

## Abstract

Despite past controversy, there has been consistent recognition that the situation, as a variable, is essential to our understanding of behavior. There is also wide recognition that there continues to be a scarcity of resources for situational analysis (Seeman, 1997; Bond, 1998). Most studies have used as input, people's perceptions and conceptions of situations. As Bond (1998) points out, by using the perceiving actor as the way to define a situation, we are using the situation as a projective test for personality processes. Similarly, to 'unpackage' the contributions of the person and the situation to behavior, we should not use a taxonomy that defines situations in terms of behaviors. This study extends the work of Marwell and Hage (1970) by developing an empirically based taxonomy of role relationships in Hong Kong, defined in terms of objective context variables. Four dimensions are identified: complexity, equality, containment and adversarialness of contacts. The results are interpreted as evidence for the existence of both universal and culture-specific dimensions defining relational space.