

# **Followership in International Relations: East Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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**August 2014**

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## Abstract

Traditionally, international relations literature has been focused on analyzing behaviors of great powers, or 'leaders'. Recently, more attention is given to small powers or secondary states especially in Asia but a systematic analysis on secondary states is yet to come. In this research, I borrow from Barbara Kellerman's work on followership to answer the question how are follower states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century increasing their influence to overcome their material capabilities? I attempt to confirm Kellerman's answer that followers boost their influence by 'engaging' in international relations. I devise two hypotheses to test the relationship between a follower state's level of engagement and amount of influence on leaders. Four cases were tested (Japan, Russia, ASEAN and North Korea) with the two-factor model that calibrated independent variable; amount of hard power, and dependent variable; level of engagement. The findings of the research confirm the relationship between a follower state's level of engagement and its amount of influence on leaders. It concludes that even states with little hard power can exert influence on the leaders by maintaining high level of engagement (ASEAN and North Korea). Also, states with large amount of hard power have less influence than their rank (hard power) would suggest if their level of engagement remains low (Japan and Russia). The findings of this research pose two implications. First, smaller states can use 'engagement' as a tool to increase their soft power and overcome their limited material capabilities. Second, as illustrated with the case of North Korea, states with high level of engagement should be monitored by fellow follower states since ill-determined influence can inflict negative impact on the international system as a whole.

## I . Introduction and Literature Review

Traditionally, international relations literature has been focused on analyzing behaviors of great powers, or 'leaders'. Recently, more attention is given to small powers or secondary states especially in Asia. However, the efforts are still seminal and divergent. To begin with, the traditional grand theory debate has three different opinions on secondary state behaviors. First, Realist scholars argue secondary states balance just like any other states do (Waltz 1979). Waltz claims that regardless of their size, states (small or large) will balance against the biggest power (capability)<sup>1</sup>. Second, others argue that small states will 'bandwagon' with the big powers in order to share the spoils of victory (Schweller 1994). Schweller contends that smaller or weaker states are compelled to respond to pressure by bigger states. Finally, there are scholars that argue small states' behaviors are unpredictable (Levy 2003; Walt<sup>2</sup> 1987). Because small states' position within the structure is different from that of major powers, their behaviors are affected by non-structural factors such as domestic

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<sup>1</sup> Waltz argued "secondary states, if they are free to choose, will flock to the weaker side" (Waltz 1979, 127).

<sup>2</sup> Walt argues that threat perception is the main factor that decides which states to align against. According to Walt, variable such as aggregate power, geographical proximity, aggressive capability, and intention amount to creation of threat perception (Walt 1987).

situation, history, geography, and local power relations, hence, unpredictable. In Europe where most IR debates took place until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the role of small powers was minimal and insignificant. Therefore, theories on secondary states rarely received attention and scholars saw little harm in simply stating that small state behaviors are unpredictable.

In the wake of 21<sup>st</sup> century, secondary states, especially those in East Asia began to receive increasing attention along with the issue of rising China. Debate over whether China will replace the US as the next hegemon is always followed by the debate on whether neighboring states are balancing or bandwagoning with rising China. Contemporary debate on secondary state behaviors has three features. First, the term ‘balancing’ is being expanded. The term ‘hard balancing’ replaced the original definition of ‘balancing’ since military balancing rarely takes place in this century especially in East Asia. New term ‘soft-balancing’ is now widely used to describe the behaviors of secondary states in response to China’s rise (Pempel 2010). ‘Soft-balancing’ is a non-military form of balancing using economic, cultural or diplomatic measures. Second, the term bandwagoning is being replaced by the term ‘accommodating’. Accommodating refers to a milder version of bandwagoning where secondary states would less overtly side with the big power by allowing its influence. David Kang comes up with a spectrum of behaviors ranging from hard-balancing, hedging, accommodating and bandwagoning depending on the amount of fear that a secondary state feels toward a rising power. He argues that East Asian states are mostly accommodating/hedging China rather than balancing her<sup>3</sup>. Robert Ross also contends that secondary states tend to accommodate China. However, Ross’s indicators are economic and military capabilities combined and he argues that balance of power realism explains alignment behavior of East Asian states as much as it does that of European states (Ross 2006). On the other hand, scholars like Acharya take a middle ground and argue that states are engaging China rather than accommodating (Acharya 2003). Third, new terms are being invented to describe secondary state behaviors. Evelyn Goh coined the term ‘omni-enmeshment’ to describe Southeast Asian states’ behavior. She argues that Southeast Asian states, especially ASEAN member states, are enmeshing big powers in an intricate web of institutions in order to check hegemonic behavior (Goh 2007/2008).

Despite copious efforts, previous literature lacks in three aspects. First, there is no systematic tool exclusively designed to analyze secondary state behaviors. Some scholars use existing terms and apply them to secondary state behaviors (Acharya 2003; Pempel 2010; Kang 2013; Ross 2006) while others comes up with new terms (Goh 2007/2008). Lack of systematic tool focused on secondary states creates confusion and overlaps in assessment. Second, existing research overlooks the influence that secondary state behaviors have on super powers. Super power leadership and secondary states’ followership form a two-way traffic but only one side of that relationship is highlighted. Descriptions of different secondary state behaviors are provided but there is no analysis on if and how a certain type of secondary state behavior affects the superpower. Most scholars assume that secondary states behaviors are always reactive and passive. Third, most literature regarding secondary state behaviors in East Asia are focused too much on the rise of China. It is undeniably true that in East Asia, China’s influence is increasing. It is also true that in East Asia, small states are becoming increasingly active but not all small state behaviors are direct responses to China’s rise. In order to overcome these shortcomings of previous research, I borrow from Barbara Kellerman’s research on followership and apply it to IR context. Her work constitutes a systematic analysis exclusively focusing on the role of followers and their influence on leaders (Kellerman 2008). Even though her work is primarily drawn

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<sup>3</sup> Kang categorized Taiwan as ‘balancing against China’, Philippines, South Korea, Japan as ‘hedging’ China, Vietnam, Malaysia as ‘accommodating’ China and North Korea as ‘bandwagoning’ with China (Kang 2013).

from the field of business, it has much bearing on International Relations as well as I shall prove in the subsequent chapters.

## **II. Motivation and Research Question**

As the title suggests, Kellerman's book is about how followers create change and change leaders. The question of "how do people with less power, authority, and influence wrest some away from those who have more?" has always existed throughout history. Then, why is Kellerman addressing this issue again in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Because the changes that this century has brought us have made it easier for followers to 'create change and change leaders' (Kellerman 2008, 126). Kellerman asserts that the fruits of Information Revolution such as the Internet have changed the dynamic between those who hold positions of power and those who do not (Kellerman 2008).

Then why is it important to apply this concept to IR in East Asia now? Because the 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought on similar trends of change in international relations to what Kellerman has described. First, Globalization has increased countries' interdependence. Intricate web of International trade binds countries of different size, wealth and location. As Nye and Keohane rightly pointed out, complex interdependence has transformed international politics in fundamental ways<sup>4</sup>. Second, Information Revolution has brought on many changes in the ways countries conduct foreign relations. Foreign relations are conducted in a less covert way and public opinion gained much more weight due to increased media activities and SNS (Social Networking Service).

Because of these two major changes, the leadership in IR today looks very different from that during the Cold War. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, increased interdependence raised the cost of damaging trade relations so it became more difficult for a powerful state to impose on others. During the Cold War, there was virtually no trade between the economies of the free world and socialist states. Politics and economy went hand in hand which left secondary states in each camp with very little choice but to obey their leader because their economy depended solely on them<sup>5</sup>. However in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, American and Chinese economies are closely connected to each other and to the world economy which gives more breathing room for secondary states. For instance, Japan is one of closest US allies in East Asia but her largest trading partner is China. This makes it more difficult for the US to impose a certain trading policy on Japan when her major trading partner is not the US. The same goes for South Korea and Philippines. During the Cold War when US-Soviet dichotomy was severe, all secondary states had to either balance or bandwagon. Because states rarely refused to choose, the term 'hedging' was coined for those who didn't choose sides. But today, it is becoming increasingly meaningless to characterize a secondary state's behavior as 'hedging' because technically everyone is hedging only to a varying degree.

Moreover, increased access to information has boosted the role of public opinion in foreign policy decision making which also endows secondary powers with more leverage. These days, a 'secret deal' where a superpower and smaller state would exchange economic benefits and political influence is very difficult to get past the eyes of the judging public. Overall, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, smaller states with less power are increasingly influencing more powerful states and their foreign

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<sup>4</sup> Nye and Keohane characterize complex interdependence in three aspects. First, the use of multiple channels of action between societies in interstate, transgovernmental, and transnational relations. Second, the absence of a hierarchy of issues with changing agendas and linkages between issues prioritized. Third, the objective of bringing about a decline in the use of military force and coercive power in international relations (Keohane and Nye 2011).

<sup>5</sup> For more detail on the US-USSR dichotomy during the Cold War, see (Gaddis 1997).

policy. Then, the question permeating this research is, how exactly are they doing this? How are smaller states influencing bigger states despite their disadvantage in capability? Barbara Kellerman answers, by engaging. And this research proves that her answer can be positively verified in IR as well.

### **III. Research Design (Synthesis)**

#### **(1) Defining Followers in International Relations**

Kellerman defines followers as those “in subordinate roles in which they have less power, authority and influence than do their superiors and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line(Kellerman 2008, 86)”. She makes a clear distinction between followers defined by rank and followers defined by behavior and emphasizes how she defines followers by rank, not by behavior. In other words, ‘followers’ are those who are given the position of followers, not those who act like followers. There have been many passive leaders in history who followed their subordinates rather than lead, however, they are still considered leaders. Therefore, followers are those who inherently have lower rank than leaders in an organization and naturally have less power, authority and influence.

Now applying her definition of followers to International Relations, these three elements - power, authority and influence – should be adjusted. First, in international relation, authority is absent in the structure of anarchy. Sometimes powerful states’ capability to coerce or pressure others is misunderstood as having authority. However, being able to impose on others using superior capabilities does not mean having authority to do so. In the case of a government, a president’s authority comes from the position itself not from the capability he/she has. Of course, a powerful president with charismatic features and wide supporter base would strengthen his/her authority but even the most unpopular and incompetent president would still have the same authority listed in the constitution once he/she is elected. On the other hand, in International Relations, super power status and the coercive capability (which is often perceived as authority) comes from aggregate power. The US is considered a superpower because of its superior military/economic capability not because other states elected the US to be one. Therefore, because there is no world government to grant authority<sup>6</sup>, it is insignificant to talk about state’s authority in IR.

Now, I turn to the concept of power and influence in international relations. Traditionally in international relations, ‘power’ was used to refer to ‘military and economic capabilities’ in Waltzian<sup>7</sup> sense. However in the post Cold War era, new concepts of ‘power’ are being invented or rather, discovered. Joseph Nye expanded the concept of power and coined the term ‘soft power’ which refers to the ability to “get others to want the outcomes you want” rather than “getting others to do what you want (Nye 2004, 5)”. Nye explained that this ‘soft power’ is the second face of power while describing the traditional concept of power (economic and military power) as ‘hard power’ (Nye 2004). Therefore in IR, states possess two different types of power; hard power (economic and military capabilities) and soft power<sup>8</sup>.

As I mentioned earlier, Kellerman defines follower by rank not by behavior. In the case of a

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<sup>6</sup> The United Nations and its Security Council is the closest we have to an ‘authority’ in international relations. However, it is not a world government and it would be rather far-fetched to argue so for two simple reasons. First, not all countries in the world are member of UN. Second, even though UN does have uniformed military personnel, the authority to deploy the troops is not monopolized.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Waltz argued that in international relations, states are functionally undifferentiated entities and they are distinguished only by their varying capabilities which are economic and military strength (Waltz 1979).

<sup>8</sup> Nye also adds that the distinction between hard and soft power is not so clear. In reality, hard and soft power work interactively and often times it is difficult to distinguish the boundaries (Nye 2004).

company, rank is fixed within the structure and understood in a relative scale. No matter how incompetent a CEO is, his/her power within the company will be larger than that of a competent manager. Also, being a CEO wouldn't mean much when the company is constituted of 1 board and 3 CEOs. The position of CEO is only powerful because it has 'more' power than others in the company. In this sense, 'rank' has many similarities with 'hard power' in that they are both rather fixed and understood in a relative scale. A state's hard power is often fixed and limited by factors that are more or less permanent. For instance, simply because of its sheer size, South Korea's GDP could hardly be expected to trump that of China. Also, the advantage of first-mover<sup>9</sup> will not allow Southeast Asian countries' economies to be more developed than that of Japan's no matter how fast they are catching up. Also, the US is considered superpower because it has 'more' capabilities than any other countries. If a country with more capabilities appears tomorrow, US would lose her rank which is why the rise of China is receiving so much attention. Therefore, in this research, followers are defined as states that possess less hard power than leaders. And by 'hard power', I mean a country's economic and military capabilities in Waltzian sense. TABLE 1 shows the list of states in East Asia and the amount of hard power they possess. Economic capability is measured by a country's Gross Domestic Production (the size of its economy) and military capability is measured by its defense expenditure (the size of its forces).

TABLE 1: List of East Asian countries and their GDP and Defense Expenditure

		GDP (millions of US dollars)	Defense Expenditure (millions of US dollars)
US		16,244,600	640,221
China		8,227,103	188,460
Japan		5,961,066	48,604
Russia		2,014,755	87,836
ASEAN	Brunei	16,954	412
	Cambodia	14,038	243
	Indonesia	878,043	7,840
	Laos	9,418	-
	Myanmar	-	2,211
	Malaysia	305,033	4,842
	Philippines	250,182	3,472
	Singapore	276,520	9,759
	Thailand	365,966	5,891
	Vietnam	155,820	3,387
South Korea		1,129,598	33,937
Australia		1,532,408	23,963
New Zealand		171,281	1,833
North Korea		-	-

\*Source: World Bank Data ([data.worldbank.org](http://data.worldbank.org)) and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute ([www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org))

<sup>9</sup> First-mover advantage (FMA) is the advantage gained by countries that start out as large producers in certain industries. This advantage derives from persisting established patterns of specialization even if some other later comer countries can produce the goods more cheaply (Krugman and Obstfeld 2009).

## (2) Expanding Kellerman: Followers of different rank

As clearly illustrated in TABLE 1, not every follower is in the same position. Kellerman presumes all followers to be in the same rank; that is, a rank lower than that of the leader. However, I expand this concept to recognize the different rank among followers. In a company, CFOs and managers are both followers in a sense that they are not the CEO. However, a CFO would have much more power and influence than a manager simply because of his/her position within the company structure. Similarly in IR, countries like Japan and Russia have far greater hard power than countries like Malaysia and New Zealand. Therefore, it is fair to note that Japan is a higher ranking follower than Malaysia.

## (3) Relationship between Power, Engagement and Influence

The essence of Kellerman's book is to answer the question of how followers with less power, authority and influence acquire more. And she argues that followers do this by engagement. She distinguishes followers into five categories; isolate, bystander, participant, activist, and diehard. Her typology is based on a single, simple metric; level of engagement. She argues that the higher the level of engagement (moving from isolate to diehard), the more chance a follower can influence the leader and leadership (Kellerman 2008). She describes each type of follower as below.

### *Isolates*

Isolates are completely detached. They do not care about their leaders, or know anything about them, or respond to them in any way.

### *Bystanders*

Bystanders observe but do not participate. They make a deliberate decision to stand aside, to disengage from their leaders and from whatever is the group dynamic.

### *Participants*

Participants are in some way engaged. They clearly favor their leaders and the groups and organizations of which they are members – or they are clearly opposed.

### *Activists*

Activists feel strongly about their leaders and they act accordingly. They are eager, energetic, and engaged. Because they are heavily invested in people and process, they work hard either on behalf of their leaders or to undermine and even unseat them.

### *Diehards*

Diehards are as their name implies – prepared to die if necessary for their cause, whether an individual, or an idea, or both. Diehards are deeply devoted to their leaders; or, in contrast, they are ready to remove them from positions of power, authority, and influence by any means necessary.

She contends that in Hitler's Germany, the tragic genocide took place not only because of Hitler himself but also because his followers (who Kellerman characterizes as 'bystanders') didn't stop Hitler and followed his orders to slaughter the Jews. Also, she explains how Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) as 'activists' worked to bring down the Catholic Church community after a series of child sexual abuse case surfaced (Kellerman 2008).

#### (4) Level of Engagement in International Relations

It is important to mention that Kellerman’s use of the term ‘engagement’ is more broad and inclusive than the term ‘engagement’ used in IR these days. Engagement in IR has evolved to contain two meanings. First, the broad definition refers to a policy that entails involvement and interaction as opposed to isolationism (Suettinger 2000). Second, the narrow definition refers to a policy of using positive incentives to reward good behavior as opposed to policy of containment (Haass 2000). In the post-WW2 era, the narrower definition became dominantly used because the international environment rendered ‘isolationism’ irrelevant for the US and rogue states began to emerge. These days, ‘engagement’ normally refers to the narrower definition. However, Kellerman’s definition of ‘engagement’ refers to the broader term which is also adopted in this research. In this paper, engagement refers to any kind of involvement or interaction. It includes both positive and negative behaviors. South Korea pursuing FTAs with other countries, ASEAN negotiating accession with China, and North Korea issuing threats (allegedly against the US) are all considered ‘engagement’.

#### (5) Hypotheses

As illustrated above, this research is designed to confirm and expand Kellerman’s findings in International Relations. Kellerman asserted that the level of engagement affects the amount of influence that a follower has on the leader. In order to confirm her argument in IR, I adopt Kellerman’s typology to IR and analyze the relationship between follower state’s level of engagement and its influence. This paper seeks to delineate the dynamic behind follower state’s power (hard power), level of engagement and its influence (soft power) on others<sup>10</sup>. Following hypotheses are devised in order to test the link between the level of engagement and the amount of influence.

H1: Follower states with lower rank (less hard power) and high level of engagement exercise greater than their rank-proportionate amount of influence on leader states.

H2: Follower states with higher rank (more hard power) and low level of engagement exercise less than their rank-proportionate amount of influence on leader states.

#### (6) Analytical Tool (Two factor model)

In order to test the hypotheses, I devised a two-factor model calibrating the amount of hard power (rank) and the level of engagement.

TABLE 2: Two-factor Model

		Level of Engagement	
		High	Low
Amount of Hard Power	High	A	B
	Low	C	D

\*Source: by author

This model allows for the analysis of how follower states with fixed amount of hard power

<sup>10</sup> Due to the interactive nature of soft power and hard power, states with large hard power are more likely to have large soft power. There are innumerable cases supporting this proportionate relationship. Big states such as the US have large hard and soft power while small states such as Christmas Island have much less hard and soft power. However, there are cases that does not fit into this equation and this paper attempts to analyze such anomalies and confirm whether the level of engagement is indeed the variable that affects the relationship.



increase their influence (on the leaders) by engaging. In this research, just as in Kellerman’s work, engagement is the tool for follower states to boost their influence.

## V. Testing Hypotheses and Findings

Testing hypothesis 1 entails testing cases that belong to quadrant C in the two-factor model. Two cases that belong to the conditions of quadrant C were tested; ASEAN and North Korea.

### *Quadrant C: Activist ASEAN and North Korea*

#### (1) Activist: Southeast Asian countries (ASEAN)

ASEAN constitutes of 10 member states in the Southeast Asia region. The two features that ASEAN countries share are low hard power and history of colonization or domination of some kind. In the post-Cold war era, these nascent independent countries formed a tight, unique and strong community; ASEAN. ASEAN developed a unique culture called “ASEAN way” which is characterized by three distinct institutional rules; informal connection between states, non-interference (sovereignty) and strong emphasis on consensus in decision making (Acharya 2003). Up to this point, ASEAN resembles the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Cold War. NAM countries refused to participate in either US or USSR leadership and their ideological war. They created their own institution (NAM) and purported their own code of conduct (Bandung Principles<sup>11</sup>) including respect for sovereignty and independence and peaceful resolution of disputes. The difference between NAM countries and ASEAN is that ASEAN took the next step to engage the leaders and take initiative to make change. NAM succeeded in diluting the severe East-West dichotomy but failed to include either the leaders or countries that were directly involved in the dichotomy (except Yugoslavia). It wasn’t until after the détente and the ease of tension when countries like France began joining NAM as observers. On the other hand, ASEAN successfully included the two leaders – US and China – into their community through continuous engagement. ASEAN’s engagement strategy is often called strategy of ‘enmeshment’<sup>12</sup>. According to Goh, enmeshment is a “process of engaging with a state so as to draw it into deep involvement into international or regional society, enveloping it in a web of sustained exchanges and relationships with the long-term aim of integration” (Goh 2007/2008, 121). For instance, ASEAN has initiated multiple regional institutions and got almost all of major players in the region to join them. TABLE 3 shows how far ASEAN’s institutional web goes.

TABLE 3: ASEAN-initiated Regional Institutions and Respective Memberships

Institution	Membership
ASEAN	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
ASEAN Plus Three (APT)	ASEAN + South Korea, China, Japan
ASEAN Plus Six	ASEAN + South Korea, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, Australia
ASEAN Regional	ASEAN + South Korea, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, Australia, US,

<sup>11</sup> For a full statement of ‘Bandung principle of 1955’ see ([https://bcc-cuny.digication.com/MWHreader/Bandung\\_Declaration](https://bcc-cuny.digication.com/MWHreader/Bandung_Declaration)).

<sup>12</sup> Evelyn Goh coined the term “Omni-enmeshment”. She provides excellent analysis of how ASEAN states use institutions to enmesh not only super powers such as the US and China but also other major powers in the region such as Japan and Australia (Goh 2007/2008).

Forum (ARF)	Russia, Bangladesh, Canada, Mongolia, North Korea, Pakistan, EU
East Asia Summit (EAS)	ASEAN + South Korea, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, Australia, the US, Russia

\*Source: ASEAN (www.aseansec.org)

These institutions all share the same norms and rules; ASEAN way. They do not have binding forces like the UNSC does. These are loosely connected webs emphasizing each member state's sovereignty and consensus-based decision making. No country has veto which means all countries have veto. This lax nature is often criticized as an underdeveloped or premature form of institution building as opposed to more tightly and legally binding EU (Friedberg 1993/1994). However, precisely because of this loose characteristic, ASEAN can be successful. Originally, regional multilateral institution was disfavored by many major players in this region, particularly China. China suspected any multilateral attempts to be attempting to contain her. However, ASEAN-led institutions which requires less commitment and provides more freedom greatly eased Chinese reluctance. Also the fact that it was initiated by 3<sup>rd</sup> party countries and did not involve US or its allies greatly reduced Chinese suspicion. Now, APT is China's most favored regional institution while for obvious reasons China disfavors the US-led APEC<sup>13</sup>. ASEAN maintains extremely high level of engagement in order to sustain the numerous institutions and its norms and rules. At any given day, ASEAN holds a dozen meetings whether it be ASEAN meeting, ARF, EAS, APT or any of their sub-organizations. Each summit or forum requires tremendous amount of preparation and coordination among member states and host country and ASEAN is willing to take on this toll.

Then what is the result of this engagement strategy? How does the enmeshment work to influence state's behavior? The immediate consequence of enmeshment is that it increases the value of being enmeshed and increases the cost of being left out. Regardless of how loose and meaningless these institutions are, when every state in the region is a member except you, you will want to join the club. This is precisely how ASEAN increased their soft power (influence) and influenced the US in the case of TAC accession.

### **The case of US accession to TAC (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation)**

TAC (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation) is a code of conduct that codified the 'ASEAN way'. It emphasizes strict adherence to non-interference, peaceful resolution of conflict and restraint from using military measures<sup>14</sup>. Initially, TAC was only signed by 10 ASEAN member states but they allowed non-ASEAN signatories in order to apply the treaty to other ASEAN-initiated institutions. In fact, ASEAN mandated TAC accession as one of the three requirements of gaining membership at EAS. By 2008, all countries in Asia Pacific except the US had signed the treaty. This situation triggered a policy debate within the US and they finally signed the TAC in 2009.

US decision to sign the TAC is a clear example of a follower state exerting influence on the leader state through engagement. First, signing TAC was not in coordination with existing US Asia policy. The US has traditionally preferred bilateral approach in dealing with Asian countries for reasons that are still debated<sup>15</sup>. Since the end of WW2, the US has utilized bilateral alliance system (often called hub-and-spokes system) to maintain her presence in this region. However, TAC has

<sup>13</sup> For the institutional rivalry caused by China and the US, Japan favoring different institutions see (김기석 2007).

<sup>14</sup> For the full text of TAC, see (ASEAN 2005).

<sup>15</sup> For the reasons why US preferred bilateral approaches in Asia and multilateral approaches in Europe, there are many contending views. See (Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002).

emphasis on its multilateral nature just as all ASEAN-led institutions do. US accession to TAC implies that the US has agreed to join in ASEAN's multilateral approach when it comes to this region. Second, the US signed TAC despite the concern that it could constrain US freedom of action as a superpower/leader (Manyin 2009). This was the argument shared by anti-TAC group within the US government. The US has exercised its freedom of action as a superpower by leading intervention in states such as Iran, Iraq and Libya. Joining the TAC which contains a non-intervention clause bore the risk of limiting US freedom of action towards any of TAC signatories<sup>16</sup>. Particularly at that time, the US had been imposing heavy sanctions vis-à-vis Burma against the Burmese military Junta. So the concern was that signing TAC would limit US action to penalize or sanction on Burma. Despite such concerns, the US concluded that it was in her interest to sign the TAC and acceded in 2009. Behind this decision, US interest in Asia Pacific was two-fold. First, being the only country to not sign the TAC projected a lack of commitment to neighboring countries which was hurting US interest vis-à-vis her 'Pivot to Asia' policy. Second, acceding to TAC was a requirement for gaining membership to EAS and joining the EAS was important for US interest in East Asia.

This clearly shows that ASEAN influenced the US to do what it would not do otherwise. ASEAN did this not by force but by creating an environment in which the US would feel like it was in her interest to join the TAC.

## (2) Activist, North Korea

North Korea is one of the most remarkable examples of a state with little hard power exercising tremendously disproportionate amount of influence. North Korea's strategy of engagement is often called 'brinkmanship'. North Korea has conducted 3 nuclear tests, dozens of missile tests, and issued countless numbers of verbal threats everyday including declaration of war. North Korea's nuclear negotiation tactic often referred to as 'crisis diplomacy'<sup>17</sup>, is one of the most taunted examples. Among the innumerable instances, I will introduce two. First, during the first nuclear crisis (1989-1994), North Korea successfully gained economic and political concession from Clinton Administration by threatening to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)<sup>18</sup>. By signing the Agreed Framework in 1994, US agreed to provide North Korea with heavy fuel oil, light water reactor, and even normalize diplomatic relations in exchange for giving up their nuclear weapons program which was nascent, crude and barely developed.

Second, during the second nuclear crisis, North Korea literally made the US reverse its policy carried out by the Department of Treasury<sup>19</sup>. In September 2005, US department of treasury sanctioned Banco Delta Asia in Macao which was suspected for money laundering and circulating super-notes. This decision froze approximately \$25 million of North Korea's funds in Banco Delta Asia. North Korea brought this issue to the Six-party Talks which was in process. North Korea openly criticized the US to all the members of Six-party Talks, threatened to push forward with its nuclear weapons program and left the Talk. This greatly frustrated other involved parties since the talk was already slowly progressing and nuclear fear was increasing. In 2007, the US finally gave in to the pressure from other parties who wanted to push the talk forward. The US transferred \$25 million to North Korea's account in New York in exchange for North Korea returning to the Talk. This incident

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<sup>16</sup> Which by then were almost all countries in East Asia and Oceania.

<sup>17</sup> For more analysis on North Korea's negotiation pattern, see (Downs 1999).

<sup>18</sup> For detailed account of the events in the first nuclear crisis, see (Wit, Poneman and Gallucci 2004). They provide first-hand experience of negotiating with North Korea during their time in the office.

<sup>19</sup> For detailed account of the events during the second nuclear crisis, see (Chinoy 2009).

is quoted as North Korea's savvy crisis diplomacy that influenced the US<sup>20</sup>.

As illustrated above, North Korea engages others by invoking a sense of crisis and fear. It does not hesitate to threaten the leaders (the US) or other followers. On top of verbal threats, it does not shy away from carrying out threatening actions such as launching missiles or conducting nuclear tests and the trend still continues today. North Korea's brinkmanship strategy works in two aspects. First, it is directed to the leader (the US). When nuclear threat or any kind of threat is directed at the US, it becomes very difficult for the US to ignore that threat no matter how empty it may seem. Second, the threat or provocative actions instill anxiety into other followers. It agitates them by creating a volatile atmosphere so other followers pressure the leader to take an action.

### *Quadrant B: Participant Japan and Russia*

Testing hypothesis 2 requires analyzing cases that belongs to quadrant B. Two cases that fit the conditions of quadrant B were tested; Japan and Russia.

#### (1) Participant, Japan

In terms of GDP and defense expenditure, Japan is certainly one of the higher ranking followers in this region. The sheer amount of hard power that Japan possesses already gives her more influence than lower ranking follower states. However, considering her rank (hard power), Japan is often assessed to 'punch below her weight'<sup>21</sup>, when it comes to participation in regional affairs. The area where Japan shows the highest level of engagement is the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands issue but even in this area, her level of engagement does not exceed that of North Korea. Japan verbally claims her sovereignty, expresses her concern towards China and routinely patrols the area but nothing more. Japanese government does not directly discuss the issue on summit level or engage in serious military conflict either. In fact, Sino-Japanese territorial dispute is creating more of a tension than an actual conflict. Such low level of engagement could be due to Japan's unique situation under the peace constitution (article 9) which mandates her to depend on the US forces for her defense<sup>22</sup>. The peace constitution greatly constrains Japanese ability to devise and conduct foreign policy in security area. However, even in the economic area where Japan's hands are free, her level of engagement remains low. Japan is participating in US-led TPP design instead of initiating any regional economic design. The latest Japanese attempt to actively engage in the region's economy was in 1997 when she proposed establishment of Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) right after the Asian Financial Crisis (1997). After this proposal was denied by the US and China, Japanese involvement in regional economy has remained relatively low. Many scholars attribute this to the widespread anti-Japanese sentiment among East Asian countries, particularly those who were directly subjected to Japanese expansionism (South Korea, China, Philippines, and Australia)<sup>23</sup>.

#### (2) Participant: Russia

Russia is also one of the higher ranking followers in the region. However, she also shows

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<sup>20</sup> The Banco Delta Asia incident is also frequently quoted to illustrate US lack of inter agency coordination (Chinoy 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from a personal interview with Dr. Mark Manyin, senior analyst at Congressional Research Service. Conducted on July 18, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> For the history of Japanese Peace Constitution see (Dower 1999). And for the background of US-Japan military treaty and how it affects Japanese policy makings, see (Schaller 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Such scholars include Yoshihide Soeya, Yasuhiro Izumikawa, and Mike Mochizuki.

relatively low level of engagement considering her rank. Because it stretches from the West to the East, Russia's geographical identity has been torn between Eastern Europe and Northeast Asia. Throughout the course of history, Russia's focus of attention was mainly in Europe. It wasn't after the fall of Soviet Union that Russia began paying some attention to Asian affairs. Even in the new millennium, her level of engagement still remains low as proven by its minimum role during the Six-party Talks. As a former patron state, North Korea still had relatively less hostile sentiment towards Russia and she certainly could've played more role in the Six-party Talks with this unique position. However, her role in the negotiation remained not more than participation. On top of that, Russia was late to join many regional and international institutions such as WTO, let alone initiate one. This spring, the gas import deal signed with China<sup>24</sup> seemed to signal a foreign policy shift but Russia soon retracted back to Europe with the Ukraine issue. Russia certainly is not as engaged as Japan in this region when she has every reason and advantage to be. Russia could exercise far more influence on US and Chinese leadership in the future with increased level of engagement. Whether Russia's increased level of engagement will affect the region positively or negatively is something that we should keep a close eye on.

## **VI. Conclusion, Theoretical Implication**

The case of ASEAN and North Korea confirm hypothesis 1 while the case of Japan and Russia confirm hypothesis 2. Due to word count limit, not all quadrants have been examined and not enough cases have been tested. However, the four cases analyzed in this paper support the relationship between level of engagement and amount of influence. This also positively verifies Kellerman's conclusion in International Relations that followers can exercise influence on leaders by engaging. If Japan were to overcome the constitutional constraints of article 9 and increase her level of engagement, it would certainly exert more influence than ASEAN. However, in 21<sup>st</sup> century East Asia, states with less hard power seem to be exercising much influence by engaging, even more influence than less-engaging but more powerful states in the region. The reason behind this phenomenon of smaller states taking a lead (Buzan 2014) could be the anomaly (Kang 2003/2004) that needs to be dealt with in another research.

## **VII. Policy Implication**

From the findings of this research, two policy implications can be drawn. First, states should engage. Especially states with less hard power should engage. It gives smaller states an opportunity to overcome their material capabilities and exert influence. Engagement is a crucial tool for increasing a state's soft power and the global environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century makes it much easier to utilize this tool. Second, follower states should beware of activists. As illustrated from the case of ASEAN and North Korea, having an activist follower doesn't always bring positive impact. It could go either way. Kellerman herself argued that if an activists' determination channeled in the right direction at the right time, they are an asset. However, "if their determination to have an impact is ill considered or wrongheaded, activists can be dangerous. So they should be watched and they should be judged (Kellerman 2008, 151)". And the watchdog should be fellow followers rather than leaders because leaders will often resort to forceful means in dealing with ill-determined activists. It is the responsibility of the follower states to look after and surveillance each other as well as the leader.

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<sup>24</sup> Russia will export 38 billion cubic metres of gas to China from 2018 when the pipeline infrastructure is finished. (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/21/russia-30-year-400bn-gas-deal-china>)

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