

Superiority in Quality and non-Archimedean value orderings

This paper reviews the discussion inspired by Mill's claim about some pleasures being superior in quality to other pleasures. More precisely, it takes as its point of departure the analysis provided by Arrhenius and Rabinowicz the paper 'Millian Superiorities'. They prove a number of observations concerning what they call superiority ("A is better than any number of B") and weak superiority ("Some number of A is better than any number of B"). And they point out that many writers implicitly or explicitly assume that superiority involves infinite value differences and additivity.

This paper deals more in depth with the assumptions of additivity and a non-Archimedean value ordering. It is shown that even though many writers intend these properties, they seldom ensure that they are fulfilled. It is also shown that, under these conditions, weak superiority collapses into superiority. Finally, some consequences for interpersonal aggregation and for risk taking are spelled out.

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