

# The Saltwater Theory: A Directed Study of Failed Revolutions

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## Abstract:

From the Second World War to date, social scientists who study revolutions have engaged in a pivot from initially focusing on the conditions of the state to a more actor-centric model. In their eyes, the actors (revolutionaries, political parties, foreign nations) within a sphere decide a path for political change, rather than the existing conditions (political rights, economic conditions, repression, etc.) in the same environment. This essay counters this thinking by introducing a Saltwater Theory to explain how different forms of uprisings (the same as different species of animals) can survive in some environments but not others. Additionally, the paper supplements the study of political change by examining four failed revolutions: the Simba Rebellion beginning in 1964, the First Palestinian Intifada beginning in 1987, the Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989, and the Syrian uprising beginning in 2011.