Reflections on combining methods. A 10-minute provocation

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A provocation?

“I cannot the point of all this combining methods stuff? Where is the problem? We have always combined methods. For instance, we do macro quantitative analysis to understand general trends and we explain how these come about in specific contexts with qualitative analysis. What’s the issue with this?”

Anonymous (paraphrased)
• Where is the problem?
  In evaluation practice
• What is the problem?
  Although combining techniques makes analytical sense it rarely happens because:
    Cost considerations
    Different “epistemic communities” competing in a tight market
    **Different methods are associated with different evaluation functions**
      Quantitative with arms-length, summative evaluation for distributive or auditing purposes
      Qualitative methods with formative evaluation from improvement purposes
And so...another “provocation”...

If different methods seem more appropriate for different evaluation purposes, wouldn’t it be better to separate different evaluation purposes (and therefore keep quantitative and qualitative methods apart?)