ABSTRACT

Resilient infrastructure is imperative especially following natural or manmade disasters. The ability to move food, water, and relief supplies using multiple modes of transportation to areas recently affected by major disasters is oftentimes very difficult. Following Hurricane Maria’s landfall on Puerto Rico in 2017, 18,000 shipping containers were stranded in just one port of Puerto Rico unable to traverse the island to reach those in need. The lack of resilient infrastructure caused a delay in repair to normalcy for the entire island and delayed supplies that were already late to their destination even longer.

The goal of this research is to model the elasticity of cargo arrival and departure under resilient infrastructure. The objective of this research is to determine the responsiveness of a mode of transportation to change under demand and restrictions.

PROBLEM

On September 20, 2017 Hurricane Maria made landfall on Puerto Rico as a category four hurricane, the strongest storm to pass over the island in 85 years. The island, whose infrastructure was already deteriorating, came out in an inhabitable state in many areas. It took until September 23rd for the Port of San Juan to reopen and allow 11 cargo ships to bring water, foods, clothes, and generators. On September 28th, eight days after landfall, 10,000 shipping containers containing food and supplies were still stuck in the Port of San Juan.

In 2017, NOAA reported that 17 named storms formed in the Atlantic, 10 of which were hurricanes, and six of which were major hurricanes (category three or higher). Since 1851, 27 storms have directly hit Puerto Rico, 11 of which were major storms. In the past 20 years the number of major hurricanes in the Atlantic has increased 74 percent. As the number of major hurricanes increases, the need to ensure resilient infrastructure to aid in preparation and repair efforts on an island with aging infrastructure is ever present. The National Science Foundation (NSF) defines resiliency as “the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, or more successfully adapt to actual or potential adverse events.”

METHODOLOGY

Modeling of Hybrid Mesoscopic/Microscopic Network in VISSIM

A base model will be established under normal operations using data collected over a given timeframe. An Inverse Transform Sampling will be applied to simulate vessels within the port. Once vessel arrival and dwell times are estimated they can be analyzed using a Graphical User Interface. Simulated vessel operation will be examined and compared to historical data for calibration and validation purposes. A developed simulation model will allow the evaluation of various disruptive scenarios such as Hurricane Maria, flooding, and port labor disputes. This approach to analyzing port operations will be integrated with a landside model of surface transportation cargo distribution facilities.

IMPLICATIONS

This research will have major impacts on society. By performing this research potential benefits can be achieved in public safety literacy, as well as the improvement of the well-being of individuals in a society. By enhancing emergency preparation and response times—i.e., allowing for the safe passage onto and off of the island and shipment of food, water, and preparedness and recovery supplies across the network in the days leading up to and following a major disaster this will help increase partnerships between academia, industry, and others by contributing research on a topic as important as resilient infrastructure from an engineering and academic standpoint. It will help to aid in new resilient infrastructure design and construction throughout the country and the world. It will also help to aid national security by providing data for the need for resilient infrastructure that can be applied to both natural and manmade disasters.

REFERENCES