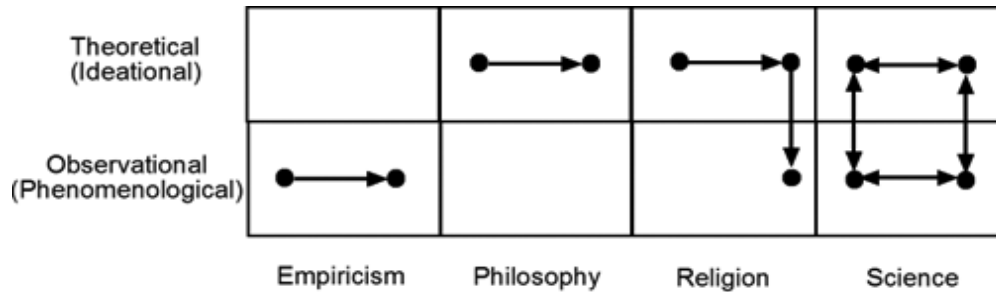


## Systems of Knowledge



The logical forms of the major systems of knowledge are dramatically contrastive when examined by their use of theoretical and observational concepts. Common senses combine all four systems in an unrecoverable and cryptic mixture. The arrows denote the sequence of explanation. Philosophy and religion share the feature of not explaining events on the basis of empirical observation. Philosophy does not deal with phenomena at all, but with ideas; religion attributes all events to a single non-empirical cause. Empiricism and science both explain empirical observations, and thus are readily confused with each other (e.g. Watson et al. 1971), but contrasted to the other systems, albeit in different ways. The 'social' sciences can generally be modelled as empiricism while the 'hard' sciences and biological sciences can generally be modelled as science.

In this diagram, horizontal arrows in the top row represent rational argument (i.e. arguments linking theoretical concepts) and in the bottom row they represent empirical argument (i.e. those linking observational concepts). For science, the vertical arrows represent both abstraction and the construction of observational units.

Logical form is not, of course, the only distinguishing feature of different knowledge systems.

### References:

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