Globalism and Comparative Public Administration, by Jamil Jreisat, is an easy-to-read introduction to and description of comparative public administration. The book touches upon important issues that contribute significantly towards the understanding of public administration in a global context. It offers a thoughtful illustration of how governance, globalization, information technology, and ethical standards, as major contributing factors, affect public administration in different countries.

The first chapter describes the core characteristics, measurement indicators, and democratic values of good governance in the context of globalism. The second chapter discusses comparative public administration (CPA) from the perspectives of globalism, national development, and various critical external influences such as the effect of information communication technology on cross-cultural learning. This chapter also touches upon the role of academic societies and emerging scholarship trends in promoting the scholarly base of CPA. Chapter three gives a full description of bureaucracy from the comparative perspective. It describes the classic bureaucratic model and forms of bureaucracy proposed by Weber, followed by the major assessments, criticisms, and issues of bureaucracy.

The fourth chapter, “Comparative Research and Methods,” focuses on typical units of analysis, important methods, and instruments used in comparative research in public administration. It further highlights the significance of different types of contexts, such as social, political, and internal operating systems, often applied to the study of CPA. The subsequent chapter, “Comparative Public Policy” illustrates different stages of policy process and important factors beyond the formal process that contribute significantly to
issues related to policy formulation and implementation. It also describes important frameworks of decision making that play a significant role in policy analysis.

Chapters six and seven explain administration in developing and developed countries. These chapters give a full account of background information and important traits of administrative systems in developing and developed countries. The issues of implementation challenges, imperialistic hegemony, and lack of differentiation are found to be the main factors affecting administration development in developing countries. For developed countries, science and rationalism and the role of new public management are identified as core factors influencing administration. The final chapter, “Global Ethics and Public Service,” illustrates the importance of developing uniform ethical standards and strategies to counter corruption in various countries. It highlights the need for a broader definition of ethics to be applied in the global context.

The book provides a comprehensive view of issues related to CPA. However, from the perspective of the public administration and policy audience, there are certain aspects that seem to have been overlooked. The most critical aspect is organization- or management-related subject matter, which needed more attention. Jreisat offers a focused critique on the role of New Public Management (NPM) as a contributing factor that has affected policy, economic development, research methodology, and other administrative traits, particularly in developed countries. After such an exhaustive analysis of NPM, a reader also expects more positive discussion of management-related issues. There could be a detailed analysis of human resource management perspectives, for example, especially public service recruiting, performance measurement, and training and development issues in public administration in different countries.

The overall tone of the book is descriptive. It provides a nice illustration of the administrative, policy, methodological, and ethical issues in CPA. The author also presents some recommendations for certain major issues, although many of these prescriptions are either discussed in previous sections of the book or are too general to reach concrete solutions. Some readers will also want more extensive prescriptions in conjunction with many of the core issues addressed in the book. However, this can be associated with the fact that the field of CPA, after a period of decline, is still re-emerging, and more research is needed to form specific prescriptions to specific problems. I personally like the author’s recommendations for the development of consensus within the public administration community with regard to conceptual understandings and definitions of some of the major concepts such as NPM and contemporary bureaucracy.

The author has captured the Arab world very nicely in depicting the weak democratic governance and administrative structures around the world. Similarly, he has heavily emphasized the U.S., U.K., and European systems to illustrate examples of prominent administrative systems across the world. However, he ignores some of the other leading administrative structures, in countries such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.