management of ecosystems and natural resources that seeks to balance ecological, economic, and social goals in a sustainable way. The evolution of marine wildlife management goals from the MSY to OSP, and of conservation units from species to ecosystems and stocks, were paralleled by a search for effective conservation strategies. In terms of the actors' involvement, two major strategies have been identified: conservation by exclusion and participatory/adaptive conservation. **Conservation by exclusion** is executed by the CG environmental agencies in a top-down "command and control" manner, creating strictly protected areas and evicting people from traditional dwellings and livelihoods, when necessary. The new **participatory/adaptive conservation strategy** involves and empowers communities and indigenous populations, mobilizing their traditions including use rights, thus marking the trend towards multi-actor interactive governance. The trends towards EBM and participatory/adaptive conservation set the stage for an integrated approach to managing marine and coastal areas, encompassing their diverse uses, such as the **integrated marine and coastal management (IMCAM)**. Wildlife conservation philosophy has evolved along two major strands: the **utilitarian or anthropocentric conservation** of wildlife as resources for human livelihood (consumptive use), and the **aesthetic conservation** of charismatic species and landscapes valued for cultural and religious reasons and intended for indigenous and other traditional non-consumptive uses. The latter strand gave rise to **ecocentric conservation** of wildlife as an indispensable part of ecosystems, or **environmentalism**. An alternative current to anthropocentric and ecocentric thinking is **compassionate conservation**, stressing the importance of each individual. It forms the basis of **animal welfare/well-being** and **animal rights** advocacy. These strands and currents are underpinned by different types of value attributed to wildlife: **instrumental** (associated with utilitarian conservation), **inherent** (forming the basis of aesthetic conservation), and **intrinsic** (one of the main premises of compassionate conservation). This broader shift toward recognizing the non-consumptive value of wildlife was accompanied by changes in its legal status: from **common property** (*res nullius*, which would become the property of the first party to catch them) towards **common concern**, recognizing a legitimate interest of states that cannot directly benefit from the consumptive use of a particular element of nature. The emergence of compassionate conservation, particularly, the animal rights' perspective, led to one further step in the evolution of the legal status of wildlife – raising the issue of **nonhuman personhood** for individual animals.

From the area of global governance, in addition to the concepts of **actors** (state, substate and nonstate) and **leadership** (structural, cognitive and relational), I borrowed Putnam's "**two-level game**" metaphor and **multilevel governance**. The "two-level game" metaphor depicts how central governments (CGs) simultaneously engage with the key stakeholder

rs at the domestic and international levels when devising international arrangements. Multilevel governance (MLG) is described as post-sovereign and post-territorial, multi-actor and multi-scalar, non-exclusive and non-hierarchical, with states and non-state actors working side-by-side as co-participants, coauthors, and co-executors of policy.

My main research method was a multi-case study of the involvement of Japanese and Russian actors in the pinniped conservation and management in the North Pacific. The cases selected include the two NFS regimes and several recent domestic MLG undertakings in Japan and Russia. For exploring the causal connections between CGs, SNGs and NSAs' actions and progress in negotiation or discussion of the NFS conventions, or their modification or abrogation I employed pattern matching (congruence testing), a method of **within-case analysis**. To assess the contributions of Japanese and Russian actors in the NFS regimes, I conducted **stakeholder mapping**, a method widely used in environmental governance. I aggregated information on the main Japanese and Russian stakeholders at different stages of the NFS regimes' existence in **stakeholder analysis tables**, categorizing them into various actor types, delineating their goals/expectations and roles, and rating their level of interest and influence on a scale of "high–medium–low". I visualized the results of the stakeholder analysis using **stakeholder grids**, which position stakeholders within a four-quadrant grid based on their interest and influence – represented by the X-axis and Y-axis, respectively – rated on a scale from high to low. To illuminate the specific features of the Japanese and Russian actors I drew **cross-case comparisons** with their US and Canadian counterparts in the context of both the NFS regimes and the US and Canadian domestic cases.

Chapter 2

In Chapter 2, I presented a brief overview of the NFS biology, ecology, and the history of fur sealing regulation in the North Pacific, drawing on data from previous studies and Japanese printed media starting from the late 19th century.

I examined the previously understudied domestic conditions and policy goals in Japan and Russia, framing these as the domestic tier of the "two-level game" and offering historical context for identifying key actors in Chapter 3. I also outlined the main features and stages of the NFS regimes, analyzing them in relation to the conservation goals, approaches, strategies, philosophies, and wildlife value categories introduced in Chapter 1. I highlighted the growing divergence in the parties' approaches to marine mammal conservation and management. Finally, I established the study's time frame, focusing on the periods when Japanese and Russian actors made particularly significant contributions, which were further explored in Chapter 3.

The time frame of my study is from the late 1880s, when the spread of commercial pelagic sealing triggered the first international conflicts in the North Pacific, to present. This time frame may be divided into 5 periods. Period 2 aligns with the duration of the first NFS regime based on the 1911 Convention, and period 4 aligns with the duration of the second NFS regime based on the 1957 Convention. Periods 1, 3, and 5, respectively, precede, intercede, and follow these two regimes. Previous studies have focused on the roles of US and British/Canadian actors and US-Japanese interstate interactions in negotiating the first NFS regime (period 1 and the transition to period 2), as well as the conflicts between US and Japa

nese goals and approaches to marine mammal conservation and management, which contributed to the collapse of the first and second NFS regimes (transitions from period 2 to 3 and from period 4 to 5). I examined the understudied roles of Japanese and Russian actors in the formation and dismantling of both NFS regimes, with particular attention to the transitions between periods 2 to 3 and 4 to 5, as well as the post-NFS regime period 5.

Chapter 3

In Chapter 3, I identified the key Japanese and Russian/Soviet state, substate, and non-state actors, and looked into domestic interactions between CG bodies with differing priorities and other actors, as well as the influence of SNGs and NSAs on the NFS regimes at the international level (the “two-level game”) during periods 1–4. I examined their motives, tactics, interconnections, and influence of these actors using the concept of leadership, considering their roles in light of domestic and foreign policy goals, regional and global trends in environmental governance.

Japan and Russia participated in the NFS regimes by engaging in a “two-level game”. At the international level, Japan and Russia’s MOFAs negotiated in both the bilateral and regional settings. Their positions and strategies were affected by such external factors as international conflicts and the ensuing territorial cessions including islands with the NFS rookeries, competition for the Okhotsk and Bering seas’ living resources, for political influence and economic interests in China and Korea. At the domestic level, the MOFAs interacted with the fisheries departments, which played a crucial role in restarting the two states’ diplomatic relations for fisheries regulation in the 1950s. Due to the resource periphery/frontier status of the SNGs involved, they had limited influence vis-à-vis the CGs. Both CGs and SNGs relied on companies for conducting fur sealing, which contributed to generating the regional and central revenues. In Russia, in periods 2–4, sealing companies were state-owned or controlled, and their interests were defended by the fisheries department. In Japan, sealing companies were private, but closely connected to the central and regional governments. This illustrates the absence of clear-cut boundaries between public and private actors in general.

The Japanese companies’ lobbying was one of the key factors in dismantling the 1911 regime, shaping the 1957 regime, and in Japan’s attempts to revise the 1957 Convention so that limited pelagic sealing would be allowed. Petitioning was one of the institutionalized channels for influencing the CG and legislators (many MPs were entrepreneurs with stakes in sealing). Other channels included the mass media, such as journals published by the Japan Fisheries Society. Unlike the Russian government, the Japanese government and MPs needed the votes and support of the sealing and fishing industry (particularly in periods 2 and 4), which employed a larger share of the North Pacific coastal population than their Russian counterparts.

The Japanese and Russian experts had stronger affiliations with the fisheries departments than academia, and their research was guided more by the CG objectives, although in Japan the companies enlisted the support of some experts. Both Japanese and Russian experts participated in and contributed to the negotiations of the NFS conventions from period 1. Despite the military conflicts between the two states, their experts were able to mainta

in some contact and even make visits and interact at the negotiations of the NFS and other fisheries-related conventions.

Similar to their US and Canadian counterparts, the Japanese and Russian experts provided cognitive leadership, which influenced the NFS regimes' dynamics. They played a significant part in determining separate NFS stocks (called "herds" in both NFS conventions), which made the NFS regimes oriented towards stock-based rather than species-based conservation. Although they disagreed on aspects of the NFS biology and ecology, such as the damage caused by pelagic sealing and the NFS's impact on commercial fisheries, they cooperated under the 1957 Convention to elucidate the feeding habits and the extent of intermingling of NFS stocks in period 4. These joint studies also examined the seals' dependence on fish stocks in Japan's coastal waters, particularly around Hokkaido, and, consequently, the impact on the livelihoods of the Japanese fishing community. The cooperation and cognitive leadership of the experts were crucial in extending the life of the 1957 Convention, which had initially been concluded as an interim instrument. Their scientific advice was seen by the parties' CGs as sufficiently objective and convincing to serve as the foundation for protocols that modified the provisions and extended the term of the convention.

Overall, at the domestic level, the Russian actors in periods 1–4 were supervised and controlled by the CG, whereas in Japan companies formed associations and allied with experts, SNG and CG legislative and executive bodies to influence Japan's negotiating position at the international level. However, it should not be inferred that the Japanese CG was controlled by private companies. The former also exerted control over the companies and responded to their pleas only when they were compatible with the other policy objectives. Despite the lobbying and petitioning by the Japanese sealing companies in the early 1950s, Japan's CG refused to lift its ban on pelagic sealing and proceeded to negotiate the 1957 Convention. Although the wording of the convention and its subsequent protocols reflected the concerns of Japanese fishing and former sealing interests, the US and USSR refused to modify its provisions to allow commercial pelagic sealing.

In evaluating the role of Japanese companies in the NFS regimes in periods 1–3, particular attention should be given to the relational leadership demonstrated by "cross-category" individuals, such as Risuke Sumi, Keishi Ishino, Hitoshi Doke, Miyozo Takakusa, Seiroku Tsutsumi, who acted in the capacity of entrepreneurs, government officials, MPs, experts, journalists etc.

Russian and Japanese indigenous inhabitants have been instrumental in sealing, and their needs have been cited by both states as a justification for securing a special sealing quota at the international level. However, at the domestic level the traditional rights have existed mostly on paper, and, unlike the US and Canada, Japan and Russia's CG regulatory bodies have not yet launched co-management arrangements with their North Pacific indigenous communities.

Both the 1911 and 1957 NFS conventions exemplify a top-down conservation by exclusion strategy, implemented by CGs. Nevertheless, they did acknowledge the interests of indigenous communities, with the 1957 Convention notably assigning a significant role to experts, albeit primarily those affiliated with the government.

However, the paradigm shifts in conservation strategies and philosophies outlined in Chapter 1, along with the interrelated changes in the composition of the relevant actors in th

the North Pacific states, created a rift between the US and other parties to the 1957 Convention, ultimately undermining the second NFS regime. A key factor in its collapse was the gradual US shift away from species-specific, MSY-based utilitarian management of the NFS, as reflected in the 1972 MMPA, which emphasized the aesthetic (inherent) value of marine mammals.

Another significant driver was a transition from a top-down to a participatory/adaptive conservation strategy, as demonstrated by the 1983 amendment to the 1966 Fur Seal Act. This amendment transferred certain federal powers to the SNG (the State of Alaska) and the Indigenous self-governing bodies (such as the tribal councils of St. George and St. Paul). Alongside the evolution towards ecocentric conservation, US environmental NGOs successfully advanced the discourse of compassionate conservation, affirming the intrinsic value of marine mammals and paving the way for initiatives supporting their legal personhood. They displayed cognitive leadership in persuading the US Senate to reject the ratification of any further protocols extending the term of the 1957 Convention.

Whereas many previous studies underscore the role of the US environmentalists in the formation and dismantlement of both NFS regimes, the role of non-US actors, such as the Japanese sealing companies or Russian and Japanese experts and fisheries departments, have long remained overlooked. However, it may be argued that the Japanese sealers were instrumental in highlighting the connection between the NFS harvesting, conservation, and the NFS impact on fishing as an alternative use of the North Pacific waters. The long-running conflict between these US and Russian conservation- vs. Japanese sealing/fishing-oriented perspectives revealed itself in the successive protocols to the 1957 Convention.

The US wildlife protection movement, its activists and their organizations played a significant role in the emergence of the first NFS regime in period 1 and the dismantlement of the second one in period 4. By contrast, in Japan and Russia/the USSR environmental activists were not among the key actors, although conservation concerns had been voiced by other actors. For instance, in Russia, the CG, SNG bodies and experts were unanimous in placing the blame on foreign pelagic sealers and poachers, using it as an argument for stronger state control over marine living resources.

In period 5, Japanese and Russian environmental agencies and affiliated research institutes were created, new domestic legislation protecting wildlife as part of ecosystems adopted, and ENGOs and recreational companies (seal watching, aquariums etc.) emerged. These developments, following the patterns observed in the Northeast Pacific states, the US and Canada, have diversified the stakeholders in marine mammal conservation and management in the Northwest Pacific. They marked the shift towards EBM and IMCAM, participatory and compassionate conservation in Japan and Russia.

To contextualize the Japanese and Russian actors' roles, I provided a general picture of the North Pacific regional marine wildlife conservation and management from the early 20th century, indicating the ongoing transition from single-species marine living resource management to ecosystem-based management (EBM) and integrated marine and coastal area management (IMCAM), as well as from utilitarian conservation by exclusion to more compassionate and participatory approaches. The end of the Cold War provided a fresh impetus for development of regional governance in the North Pacific, leading to a diversification of actors at both international and domestic levels. Conservation efforts for marine wildlife were c

onsolidated, with PICES emerging as a primary forum for experts, while regional networks such as NEAC, NAPEP, NOWPAP, and NEASPEC/NEAMPAN facilitated data exchange and policy coordination among diverse actors, including scientists and ENGOs. The improved understanding of marine ecosystems, the growing recognition of the importance of habitat protection, and the ongoing shift from species-specific to ecosystem-based management led to the extension of coastal states' cooperation to areas beyond national jurisdiction, as illustrated by global and regional agreements: the 1992 CBD, the 1994 Donut Hole Agreement, 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, 2012 North Pacific High Fisheries Convention, and 2023 UNCLOS BBNJ Agreement. The high seas are no longer regarded as commons open to unregulated fishing, and preservation of biodiversity is becoming a common concern. This trend further enhances the shift towards global governance and involvement of sub- and non-state actors. Technological advances and societal change have generated new coastal and marine area uses, such as offshore oil and gas exploration, submarine cables, tourism etc., and heightened the awareness of the necessity of their integrated management (IMCAM). These factors account for the increasingly global, or post-sovereign, nature of marine governance and involvement of multiple actors, as witnessed by their involvement in the North Pacific regional networks.

In the concluding sections, I explored the current situation following the dismantlement of the second regime and the outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine. I outlined Japan and Russia's legal and institutional frameworks for marine mammal conservation and bilateral cooperation, drawing comparisons to the US and Canadian frameworks. I also introduced several recent domestic and cross-border cases of multi-actor multilevel cooperation on pinniped conservation and management in Japan and Russia, highlighting the role of new actors such as environmental government agencies and NGOs, and assessed the impact of the war in Ukraine on these emerging frameworks and actors. Neither Japan nor Russia has large-scale commercial sealing or whaling any longer, and no seal or whale watching industry of a scale comparable to that in the US and Canada yet. Thus, the marine mammal conservation and management issues in Japan and Russia mainly arise with respect to the bycatch, competition with commercial fisheries (particularly in Japan), and marine (e.g. plastic) pollution issues. In the absence of dedicated CG or SNG departments in charge of marine mammal conservation and management or powerful commercial interests, marine mammal protection in the two states is driven by researchers, the civil society and ENGOs as their representatives, who have pioneered MLG arrangements. Until the war in Ukraine, ENGOs played a significant role in marine mammal conservation and management in Russia, cooperating with all actors. The Russian branches of WWF, IFAW, and Greenpeace partnered with SNGs and municipalities, oil and gas developers, indigenous communities etc. for marine mammal monitoring, education, cleanups, rescuing, and habitat protection. Many of the experts from these ENGOs were affiliated with Russian academic institutions, which helped them gain the trust of their Russian partners, despite the widespread distrust of international organizations, often suspected of serving foreign government interests in Russia.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 led to the "war of sanctions," heightened the security concerns and put to test the emerging cross-border and Russian MLG arrangements for marine wildlife conservation and management in the North Pacific. The Japanese CG and other actors' cooperation with their Russian counterparts was disrupted by the constraints

imposed by both states for security reasons and further complicated by financial and logistical obstacles. Nevertheless, cooperation between the two states on fisheries regulation and search and rescue operations persisted, with some academic and SNG-level contacts remaining in place. Some North Pacific regional cooperative frameworks and forums also continue to function, with Russian experts and other NSAs contributing to the maintenance of regional environmental governance.

However, the war in Ukraine has had a far-reaching negative impact on Russia's academic community (triggering the largest brain drain since the dissolution of the USSR), the private sector (due to sanctions and the severance of business ties with foreign partners, including Japan), and indigenous communities (which have been most severely affected by the military draft and suppressed by the CG). Russian ENGOs also came under fire, as demonstrated by the designation of WWF Russia as an "undesirable organization" and the termination of its cooperation agreement with Chukotka SNG.

Conclusion

This thesis was conceived as an ambitious effort to clarify SNGs and NSAs' roles in environmental governance, including periods of strained interstate relations, and in paradigm shifts in conservation and management units (from species to stocks), goals, instruments (introduction of trade-related measures, supranational commissions and monitoring), philosophies and strategies in the North Pacific and beyond. For this purpose, I conducted a case study of the oldest successive international regimes for marine wildlife conservation and management – the northern fur seal (NFS) regimes. I aimed to construct a broader picture of marine wildlife conservation and management evolution and the related institutional complexity in the North Pacific. This involved drawing comparisons with other North Pacific fisheries regimes and reviewing the NFS regimes within the wider context of marine mammal conservation and management. I also addressed a research gap on the Japanese-Russian part by integrating fragmented findings from previous studies on the NFS regimes, Japanese-Russian diplomacy and fisheries relations. Studies on Japanese-Russian environmental cooperation had been scarce, a situation that has not improved and has been further exacerbated by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The results of this study shed light on the Northwest Pacific side of the NFS regimes' history. They demonstrate that, contrary to traditional descriptions of them as CG-led, SNGs and NSAs played a major role in the formation, development and dismantlement of these regimes, as well as in subsequent domestic and cross-border undertakings for marine mammal conservation and management in Japan and Russia. The previous studies emphasized the structural, cognitive and relational leadership exercised by the American actors. This thesis elucidates the roles of Japanese companies and individuals acting in multiple capacities in shaping the NFS regimes against the backdrop of the transition from the top-down conservation by exclusion towards a more participatory/inclusive conservation.

During the lifespan of the NFS regimes, the Japanese and Russian CGs had to simultaneously engage with each other at the international level and interact with the other actors at the domestic level, in a "two-level game." It was further complicated by coalitions between actors and close interaction between personalities representing several actors or changin

g affiliations between public, private and academic organizations.

The emergence of new actors and their networks and the ongoing transition from single-species marine wildlife management (exemplified by the NFS regimes) to EBM and IMC AM at the regional and domestic level in the North Pacific produced new multi-actor governance patterns, which cannot be explained by the “two-level game” metaphor only. Application of the non-hierarchical and post-territorial MLG concept allowed me to compare the recent trends in Japan and Russia’s marine mammal conservation and management and to demonstrate that they have been moving towards the co-management models pioneered by the US and Canada.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has severely curtailed the Russian SNGs and NSAs’ power vis-à-vis the CG and hampered domestic MLG undertakings and cross-border cooperation with Japan on marine wildlife conservation and management. Nevertheless, some bilateral agreements and regional frameworks, as well as communication channels between Japan and Russia’s SNGs and NSAs, remain operational. Multilateral formats that involve states with divergent policy objectives and NSA representatives may prove to be more resilient during international crises. Hybrid arrangements and dialogue platforms comprising state and non-state actors may also be less vulnerable to interstate confrontation and therefore more resilient. MLG frameworks may play a positive role in restarting regional cooperation in the North Pacific after the normalization of Russia’s relations with its neighbors.