Do All Failures Lead to Change?

Do all failures lead to policy learning and change? It stands to reason that every failure will not lead to change, much less a policy change that will improve a program or outcome. The central premise is that some policy failures may lead to learning and policy change because of the type of failure that occurred or the type of learning that the failure initiated. This study uses data on policy failures revealed by a natural disaster, Hurricane Harvey, and a technological disaster, drinking water infrastructure failures in Ohio, Michigan and North Carolina. The analysis reveals the conditional nature of policy learning after a failure. It suggests that not all failures lead to learning that reduce future risks and promote long term resilience. Experience with disaster is important for change after a failure.

Kristin Taylor
Associate Professor
Political Science

Kristin Taylor is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, USA. She earned her Ph.D. in Public Administration from North Carolina State University. Dr Taylor’s research investigates the policy process, focusing events, policy failure and learning, and the politics of hazards and disasters.

For more info about the Humanities Center, call (313) 577-5471 or visit https://research2.wayne.edu/hum/Programs/brownbag/19-20.html