# Remoteness and Austerity: a Major Driver of Physical and Insitutional Vulnerability

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## Introduction

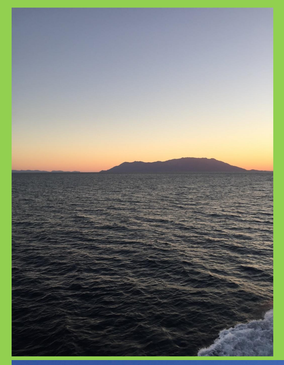
Remoteness and austerity influence the vulnerability of communities and the built environment to natural hazards. The interaction between drivers and factors of institutional vulnerability and the other vulnerability dimensions as well as the way remoteness and austerity influence these factors is demonstrated in Figure 1 and 2 respectively.

## Remoteness as a major driver of vulnerability

- Limited infrastructure including medical facilities, energy alternatives, resources.
- Limited emergency services.
- Limited communication possibilities and transport connection
- Decisions are taken somewhere else

## Austerity as a major driver of vulnerability

- Budget cuts in essential ministries and organisations related to natural hazard management (infrastructure, health, safety) that lead to reduced personnel, limited investments in new technology, maintenace of equipment, communication etc.
- Merging and closure of essential organisations, public administration and SMEs.
- Budget cuts for the maintenance of public buildings, facilities and infrastructure
- Changes in the public administration (e.g. merging of municipalities)
- Significant decrease of the household income and increase in poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, psychological illnesses etc.





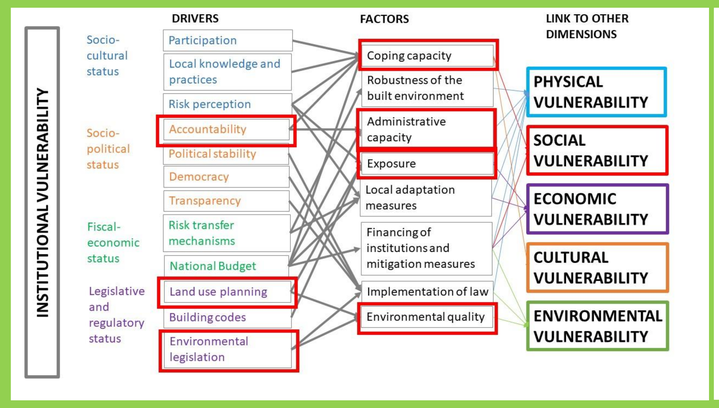



**Figure 1** The influence of remoteness on institutional vulnerabilit and other vulnerability dimensions

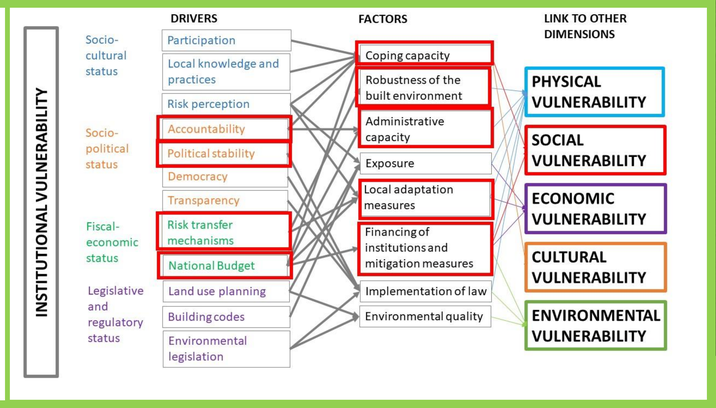



**Figure 2** The influence of austerity on institutional vulnerability and other vulnerability dimensions

## The case of Samothraki

Samothraki is a small mountainous Greek island (178 km2) located at the north east Aegean. The island suffers from intense erosion and overgrazing as well as the impacts of the Greek financial crisis. There are 2,859 permanent residents on the island (Census 2011).

## The event of 2017

The steep and eroded slopes together with high precipitation have led often to catastrophic events (e.g. October and July 2006). In September 2017, however, the island experienced a serious flash flood caused by extreme precipitation which resulted in the destruction of several buildings (67) in the main settlement of the island fortunately without human casualties.

## Disruption in 2019

on the 12th of August 2019 a wildfire on the island coincided with an extended interruption of the ferry connection that impeded aid from the mainland to reach the island and support the 10 firemen that with the help of five fire brigade vehicles and one water tanker were trying to get the fire under control.

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