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2 Existing frameworks for humanitarian crisis analysis

Liesbet Heyse

Towards an encompassing but lean framework for humanitarian crisis analysis

This book aims to assist humanitarian aid workers with context, actor and intervention analysis by facilitating them with acquiring the analytical skills and tools in evidence production, collection, reduction, synthesis and analysis in order to plan for and design safe humanitarian interventions. However, it could be argued that already many tools and frameworks in this field exist that aim to do the same. Why then present yet another framework?

As stated in Chapter 1, our framework is a concise model generated on the basis of the thorough analysis of existing methods and tools. This model – called the Humanitarian Analysis and Intervention Design Framework (hereafter, the H-AID framework) – synthesizes and combines the essential elements of existing frameworks in an understandable and hands-on way so that humanitarian staff can quickly learn and apply this in their work. Hence, through this synthesis and combination we present a ‘meta’ model for evidence-based humanitarian programming that provides sufficient rigor for sound analysis, while at the same time taking the specifics of humanitarian work into account.

In this chapter, we present the core components of this framework and how we arrived at these. We therefore discuss the characteristics of a number of frameworks for analyzing humanitarian crises that have been extensively used and referred to in the humanitarian sector. The selected frameworks are: the Pressures and Release model (PAR), the Political Economy/Arena Approach (PoIEc), the Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), Capabilities and Vulnerabilities Analysis (CVA) and the (Sustainable) Livelihoods Framework (SLF). Whenever appropriate, we will also discuss how these frameworks provide input in issues of organizational security management.

We opted for this particular selection of frameworks, since these frameworks offer what we would call a ‘structural approach’ to humanitarian crises. By this we mean that humanitarian crises are not perceived as sudden events, but as processes that build up and can have many manifestations throughout time. Although the distinction between natural and man-made disasters still is often made, the common wisdom nowadays is that humanitarian crises do not just happen like that, but are

the consequence of high vulnerability of people to (disruptions in) their environment. Hence, the impact of a disruption – be it physical violence, an earthquake, drought or something else – is related to lack of (human) preparedness, prevention and resilience in society. Consequently, humanitarian aid is more than providing immediate relief; it is about connecting to existing or remaining capacities of individuals, groups, organizations and societies, and intervening in such a way that people’s vulnerabilities are reduced, not only in the short term but also in the longer term. Put differently, humanitarian aid aims at the minimum to support existing capacities and resilience and at the most to contribute to build capacity, reconstruct societies and create resilience for the future.

The selected frameworks recognize this structural dimension of humanitarian crises, as will become visible in the remainder of this chapter, by emphasizing the importance of analyzing the *context* and (immediate) *causes* of humanitarian crises as well as the role of *actors*, three elements we deem crucial for this more structural approach to humanitarian crises. Also in the Good Practice Review on operational security management these three elements are – not coincidentally – crucial for achieving safe humanitarian interventions. In addition, the selected approaches and frameworks together cover a wide range of phases and activities that humanitarian organizations are involved in (see Figure 2.1): some approaches focus more on the immediate aftermath of a crisis (MIRA), whereas others are more distant from the immediate aftermath of a crisis, such as the CVA and PolEc approach or the PAR model and SLFs.

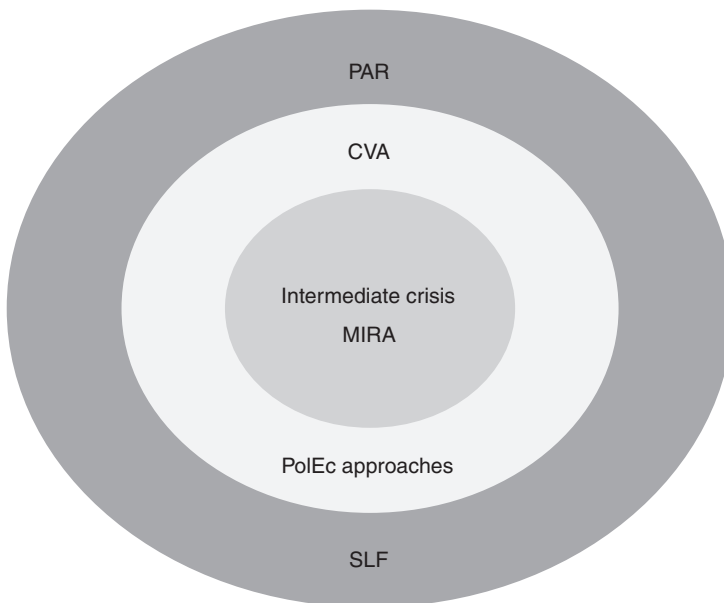


Figure 2.1 The selected frameworks and their relation to the immediate aftermath of a humanitarian crisis.

We evaluate these frameworks on a number of core qualities. In the next section, we outline the set of criteria developed to evaluate the selected frameworks on their usefulness, applicability and rigor for evidence-based programming in humanitarian action. In the sections that follow, we evaluate the selected frameworks on these dimensions, followed by a discussion on the differences and similarities of these frameworks. Based on this analysis, we present the core elements of the H-AID framework.

It should be noted that we by no means intend to present a complete picture of the selected frameworks; we aim to limit our discussion of these frameworks in relation to the core qualities discussed. For in-depth descriptions, reviews and discussions of each framework, we refer to the references listed with each framework.

Balancing core qualities of humanitarian crisis analysis frameworks

In order for any analytical framework to be used in the humanitarian sector, it needs to deliver and balance a variety of qualities. Below we outline three types of qualities that in our view need to be balanced in order for an analytical framework to be useful and used in the humanitarian sector. We contend these qualities to be of relevance because they help humanitarian workers and organizations to adhere to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. The humanitarian principles are served in that a framework based on these core qualities will help aid workers to plan for aid on the basis of need.

Quick and ‘dirty’ analysis versus slow and thorough analysis

First of all, humanitarian work needs to be done quickly. Time and manpower in humanitarian crises is often limited, so any analytical framework for humanitarian crises should allow the speedy generation of results. The requirement for speedy results implies that the framework is not too extensive in terms of the elements that need to be analyzed and the amount of information that needs to be collected.

However, speed should not go at the expense of the quality of the information collected. It is crucial that any analytical framework for informed humanitarian programming provides the user with guidelines as to what are the relevant dimensions to focus on – whether these are context dimensions, actors or other dimensions – and how to generate reliable and valid information on these dimensions (see Chapter 4 for an elaboration of these concepts). In short, information is most likely to be reliable if it is transparently reported how data was collected and analyzed, so that the data collection and analysis process can be replicated and checked upon by others. Optimal reliability is achieved if this replication exercise leads to the same results, that is, when more analysts using the same data and techniques independently reach the same conclusions. Information and evidence can be called valid if the information generated is relevant to the situation at hand and correctly represents the dimensions of study in a particular context.

Based on the above, we distinguish between frameworks to the degree that they can be regarded as ‘quick and dirty’, in that they provide coarse-grained means to very quickly analyze a humanitarian situation by presenting quite a broad (unspecified) set of dimensions and indicators to focus on from which one can pick and choose, or as ‘slow and thorough’, meaning that these frameworks offer an extensive set of specified dimensions, indicators and interconnections to focus on which takes quite some time to collect information on. In other words, frameworks that offer a quick analysis of humanitarian settings often do this at the expense of the reliability and validity of the data gathered. ‘Slow and thorough’ frameworks offer high reliability and validity, but at the expense of speed. However, since it might be theoretically possible that frameworks can be both ‘quick and thorough’ or ‘slow and dirty’ we analyze each framework on both the time it costs for data collection and analysis, and the degree to which the framework is thorough, i.e. it specifies the dimensions and indicators to be studied.

General applicability versus specific applicability

Ideally, a framework for humanitarian crisis analysis can be applied to all phases of humanitarian crises – such as the immediate onset of a crisis or the recovery and rehabilitation phase – as well as to a variety of humanitarian crisis types, such as earthquakes, floods, conflicts or complex emergencies. This requires the framework to be so general that it allows applicability to a wide variety of crisis phases and contexts, while at the same it should ideally also be possible to adjust this general framework to specifics of particular crisis contexts. This general applicability can be achieved if the framework outlines a set of core components, possible indicators and methods as how to collect data on these components, whereas at the same time the framework also provides guidelines as to when and how to restrict, extend and adapt these core components.

‘Just’ an analytical tool versus providing guidelines for programming

A final quality of humanitarian crisis analysis frameworks is that it should assist humanitarian aid workers with making decisions on the basis of the evidence collected. This requires that the framework provides users with advice as how to interpret the evidence collected and how to translate this information into humanitarian interventions, activities and projects. Take for example considerations regarding a food intervention. Let us assume that one has collected reliable and valid evidence that food access is indeed problematic. The next question is then how to address this problem in a way that is likely to generate the desired effect (i.e. improved food access) and at the same time prevent the occurrence of undesired effects (i.e. distorted markets). Given the plethora of livelihoods and food interventions available – such as food for work, cash transfers or free food distribution – how is it decided which intervention is the best option in a given context? Ideally, a humanitarian crisis analysis framework should provide tools and advice as how to arrive at such decisions.

Balancing core qualities

Ideally, any humanitarian crisis analysis framework would balance these core qualities, being swift, adaptable, thorough and practically related to humanitarian intervention design by offering programming advice (see Figure 2.2).

One could question whether it is possible to arrive at such a balance. For example, at one extreme there might be quite extensive, detailed and rigorous frameworks for analysis, generating in-depth and highly reliable and valid evidence for specific crisis contexts. However, this might hamper the speed of applying such a framework as well as the adaptability to which it can be applied to different crisis contexts. At another extreme there might be quite general frameworks that focus on broad dimensions and a limited set of indicators. This might allow for flexibility and speedy analysis, but might not meet the qualities of relevant, reliable and valid evidence generation.

In the next sections, the selected frameworks for humanitarian crisis analysis are evaluated on the core qualities outlined in this section. We will discuss per framework its basic components and then proceed to evaluate these frameworks on the qualities set out above. We discuss the similarities and differences between the frameworks, and relate them to issues of organizational security analysis when appropriate, and then, based on this evaluation, we proceed with presenting our meta-framework and its core components.

The MIRA approach

The Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment is a method developed by the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) as a rapid needs assessment tool to

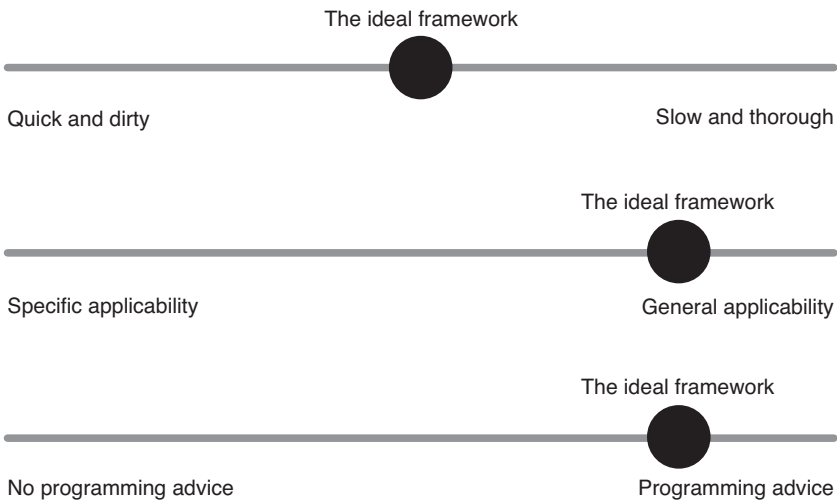


Figure 2.2 The ideal balance of qualities of a framework of humanitarian crisis analysis.

identify strategic humanitarian priorities during the first weeks of a humanitarian emergency (IASC 2012b: 3). It is explicitly meant as a method to be applied by all key stakeholders in a humanitarian emergency as a way to develop a common, cross-sectorial and multi-cluster understanding of the emergency. MIRA both requires secondary data analysis and community level assessments as a form of primary data collection. The secondary data analysis is meant to develop a so-called Preliminary Scenario Definition within 72 hours as a way to inform response planning and funding appeals. It consists of both a pre-crisis and an in-crisis analysis. The primary data analysis is meant for a more extensive rapid assessment of the situation by means of key informant interviews and observation, and should be ready within two weeks. For the key informant interviews a pre-structured interview scheme is provided, asking into issues of food, health, income, shelter, security, education, etc. Also, specific advice is given how to conduct such interviews. The same is provided for applying the method of observation.

In general, the approach focuses on identifying (IASC 2012b):

- the impact of the crisis in terms of drivers of the crisis (causal analysis), the scope of the crisis and the humanitarian profile (i.e. the number of people affected) and the status of the populations in the affected areas;
- the response capacity, in terms of national and international capacities and responses including local coping capacities;
- access and gaps, in terms of humanitarian access (logistically but also security wise), coverage and gaps in aid provision.

For each of these dimensions research questions are formulated, related to the status of certain groups and issues (such as protection), the impact of the crisis on these groups and issues, as well as the associated vulnerabilities, risks and trends. Examples of research questions are:

- What are the main drivers of the crisis (including environmental, socio-political, climatic and economic factors)?
- What are the known coping mechanisms of local communities and how were they affected?
- What are the main considerations affecting the local population and the delivery of assistance (armed groups, gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and UXOs) and where are they?

The MIRA approach also pays attention to security issues by asking about the main security risks and civil–military relations, but not extensively.

When we relate this approach to the three core qualities, we label this approach as quite ‘quick and dirty’ in that it helps to quickly get an overview of the needs of groups in certain crisis-struck areas. It thus does not provide tools for an in-depth analysis. For example, there is no explicit causal model underlying the identification of crisis drivers (such as for example in the PAR model)

and the dimensions mentioned above are not specified in detailed indicators, although for the primary data collection specification is provided. Moreover, the approach lacks the broader contextual analysis as proposed by other models, which makes sense given its aim to provide a quick overview. The approach is generally applicable to various crisis contexts but is especially meant for the immediate crisis phase, not as a prevention tool or as a means to make the transition from relief to development. In addition, the method is meant to help define strategic humanitarian vulnerabilities, not to assist agencies in making detailed decisions on localized responses and projects (IASC 2012b: 3). Hence, the approach offers programming advice, but quite general on a strategic level.

Political economy and arena approaches

A political economy approach to humanitarian crises explicitly relates the dynamics of humanitarian crises to the actors in a crisis and their interests, goals, resources and interaction with each other (Collinson 2002). This approach has as a central question whether groups and actors have something to gain or lose in humanitarian crises, and, if so, what exactly. Societal and crisis processes are thus viewed as inherently political, related to issues of power and wealth distribution. For example, violence is perceived as an opportunity for some groups in society to gain power and ensure access to resources, thereby leading to an interest in the continuation of conflict (Anderson 1999). Conflicts thus create their own economies, such as a war economy, a shadow economy and a 'survival' (or, coping) economy with distinct actors pursuing different goals. This approach is related to literature on 'greed and grievance' in conflicts (Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

In this approach vulnerability is thus very much conceptualized in terms of powerlessness. The approach stresses the importance of analyzing the actors in a crisis in order to achieve a good understanding of why some groups are less powerful than others. It also asks for a careful *ex ante* evaluation of the ways in which humanitarian aid could become a part of the various economies and what potential undesired consequences this could generate. It therefore sees humanitarian action and intervention as inherently political.

We also see the work by Hilhorst *et al.* as part of this approach, since it views humanitarian space as an arena in which various actors negotiate the outcomes of aid (Hilhorst and Serrano 2010, Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). The outcomes are the result of how actors involved (donors, recipients, governments) interpret the context, needs, their own role and each other. Actors are seen as driven by different motives, political and organizational ones included (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). This so-called 'actor-oriented approach' differs slightly from a pure political economy approach, since it asks attention not only for power issues and relationships in humanitarian crisis, but also to how actors define and interpret a humanitarian crisis context. Nevertheless, both approaches emphasize the importance of analyzing the actors in a crisis and their goals, motives and resources as a way to understand how humanitarian crises develop and persist, and how humanitarian aid is part of these dynamics.

When we relate these approaches to the three core qualities defined previously, this type of approach first requires quite a thorough analysis of all actors in a crisis, and their perceptions, interests and motives. Especially the work by Hilhorst and colleagues is based on thorough anthropological fieldwork and in-depth understanding of local crisis contexts. Nevertheless, a more ‘quick and dirty’ version of this approach is possible by means of a more or less rough stakeholder analysis. Collinson (2002), for example, provides suggestions on what concrete dimensions to focus on and what methods to employ when applying this approach. We therefore rate it as a medium slow and thorough approach. Both approaches are also quite generally applicable. For example, whereas the political economy approach was first predominantly applied to conflict settings, it has also been applied to understand the differential impact of natural disasters on groups in society (see for example, Kenny 2009, Cohen and Werker 2008). Finally, in terms of programming advice, the approaches give opportunities to identify marginalized groups in society as potential target groups for aid and to decide on appropriate ways to help address the causes of their marginalization. The approaches also provide options to think through the impact of humanitarian aid on the dynamics of conflict. Moreover, such an approach resembles very much the actor analysis for purposes of organizational risk and safety management as recommended in the HPN Good Practice Review (2010).

The vulnerabilities and capacities framework

In 1989, Mary Anderson and Peter Woodrow introduced the idea of vulnerability and capacity analysis in their book *Rising from the Ashes*. This type of analysis aims to assist humanitarian aid workers in planning and implementing emergency relief programs whereas at the same time fundamental sustainable development is promoted (Anderson and Woodrow 1990: 7). It is therefore also called a ‘developmental relief approach’.

The basic point of departure is not to view people in need as helpless victims, but as ‘active, capable and inventive managers of their own lives’ (Anderson and Woodrow 1990: 7). By assisting people to increase their capacities they can be empowered to lead the lives they wish to live, socially, economically, morally, etc. At the same time organizations can assist in decreasing these people’s vulnerabilities to events that threaten their existence. Both capacities and vulnerabilities can be subdivided into various dimensions. These are (Anderson and Woodrow 1990: 10):

- Physical and material vulnerabilities/capacities, related to productive resources, skills and hazards, such as land, climate, health, infrastructure, labor and lack of income or food kept in storage.
- Social and organizational vulnerabilities/capacities, related to the relations and organization among people, such as formal political structures and informal social structures, next to issues of marginalization and lack of group solidarity versus social cohesion and community assistance.

- Attitudinal and motivational vulnerabilities/capacities, related to how the community views its ability to create change, which includes ideologies, beliefs, motivations and experiences of collaboration, such as low confidence and being apathetic versus a strong will to survive and motivation to recover.

If vulnerabilities are high and capacities low, then communities or societies are more prone to disasters and crisis. Communities can thus be helped to become more ‘disaster resistant’ by decreasing their vulnerability and fostering their capacities. Vulnerabilities differ from needs, in that they pinpoint at the deeper roots of the needs of people in crisis.

The three dimensions are quite broad and although examples are provided for each dimension, no extensive outline of their components and potential indicators is given in the original documents. Furthermore, it is advised to disaggregate the information on vulnerabilities and capacities by, for example, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, age. It can also be applied to different time points – to compare developments in capacities and vulnerabilities – and different levels (household, community, provincial levels, etc.). In later elaborations of the model, guiding questions for the analysis have been formulated (see, for example, CARE’s climate vulnerability and capacity analysis (2009)). Also concrete tools for participatory analysis and checklists of vulnerabilities are suggested (Davis *et al.* 2004, CARE 2009).

The framework is explicitly presented as a diagnostic tool (Anderson and Woodrow 1990: 77) that is not aimed at providing guidance for specific actions or projects. It is claimed, however, that the framework offers ways to organize and systematize information that can help to identify possibilities for program responses. For example, it can help organizations to identify groups and organizations with which it might make sense to establish partnerships (see for example, ICRC 2007a). However, that this can be difficult is made clear in Heijmans and Victoria’s work regarding the Philippine case:

Project staff still find it difficult to apply the CVA as an analytical tool ... the result is often more descriptive than analytical... Members find it difficult to use the CVA for the identification of appropriate interventions... Its use is limited to counter-check selected interventions.

(2001:75)

Based on the above, it can be concluded that CVA can be rather quickly applied and can be regarded as medium thorough, in that the dimensions provided were originally not specified much, but later more specified indicators, checklists and questions were proposed (ICRC 2007a, 2007b, Heijmans and Victoria 2001, Provention 2007). At the same time, checklists are criticized (Davis *et al.* 2004). CVA also is quite generally applicable, in that it can also be applied as a prevention tool, although in terms of crisis contexts it is most used for disaster prone areas. Finally, CVA offers basic programming advice, in that it offers

insights in potential vulnerabilities that one could strive to diminish as well as capacities that one could support, which helps to identify interesting options for local partnerships.

The Pressure and Release model (PAR)

The Pressure and Release model, developed by Wisner and Blaikie (1994/2005), is closely related to Anderson and Woodrow's pledge for thinking in capacities and vulnerabilities. The authors use this way of thinking to understand the risks of disasters as well as the effects of hazards by elaborating a model that sketches 'the progression of vulnerability'. Core concepts in this framework are risks, hazards and vulnerabilities, in combination with root causes, dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions (see Figure 2.3).

Risk is defined as the combination of potential hazards that threaten communities and the vulnerabilities of certain groups, meaning the likelihood that these hazards will actually harm groups and communities. Hence, the more vulnerable groups are, the higher the risk to be harmed by hazards. This framework thus points out that some societies and groups are more at risk for disasters and crisis due to certain hazards (i.e. natural disaster events, such as earthquakes or floods) and human vulnerabilities to such hazards. These vulnerabilities are explained in three intermediate steps. First, there is a set of *root causes* that form the most distant set of explanations of societal vulnerability. These root causes are related to social and economic structures, ideologies and history and culture. These root causes translate into a set of so-called *dynamic pressures* at the political and institutional macro level, leading to particular forms of insecurity that arise as a result of societal deficiencies – such as failing or lacking local institutions or lack of media freedom – as well as macro forces, i.e. rapid population growth, urbanization, conflict, economic crisis or declining biodiversity (Wisner *et al.* 2012). These pressures are called 'dynamic', because they 'transmit the historic weight of root causes along the "chain of causation", as an intermediary between them and fragile livelihoods and unsafe locations and conditions' (Wisner *et al.* 2012: 25). Third, the dynamic pressures result in a set of *unsafe conditions* related to the natural, physical, economic, social and political environment. These conditions are the specific ways in which a group's or community's vulnerability become visible in a certain place and time. This part of the model has later been relabeled as 'fragile livelihoods and unsafe locations' which is then strongly related to lack of access to resources and processes of marginalization (Wisner *et al.* 2012: 24). Together the root causes thus lead to dynamic pressures that in turn result in unsafe conditions that create vulnerabilities to disaster.

The authors also show how the progression of vulnerability could hypothetically be turned around into a process of progression of safety (see Figure 2.3). The model allows the identification of so-called entry points of intervention in terms of creating safer conditions, minimizing dynamic pressures or addressing root causes. For example, one could work towards reducing the likelihood that hazards occur by implementing disaster risk reduction measures, such as dams,

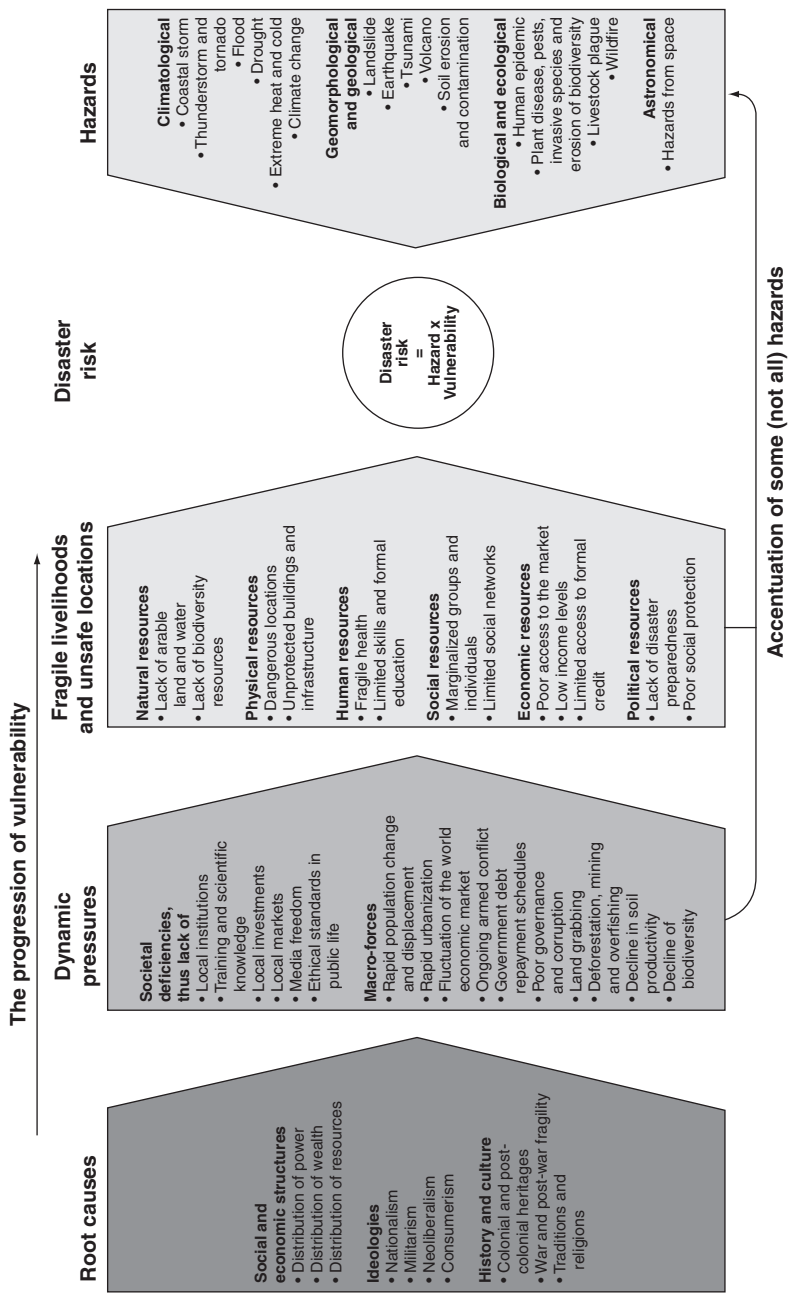


Figure 2.3 The progression of vulnerability (source: Wisner *et al.* 2012: 23).

shelters or monitoring systems. One could also try to influence the dynamic pressures by providing training or supporting institutions. Finally one could attempt to impact on root causes by addressing lack of access to power, for example.

Related to the three core qualities presented previously, one can see from Figure 2.3, the Pressure and Release model is quite extensive, providing a detailed overview and elaboration of potential factors that can explain vulnerability to disaster. In the *Handbook of Hazards and Disaster Risk Reduction* (2012), the full model is explained and elaborated, and for each hazard chapters are provided that define the particular hazard and ways to monitor and address these. There is also a historical dimension to this framework, which asks for in-depth and longitudinal research. It can therefore be categorized as a ‘slow and thorough’ framework for analysis. Furthermore, the model is specifically applicable in two ways. In terms of crisis phases, it is especially meant as a tool for prevention and disaster risk reduction, not for the immediate relief phase, since the model is so extensive and detailed. In terms of crisis contexts, the model is especially meant to be applicable to natural hazards, such as climatological, geomorphological/geological, biological/ecological and astronomical events. Finally, in terms of programming advice, the model offers various ‘entry points of intervention’ in the release model, due to its specific elaboration of dimensions in terms of root causes, dynamic pressures and unsafe conditions.

Livelihoods approach

A fifth relevant framework was developed as part of poverty reduction strategies, but also proves useful for understanding humanitarian crisis contexts (Twigg 2001). This framework focuses on the livelihoods of individuals and households as a way to understand better why some groups are more vulnerable (to hazards, for example) than others. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a certain level and means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for a next generation; and contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term (Chambers and Conway 1991: 6, see Figure 2.4).

The aim of the framework is to uncover what factors and processes can help to improve the livelihoods of people, and thereby diminish their vulnerability to shocks and stress. The focus is on the following core elements: livelihood assets, transforming structures and processes, livelihood strategies and the vulnerability context (see Figure 2.4). The *livelihood assets* consist of the social, human, natural, physical and financial capital of individuals, households and groups. Human capital refers to the skills, knowledge and abilities people have, whereas social capital refers to the social support (in terms of relationships, networks and group membership) that people have. Natural capital points to the natural sources that livelihoods depend on (such as land, forests, etc.) and physical capital is about the basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to secure livelihoods.

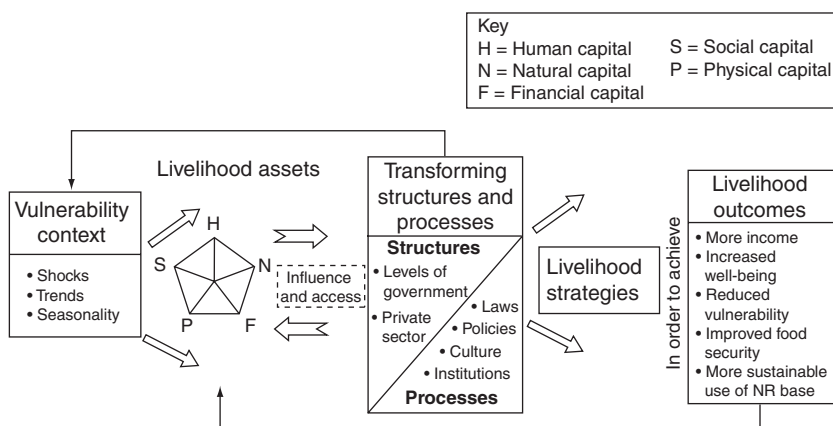


Figure 2.4 A visualization of the sustainable livelihoods framework (source: DFID 2001: 3).

The *transforming structures and processes* are the institutions, organizations (in the public, private and nonprofit sector), policies, norms and legislation that influence livelihoods in terms of access to and exchange between the various forms of capital. In addition, groups have all kinds of *strategies* to secure their livelihoods, such as seasonal labor, selling produce on markets, and diversified agriculture. By analyzing the factors that make up the livelihoods of communities and households, aid organizations can detect and support the positive aspects and at the same time try to diminish vulnerabilities. This is very much dependent on *the vulnerability context* that consists of contextual trends and shocks that influence livelihoods. Based on the analysis of the above, the SLF should provide guidance for intervention.

As one can see from the above and Figure 2.4, a livelihoods analysis, if done properly, consists of an in-depth study of all these factors. This makes the model quite time consuming to apply (Morse *et al.* 2009, Krantz 2001). The model is quite specified, and could thus allow for thorough analysis. Guidelines as how to analyze each dimension in the model have been provided for (especially by DFID 2001). However, there has been some criticism as to how exactly to study the dimensions in the model (Morse *et al.* 2009), for example as it comes to the assets and the transforming structures and processes. It therefore requires well-trained and highly skilled staff to conduct SLF properly (Carney 2002). We therefore label the model as slow and medium thorough. The model is quite generally applicable, also to for example conflict-ridden contexts, which is then often combined with a political economy approach (Collinson 2002, 2003, Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). In terms of programming advice, the model is quite specific so that it potentially offers various entry points for intervention. However, it has been argued that the model is so complex and that many factors in the model are difficult to influence by aid agencies that this limits the options for programming (Morse *et al.* 2009).

Comparing and combining the evaluated frameworks: towards the H-AID framework

The above review of various frameworks for humanitarian crisis analysis is summarized in Table 2.1. In Figure 2.5 we have translated this summary into locating each discussed framework in a three dimensional space outlining the three core qualities we used to evaluate these frameworks on.

From this, and the summary table (2.1), we can see what the various frameworks have to offer in relation to the ideal balance of core qualities which this chapter started out with. We see, for example, that both the PAR and SLF framework score quite well on offering programming advice and thoroughness, but they are quite slow to apply. PAR is not that generally applicable as the ideal would be, whereas the SLF framework is closer to this ideal. The political economy and arena approaches are much more generally applicable than the PAR framework and are closer to the ideal on the dimension ‘quick and dirty’ versus ‘slow and thorough’, but instead offer less concrete entry points for programming advice than for example the PAR approach. Whereas MIRA is generally applicable to various crisis contexts, it focuses on the immediate crisis phase and the phase preceding it, and is therefore quite ‘quick and dirty’, which also means that it has less to offer in terms of programming advice. The CVA approach is located a bit in the middle of all these other frameworks on all three dimensions.

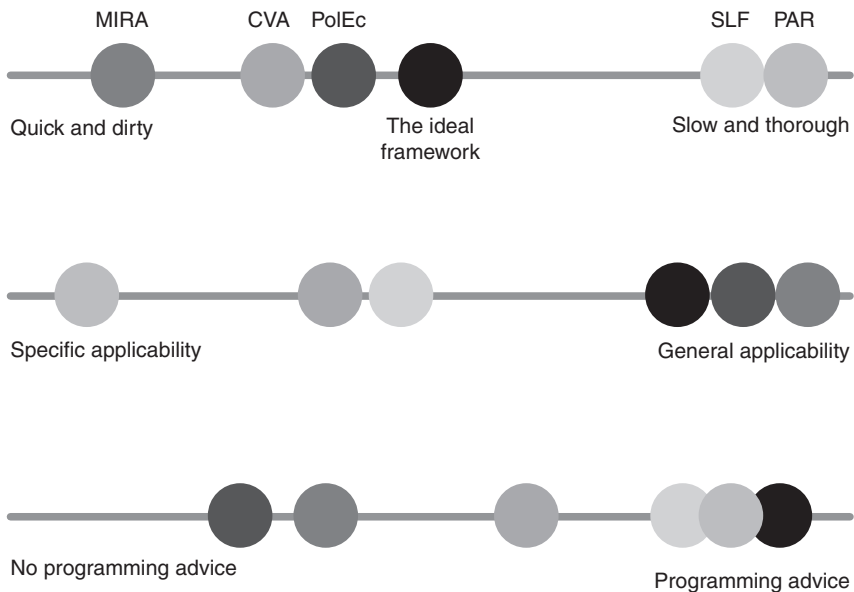


Figure 2.5 The five selected frameworks placed in the three dimensional space of core qualities.

Table 2.1 The five selected frameworks compared

<i>Core qualities</i>	<i>PAR</i>	<i>Political economy approaches</i>	<i>MIRA</i>	<i>CVA</i>	<i>Livelihood approaches</i>
Quick and dirty vs Slow and thorough	Slow and thorough	More slow and thorough than quick and dirty	More quick and dirty than slow and thorough	Quick and medium thorough	Slow and medium thorough
General vs specific applicability regarding various crisis phases and contexts	Quite specifically applicable: 'only' to disasters and in pre-disaster phases	Quite generally applicable in terms of crisis contexts, first only to conflicts, but now also applied to disaster settings. Especially useful prior and during humanitarian crises	General applicability to crisis contexts, but focuses on immediate crisis phase	Medium general applicability: mostly to disasters, but also as a prevention tool	General applicability in terms of crisis context. Mostly used as a more developmental approach
Programming advice?	The distinction between root causes, dynamic pressures, unsafe conditions and hazards, leads to potential for quite detailed programming advice	Provides some but not very detailed options for programming advice; especially useful for organizational risk and safety analysis and management	Helps to identify strategic priorities for programming, not meant as a tool to design tailored, localized responses	Quite basic programming advice, also reported problems with translating analysis to intervention	Possibilities for detailed programming advice due to degree of specificity of the model, however some criticism about feasibility

From the above it can be concluded that the selected frameworks present us with a trade-off between the thoroughness of the analysis and the time it costs to conduct a particular analysis, as expected. In addition it seems that the more generally applicable the framework – which would be a desired quality of any model – the less precise the programming advice becomes, which would be undesirable. With the H-AID framework we aim to present a middle ground by providing a framework that offers an acceptable degree of thoroughness whereas at the same time is it quicker to apply than the most thorough frameworks discussed in this chapter. In the same vein, the H-AID framework aims at being quite generally applicable (in terms of crisis phases and contexts) but also to provide tools for specific programming advice.

Next to the fact that the H-AID framework aims to offer a solution to the abovementioned trade-offs, it also aims to combine the most valuable structural dimensions from the frameworks discussed. As the above review shows, the selected models share a number of commonalities relevant for a structural approach to humanitarian action. First of all, most models focus on identifying the *capabilities and vulnerabilities* of groups as a core element of humanitarian crisis analysis, such as in the CVA, PAR, MIRA and SLF frameworks. Second, all models to some extent ask for an *analysis of crisis context dimensions*, something that is also recommended in the Good Practice Review on organizational security management (HPN/ODI 2010). Often these dimensions pertain to the social, economic and political fabric of the societies these crises occur in, complemented with physical/natural context characteristics. Whereas some models very extensively discuss these dimensions and their interconnections (the PAR and SLF model), other models provide more general elaborations of these dimensions and offer fewer options for in-depth causal analysis (MIRA, CVA), but all outline the importance of these context characteristics, also as a means to better understand the (direct) causes of crisis and vulnerability to crisis. Moreover, some frameworks recommend to conduct a pre-crisis and post-crisis analysis, such as the MIRA model. Third, most models point out the *importance of actors* (individuals, groups and organizations) in humanitarian crisis, although some refer to these more explicitly than others. Whereas the political economy and arena approaches put this at the center of their models, and explicitly include the analysis of power relations, other models include actors as one set of important dimensions to focus on (i.e. PAR, SLF and MIRA). Actors, their goals, resources and relations are deemed crucial to understand the causal dynamics of humanitarian crisis, but also to assess if and how the aid community and the work they do can become part of the power dynamics at play. This facilitates a risk assessment of potential adverse effects of aid (see also Anderson 1990) as well as organizational security analysis (HPN/ODI 2010).

The H-AID framework thus aims to build upon existing models by synthesizing and combining the core elements from existing models by elaborating three fundamental elements of safe and evidence-based programming: (1) context analysis prior and after a crisis hits; (2) making the step from context analysis to programming advice, including organizational security considerations; and (3)

stakeholder analysis as a tool a humanitarian organization can use to identify strategies to achieve its intervention goals safely and effectively.

With regard to context analysis, the book builds upon existing elaborations of context dimensions (Chapters 6 to 10), by focusing on the economic, social, political, food, health and environmental (ecological) context and providing tips for indicators and data collection and analysis (see Chapter 3 for a more extensive account of how we came to these dimensions). In this analysis also a first identification of relevant actors in the various contexts can be of importance. In addition, it will be discussed how this analysis helps to identify capabilities and vulnerabilities of groups (Chapter 5). Especially with regard to the context analysis, we aim to present a middle range framework, generating sufficiently reliable and valid evidence to base programming decisions on, but also quickly enough to apply in emergency settings. We therefore also provide guidance as how to determine what information is valuable to collect, how to collect valid and reliable information, as well as to judge information quality, to analyze it, interpret it, scale and weigh it (Chapter 4).

In terms of connecting the context analysis to programming advice, a method will be presented how to translate the insights gained from the analysis into programming decisions by means of constructing program theories and investigating the assumed workings of an intervention prior to its start (Chapter 11). This is followed by the stakeholder analysis (Chapter 12), which we define as quite a specific type of actor analysis. In the context analysis one might already have identified a wide variety of actors involved in an emergency. With a stakeholder analysis we present a more focused method to analyze a stakeholder field regarding a particular issue from the point of view of one particular (focal) actor. In the case of humanitarian aid, this focal actor is often a humanitarian organization and the issue is related to the aim to intervene. In the stakeholder analysis we will elaborate how such a particular analysis helps to identify strategies such as how to achieve an aid organization's aims safely and effectively. In this analysis, one analyzes the goals and resources of, and relations between, a given set of actors crucial in achieving an aid organization's aims. Finally, as a crucial component of any intervention design, this book provides guidelines and theoretical considerations for monitoring and evaluation as well as quality assurance (Chapter 13).

In our view, the application of these elements (context, intervention design and stakeholders, next to monitoring and evaluation) as elaborated in this book will provide a sound basis for evidence-based programming and thus be helpful in generating impactful aid and a safe work environment for aid workers. In the following chapters, we will first elaborate the H-AID framework by outlining the principles of context analysis, its historical and theoretical background, and the various contexts to be analyzed.