never solve the problem and to exaggerate its extent, much greater potential for and incidence of rent seeking, and increasingly less secure property rights. As the editors state in their introduction to *The Common Law and the Environment* (p. xiv) “The logic and evidence in practice of the common law gives reason to consider reinvigorating its spirit to allow ordinary people to play key roles in protecting their own environment”. In fact, this important book raises questions about environmental regulation that can (and probably should) be raised about a lot of what the federal government now does, whether the issue is antitrust policy, regulation of financial markets and interstate transportation, federal criminalization of illicit drugs, or any of the myriad other legislative/administrative systems that have developed over the last century. I recommend it to anyone interested in environmental policy, but also to anyone interested in exploring an array of approaches to comparative institutions analysis.

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Hannu Nurmi, *Voting paradoxes and how to deal with them*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1999. x + 153 pages. DM 89.00/£30.50/$54.95 (cloth).

Consider a situation in which you were requested to design the voting rules for an executive board in a large company or, even more exciting, the voting rules (for referenda, parliamentary or presidential elections, for instance) in a newly created state. Unless you wanted to install yourself as a dictator in such an organization, you would surely try to design the rules such that they guarantee the choice of the ‘best’ alternative out of a set of admissible alternatives. But beware, in designing rules for making collective decisions you might face several pitfalls, some of them seriously affecting the chosen alternatives in a probably unintended way.

So, what to do in order to avoid some undesirable effects of specific voting rules? One advice the reviewer could give you is to rely on a recent book by Hannu Nurmi, Professor of Political Science at the University of Turku, which is entirely devoted to *Voting Paradoxes and How to Deal with Them*. The book provides a systematic discussion and concise treatment of the best-known paradoxes of voting. Each section on a new paradox begins with the basic version of the paradox, moves on to an assessment of its basic constituents, relates it to other paradoxes and discusses ways of avoiding the paradox.
A prominent feature of the book is its non-technical style which makes it easily accessible to readers without any prior knowledge of the theoretical properties of voting systems or of social choice theory in general. However, the public choice scholar interested in the intricacies of voting systems may also find the book a useful reference on voting paradoxes. In particular, the book could serve very well as a standard textbook for an undergraduate (to a lesser degree, graduate) course on voting in, e.g., political science, political economy, or sociology.

In general, voting paradoxes are unpleasant, counterintuitive or inconsistent surprises encountered in elections. Before discussing the earliest paradoxes, dating back to 18th century France, Nurmi introduces the basic concepts and tools for analyzing voting paradoxes. The basic starting point is the observation that the notion of voting itself includes two fundamental aspects, i.e., choice and voter opinion. Both the set of alternatives from which to choose as well as the preferences underlying the rankings expressed in voter opinion are typically regarded as given in the theory of voting. Specific types of alternative sets and voter opinions, then, lead to voting paradoxes. The set of alternatives is related to voter opinions in preference profiles. They indicate each voter’s preference ranking over the alternatives. From preference profiles, one can construct a pairwise comparison matrix, indicating the number of voters who prefer one alternative over the other, or a tournament matrix, indicating whether a majority of voters prefers one alternative over the other. Preference profiles can also be analyzed geometrically in the form of Saari triangles which, basically, convey the same information as the pairwise comparison or tournament matrices.

Equipped with the tools for analyzing voting paradoxes the book starts out with what is later (in Chapter 10) classified as incompatibility paradoxes. Such paradoxes are characterized by not simultaneously satisfying several intuitively plausible requirements that one could impose on ‘best’ alternatives. The probably most famous voting paradoxes of Borda and Condorcet belong to this class of paradoxes. Condorcet’s paradox is the well-known fact that the aggregation of individual transitive preferences using majority rule may lead to collectively intransitive preferences, thus making the outcome of a vote dependent on the order of voting and giving the agenda setter considerable influence. Borda’s paradox refers to two defects in the plurality rule: (i) it may lead to the election of a candidate who would be defeated by all other candidates in a pairwise contest with a majority of votes (Condorcet loser), and (ii) it may fail to elect a candidate who would beat all others with a majority of votes (Condorcet winner). Both Borda and Condorcet regarded the paradoxes as serious problems for the working of democratic institutions. Therefore, they came up with solutions like the Borda count or Condorcet’s