



Australian Government

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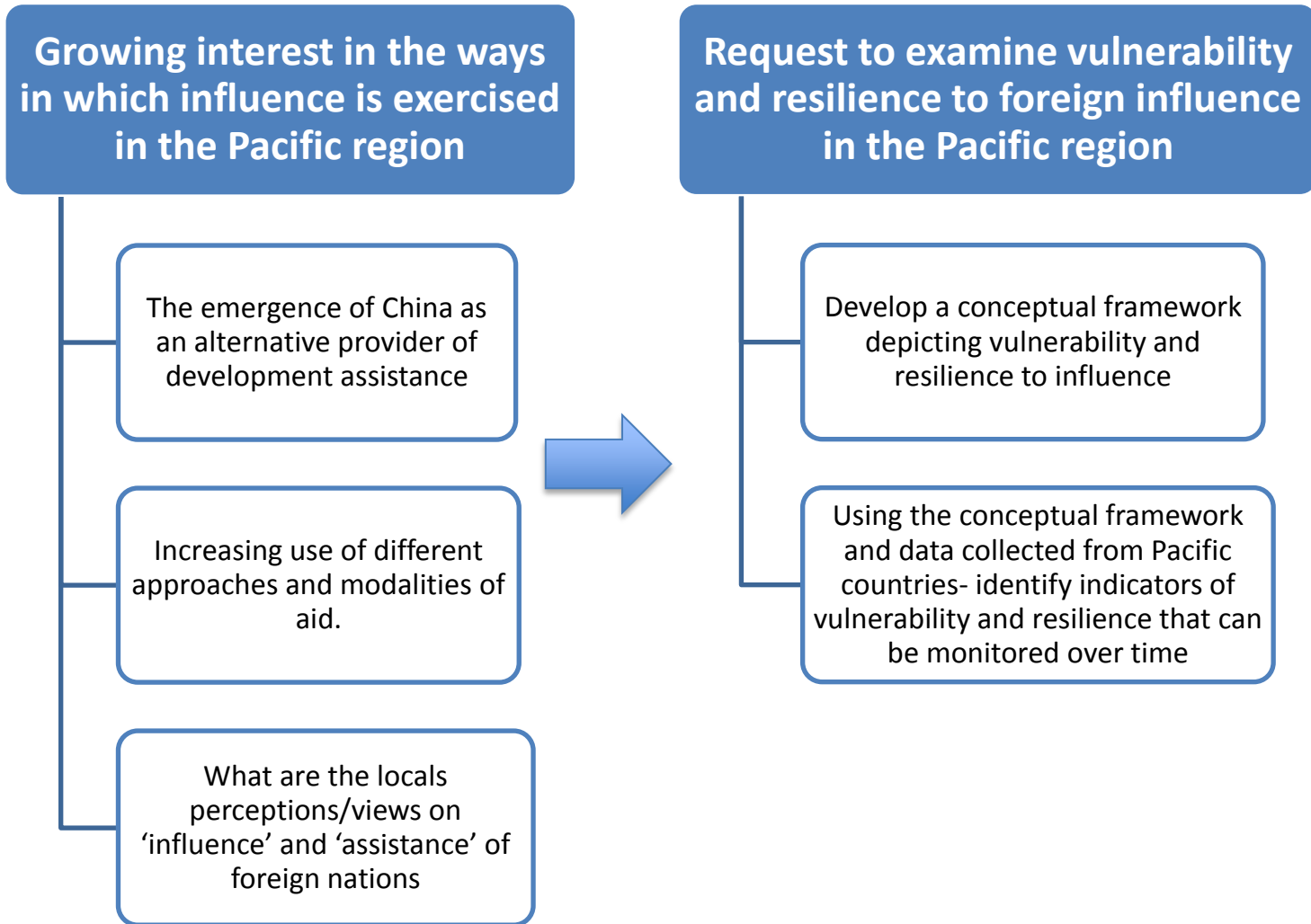
Vulnerability to Influence: A National Level Framework for Cross-Case Comparison

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Outline

- Background
- Research Approach (Phase 1 and 2)
- Vulnerability
- Vulnerability: Social Vulnerability
- Resilience
- Social Vulnerability and Resilience: Conceptual framework
- Next Steps

Background



Research Approach: Questions

- What are the underlying social factors that make Pacific nations vulnerable or resilient to influence attempts?
- How do different modalities of aid effect local populations?
- How do Pacific nations perceive influence in their region, and their own nation's vulnerability or resilience to influence attempts?
- How can Australia assist Pacific nations to become more resilient to influence attempts and more able to exercise autonomy and realise their independence?

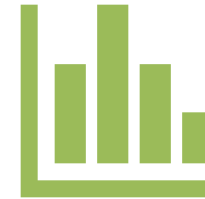
Research Approach: Phases



Phase 1: Initial development of the conceptual framework

Review of Academic Literature: Social Influence, Vulnerability and Resilience

Open source material and previous research on the Pacific region



Phase 2: Case Study Methodology: Mixed Methods(Data Collection).

Single-case: Solomon Islands

Intent for multiple cases to allow for cross-case comparison

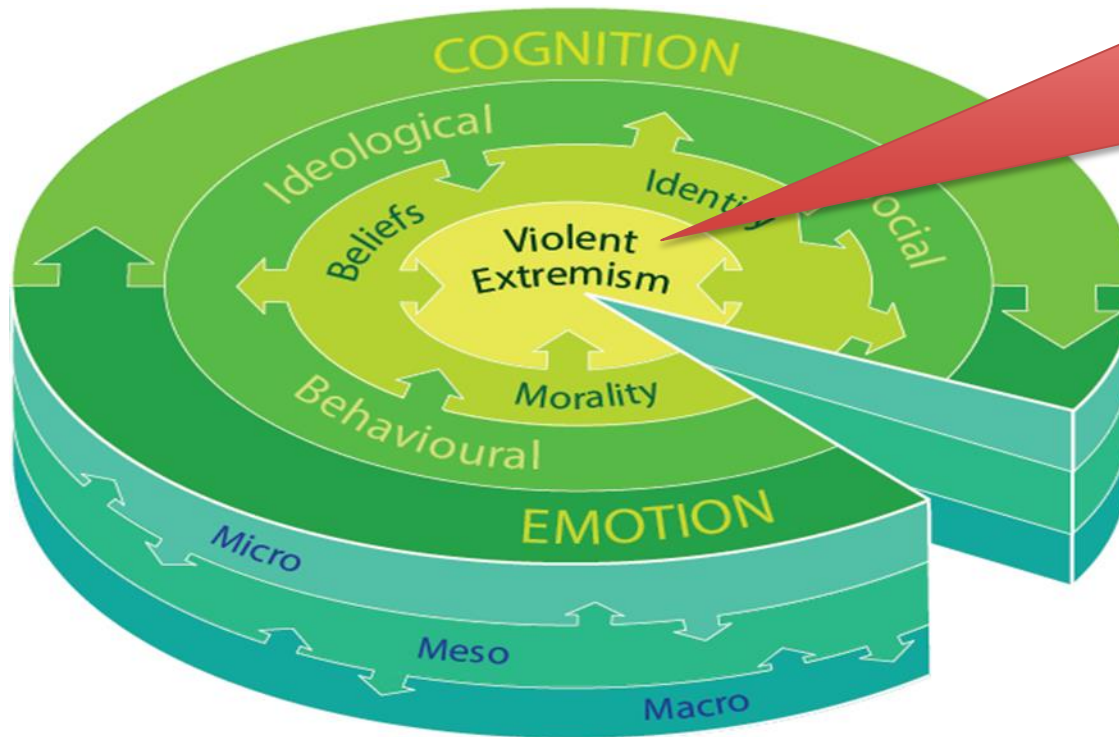
Quantitative

- Survey administered to a sample of the local population

Qualitative

- Open-ended question responses

Social influence



***While directed toward understanding the process of radicalisation from the perspective of the person being influenced, this model can also be applied to identify and understand other contexts where influence efforts are enacted.**

The Social Influence Model of Violent Extremism, Smith and Talbot (2019)

Vulnerability

- The ‘capacity to be wounded’ (Kates, 1985; Dow, 1992) or the ‘potential for loss’ (Cutter, 1996)
- Four dominant discourses at play
 1. Natural disaster/exposure to hazards
 2. Health – outcomes, quality of life, longevity
 3. Conflict – pre-existing instabilities that may lead to conflict and post conflict recovery
 4. Cyber – compromising systems
- (Unexpected) exposure/and or susceptibility to a harming event/attack/stress - reactive stance – response to event/attack/stress
- Goal - building resilience/adaptive capacity/develop immunity (protective factors)
- Omnipresent notion of risk – negative connotations

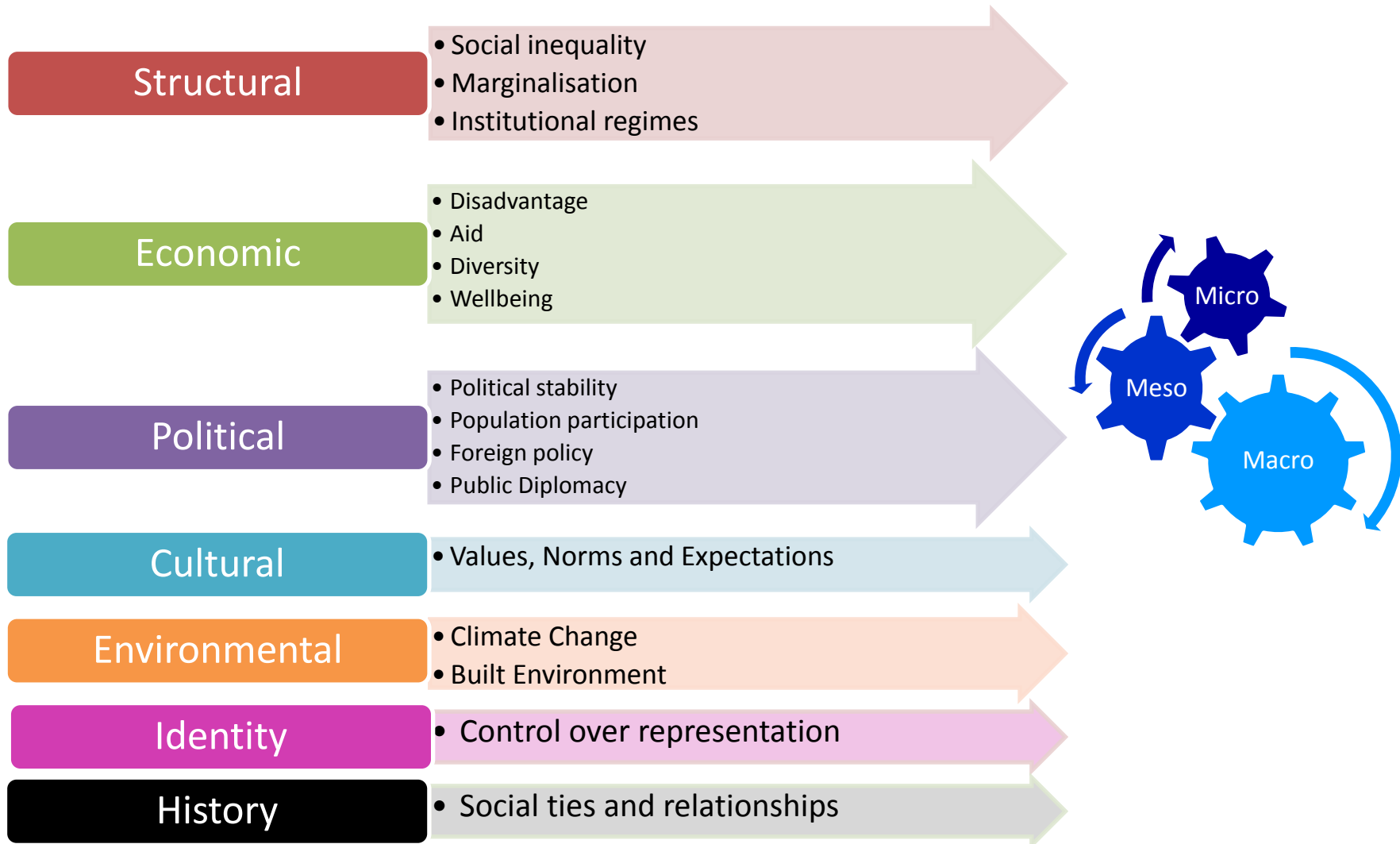
Influence and vulnerability

Following the lead of Wisner (2016) we define vulnerability as:

...characteristics of people...groups [and nations] that expose them to influence and limit their ability to anticipate, build resilience to and counter influence attempts over time.



Dimensions of vulnerability



Resilience

*Approaches to and expressions of resilience may differ according to culture

A vehicle through which vulnerable individuals and populations can better **respond to influence and uncertainty**

Aspects:

- The **adaptive capacities** of individuals, organisations and societies to bounce back from shocks, disturbances, or stress
- **Opportunity** for reinvention and growth – building newer and better (and more adaptive) versions of people, organisations and societies into the future
- **Agentic** expressions of resilience:
 - **Self-advocacy and self-determination**
 - **Resistance**
 - overt
 - covert
- Temporal dimension to resilience

Resilience

Micro: Individual

Characteristics/qualities/abilities to adapt or manage challenging events/circumstances or psychological stressors

Meso: Group/Community/Organisation

Risk management, organisational and safety cultures

Macro: Societal/Cultural/National

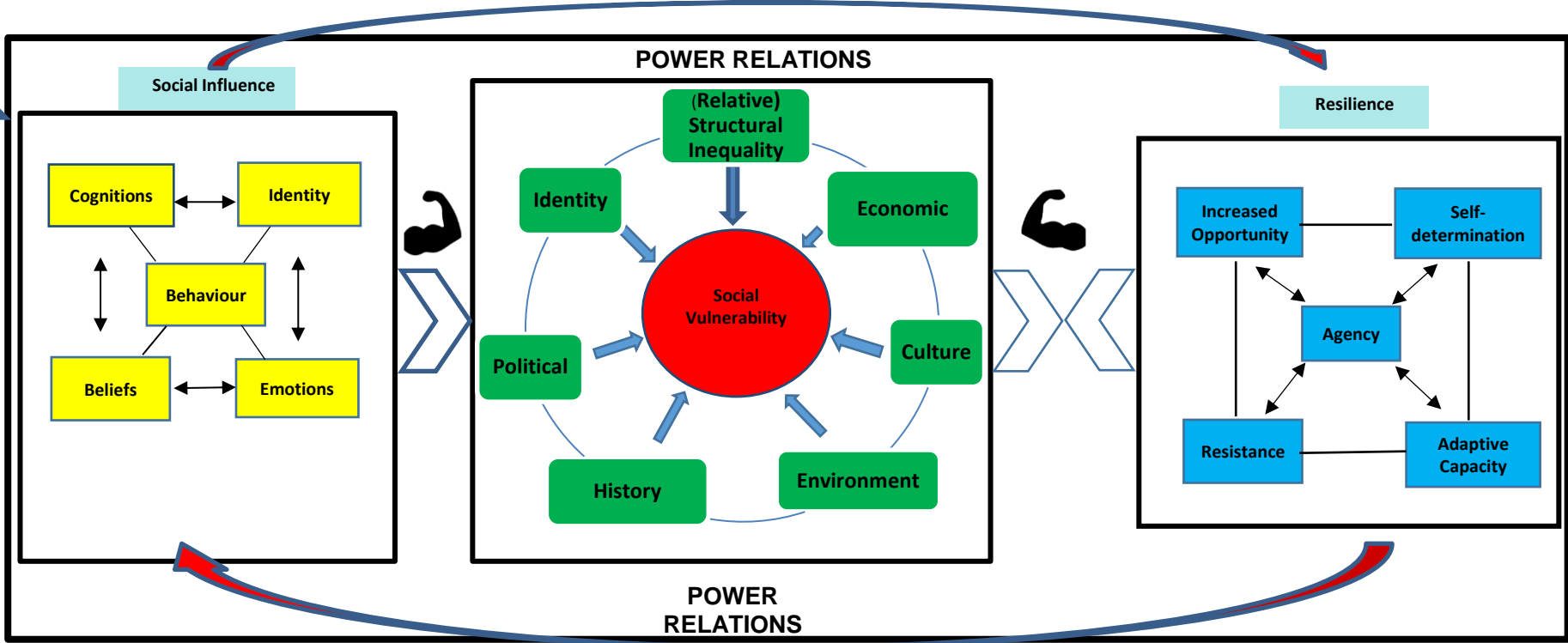
Ability to adapt/cope within environmental structural and contextual concerns or external threats maintaining livelihoods or retaining identity

Vulnerability to Influence Framework

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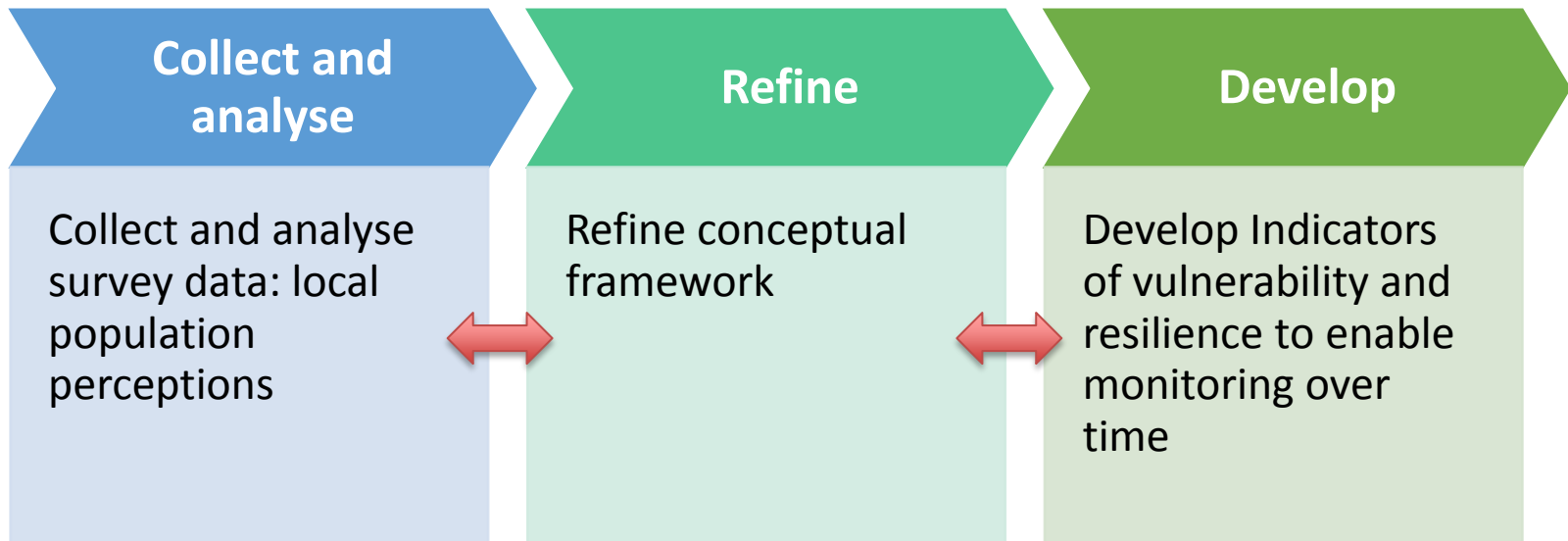
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(Temporal-Change over time)



Next Steps: Collaboration with Deakin University and RMIT



Impact for Defence

- An ADF equipped with a greater socio-cultural understanding of countries in the region and what makes them vulnerable and resilient to influence attempts.
- Defence (working as part of a WoG approach) is better able to determine how Australia may engage with countries in the region and assist in making them more resilient to foreign influence.
- Contribute to understanding the significance of influence within 'grey zone' operations
 - Gaining competitive edge below conflict threshold



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**Thank you!
Questions?**

