



African MDIs: Mirrors of change in Public Administration

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Introduction

- Public Administration responsive to geo-political realities & changes in science
- Globalisation – interconnectedness
- Globalism – common world culture
- NPM – ease with which thought has converged

FOCUS OF PAPER

African MDIs absorb & reflect changing realities/ thinking/
images – for better or for worse

MDIs

- MDIs/ PAI/ DMIs / SIAs
- Expansive and restricted meaning
- Colonial heritage
- Key in capacity building and knowledge transfer
- Therefore in Africa MDIs critical players in development and poverty reduction/ eradication

Method

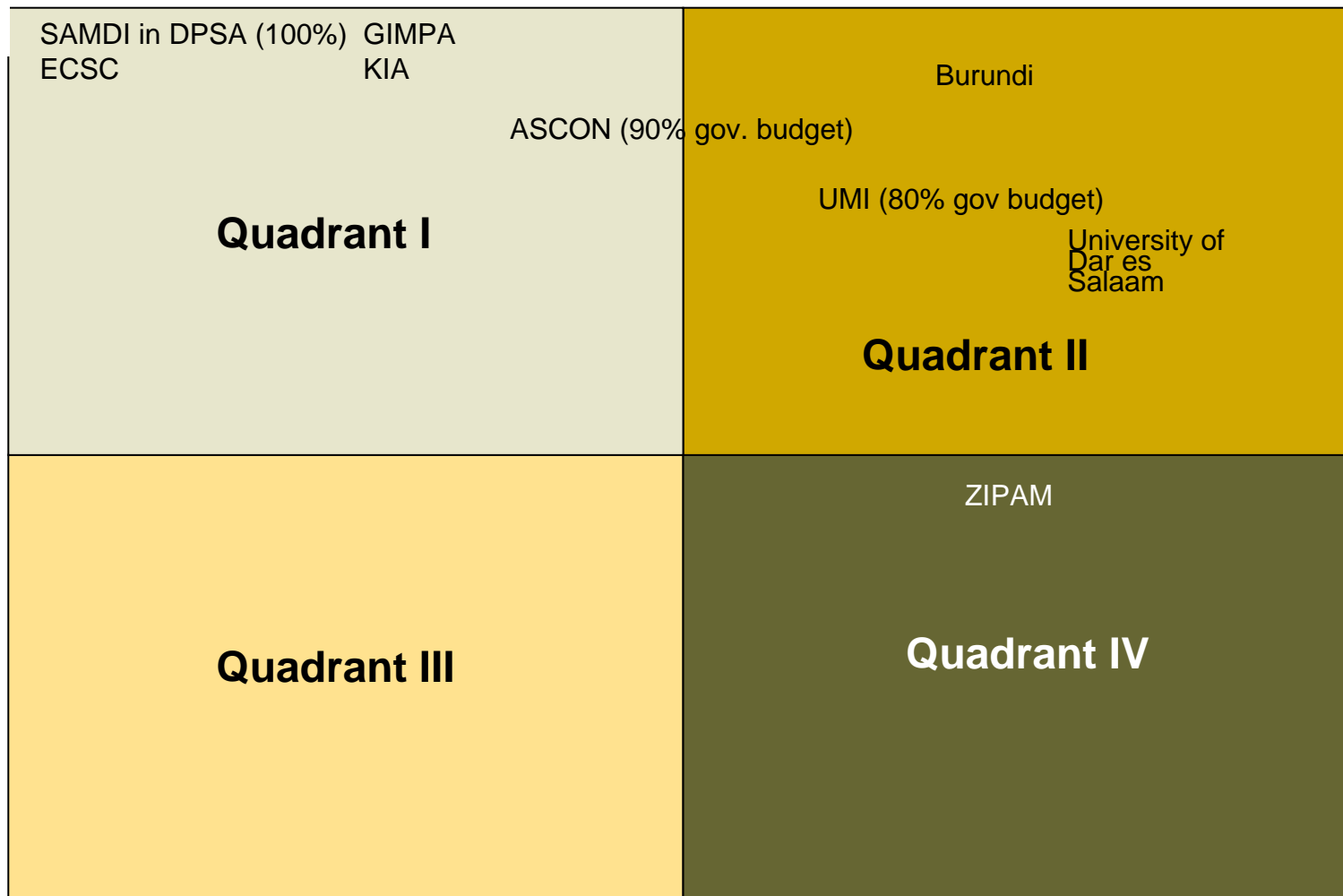
- Building up of data – reconstructing historical data
- Not perfect in the detail, but confident re the general trends & observation
- Cooperation of AMDIN
- Both quantitative and qualitative

NPM linked changes in African MDIs - Propositions

1. Relationship with government (autonomy and form)
2. Funding arrangements (financial self-sufficiency)
3. Preferred status (advisor/ think tank/ trainer)
4. Composition of products and services
5. Staffing arrangements
6. Use of ICT

Typology African MDIs 1995

Fully funded by
government



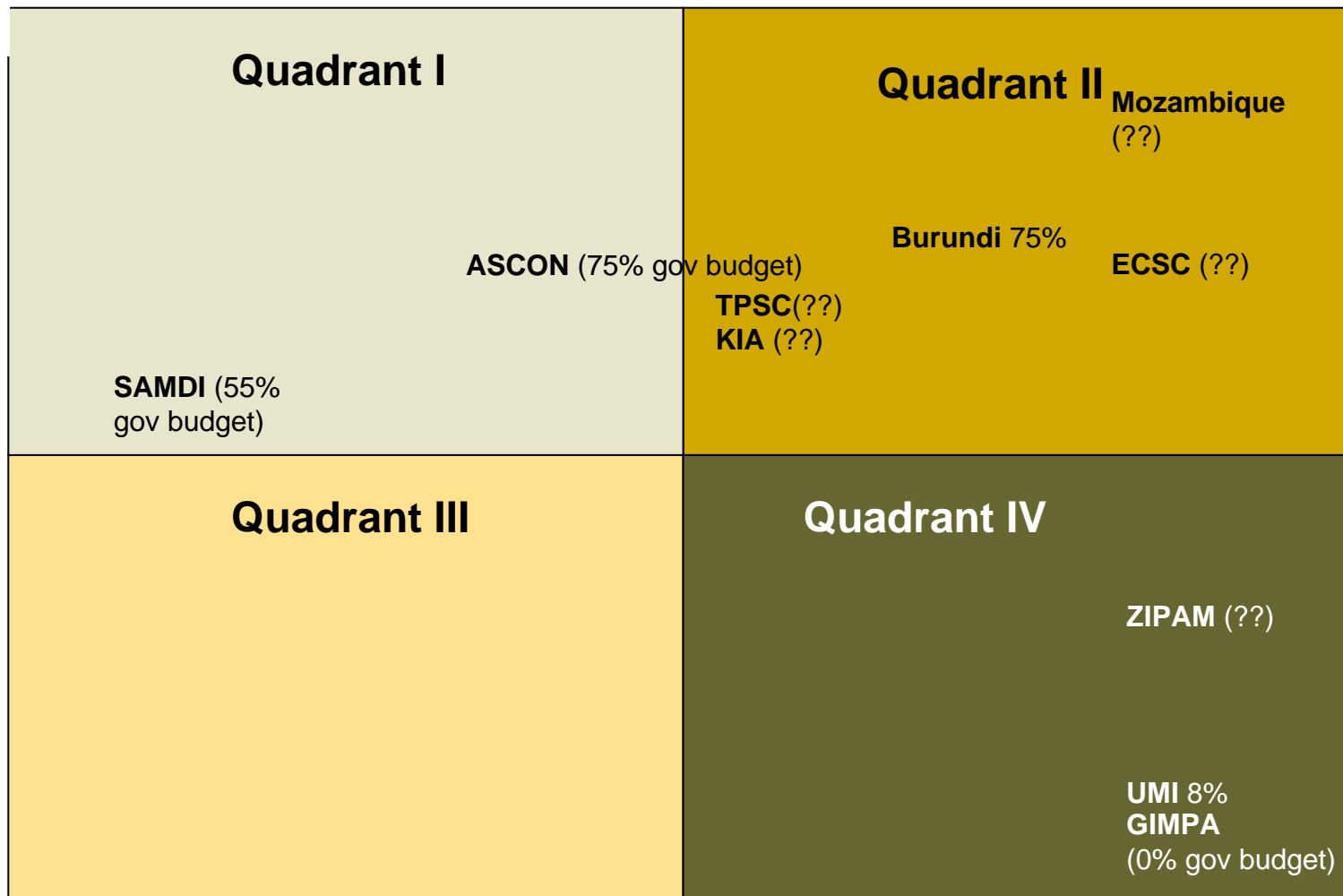
Financially
self-
sufficient

Typology African MDIs 2005

Fully funded by
government

No
autonomy

Full
autonomy



Change in form & relationship with government

- Trend is commercialisation and privatisation
- Notable exceptions: SAMDI and TPSC

Greater autonomy → structurally weakened
relationship with government

Greater financial self-sustainability

- Emphasis cost recovery
- “Market” conditions vary greatly across different countries – training budgets & competition
- Capital infrastructure

Notable shift with almost all institutions – willingly or forced (directly & indirectly)

Preferred Status

- Spiraling down
- Zeitgeist contributing factor → nothing good can come from within government (or Africa)
- Changes re-enforcing slide downwards – staff appointments; knowledge base; government do not want to pay “market” prices; products & services
- Losing influence in terms of over all public service reform agenda

Loosing status and influence rapidly

Products and Services

- Research and knowledge production are the big losers
- Money spinners (demand in the market or size of market) not necessarily what is needed most by governments to ensure development
- Degrees/ certification vs. training & skills development
- Result is that “public” focus lost and governments under-serviced

Notable correlation re shift in products & services and form & financial arrangement

Staffing

- Predominantly full time employment of large training staff and even larger administrative components
- New direction of SAMDI exception
- Privatisation → huge staffing casualties
- Experienced public servants as trainers vs. book learned but inexperienced

No notable correlation between staffing and form & financial arrangement

Use of ICT

- However, much slower uptake than in other regions of the world (infrastructural problems)
- Webpages, with exception of 1
- Content leaves many dimensions of ICT use unexplored
- Distance learning using ICT

Increased recognition of value of improved ICT use
and application

Who influences African MDIs i.t.o. NPM

- Multilateral and global players (conditionalities)
- Donor countries and development partners
- International and regional professional and subject associations
- Internet & publications

Africa undeniable part of global community. Isolation not an option. Equal partner in global knowledge production?? African “ownership” of own knowledge??

Pointers to the Future

- Africa and New Public Administration agenda
- Growing self-knowledge and confidence re role
- Globalised “training market” real threat to African MDIs coming into their own → playing field is not level

Conclusions

- NPM had and will continue to have far-reaching effects on African MDIs
- Effects of NPM not uniformly good or bad
- African MDI environment not uniform
- NPM underpinning philosophy further removed from African values & situation than NPA emerging thinking

Recommendations

- Remain critical re appropriate knowledge transfer → “export” vs “exchange & discuss”
- Strengthen research re MDIs – Africa & elsewhere
- Advocacy agenda to restore status of African MDIs
- Improve connection between African MDIs and their governments/ main “client”
- Strengthen collaboration & pooling of resources

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