

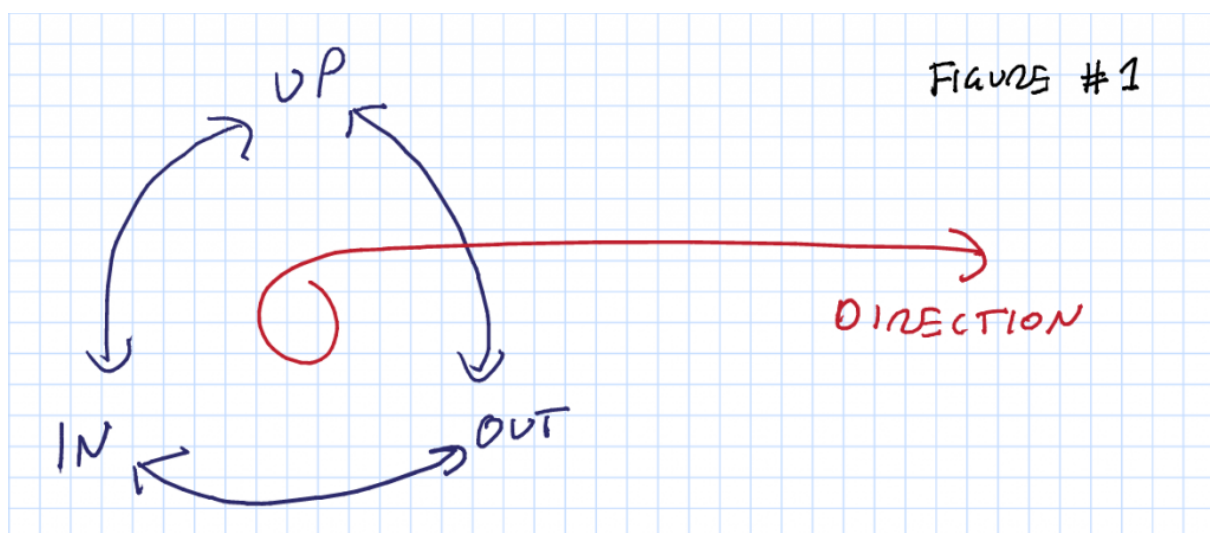
# Shapes of Movements

I guess there a bunch of ways to define a “movement.”

From the broad point of view, not every organisation or gathering of people is a movement. Some groups simply exist to achieve a task, they are *functional* or *operational*. Some groups simply exist for the sake of the members, they are *therapeutic* or *social*. Some groups simply exist around a common point of interest or way of seeing the world, they are *esoteric* or *idealist*.

Using language with which some will be familiar, some groups focus on “OUT” (functional), some groups focus on “IN” (social), some groups focus on “UP” (idealist).

But when a group can incorporate all three aspects, and combine them with a sense of innate *direction*, then **you have a movement that not only achieves a purpose, but moves itself, and those around them, towards a goal.** It’s UP-IN-OUT with DIRECTION.



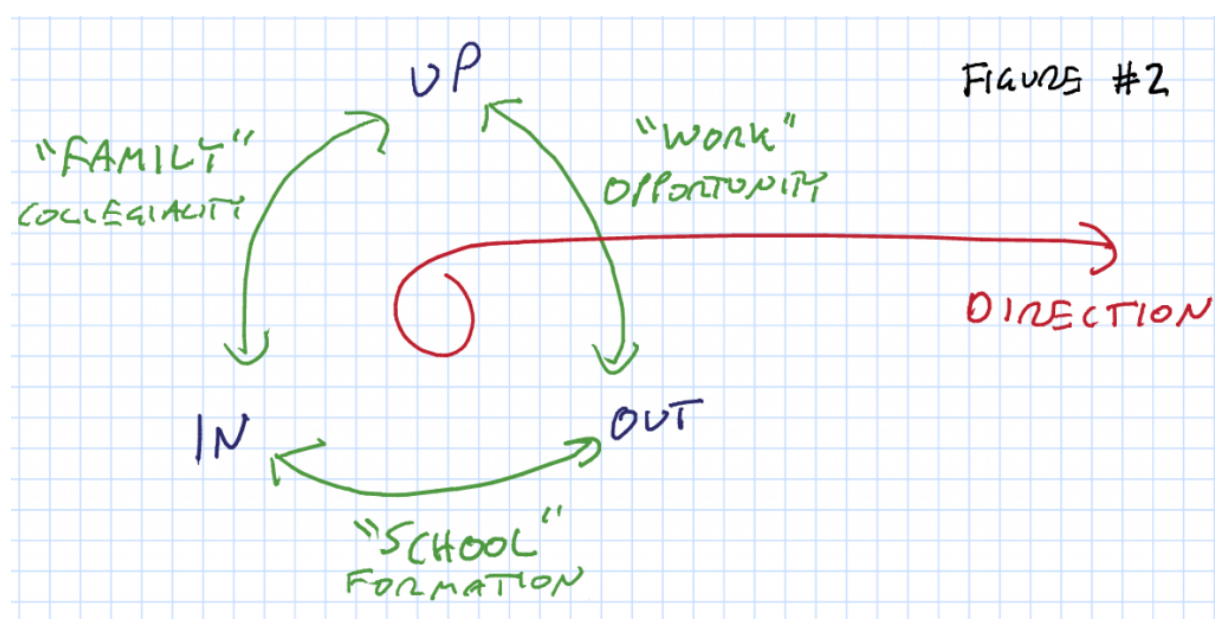
It’s these sort of groups, these movements, that change the world.

But from a closer point of view, they are also the groups to which motivated individuals choose to belong; and that’s a

belonging in a very deep sense. When people belong to a *group* they simply attend, contribute, and enjoy. When people belong to a *movement* there is an alignment of purpose and place by which that person offers a certain degree of investment and allegiance, and receives collegiality, formation, and opportunity to achieve.

This can also be expressed in “UP-IN-OUT” language, but this time in terms of the interplay between these aspects. And so:

- The interplay between “UP” and “IN” provides a context for *collegiality* where ideals and values interplay with the inward-life of the group. In other words, **the movement is partly a dynamic of “family.”**
- The interplay between “UP” and “OUT” provides a context for *opportunity* where functional tasks are guided by the ideals and values. In other words, in the deepest sense of the word, **the movement is partly a dynamic of “work.”**
- The interplay between “IN” and “OUT” provides a context for *formation*; part of caring for those within is to help them to grow to participate in the achievement. In other words, **the movement is partly a dynamic of “school.”**



I see such a dynamic is at work in a variety of “movements” –

from activist groups, political parties, through to football clubs and artistic collaborations. It's why they are precious to people.

In my own experience, the movements that my family and I have belonged to have been Christian. Jesus is our direction, and therefore the focus of our "UP", the centre of our "IN", and the exemplar of our "OUT." It's the stuff of "your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."

We can map out our life-experience by the movements that we have belonged to. On the outside they are mission agencies or dioceses. On the inside, we have experienced "family" dynamics within Christian community; we have experienced formational "school" dynamics, and rejoiced (and struggled) in the seizing of opportunities in the "work" dynamics. When you belong to such a movement it is life-giving. And it's really hard to leave.

Sometimes movements don't live up to the name. The "school" dynamic drops away and people are left unformed, un-nurtured. The "family" dynamic drops away and people are trained up, dropped in it, and left alone. The "work" dynamic drops away, and you have nice mature people who do not do anything, or have the opportunity to do anything. Others throw in the towel and lose their sense of direction. Such movements need revitalisation, reformation, or perhaps to simply fade away.

For those of us who are looking ahead at the moment: it is a *movement* that we are looking for, to join or to grow. The process of growing/changing/starting a movement is the stuff for more thought. But I suspect this is true: it can't be done alone; and it must be sown within a Christward direction.