

REVOLUTIONARY COALITION

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1. Core Definition and Context

A **revolutionary coalition** is defined as a highly organized and ideologically motivated subgroup that emerges within a larger, established institution or organization, dedicated to achieving **profound and extensive alterations** in the operation, design, and often the fundamental ideology of the parent body. Unlike typical factions or reformist movements that seek incremental adjustments within accepted institutional parameters, a revolutionary coalition aims for a paradigm shift, fundamentally challenging the existing power structure and normative order. This concept is crucial in understanding how entrenched institutions, whether political parties, corporations, labor unions, or academic bodies, face internal pressures for radical transformation. The distinction lies in the severity and scope of the proposed changes; revolution, in this context, implies overturning or completely replacing foundational principles and leadership, not merely updating policies or personnel.

The term draws heavily from both **organizational theory**, which examines internal friction and change dynamics, and **political science**, where coalitions are analyzed as temporary or permanent alliances formed to achieve political objectives. When applied to a revolutionary context, the coalition utilizes the resources and infrastructure of the host organization while simultaneously undermining its current leadership and direction. The success of such a coalition often hinges on its ability to mobilize external dissatisfaction and internal dissent, leveraging a perceived crisis of legitimacy within the parent organization to justify its radical agenda. They leverage institutional membership to gain access, legitimacy, and resources that would be unavailable to an entirely external opposition movement.

In essence, the revolutionary coalition is a mechanism of **internal institutional revolt**. It maintains a semblance of loyalty or membership to the organization it seeks to transform, allowing it access and legitimacy, but its true objective is the capture or complete redirection of the organization's mandate. The goal is not secession or simple opposition, but conquest and ideological domination. This dynamic necessitates careful maneuvering, often requiring the coalition to operate as a cohesive, clandestine, or highly disciplined group focused on acquiring key leverage points within the bureaucratic, legislative, or electoral structures of the greater organization. Their effectiveness is measured by their ability to translate popular internal discontent into actionable political power.

2. Mechanisms of Formation and Ideological Purity

The formation of a revolutionary coalition is typically rooted in a confluence of factors, including deep-seated ideological divergence, perceived systemic failure, and the timely availability of charismatic, unifying leadership. Ideological purity often serves as the initial and most potent unifying factor; members feel the parent organization has strayed too far from its original, ideal, or fundamental principles, creating a vacuum of legitimacy that the coalition attempts to fill. This divergence is often crystallized by a specific, high-profile policy failure, an electoral defeat, or a perceived ethical compromise by the existing leadership, providing a tangible catalyst for radical dissent and mobilization.

Technological advancements and social changes play a significant role in enabling rapid and widespread coalition formation. Modern revolutionary coalitions often utilize decentralized communication networks, such as encrypted messaging platforms and social media, to coordinate actions, bypass traditional organizational gatekeepers, and recruit members who feel disenfranchised by the organization's central command. This capability to organize vertically across various organizational levels and horizontally across disparate geographical locations allows the coalition to present a far more unified and potent front than traditional, decentralized factions, enabling rapid consensus building around a radical agenda.

A critical psychological mechanism underlying formation is the identification of a common external enemy or threat, whether perceived or real, which is often linked to the perceived weakness of the incumbent leadership. By framing the existing organizational leadership as either corrupt, ineffective, or compromised by outside interests, the coalition successfully justifies its radical stance as necessary for the survival or moral revitalization of the institution. The consolidation of internal grievances under a singular, powerful, and often simplified narrative transforms disparate complaints into a cohesive revolutionary platform, thereby accelerating the transition from a mere dissenting faction to a formal, organized, and transformative coalition prepared to seize control.

3. Typology and Characteristics of Revolutionary Goals

The goals pursued by a revolutionary coalition are inherently maximalist and fall into three primary, interconnected categories: ideological, structural, and personnel. Ideologically, the foremost goal is often the radical restoration of a perceived "golden age" or the uncompromising enforcement of a purist interpretation of the organization's founding doctrines. This necessitates the immediate and unambiguous repudiation of all recent policy shifts, compromises, and ideological adaptations that the coalition views as compromising or antithetical to the core mission, establishing a non-negotiable set of principles for the organization's future direction.

Structurally, revolutionary goals inevitably involve the **dismantling of existing power centers** and administrative mechanisms that are seen as enabling the status quo and perpetuating moderate control. This might include radically altering the voting rules for leadership selection, restructuring

governing bodies to ensure proportional ideological representation, or decentralizing authority away from established elite committees. The ultimate intent of these structural reforms is to make the organizational design fundamentally compatible with the new, radical ideology, thereby ensuring that future moderate or conservative elements cannot easily revert the changes once the coalition assumes control. These changes are often justified under the guise of increasing democracy or accountability.

The third and most immediate characteristic relates to systematic personnel replacement, which often involves internal conflict and purges. A successful revolutionary coalition methodically seeks the removal of current leadership and entrenched bureaucratic figures, replacing them with adherents who are ideologically committed to the coalition's non-negotiable agenda. This process is essential for securing long-term change, as structural reforms alone are insufficient if the same personnel remain in control of implementation and interpretation. Thus, aggressive internal campaigning, targeted primary challenges, and strategic appointments become operational cornerstones, ensuring that the organization is governed by individuals who prioritize the coalition's revolutionary vision.

4. Tactics and Strategies Employed

Revolutionary coalitions employ a complex mix of internal political maneuvering and external populist pressure to achieve their goals, often utilizing the very democratic processes of the parent organization against its entrenched leadership. Internally, a primary strategy is the focused and disciplined acquisition of control over vital organizational choke points, such as key budget committees, electoral infrastructure, and nominating conventions. By controlling who gets nominated for pivotal roles, the coalition ensures that its membership base expands strategically, tilting the institutional balance of power over a sustained period.

Externally, revolutionary coalitions frequently bypass traditional organizational communication channels and appeal directly to the rank-and-file membership or the broader public base that the organization claims to represent. This strategy involves high-profile, uncompromising rhetoric, aggressive media engagement, and the utilization of populist fervor to pressure the moderate establishment into policy compliance or surrender. A globally recognized example of this phenomenon is the formation of the **Tea Party** movement within the Republican National Convention (RNC) in the United States. This coalition did not seek to leave the RNC; rather, it used grassroots mobilization, highly publicized protests, and coordinated primary challenges to force the existing Republican establishment to adopt more conservative fiscal and social policies, effectively reshaping the party platform and purging moderate voices from the party structure.

Furthermore, **obstructionism** and procedural warfare are key tactics. By leveraging minority representation in legislative or governing bodies, the coalition can effectively halt the functioning of

the parent organization, generating institutional gridlock until its core demands are met. This willingness to prioritize ideological purity over institutional harmony serves as a potent bargaining chip, forcing the established leadership to concede significant structural or policy changes simply to restore functional operation. This strategy relies heavily on the coalition's internal unity, which must remain robust despite external pressure to compromise.

5. Organizational Environment and Preconditions for Success

The viability and ultimate success of a revolutionary coalition are highly dependent on the institutional environment of the parent organization. Several preconditions are highly favorable to the coalition's rise, including significant organizational inertia, widespread public perception of corruption or systemic ineffectiveness, and weak or fundamentally divided leadership. When an organization is perceived by its core constituency as failing its mission, or when its processes appear ossified and unresponsive, the ground becomes fertile for radical alternatives to take root, as the perceived cost of supporting the status quo is judged to be higher than the risk of radical change advocated by the coalition.

A crucial precondition for activation is the existence of a unifying external threat or crisis. In moments of acute institutional vulnerability--such as catastrophic electoral defeat, major financial scandal, or profound public alienation--the coalition can successfully argue that the established leadership is incapable of navigating the crisis and that only radical measures will suffice. This perception empowers the coalition to present itself not as a disruptive, divisive force, but as the only viable alternative for institutional recovery, moral strength, and future stability. The crisis provides the moral authority required for revolutionary demands.

Additionally, the specific structure of the host organization matters significantly. Organizations with decentralized power structures, where local or regional chapters hold substantial autonomy in areas like funding or candidate selection, provide easier entry points for coalitions to gain control incrementally. Coalitions can slowly build power by capturing local organs before challenging the national leadership. Conversely, organizations with highly centralized, monolithic control are often harder to penetrate, forcing the coalition into riskier, more overtly confrontational strategies that may invite immediate expulsion, censorship, or institutional repression, thereby shortening the window for successful internal takeover.

6. Outcomes and Institutional Impact

The impact of a successful or even partially successful revolutionary coalition is transformative, leading to irreversible institutional change. Outcomes generally fall into three definitive categories: ideological absorption, strategic redirection, or catastrophic fracture. In the case of **absorption**, the coalition successfully captures the primary organizational structure, and its revolutionary agenda

rapidly becomes the new mainstream ideology of the parent body. The original moderate goals, policies, and personnel are either marginalized, systematically purged, or fully assimilated into the new ideological order, resulting in a wholesale transformation of the institution's identity.

In the scenario of **strategic redirection**, the coalition does not achieve total, uncontested victory but exerts sufficient power to force the parent organization to significantly shift its policy direction in response to sustained internal pressure. While the original moderate leadership might remain in place for a time, their operational flexibility and policy choices are severely curtailed by the powerful, ideologically rigid internal faction. This outcome is highly visible in political parties where the platform moves sharply to one extreme to appease the revolutionary elements, often sacrificing electoral viability for ideological purity.

The third outcome, **fracture**, occurs when the tension between the revolutionary coalition and the establishment becomes irreconcilable, leading inevitably to schism or organizational breakdown. If the parent body attempts to expel the coalition, the coalition may successfully draw away a significant portion of the membership, resources, and public support, forming a rival institution that directly competes with the established body. Regardless of the specific outcome, the sustained presence and activity of a revolutionary coalition permanently alters the political calculus, resource allocation, and foundational ideological principles within the host organization.

7. Debates and Criticisms

While the concept of the revolutionary coalition is analytically vital for understanding internal institutional conflict, it faces several academic and practical criticisms. One primary limitation revolves around the difficulty in definitively classifying a movement as truly "revolutionary" versus merely "radical reformist." Critics argue that true organizational revolution necessitates a complete break from historical institutional norms and total ideological capture, whereas many coalitions ultimately compromise, settling for significant policy shifts rather than wholesale systemic overthrow. This definitional ambiguity complicates objective scholarly classification and analysis.

Furthermore, the heavy theoretical focus on internal structure often neglects the necessary external environment required for a coalition to achieve critical mass and thrive. A revolutionary coalition cannot succeed without broad public sympathy, favorable media exposure, or the crucial backing of powerful external funding or influential advocacy networks. Treating the phenomenon purely as an internal organizational dynamic ignores the profound sociological, economic, and political forces that empower these movements and provide them with the sophisticated resources necessary for sustained, high-stakes internal conflict against entrenched elites.

Finally, there is significant criticism regarding the long-term durability and post-victory efficacy of such coalitions. By definition, a coalition is an alliance often formed primarily under duress or in unified response to a singular, defined threat. Once the immediate revolutionary goal is achieved

or the targeted leadership is deposed, the internal ideological differences and resource conflicts within the coalition may rapidly surface, leading to severe fragmentation and debilitating infighting. The very mechanism that ensures their disciplined formation--a high degree of ideological purity and unwillingness to compromise--can become a liability once the group transitions from resistance and opposition to the complex demands of governance and institutional maintenance.

Further Reading

[The Tea Party Movement \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Organizational Theory and Change Dynamics \(Wikipedia\)](#)

[Political Coalitions and Factionalism \(Wikipedia\)](#)

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