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Geographical Planning  
Reading Response 2  
Natural Hazard Mitigation

Throughout the majority of the reading outlining natural hazards and avoiding them the biggest examples have come from catastrophes in which have occurred before major changes were implemented. Following the events of Hurricane Sandy, the Bloomberg administration directed spending and energy to mitigation. Following Hurricane Katrina the city council of New Orleans adopted a whole new city plan. While even though New Orleans was implementing strategies to mitigated flooding as early as the 1920's, it wouldn't stand against Hurricane Katrina. It is without mentioning that these events are a trigger mechanism to implement natural hazard mitigation.

Robert Verchick's three basic rules for doing adequate planning for natural disasters: Go green, be fair, and be safe can be diagnosed upon most city hazard plans. In the case of planning for NYC after Hurricane Sandy, the Bloomberg followed a rough edition of these steps. Going green meant that NYC would adopt natural ways of mitigation that could also be cost effective. Rather than create one large variable for mitigation, the administration went through NYC and redid zoning codes, widened beaches, expanded levees, and addressed neighborhoods individually. By doing this the government was able to create a fair environment, even when the state government wanted to buy home owners land on the beach, the city fought for their property. The three basic rules however, were a defense mechanism when battling against the natural hazards and even after doing so Bloomberg was succeeded by Bill De Blasio who has lessened hazard mitigation spending and resources.

Perhaps there is no better example to list about mitigation than the current Covid-19. While the outbreak is listed as a 'pandemic' rather than a 'natural disaster,' the response mechanism has been very similar. However, since the pandemic is a slower ongoing hazard compared to a natural disaster it is possible to diagnose administration's actions more thoroughly. As the US now has over 1 million cases and over 60,000 deaths, it has been seen that the government was not prepared for the events. Local governments have asked fellow citizens with help through medical staff, face masks, and ventilators. To prove that this country was not prepared for this pandemic, let's look at Robert Verchick's rules for adequate planning.

As studies have shown the result of coronavirus effects on the overall carbon emissions it has shown to decrease. However in the scheme of things the overall daily emissions have only dropped about 10% due to less air and street traffic. It is expected that the effect will have little to do on any long term climate change effects. However when looking at 'Go Green,' it has been seen that fighting coronavirus is not a local and sound defense. Governments are asking for people to send equipment/resources all across the country. This allocation does not allow for government to use local resources to fend for themselves and lessen footprints. Since recently studies have shown that effects of the coronavirus have resulted in more deaths within Black and

Latino communities. These are do to the higher obesity rates and health concerns among individuals, but attention has not shifted towards these groups since the outbreak anymore. Lack of resources keep these groups from seeking professional care. At the same time outbreaks within NYC have resulted in over 160,000 cases. NYC has frequently maximized medical staff and ventilators resulting in allocation of resources. This disease may obviously distribute where it will, however with an abundance of resources in suburban areas compared to rural the 'Be Fair' rule is not followed. Finally, the result of the lack of attention when the virus first was present has resulted in abundance of deaths around the country. Compared to countries such as South Korea and China, the USA has been slow to act on such policies and make actions. The economy has also seen merciless effects from the coronavirus. The coronavirus response has not been able to follow the 'Be Safe' rule and can see the effects through many lenses.

Robert Verchick's three basic rules for doing adequate planning for natural disasters can be an effective way to combat hazards, however seen through examples it trends to be used following these major catastrophes. Natural hazard mitigation has proven to be a preparation that benefits long term benefits. A good city planner will implement these strategies.

#### Works Cited

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