A small state's engagement in discursive processes for international Internet-related public policy and implications for its domestic Internet agenda

A Case Study of Trinidad and Tobago from 2003 to 2013

Kevon Swift

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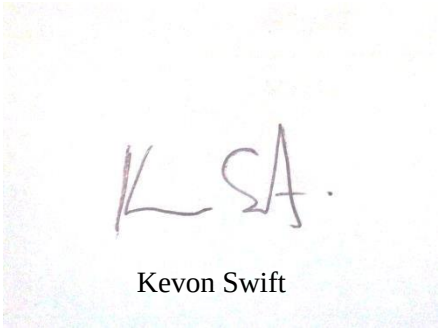
Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work.



Kevon Swift

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Dedication

To my very supportive family and especially my mother without whose unfailing guidance I would not be where I am today.

Abstract

The Internet means different things for different people. In Trinidad and Tobago, ICTs including the Internet have often been hailed as a critical enabler for development in addition to an issue in its own right. That being said, reference to the Internet in Trinidad and Tobago is often lost within ICT and Development (ICTD) rhetoric and resultantly, national interests in Internet Governance diplomacy can be characterised as seeking the broadest set of developmental needs in the face of knowledge divides, unfamiliar diplomatic rules and problematic coherence on the home front.

This dissertation explores the nuanced role of the Trinidad and Tobago State in achieving domestic Internet agenda and participating in external discursive spaces for international Internet-related public policy, where on the one hand the correlation between diplomacy and domestic Internet development is put into perspective while on the other, the particularities of being a small developing country provide the frame for the aforementioned aspects. The dissertation reveals that although the correlation between the development of substantive policy on domestic and global levels are low, and there is certainly room for enhancing Internet Governance diplomacy, there are some developments that suggest that the *status quo* is on the cusp of change.

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List of Acronyms

ADSL	Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
ARIN	American Registry for Internet Numbers
BTA	Basic Telecommunications Agreement
CANTO	Caribbean Association of National Telecommunications Operators
CAS	Complex Adaptive System
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CSIRT	Computer Security Incident Response Team
CTU	Caribbean Telecommunications Union
DNS	Domain Name System
eBRT	eBusiness Roundtable
EDGE	Enhanced Data Rates for GSM Evolution
FTTB	Fibre to the Business
FTTC	Fibre to the Curb
FTTH	Fibre to the Home
GAC	Government Advisory Committee
HSPA+	High Speed Packet Access Evolved
ICANN	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTD	Information and Communication Technology and Development
IETF	Internet Engineering Task Force
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
IGO	International Intergovernmental Organisation
iGovTT (brand)	National ICT Company Ltd
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee
ISOC	Internet Society
ISP	Internet Service Provider
ITU	International Telecommunication Union

ITU-D	Telecommunication Development Sector of the ITU
IXP	Internet Exchange Point
GoRTT	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
LACNIC	Latin American and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MNS	Ministry of National Security
MPA	Ministry of Public Administration
MPAI	Ministry of Public Administration and Information
MST	Ministry of Science and Technology
NETmundial	Global Stakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance
NICTC	National ICT Centre
NISC	National Information Systems Centre
NSA	Non-State Actor
OGD	Other Government Department
OTN	Office for Trade Negotiations
PP	Plenipotentiary (Conference)
RIR	Regional Internet Registry
TATT	Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
TNC	Transnational Corporation
TSP	Telecommunications Service Provider
TSTT	Telecommunication Services of Trinidad and Tobago
TTNIC	Trinidad and Tobago Network Information Centre
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
WCIT	World Conference on International Telecommunications
WGIG	Working Group on Internet Governance
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WTDC	World Telecommunications Development Conference
W3C	World Wide Web Consortium

Introduction

The International Telecommunication Union's Plenipotentiary Conference (ITU-PP) in Minneapolis, 1998 was an outstanding milestone through which the international community initiated an extraordinary process in the way the global communications sector would be viewed, and how stakeholder involvement pursuing the evolution of the sector would be transformed. ITU-PP 98 cited the emergence of the concept of the Information Society in which telecommunications would play a central role, and called for the convening of a world summit on the issue with a view to pursuing "*a joint and harmonized understanding of the information society"* and a "*strategic plan for the development of the information society*" among other things (ITU-PP, 1998). In that same year another key development occurred igniting a unique approach to transnational governance for an increasingly valuable resource – the incorporation of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which was the response to a Green Paper outlining the need to manage Internet names and addresses in a manner that allows for the development of robust competition and facilitates global participation in Internet management (NTIA, 1998). The decentralised and multifaceted nature of both the construct and the benefits of the Internet would soon become an increasingly prominent issue on global agenda from this point onwards.

With other contributing events to the fabric of Internet Governance, both phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) articulate a number of imperatives that could be deemed critical to the advancement of societies by leveraging Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including the Internet, as a means. It was nonetheless between WSIS phases, during the West Asia regional meeting in February 2003, that the notion of Internet Governance was first introduced into this discursive space (Kurbalija, 2014). What is more, the Working Group on Internet Governance's (WGIG) definition of Internet Governance set the cornerstone of contemporary diplomacy for the

evolution and use of the Internet and, in the process, established new considerations for the diplomatic styles of small state actors who might have relied on traditional multilateralism to exert influence along various aspects of their foreign policy. Said considerations feature, *inter alia*:

- the merging of traditional diplomatic work with direct policy shaping/setting at the global level where prior to postmodern diplomatic activity policy setting might have been otherwise considered as an internal function of the state's machinery (Kurbalija and Katrandjev, 2006);
- direct engagement of Non-State Actors (NSAs) in contemporary diplomacy through various iterations of multistakeholderism which, for the most part, brings specialist knowledge and expertise to the substance of global dialogue on Internet Governance; and
- the introduction of new power configurations in multistakeholderism, owing to direct NSA engagement, which unsurprisingly complicates diplomatic methods to which small state actors would have traditionally resorted.

At the domestic level, the organisational approach to foreign policy in addressing more complex global issues, and more prominently *wicked problems*, has equally evolved where the function-based activity is not necessarily solely driven by the Foreign Ministry but rather Other Government Departments (OGDs) including those with responsibility for ICT (Camilleri, 2012). Diplomatic shift in this regard was inevitable as the Internet is one of the foremost Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) to date, and a key resource that lends itself to boundless innovation. Diplomatic activity is therefore devolved to many actor types and readjusted along several fronts, making coordination and general policy cohesion ever more imperative.

At the time of writing, there has been an increasing focus on dialogue outlining policy silos along professional and institutional axes at both the domestic and global levels (GIP, 2014). Policy actors in Trinidad and Tobago have certainly not been exempted from this trend, as the findings of this dissertation allude to problematic communication among policymakers, and between diplomats and policymakers, which are further exacerbated by numerical limitations. This issue that affects domestic policy authorities will be put into greater perspective in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

The *status quo* of Internet ecosystems also underwent significant transformations during the WSIS process, as the telecommunications sector, on which the Internet depends, in many states saw varying degrees of liberalisation that generally translated into the shift from state-owned (or sponsored) telecommunications monopolists to private and semi-private operators functioning within competition-driven markets with ideally an independent regulator to ensure fair play. These ecosystems continue to evolve with the phenomena of technological convergence and innovation, through which there is a proliferation of new Internet infrastructure and markets, services business models, terminal devices, Internet intermediaries and regulatory concepts. Albeit the transformed telecommunications scenario, telecommunications development in areas that are not economically competitive is being addressed through state intervention that leverages levies collected from revenues from telecommunications operators to fund access initiatives under the umbrella term of *Universal Service*. With regard to other Internet infrastructure, Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) have been gaining ground across countries to cut back on the costs of routing local Internet traffic among other benefits.

At the same time, while *access* initiatives are being pursued, the Information Society in many countries has been taking shape with, *inter alia*, the appearance and expansion of e-commerce activity, e-government and social media. These aspects all point to the enabling aspect of ICTs, including the Internet, as they are put to the service of social, economic, cultural and human development across countries.

There are, however, a number of international public policy issues attendant to the Internet which are not cohesively outlined, measured and compared through globally developed policy methodologies, but are critical nonetheless for the pursuit of domestic Internet agenda. These issues range from domain names and domain addresses, to cybersecurity and SPAM to name a few. Some of these elements are considered as integral parts of the technical coordination paradigm of the Internet, but bear large implications outside of technical boundaries and are ongoing concerns articulated by some developing countries, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS), at various Internet Governance fora be they of the decision-making or decision-shaping nature.

As regards such examples, the case for ongoing knowledge-building and knowledge-sharing processes, along with diplomacy, is very clear given that differing cultural and professional

representatives in any multistakeholder dispensation can draw distinct interpretations of issues coded in a particular way, which could lead to great misunderstandings when participating in the discursive space.

Despite some earlier apprehensions about the applicability of state actions to the Internet[1] there is certainly the real presence of jurisdictionality that has been evidenced time and time again in specific cases of private international law[2], but generally through state participation in multilateral/multistakeholder fora. Said jurisdictionality is coupled with the physicality of the infrastructural layer of the Internet, whose development is addressed through telecommunications policy and law on the one hand, and self-instigated initiatives by domestic and foreign actors in further building out key Internet infrastructure such as IXPs on the other hand.

The small state of Trinidad and Tobago has recognised and addressed some international Internet-related public policy issues, although its performance will be discussed later on in the dissertation. While there is a chronological record of Trinidad and Tobago's participation in discursive spaces addressing said issues, there have also been a number of developments in the area of the Internet on the home front, although it would be too early to determine the correlations between both activities at this time. One may even argue that the distinction between domestic and external spaces is artificial, but low or no participation in the external discursive space may bring domestic policy formulation into contention. Analysis of the above mentioned activities will require, *inter alia*, consideration of extant capacity for domestic Internet policy and strategy formulation, and foreign policy covering such interests; the protagonists and political economy of domestic ICT development including the Internet; the quality of delegations and participation in external discursive spaces given that some Internet-related public policy issues are somewhat driven by exogenous factors; and the general performance of monitoring and evaluation for representative and Internet-building/Information Society actions.

[1] Allusion is specifically drawn to John Perry Barlow's *Declaration of Cyberspace Independence* and earlier perceptions of the Internet being a space that enjoyed immunity from real world law (Goldsmith and Wu, 2006).

[2] *Ligue contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme (LICRA) et Union des étudiants juifs de France (UEJF) versus Yahoo! Inc. and Société Yahoo! France (LICRA v. Yahoo!)* at the dawn of geolocation technology use is one such prominent case of the applicability of jurisdiction on the Internet, when LICRA complained that Yahoo! were allowing their online auction service to be used for the sale of memorabilia from the Nazi period, contrary to Article R645-1 of the French Criminal Code (Wikipedia, 2011)

As an umbrella term, Internet Governance may consist in varying governance configurations in relation to participating actors/stakeholders[3]. Said configurations may be driven by competence, as in the development of technical Internet standards (e.g. IETF or W3C standards), economic competition (e.g. Google for search engine markets), political (e.g. ITU plenipotentiary conferences) or mixed (e.g. multistakeholder dialogue such as NETmundial). The main objects of these governance constructs are often norms, standards, markets, rules and laws (Malcolm, 2008).

One hypothesis in this dissertation is that the interplay of public and private ordering for Internet governance in Trinidad and Tobago may be unique, or rather atypical to extant Internet Governance literature and documented experiences where, owing to specific dynamics, there may not be prominent practices of private ordering among domestic actors or instances of prominent policy entrepreneurship.[4]This situation oftentimes translates into uncertainty on numerous Internet and information society issues. It is worth noting, however, that said unique dynamic is not limited to the very Internet and information society issues.

In evaluating development policy changes in Trinidad and Tobago between 1958 and 2008, Farrell (2012, p.226) notes that a lack of affinity between the political directorate and the business elite (both foreign and domestic) had translated into the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's assumption of the mantle of *prime mover* for growth and development across sectors, as it traditionally did not have faith in the private sector's ability. He further states that the foreign private sector, in particular, had been denigrated during and after the black power uprising of 1970, which in turn led to Government's continued endeavour in setting up parastatals over the years with popular support (Farrell, 2012, p.226). This observation is crucial to understanding the relations among actors within the domestic policy environment although, admittedly, there has been some evidence of gradual change during the investigation period.

Without any intention to downplay the relevance of smooth technical coordination, the focus of this dissertation is to address the instances of Internet Governance diplomacy where emphasis is placed

[3] For example, a contrast is noted between the open association model of the IETF for any interested engineer and its "Request for Comments" (RFC) procedure, and the membership-based state-centric model of the ITU, which works on recommendations, resolutions and treaties.

[4] A notable exception to this assertion is the collective effect of Internet service providers, which create limited provisions for the processing of personal data within commercial contexts. This is contrasted with the shortcomings of the Data Protection Act (2011) at the end of the investigation period, whose proclamation has been partial and minimal at least as it does not extend to the protection of personal data by public bodies or the private sector.

more on the approach to international Internet-related public policy issues than technical issues, albeit the possible overlaps where technical standards have non-technical impacts[5]. Analytical work will focus on the state's organisation and leadership for said matters. For these purposes, the discursive spaces to be addressed will be largely centred on political and mixed processes. Economic considerations are also contemplated in this dissertation as market dynamics are atypical in a small state such as Trinidad and Tobago when compared with large states, therefore the understanding and/or expectations for private actors in Internet Governance may also be atypical. For instance, while there may be a lot of activity by transnational corporations (TNCs) in Internet Governance it is uncertain whether TNCs with a domestic presence might act in recognition of the particularities faced by other actors within Trinidad and Tobago, or social compromise, which may inadvertently have an impact on the TNCs primary quests for market. In this regard, admittedly the individual market size for the Internet economy in Trinidad and Tobago may be insignificant to a large TNC.

A primary limitation within the present work is the absence of succinct actions that are comprehensively framed as the national Internet agenda, although the concept could be substantiated through various articulations of strategic intent such as national ICT strategic plans including emphasis on broadband, draft e-business frameworks, draft frameworks for transformative e-government and the like. Internet development will be approached cognisant of the rules of supply and demand. On the demand side, it is essential to examine issues surrounding the expansion of the Internet user base and take into consideration the duality of such users, or rather the consumer/producer dynamic of users, which is a phenomenon enabled by the Internet. The supply side is linked to the actions of network operators and service providers, which could be attributed to the functions of the domestic enabling telecommunications/ICT environment for the most part, whether actions conform to public policy objectives intentionally or by coincidence. The domestic Internet agenda will therefore be specifically defined for the purposes within this body of work as a lynchpin for assessing Trinidad and Tobago's engagement in discursive spaces on international Internet-related public policy.

[5] As an example, Goldsmith J and Wu T (2006) highlight the negative impact that contention that arose between initial FTP and torrent applications and the American music industry on copyright issues.

This dissertation has a two-fold objective: in the first instance it seeks to explore the nuances of a small state such as Trinidad and Tobago in effectively conducting Internet governance diplomacy for international Internet-related public policy matters. In the second instance the implications of such interactions for the domestic Internet agenda, especially where exogenous factors might be greatest at play as principle, norm, rule and decision-making processes may occur at a faster rate externally than internal consideration for such matters, depending on the state of ICT development, inclusion and more generally capacity at the domestic level.

Early recognition is made of the myriad of actors within transnational networked governance models, each with their particular groupings, organisational cultures and *modus operandi*, and the discursive spaces in which they are convened to undertake some action, although the agenda and expectations of these actors are decidedly disparate (Malcolm, 2008). For the most part Internet-related public policy is addressed along democratic and consensual constructs as regards multilateralism and multistakeholderism, for which representation as a function is widely accepted, albeit shortcomings that will be discussed later on. The dissertation will be concerned with statehood, although not exclusively, as there may be an expectation that in a small country, consistent with other issues debated in international affairs, the state's machinery may be tasked with external representation given the small state's oftentimes strong involvement in developing Internet infrastructure and the information society/economy through, *inter alia*, the parastatal sector, and the advantages of finances for participating in external discursive spaces when compared to other domestic stakeholders. A dearth in mobilisation culture among NSAs may also be attributed to the prominence of the state in the prior regard. The policy process and organisational arrangements for representation/participation may therefore be intricate, recognising the variety of interests at stake and the possible capacity limitations to effectively conduct diplomacy across a multi-stakeholder dispensation but premised on internal participatory processes for issues deemed as priorities.

The first chapter of the dissertation will explore Internet taxonomy by analysing the telecommunications landscape and Internet infrastructure during the years 2003 to 2013, through the review of national telecommunications law and policy and the national ICT agenda, and an overview of significant discursive spaces throughout the said period that may have had an effect on the domestic

enabling environment. Interestingly, Trinidad and Tobago identified and articulated a national ICT strategy before the development of the Geneva Principles, which could be a testament to the country's then recognition of the potential ICT held for national development in addition to its then foresight to make conscious investment decisions in the ICT sector through the creation of the enabling environment on the one hand, and directly championing large-scale ICT initiatives on the other.

The second chapter will take into account the political economy of the Internet during the investigation period, and will rely on the presentation of the results of a survey undertaken by representatives of local actors, who will be aptly defined as a group of "knowledgeable persons" in light of the roles they play within the domestic landscape, their awareness of the functions that different stakeholder types hold and their familiarity with external discursive spaces on international Internet-related public policy matters. This reference to "knowledgeable persons" is hardly accidental as it has been observed that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has often sought to invoke epistemic discussion among persons deemed as *knowledgeable* as a key vehicle for the legitimisation of government policy. Some of these persons have also rotated among stakeholder types, having passed from private to public sector and/or civil society, and *vice versa*.

The third chapter will address policy and processes, including possible perspectives on transnational governance starting from the basis of small state theory. While internal capacity for ICT policy formulation will be put into perspective, the matter of organisational arrangements for the state during the period will also be important to assess diplomatic performance when reviewing the linkages between Internet governance diplomacy and other aspects of foreign policy and diplomacy, and of course the realisation of the domestic Internet development agenda. The correlation between ICT policy formulation and Internet Governance diplomacy will be mapped as three *savoirs*, *i.e. savoir* (know-what, knowledge), *savoir-faire* (know-how, capabilities) and *savoir-être* (thought leadership). In this chapter there will be a further elaboration of the multi-layered and multifaceted aspects of foreign policy which, in theory, should denote Trinidad and Tobago's positions in external discursive spaces. The chapter will benefit from historical accounts acquired through a face-to-face interview with two government officials who proved to be instrumental to Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy during the investigation period.

Based on the findings of the previous chapters, the fourth chapter proffers requirements for contemporary diplomacy addressing the Internet, bearing in mind that a recurrent key objective of such work will be ensuring policy coherence as a best endeavour on numerous fronts.

The fifth chapter will list the conclusions of the investigation period, having considered the culmination of document research, the dissertation survey, the face-to-face interviews and theoretical underpinnings for the dissertation.

This dissertation is intended to be at the service of government representatives from small states and other actors within small countries, as it may highlight nuances to the specific environments in which they operate. Given that the landscape for addressing international Internet-related public policy matters has transformed dramatically over the years, as to the general diplomatic paradigm, the dissertation seeks to deliver the highlights of said transformation further to mere discussion of issue areas, with a view to improving the understanding of multistakeholder approaches to Internet Governance, inclusion and correlation with the domestic policy space.

Chapter One: Internet Taxonomy – A Trinidad and Tobago Perspective

A network of networks; the Internet most commonly referred to by many people is a transnational space through which information and knowledge is exchanged at computer terminals. Nonetheless, there is a very physical aspect to the Internet as well, which is developed through the evolution and dynamics of the global telecommunications and technology markets, the application of voluntary technical standards, and the activity of Internet intermediaries and content and application developers. Using Yochai Benkler's (2000) the three-layer conceptualisation to approaching Internet Governance, the Trinidad and Tobago Internet taxonomy will be explored by looking at the state's potential interests having physical infrastructure, and in particular telecommunications infrastructure, develop, and using Internet technical standards and content that will serve the Government's interests on the one hand (*i.e.* public administration) and national development on the other (facilitation of economic constituents, people empowerment, etc.). Throughout the period of the case study there had never been a succinct classification of the state's actions in the aforementioned paradigm as Internet or Internet-related policy, but rather a broader designation of ICT policy through with ICT is put to the service of national development, that is to say ICTD.

Between 2003 and 2013, Internet development in Trinidad and Tobago had been marked by a number of events which include telecommunications liberalisation (2001-2004), increased international connectivity, technological convergence, national ICT strategy (2003-2008; 2014-2018), and ongoing regulation of the telecommunications sector. The makings of a Trinidad and Tobago Information Society also became apparent through the launch of a multi-channel service delivery platform for public services known as ***ttconnect***, which promoted a singular government interface with citizens, businesses and visitors since 2009, and earlier attempts at running a B2B online marketplace such as EnterpriseNeTT and smeXchange, which would be renamed later to the Business Development

Company (BDC) Trade Portal in 2010 before its end of operations in 2012 (MPAI, 2006; Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, 2010).

Sector Liberalisation

In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, as in other small Caribbean countries, in the early 2000s the high costs of telecommunications infrastructure and equipment meant that the sector was regarded as a 'natural monopoly' thereby precluding supply under competitive markets (UN-ECLAC, 2002). As a sector classified under 'trade in services', telecommunications monopolies were also seen as barriers to the potential that players from developed countries could tap into in the quest for markets (UN-ECLAC, 2002). When juxtaposed with other factors including the prior entry into force of the Basic Telecommunications Agreement (BTA), other coincidental policy articulations addressing the *enabling environment*, technological convergence at the global level and growing recognition of the need for further integration of the communications sector into other sectors as a source of competitive advantage, the aforementioned paradigm consolidated a case for action by which the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago initiated steps to liberalisation through the development and proclamation of telecommunications law, establishing, *inter alia*, an independent regulator, a regime for concessions, a regime for licences, spectrum management and numbering and technical standards (GoRTT, 2001). It is important to note that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have been regarded as concessionaires for *public international telecommunications services*, *public domestic telecommunications services* and/or operators of *public international and domestic telecommunications networks* under Trinidad and Tobago law hence policy approaches to the Internet market are sometimes indistinct from wider telecommunications (GoRTT, 2005). Said approach labels ISPs as Telecommunications Service Providers (TSPs), agnostic of whether voice or data services are being rendered. Whereas telecommunications law was first passed in 2001, the full proclamation and operationalisation of its provisions did not occur until 2004, in which amendments addressing, *inter alia*, legal definitions, board functions and the regulator's procedures re-entered the legislature and eventually heralded competition for market access in telecommunications (GoRTT, 2004). The traditional telecommunications network operator and service provider that operated in Trinidad and Tobago until December 2005 was the Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT),

although, in the previously unregulated Internet service subsector, there were roughly eleven ISPs[6] – many of which were small companies purchasing IP transit from TSTT for resale at that time. Pursuant to the proclamation of the Telecommunications Act as amended (GoRTT, 2004), Trinidad and Tobago was able to attract investment, including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), along several subsectors of its telecommunications/ICT sector including new Tier 2 and 3 ISPs, and international and domestic fixed and mobile telecommunications network operators and service providers. In 2005, almost immediately, Digicel and Laqtel broke the monopoly in mobile telecommunications from TSTT through their successful applications for concessions. Laqtel, however, never officially started business due to subsequent financial and legal challenges (TTCS, 2008). In the fixed Internet market, the Columbus Group's acquisition of the Cable Company of Trinidad and Tobago (CableNett) meant that TSTT was faced with a comprehensive contender from the trunk to the local loops segments of the telecommunications value chain. These new entrants would soon change the Internet market significantly as a series of mergers and failures naturally developed among ISPs. At the end of 2013, there were three ISPs for fixed broadband Internet service provision in consumer markets, and six ISPs for business markets, although in the former case market share is dominated by two ISPs, namely Blink Broadband (a subsidiary of TSTT) and Flow/Columbus Communications (TATT, 2013). In general, the resulting players vary between those who have interests along the entire telecommunications/Internet access value chain (*i.e.* large-scale infrastructure/network plus services), and those who operate mainly within the telecommunications services subsector (including value-added services) such as many of the ISPs for business markets. Some other details concerning the resulting players are found below:

Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT)

Founded in 1991, TSTT served as the monopolist telecommunications network operator and service provider until the appearance of small ISPs in the Internet service market at the beginning of the 2000s, and the introduction of regulated competition since 2005. 51% shareholder capital of TSTT is owned by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago while 49% of same is held by

[6] Of the eleven ISPs, nine were prominent in the household consumer market including: Open Telecom, CableNet, Carib-Link, InterServ Ltd, Greendot, Lisa Communications (branded as Rave), Opus Network, WOW and TSTT (UNECLAC, 2006).

Cable and Wireless – a dominant regional player that has expressed views of acquiring the remaining shareholder capital and full control of the company (Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, 2012).

Columbus Networks/Columbus Communications

Founded in 2004, Columbus Networks has grown into a complete communications provider through the development of its submarine cable network (having acquired New World Networks in 2005 and several others since) (Columbus Communications, 2014). Columbus Communications has the second largest market share for fixed broadband services out of three suppliers in the household consumers market. While Columbus Communications and other operators uses a mix of technologies to provide broadband Internet services to the public it is the sole provider of cable Internet in local loops (TATT, 2014).

Digicel

First incorporated in Jamaica in 2001, Digicel expanded into the newly liberalised Trinidad and Tobago telecommunications market in December 2005 when it was granted concession to provide international and domestic mobile telecommunications (Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, 2005). Digicel and TSTT have become a duopoly in the provision of mobile telecommunications services and mobile broadband services. Digicel provides Internet to the public via HSPA+ and EDGE technologies.

Green Dot

Founded in 2004, Green Dot remains the sole Wireless ISP in the market at the end of 2013. It has the smallest market share in the household consumer market.

International Connectivity

In Trinidad and Tobago international connectivity for the Internet is primarily provided through submarine communications cables. The island of Trinidad is connected to five major submarine cable networks, while there is one link that bridges connectivity from Trinidad to Tobago. These cables are further listed in the following table:

RFS Date	Landing Station	Cable	Owner
September 1995	Chaguaramas, Trinidad	Eastern Caribbean Fiber System (ECFS)	Columbus Networks
August 2000	Port of Spain, Trinidad	Americas-II	Several
September 2006	Chaguaramas, Trinidad	Global Caribbean Network (GCN)	Global Caribbean
October 2007	Chaguaramas, Trinidad	ECLink	Columbus Networks
July 2010	Chaguaramas, Trinidad	Suriname-Guyana Submarine Cable System (SG-SCS)	GT&T, Telesur
August 2012	Toco, Trinidad – Pigeon Point, Tobago	TT-1	Columbus Networks

Table 1: List of submarine cables providing Internet connectivity to Trinidad and Tobago (Source: TeleGeography, 2014)

One should note, however, that all of Trinidad's connectivity is focused on the North-Western part of that island while Tobago does not link directly to an international cable. The following map illustrates Trinidad and Tobago's connections to the international submarine cable system.

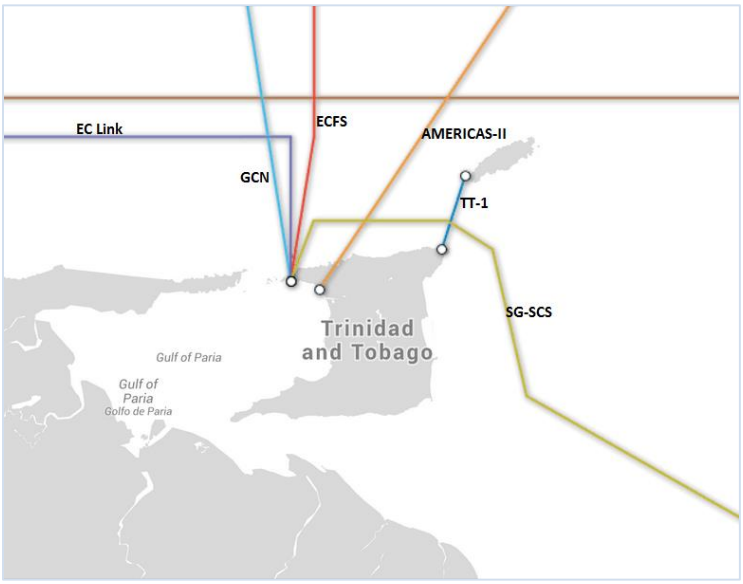


Figure 1: Map of Trinidad and Tobago's connections to the international submarine cable system (Source: Telegeography, 2014)

Internet Market (Access Providers)

Since the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, access providers within the Internet market have undergone a significant number of transformations, including, *inter alia*, fluctuations in the number of access providers and investment in new access technologies during the period. The following table provides a snapshot of the aforesaid transformations:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No. of concessionaires for public domestic fixed (wired or wireless) services and public domestic mobile telecoms services	11	9 (only four in operation)	8 (only four in operation)	9 (only five in operation)	8	8	15 (only eight in operation)	16 (only nine in operation)
Access technologies	Dial-up, ADSL, FTTC, FTTB, FTTH, FTTN, DOCSIS 3.0, CDMA2000 1xEV-DO, GPRS	Dial-up, ADSL, FTTC, FTTB, FTTH, FTTN, DOCSIS 3.0, CDMA2000 1xEV-DO, GPRS/EDGE	Dial-up, ADSL2+, FTTC, FTTB, FTTH, FTTN, DOCSIS 3.0, CDMA2000 EvDO, GPRS/EDGE	Dial-up, ADSL2+, FTTC, FTTB, FTTH, FTTN, DOCSIS 3.0, CDMA2000 EvDO, GPRS/EDGE	Dial-up, BWA, WiMAX, ADSL2+, FTTC, FTTB, FTTH, FTTN, DOCSIS 3.0, CDMA2000 EvDO, GPRS/EDGE	Dial-up, BWA, WiMAX ADSL2+, FTTC, FTTB, FTTH, FTTN, DOCSIS 3.0, CDMA2000 EvDO, GPRS/EDGE	Dial-up, BWA, WiMAX ADSL2+, FTTC, FTTB, FTTH, FTTN, DOCSIS 3.0, CDMA2000 EvDO, HSPA+, GPRS/EDGE	Dial-up[7], BWA, WiMAX ADSL2+, FTTC, FTTB, FTTH, FTTN, DOCSIS 3.0, CDMA2000 EvDO, HSPA+, GPRS/EDGE
Percentage of individuals using the Internet [8]	30.00	32.00	34.80	44.30	48.50	55.20	59.52	63.80

Table 2: Evolution of the Internet (Access) market since telecommunications liberalisation until 2013 (Source TTCS, 2007; TATT, 2013; and ITU, 2014)

Domain Names

Country code top level domains (ccTLDs)

At the start of the investigation period the *.tt* ccTLD was recorded as being administered by the University of the West Indies (UWI) but with technical control and DNS handling partially managed by the University of Puerto Rico (UNECLAC, 2006). Over time, through an individual delegation the domain name registry for the *.tt* ccTLD became the Trinidad and Tobago Network Information Centre, a private commercial entity that is managed by a Multistakeholder Advisory Group comprising domestic Internet stakeholders (TTNIC, 2010). TTNIC manages the registration of single and multiple character second-level domains, and most third-level domains with the exception of *gov.tt*, which

[7] Dial-up Internet access is still featured among access technologies at the end of the investigation period because there are still some areas of Trinidad and Tobago where broadband Internet services are not being offered by ISPs.

[8] The use of fixed or mobile subscriptions to determine Internet distribution is problematic in the Trinidad and Tobago context because i) it is difficult to discern overlapping fixed and mobile subscriptions per data subject; and ii) while the percentage of mobile Internet usage was estimated to be 23.2% of all mobile telecommunications subscriptions the Trinidad and Tobago mobile penetration rate, which has been well over 100% for a number of years, is measured as the purchase of SIM cards and mobile services as opposed to being personal to data subjects.

came under the direct management of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago during the implementation of the National ICT Strategy (TTNIC, 2010).

National ICT Strategy

Using a broad approach to Internet development which extends beyond the infrastructure layer, examining Trinidad and Tobago's inclusion into the global information society will certainly be indicative of the efforts of domestic actors. In a small country such as Trinidad and Tobago, a predominant actor is generally the state as it is often obliged to compensate for the limitations of market dynamics on the economic front, while limited integration to the global economy and the low level of diversification of the domestic economy could be related to the socio-political conditions of being a relatively new state in the post-colonial era. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago did, however, demonstrate its foresight in planning the strategic deployment and use of ICTs at a time which was coincidental to the WSIS process, as opposed to being subsequential to the same.

fastforward

Launched on 2 May, 2003 by the then Prime Minister, the Honourable Patrick Manning, ***fastforward*** was a six-year strategic plan between 2003 and 2008 which comprised of fourteen (14) pathfinder projects addressing, *inter alia*, ICT sector development, e-government, e-health, e-justice, e-legislation and broadband strategy (GoRTT, 2003). The strategy set a national ICT vision by which Trinidad and Tobago would be, "*in a prominent position in the global information society through real and lasting improvements in social, economic and cultural development caused by deployment and usage of ICT* (GoRTT, 2003)". While an ambitious number of outcomes were listed at the start of 2003, including a *quantum leap* in the development of e-Commerce within the country with specific emphasis on small and medium enterprises, in reality ***fastforward*** materialised into a handful of concrete achievements including: the connection of all public schools and libraries to a broadband Internet service; the connection of all government ministries and some agencies to a communications backbone providing email services and broadband Internet access; the establishment of a private sector led Public-Private Partnership (PPP) called the e-Business Roundtable (eBRT)[9] to inform ICT policy affecting the

[9] Although most rhetoric lists the eBRT as a private sector led PPP it is regularly remunerated by Government for its work.

business sector; and the creation of an award-winning multi-channel service delivery platform called ***ttconnect*** (PoRTT 2011; GoRTT, 2013). ***ttconnect,*** which may be deemed the most significant e-Government action undertaken by the Government to date, provides detailed information on government services and downloadable/printable forms (iGovTT, 2011). There are, however, a number of limitations to the ***ttconnect*** platform as citizens are yet in a position to transact via ***ttconnect,*** be it through the submission of forms online for public services or the online payment of administrative fees associated with government services. It is important to note, however, ***fastforward*** was informally referred to as the "connectivity agenda" and by extension the majority of its actions were related to ICT/Internet access issues.

Enabling environment

Three of the 14 pathfinder projects of great significance to stimulating ICT demand under ***fastforward*** were: i) Legislative Review and Reform (including policy); ii) e-Government; and iii) e-Commerce/e-Business Development (GoRTT, 2003). Regarding legislative review, the primary policy areas that were identified under ***fastforward*** included: electronic transactions, telecommunications, competition, consumer protection, data protection and privacy, intellectual property rights, protection against inappropriate content and internet governance and domain names (GoRTT, 2003). The implementation of these policies was intended to facilitate transformative e-Government on the one hand, and a dynamic e-Commerce sector on the other. At the end of 2013, the impacts of the Legislative Review and Reform project have been the implementation of the Telecommunications Act (GoRTT, 2004), which instituted TATT and put authorisation and universal service frameworks into place; partial proclamation of the Electronic Transactions Act (GoRTT, 2011b), which provides for the recognition of electronic data, information, signatures, records and transactions before a Trinidad and Tobago Court of Law; and partial proclamation of the Data Protection Act (GoRTT, 2011a), to allow for the establishment of the Data Commissioner and an updated Copyright Act (GoRTT, 2008), recognising the protection of copyright over the Internet by redefining the concept of an "electronic retrieval system" through which copyrighted works, performances, sound recordings or broadcasts could be made available to a member of the public. There were also a number of prominent draft Internet-related public policy instruments including, *inter alia*, the Internet Bandwidth Management

Policy 2006-2008 and the Spectrum Plan for Accommodation of Broadband Wireless Access 2006, however these policies were never approved (UNECLAC, 2006).

Quite possibly unassuming; these three projects might have been the most crucial for Trinidad and Tobago's transformation to the *digital economy* as they infer the greatest interactions for effective Internet usage in an environment where government is the largest employer and user of technology, the private sector's marketing reach is almost exclusively domestic and the potential for change through public administration is high.

smarTT

In November 2013, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago approved a second national ICT strategic plan, branded as **smarTT**¸ to bring focus to its efforts in encouraging the uptake and usage of ICTs (GoRTT, 2013). **smarTT** is premised on five thematic areas, and comprises a total of fifty-six (56) programmes to be undertaken between 2014 and 2018 (GoRTT, 2013). The thematic areas include: Innovation and Human Capital Development, Access and Digital Inclusion, e-Business and ICT Sector Development, Infrastructure Development and e-Government (GoRTT, 2013).

In the interval between ***fastforward*** **and smarTT**, a yearly laptop distribution programme to all students entering the secondary school system was initiated in September 2010, a single electronic window for trade administration (branded as **TTBizLink**) was launched in February 2011 and electronic transactions law, which provides the legal basis for administrative and commercial transactions over cyberspace, was passed and partially proclaimed at the end of 2011. Since the end of ***fastforward*** there were also some demand-side initiatives driven by the non-public sector include the Open Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI, 2013), which offers over 46 undergraduate, graduate and professional programmes online; and electronic banking for consultations and low-risk transactions, which is offered by all eight commercial banks operating in the country.

Cybersecurity

Separate from the genesis of national ICT strategic plans, in March 2010 the Ministry of National Security received a mandate from the Cabinet of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to develop a coordinated national approach to cybersecurity, cybercrime policy and

cybercrime legislation, and to establish a national Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) (Lucas-Andrews, 2013). For these purposes Cabinet appointed an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), which included some public agencies, to spearhead the aforementioned actions (Lucas-Andrews, 2013). The IMC arranged itself into five sub-committees addressing strategy, legislation, incident management, cooperation and culture/public awareness. In December 2012, the National Cybersecurity Strategy was finalised and approved, while significant achievements in developing a cybercrime bill and another bill to establish a national cybersecurity agency were noted by the end of the investigation period (Lucas-Andrews, 2013).

Internet policy versus Internet-related public policy

Some ambiguity that affects Trinidad and Tobago handle on Internet Governance diplomacy is the nuance between *Internet policy*, which is often transnational and could be possibly interpreted through Kurbalija's (2014) *narrow approach* to Internet governance, and *Internet-related public policy*, by which regardless of an issue being a technical standard or the like it has been recognised that there are broad stakes for society. Internet policy might therefore be considered as being squarely centred on technical development. Throughout the investigation a succinct distinction made for *Internet policy* in explicit rhetoric outlining ICT policy appeared to be absent, which could be attributed to the dominant connectivity foci of ***fastforward*** from telecommunications and broadband Internet access perspectives although **smarTT** singles out the development of Internet infrastructure as a key initiative within a broader Infrastructure strategic thrust (GoRTT, 2013).

Implicit framing of Internet-related public policy could be derived from Resolution 1305/Annex 1(ITU, 2009). These largely relate to cybersecurity, multilingual Internet, data protection and privacy, international Internet connectivity and capacity building among other things. In terms of the ITU's frame of these issues there may be Government's inferred endorsement of the same (and possibly expressed consensus when Trinidad and Tobago participated in ITU-PP-10 in Guadalajara, Mexico) given that the state did and continues to seek development assistance from the ITU for some of its indicated public policy issues, such as assistance to develop cybercrime policy and legislation and establish a national CSIRT (Lucas-Andrews, 2013). Notwithstanding, the current example may be indicative of a perception in Trinidad and Tobago's Internet governance diplomacy that distortion

occurs in public policy processes as exogenous agents drive their development internationally. The state might often find itself playing catch-up domestically owing to organisational and other capacity shortcomings to execute ICT agenda. As a result, a disconnect occurs between global multistakeholder dialogue on Internet Governance and the domestic Internet agenda, which may be increasing with time as issues become more complex and global events with Internet implications become more frequent. In more general contexts vis-à-vis small state diplomacy, Insanally (2012, p. 153) asserts more strongly that, "the autonomy and sovereignty of weak developing states having been generally eroded by the appearance of non-state actors. Government ability to formulate and implement policy has declined." In terms of ICTD, Farrell's (2012, p.226) observation regarding Government's 50-year approach to development (distrust of the private sector, affinity to establishing parastatals, etc.) may also lend to the foregoing perception.

Further to ITU's (2009) identification of international Internet-related public policy, another significant issue area that has less specific emphasis in core Internet Governance fora is the trade imperative. Beyond the BTA and the Fourth Protocol on Basic Telecommunications Services, the approach to telecommunications, ICT and e-Commerce, or in some instances computer and computer-related services, in international trade agreements may also be highly relevant to Internet Governance diplomacy given their clear implications for domestic Internet agenda. Aaronson and Townes (2012) highlight how US, EU and to some extent Canadian policymakers have made expanding Internet freedom a foreign policy goal, and also underscore the disparity between trade policies and trade realities. This issue area, however, continues to be a source of significant policy incoherence when looking at Internet-related provisions in trade agreements and the approaches to issues addressed in such provisions in other fora. One point of incoherence may be whether the developmental aspects of the Internet are clearly considered in trade policy, which may be of greater relevance to a small developing country such as Trinidad and Tobago.

Challenges for ICT agenda

Contributing factors to the long absence of a strategic plan between ***fastforward*** and **smarTT** include: loss of momentum during the creation of the National ICT Company Ltd (branded as iGovTT) in September 2009, in which almost the entirety of staff with responsibility for policy formulation and

monitoring were reconfigured for the project execution purposes of the company; change in political administration in 2010 which resulted in the stagnation and review of all major actions; and constant changes to the Government's organisational structure for the ICT portfolio including two ministerial realignments and frequent changes to Ministers and Permanent Secretaries (*i.e.* CEOs) with responsibility for ICT since April 2011. While it is taken as a given that capacity is an overall constraint for small countries in numerous endeavours, the aforesaid challenges could be further placed under the categories of *institutional readiness* and *leadership.* Farrell (2012) observes the continual discord between institutions and development policy implementation, which has been pervasive (but not uniquely linked) with changes in political administration much to the detriment of the public sector. The scope of these challenges with be further defined in Chapter Three of the dissertation.

Discursive Spaces

The overview of the previous actions succinctly situates Internet development at the crossroads of people, processes and technology. While globalisation allows for greater economic and technological exchanges, all of which enables Internet development and growth if contrasted with the potential of domestic factors of production, the question of foreign policy becomes highly critical albeit radically transformed when compared with the pre-1990 concerns of international relations. ***fastforward*** demonstrated partial recognition of this paradigm as it invoked the need for *External Assistance* as a critical undertaking for fulfilling its objectives (MPAI, 2006). Nonetheless, the interconnectedness between ICT and foreign policy became more apparent in practice, especially in light of the outcomes of the WSIS process. At the same time, the character of diplomacy began undergoing unprecedented changes.

Whether concretely framed as Internet Governance, or under the aegis of telecommunications/ICT or even trade, Trinidad and Tobago has participated/been represented in several fora with Internet implications, quite often with home-based Officers at Trade or ICT Ministries and sometimes with foreign-based Foreign Service Officers. At the point of seeking approval for participation in these fora the overarching rationale has usually been the pursuit of the national ICT agenda, yet, unfortunately, there has never been an instituted *ex-ante* and *ex-post* policy practice of alignment, save for WCIT

where the possible implications of that treaty conference were highly evident and had the force of law once ratified. Whereas there might be a small nuance between the terms participation and representation, the latter often reserved for the activity of trained diplomatic agents, for the following purposes no such distinction will be made as the relevance of the distinction has been diminishing with the evolving paradigm in which diplomacy is conducted. Coordination of participation will be analysed later on in this dissertation.

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Geneva and Tunis Phases

As the most prominent articulation of correlated ICT (sector) and development agendas, Trinidad and Tobago participated in both phases of WSIS through delegations comprised of Foreign Service Officers based at the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, Geneva, Technical Officers from the ICT Ministry and a representative from the University of the West Indies (ITU, 2004; ITU, 2005). The key instruments and actions pursuant to WSIS are points of reference to Trinidad and Tobago's pursuit of an ICT agenda, and are articulated as such at various layers of multilateralism, including the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the UN (Charles, 2013).

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

Trinidad and Tobago's participation within the WTO has been multi-layered, often by means of CARICOM through its Office for Trade Negotiations (OTN) in some negotiations scenarios or individually at Ministerial conferences (Chatterjee, 2013). The main relevance of WTO processes to the Internet market at this time lies in the Commitments annexed to the Fourth Protocol on Basic Telecommunications Services (WTO, 2014) under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), although e-Commerce has also been a monitored issue by the Ministry with responsibility for ICT in more recent times. Trinidad and Tobago's participation in WTO meetings was often undertaken by delegations comprised of Foreign Service Officers based at the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, Geneva and Technical Officers from the Trade Ministry.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Trinidad and Tobago enjoys long-standing relations with the ITU and has been involved in at least one critical role in addition to participating in ordinary processes as a Member State.

Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) and Council

Trinidad and Tobago participated in ITU-PP 2006 and 2010, where in the former case the country successfully proposed, lobbied and secured its candidate in one of the nine seats for Region A (Americas) during the 2006-2010 session. Trinidad and Tobago's Council Representative, Mr Cleveland Thomas, went on to become the Chair of the Expert Group to Review the International Telecommunications Regulations (ITR-EG), which was convened pursuant to Resolution 146 (ITU, 2006) to review the ITRs fix the dates of a World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) by 2011. Participation at ITU-PP often comprised Foreign Service Officers based at the nearest accredited mission to the Conference venue and Technical Officers from the Ministry with responsibility for ICT.

World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC)

Trinidad and Tobago closely follows the work of the ITU-D sector and as such considers participation at WTDC a high priority. Participation occurred at WTDC-06 in Antalya, Turkey, and in the Americas Regional Preparatory Meetings for the WTDC in Santa Marta, Colombia in 2009 and Montevideo, Uruguay in 2013 by delegations comprising Technical Officers from the Ministry with responsibility for ICT. Participation at WTDC-10 in Hyderabad, India did not occur as an administrative transition coincided with the hosting of that conference.

World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT)

WCIT represented a significant juncture in telecommunications policy among domestic actors where through a two-phased multistakeholder meeting consensus was met on particular treaty provisions that would serve national interests. Trinidad and Tobago participated in WCIT by a delegation comprising Technical Officers from the Ministry with responsibility for ICT and TATT.

Organisation of American States/Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (OAS/CITEL)

Whereas CITEL's Permanent Consultative Committee I (PCC.I) for telecommunications/ICT has been recognised as a platform for consolidating Trinidad and Tobago's foreign policy in the area of

telecommunications/ICT, participation in said Committee has been negligent. Officials from TATT have participated in CITEL meetings for observation purposes, without appealing to the power of delegation to represent the state.

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)

UN-ECLAC is a key hemispheric actor for the ICT-for-development agenda, for which Trinidad and Tobago once played a critical role in its main process and Plan of Action, namely eLAC, by serving as the Caribbean Focal Point of the Follow-Up Mechanism during the 2007 to 2010 iteration.

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

There has been participation by Trinidad and Tobago in one of the main ICANN processes for ensuring policy coherence, namely the Government Advisory Committee. Participation at ICANN has occurred since 2010 although said participation may be considered nominal when compared to derived objectives and the character of Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy to date.

Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Considered as a new policy space to encourage multi-stakeholder policy dialogue through the interactions and collaborations of all stakeholders, the IGF draws its mandate from the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society in which it was recognised that some issues related to the development of the Information Society, and specifically the Internet, fell out of the scope of existing agencies and programmes (ITU, 2005). State representation at IGF occurred once in 2006 by a Foreign Service Officer based at the Permanent Mission of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, Geneva.

Chapter Two: Political Economy of the Internet

Political economy approaches generally look at the interplay between actors such as the State and markets along construction and consumption axes according to John Fiske, or the economic organisations/constituents of an industry according to Robert Collins *et al* (cited in Matos, 2013). In this dissertation, a hybrid political economy approach will be employed in deconstructing the matrix of public versus private ordering on one dimension, and domestic versus international policy formulation and diplomacy on another albeit the increasing trend of blending both processes in external discursive spaces. This proposition is intended to develop statements about the Trinidad and Tobago Internet that will be considered as truths as deduced through *perspectivalism*[10].

Knowledgeable persons

Whereas common language in domestic policy rhetoric cites the need for *evidence*, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has often sought to invoke epistemic discussion among persons deemed as *knowledgeable* as a key vehicle for the legitimisation of policy. The e-Business Roundtable (eBRT) provides one such mechanism through which Government selected fourteen top business people and technology experts to provide guidance to the Ministry with responsibility for ICT in the development of further actions to meet the objectives of strategic thrusts (GoRTT, 2003). While there are specific issues that gain the attention of the eBRT, by Government's initiative extra-Ministerial multi-sector engagement has been somewhat characteristic of the ICT space as demonstrated in the composite working groups, public sector committees and open forums since the development of ***fastforward*** (GoRTT, 2003), and *ad hoc* consultations for various policy processes thereafter. The recurrence of such consultations in the ICT policy space tacitly shows Government's support for the

[10] The practices of *discourse Perspectivalism* in particular within domestic ICT policy will be explored in Chapter Three of the dissertation.

contributions of an epistemic community for justification, and networking in general. Despite such support, admittedly, with the exception of the eBRT there has been no default self-organised or self-nominated group[11] of this nature involved in policy entrepreneurship. It is worth noting that the role of the Foreign Ministry in domestic policy activity has not been explicit, but conduits and *ad hoc* communication have existed and will be examined in the next Chapter.

During the investigation period, there was less apparent linkage between diplomacy in negotiating with exogenous agents on the one hand, and domestic actors identifying or endorsing policy objectives through epistemic dialogue on the other. The Trade Ministry might be an exception, as it regularly convenes inter-ministerial meetings, *i.e.* among government officials, to address *trade in services* for which recognition is made for domestic telecommunications, ICT and e-commerce interests in multilateral and plurilateral agreements. In terms of more substantive issues concerning the ICT Ministry, epistemic dialogue in preparation for diplomatic negotiations has been less systematic and almost never pursued by stakeholders external to the Ministry. In September 2013, nonetheless, there was a two-part preparatory multistakeholder meeting for determining the state's position before the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT), which might have been one of the few instances where "openly" linking domestic policy options and with proposed diplomatic action for a transnational issue occurred.

Presentation of survey results

To better understand the conduct of domestic actors and their *perspectives* of the internal and external environment an electronic survey (Appendix 1) was conducted among a multi-sectoral group as a proxy, as identified by the investigator. This identification took into account one or more informal criteria including competence or authority, familiarity with the issues, prior experience in the external space and an appreciation for social ordering and governance. The collection of qualitative data from these persons was considered instructive in this aspect and in alignment with Trinidad and Tobago's nascent networking practices in the ICT policy space. Included in the group were persons from regional organisations who have often served as policy shapers in domestic processes. The survey was

[11] The Trinidad and Tobago Computer Society [TTCS] (2006) may prove to be an exception to this observation during the 2003 to 2013 period as it has generated debate and comments on various ICT policy issues until the year 2006 (See link: http://www.ttcsweb.org/articles/computer-laws/index.htm). However, there had not been explicit linkage between TTCS's comments and the public policy process in general.

emailed to these persons in May 2014 with a three-week period for responses, which was eventually extended by another three weeks. In addition to the initial email introducing the survey, follow-up emails and calls were made to the majority of targeted knowledgeable persons. The table below provides a list of these targeted persons.

Actor Classification	Name	Title	Organisation[12]	Observations
Public	Mrs Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds	Executive Manager - External ICT Relations	Ministry of Science and Technology	Former Deputy Head of Mission – TT-Geneva, MFA
Public	Mr Tracy Hackshaw	Deputy National Chief Information Officer	Ministry of Science and Technology	Former Chief Solutions Architect – iGovTT
Public	Mr John Gillette	Management Specialist	Ministry of Public Administration	Former Interim Head of External Relations Unit – National ICT Centre, MPA
Public	Ms Roanna Gopaul	Foreign Service Officer	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
Public	Mr Cris Seecheran	Chief Executive Officer	Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago	
Public	Mr Kwesi Prescod	Executive Officer – Policy, Planning and Market Economics	Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago	Former Executive Manager ICT Policy – I CT Division, MPA
Public	Ms Lisa Agard	Legal and Regulatory Consultant	Ministry of Science and Technology (assignment)	Former VP Legal and Regulatory Services and EVP Mobile Services - TSTT
Public	Dr Moreica Allana-Kim Ortega	smarTT Consultant	Ministry of Science and Technology (assignment)	
Private/Academia	Dr Patrick Hosein	Managing Director/Lecturer in Computer Science	The Trinidad and Tobago Network Information Centre (TTNIC)/University of the West Indies	
Private	Mr Julian Wilkins	Head of Group Telecoms Public Policy	Digicel Trinidad and Tobago	
Private	Mr Charles Carter	EVP Legal, Regulatory & Corporate Secretary Services	Telecommunication Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT)	
Private	Mr Devindra Ramnarine	Executive Director	Ernest and Young Caribbean	Former Director – National ICT Secretariat, MPA
Civil Society	Ms Cintra Sooknanan	Chair	Internet Society Trinidad and Tobago Chapter (ISOC-TT)	Former Director – Trinidad and Tobago Computer Society (TTCS)
Regional Public	Ms Bernadette Lewis	Secretary General	Caribbean Telecommunications Union	
Regional Public	Mr Cleveland Thomas	Area Representative - Caribbean	International Telecommunication Union	Former NCIO – National ICT Centre, MPA and Former CEO, iGovTT

Table 3: Targeted persons deemed "knowledgeable" for survey on representation, policy alignment and relationships among Internet actors

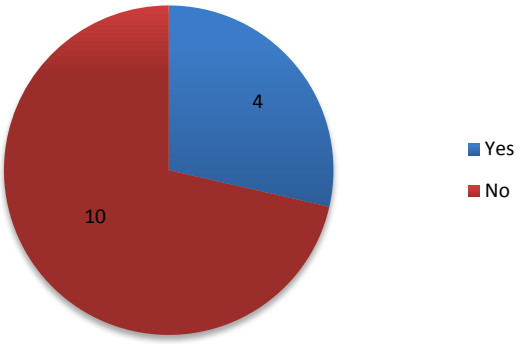
[12] Officers from TSTT, Columbus Communications, Green Dot Ltd, Packet Clearing House and the Caribbean Association for National Telecommunications Organisations (CANTO) were also approached to complete the dissertation survey but no response was submitted in some cases while in others said officers declined to comment.

Methodology and Limitations

The response format for the questions fell into polar, unstructured and Likert-scale categories. Polar questions were used to determine whether there were *carte blanche* perceptions among stakeholders about the recognition of technical, public policy and political aspects of Internet Governance. Responses to these questions would have relied on the respondent's individual experience and observations in this regard. In the case of negative responses comments sections afforded respondents the opportunity to qualify those responses. The last two categories where particularly used to understand the baseline from which epistemic dialogue could stem for Internet-related public policy matters, and to proffer a proxy for greater authentication and accountability in the lead-time to external representation.

Recognised Internet Governance knowledge was the most limiting factor in developing the list of persons to target. Albeit uncommon, other limitations were quite possibly the distribution mode and strategies for dealing with the attrition of particular persons from organisations, where there were no successors for such persons nor alternative contact details. Contact details were not current for at least two other persons, from NSAs, who were known to participate regularly in Internet Governance processes. There was a 73.68% response rate to the survey. The results are as follows:

Polar Questions

Question	Response	Observations
Are the technical dimensions of Internet Governance generally recognised, and understood?		71.43% of respondents believed that the technical dimensions of Internet Governance were not generally recognised, nor understood.

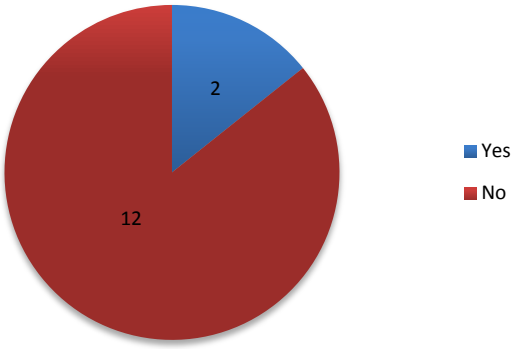
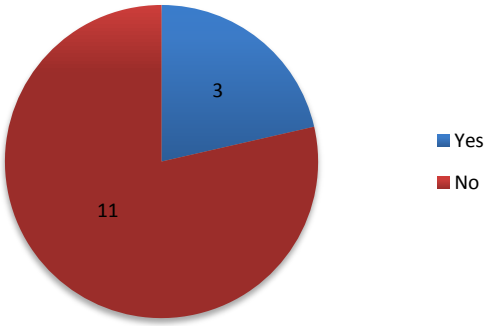
Are the public policy dimensions of Internet Governance generally recognised, and understood?		85.71% of respondents believed that the public policy dimensions of Internet Governance were not generally recognised, nor understood.
Are the political dimensions of Internet Governance generally recognised, and understood?		78.57% of respondents believed that the political dimensions of Internet Governance were not generally recognised, nor understood.

Table 4: Responses to Polar Questions of the Dissertation Survey

Unstructured Questions

Question	Response Range and Frequency
In your opinion, which are the primary Internet-related public policy matters that are transnational in nature?	• Cyber Security and cybercrime (7) • Internet resources (5) – New gtlds and sovereignty concerns – Ownership and control of "the root" and all related IP, scientific and technological collateral • Openness and Access/Digital inclusion (4) • Privacy (4) • Intellectual Property Rights (3) • Multistakeholder governance (2) • Anti-censorship/Freedom of Speech (2) • Connectivity costs (2) • Network neutrality (2) • Accountability of actors in Internet ecosystem – Agreements underpinning the Internet • e-Commerce • Permissionless innovation • Multilingualism • Development issues • Participation/representation • Local content • Market liberalisation • VoIP and new players that avoid taxation
Which are the main discursive spaces through which Internet-related	• CTU/Caribbean IGF (5) • ITU meetings (All bureaux) (4) – ITU-D processes (2)

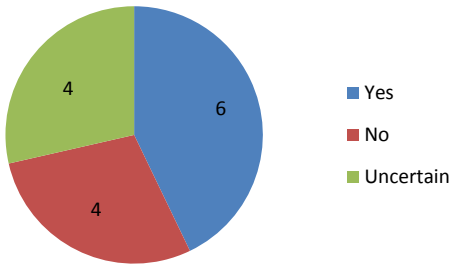
public policy matters are addressed?	• ICANN (4) – ICANN public meetings including GAC meetings • WSIS (3) • IGF (3) • RIR meetings (LACNIC/ARIN) (2) • CANTO (2) • TATT seminars (2) • UNESCO • WCIT • ISOC-TT events • WTO and Bilateral Trade Negotiations • Domestic Inter-Ministerial Committees • Technical mailing lists • Internet policy blogs, discussion forums and social media
Who are the key domestic and international actors concerning transnational Internet-related public policy matters?	• Government (9) • ICANN (9) • ITU[13] (7) • ISOC (5) • National telecommunication regulators (5) • CTU (4) • End users (3) • UN (3) – UNDP • CANTO (3) • RIRs (2) • TTNIC (2) • IGF • ISPs • CARICOM • TT Chamber of Commerce • IETF • IEEE-TT • TTCS • ICTS
Do you believe there is horizontal alignment between transnational Internet-related public policy matters and Trinidad and Tobago's wider foreign policy[14]?	

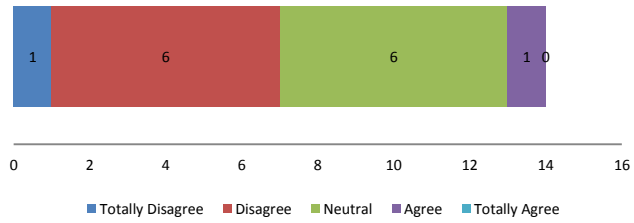
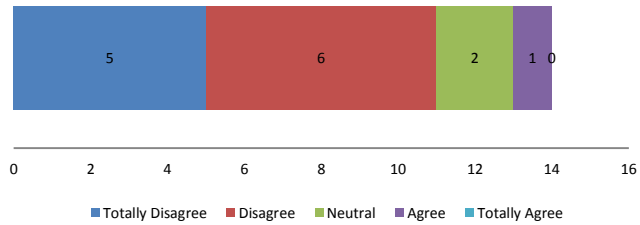
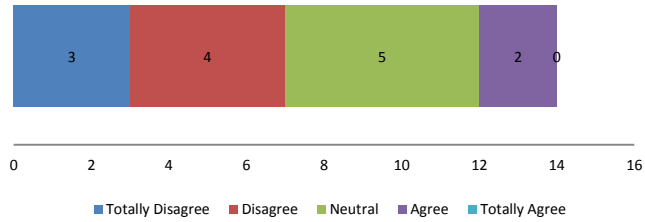
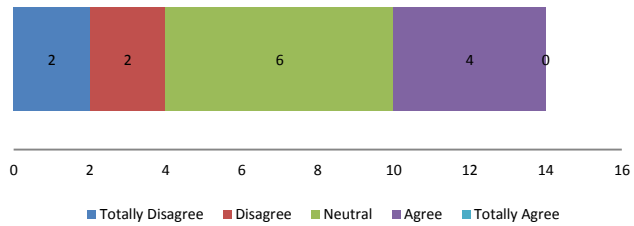
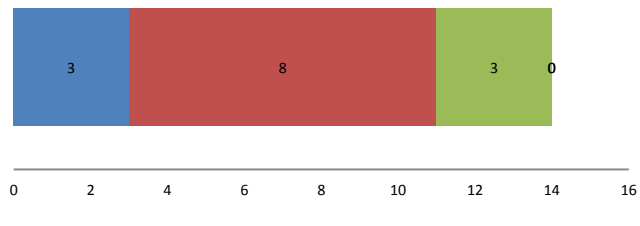
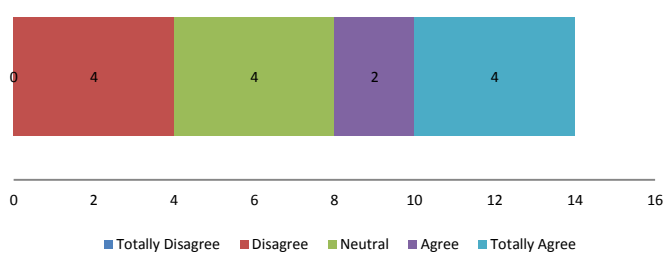
Table 5: Responses to Unstructured Questions of Dissertation Survey

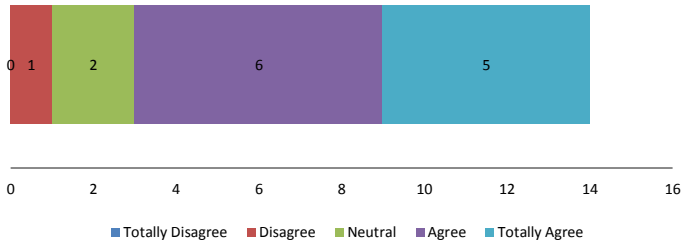
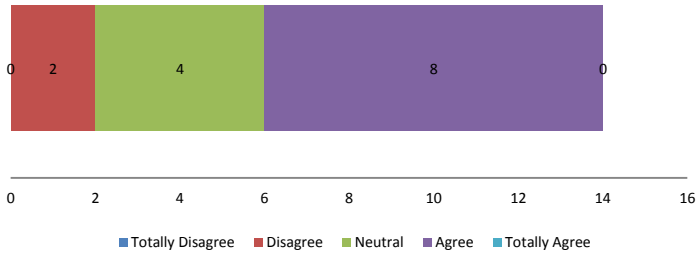
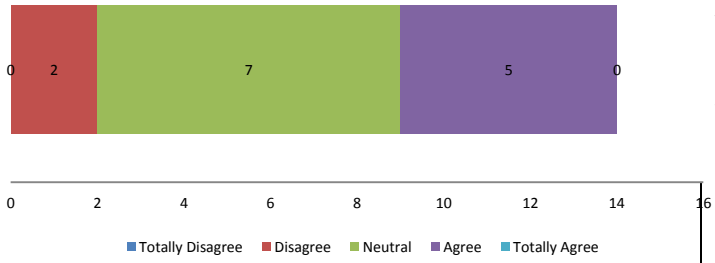
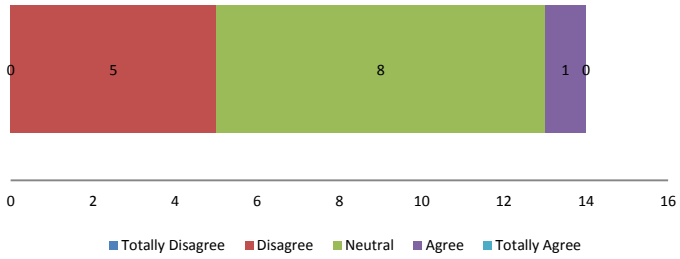
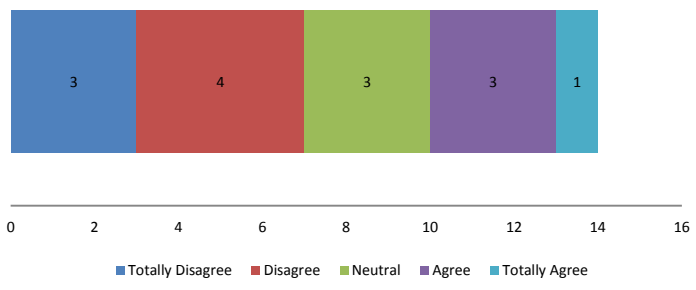
Likert-scale Questions

Question	Response	Observations

[13] Respondents differentiated the ITU from the UN (principal organs) and other UN agencies.

[14] Most of the affirmative responses to this question admitted that alignment needed to improve and better account for transnational actors and processes in general.

Domestic stakeholders are aware of transnational Internet-related public policy matters		While 50% of respondents believe that domestic stakeholders are unaware of transnational Internet-related public policy matters, 42.86% of them are neutral about the proposition.
Government's constructs for the formulation of Internet-related public policy are identifiable and widely known		78.57% of respondents believe that government's constructs for the formulation of Internet-related public policy are unidentifiable and not widely known.
Government possesses sufficient capacity to formulate and implement Internet-related public policy		50% of respondents believe that government does not possess sufficient capacity to formulate and implement Internet-related public policy while 35.71% of them are neutral about the proposition.
There are good relations between domestic state and non-state actors		28.57% of respondents believe that there is a lack of good relations between domestic state and non-state actors, and same percentage (28.57%) feel the opposite way. 42.86% of respondents were neutral about the proposition.
There is sufficient interaction between state and non-state actors on Internet-related public policy matters		78.57% of respondents believe that there is insufficient interaction between state and non-state actors on Internet-related public policy matters.
There are barriers between state and non-state actors, which hinder dialogue on Internet-related public policy matters		42.86% of respondents believe there are barriers between state and non-state actors to dialogue on Internet-related public policy matters, while equal numbers (28.57%) of respondents disagree or feel neutral about the proposition.

There are clear impacts from external ICT policy dialogue and processes on the development of domestic Internet		78.57% of respondents believe there are clear impacts from external ICT policy dialogue and processes on the development of domestic Internet.
Market conditions determining the provision of Internet access to people and businesses are relatively fair and driven by competition		57.14% of respondents believe that market conditions determining the provision of Internet access are relatively fair and competition-driven while 28.57% of them feel neutral about the proposition.
The national ICT agenda is or has been reflective of regional and international trends and processes		50% of respondents feel neutral about whether the national ICT agenda is or has been reflective of regional and international trends and processes while 35.71% of them agree with the proposition.
Government is or has been systematically represented in Internet Governance processes		57.14% of respondents feel neutral about whether Government is or has been systematically represented in Internet Governance processes while 35.71% of them disagree with the proposition.
Domestic non-state actors are or have been actively involved in the standards and protocol setting aspects of the Internet		50% of respondents believe that domestic non-state actors are or have been missing in the standards and protocol setting aspects of the Internet while 28.57% of them disagree with the proposition.

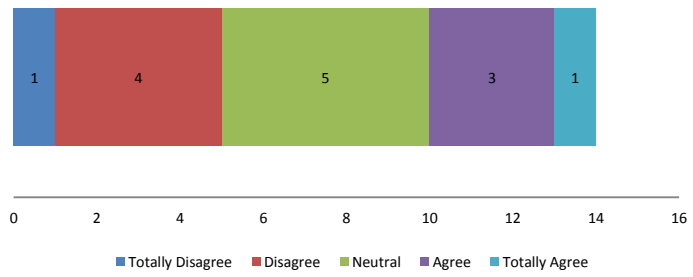
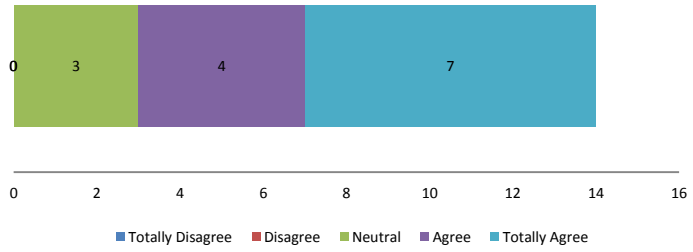
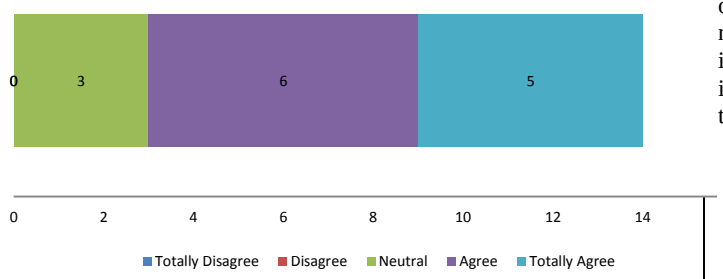
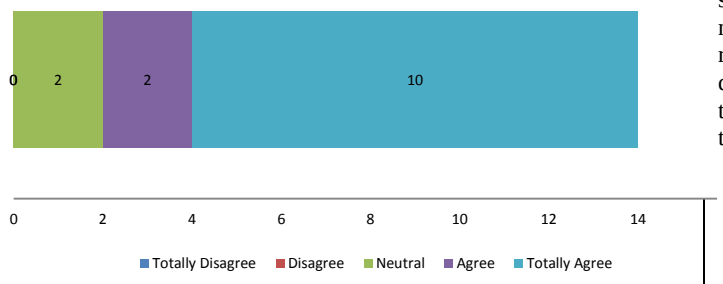
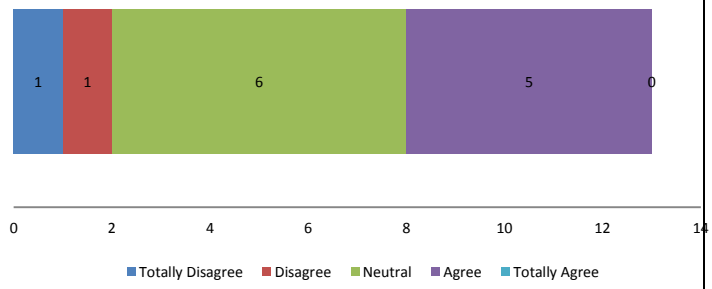
Domestic non-state actors are or have been systematically represented in wider Internet Governance processes		Equal numbers of respondents (35.71%) either believe that domestic non-state actors are or have been systematically missing in wider Internet Governance processes, or feel neutral about the proposition.
Government is obligated to pursue Internet-related public policy matters in external spaces by virtue of its efforts towards bridging the digital divide		78.57% of respondents believe that Government is obligated to pursue Internet-related public policy matters in external spaces by virtue of its efforts towards bridging the digital divide.
Government is obligated to pursue Internet-related public policy matters in external spaces by virtue of its efforts towards developing the new economy		78.57% of respondents believe that Government is obligated to pursue Internet-related public policy matters in external spaces by virtue of its efforts towards developing the new economy.
Government should play a role in a multistakeholder approach relating to the oversight of decisions regarding the technical administration of the Internet		85.71% of respondents believe that Government should play a role in a multistakeholder approach relating to the oversight of decisions regarding the technical administration of the Internet.
Regional dialogue on Internet Governance is or has been highly reflective of international dialogue on the issues		42.86% of respondents feel neutral about whether regional dialogue on Internet Governance is or has been highly reflective of international dialogue on the issues while 35.71% of them agreed with the proposition.

Table 6: Responses to Likert-scale Questions of the Dissertation Survey

Other Survey Results

As mentioned earlier, in the case of negative responses to the polar questions respondents were afforded the opportunity to provide comments in a separate dialogue box. Respondents were also free to make general comments at the end of the survey. A synthesis of these comments is provided below:

Technical Dimensions of the Internet

Some respondents felt that whereas there may be a superficial understanding of the technical aspects of the Internet, the framing of such aspects is limited. It was also felt that limited understanding of the technical dimensions of the Internet is linked to insufficient awareness of Internet Governance in general, especially as Internet Governance has been a low priority for Government. Respondents also acknowledged that whether clearly identified or not (as the technical dimensions), there is considerable discourse on the deployment of IXPs, Root Servers, IPv4 to IPv6 migration and ICANN relationships.

Public Policy Dimensions of the Internet

Some respondents stated that some understanding of the public policy dimensions is being recognised by state actors by virtue of their interests in cyber security and cybercrime but this understanding is not widespread. It was also worth noting that progress is being made concerning general awareness of the public policy dimensions of the Internet. One respondent asserted that given the huge variation in the definition of *public interest*, it is not always possible to act in the public's interest while being truly multistakeholder.

Political Dimensions of the Internet

Some respondents affirmed that the political dimensions to Internet Governance are inherent as one enters an international policy space. Notwithstanding, given the level of attention placed on technical issues, it was felt that political dimensions tended to be relegated as being non-issues. A few respondents said that the political dimensions of the Internet may be well recognised but by a small niche of persons who have been participating regularly in Internet/ICT processes.

Chapter Three: Policy, Processes and Form

When compared to traditional diplomacy, multistakeholder diplomacy as ascribed to Internet Governance processes provides a new paradigm for diplomatic agents where, in relation to the degree of multistakeholderism, traditional diplomatic work is merged directly with policy shaping/setting that would have previously been the core remit of the state's internal machinery (Kurbalija and Katrandjev, 2006). More specifically, Internet Governance dialogue may facilitate the establishment of *soft law* among other things, and present considerations for the international regime governing Internet-related public policy that is more often transnational than not.

That said, issues that are the foci of diplomatic work are certainly no longer the sole remit of the Foreign Ministry, but rather the collective of interventions of Other Government Departments (OGDs) in addition to the Foreign Ministry's, and in the case of Internet Governance such interventions may emanate from the Telecommunications/ICT ministry. Given the structure and evolution of the telecommunications/ICT sector in general terms, and in particular questions of business ownership, political economy and social conscience[15], the latter ministry must also be predisposed to operating in a networked environment and further rely on specialist knowledge from domestic NSAs to perform diplomatic work.

In addition to the numerous limitations faced by small states, Insanally (2012, p.153) contends that small state diplomacy has generally been rendered more complicated with the inclusion of NSAs in multilateral settings, which one has come to characterise as forms of multistakeholderism. This may hold true where multilateralism offers an alternative to interstate relations - for which *hard power* and alliances were the dominant questions of the past - as primacy is afforded to consensus-building

[15] The reference to *social conscience* is made specifically in connection with Farrell's (2012) observation of the traditionally distant/mistrustful relationship between Government and the private sector in Trinidad and Tobago. Said observation could explain i) greater affinity to parastatals and localisation in the past, and ii) reconciliation as attributed to telecommunications sector liberalisation since 2004. Strong Government stakes in ICTD continue, nonetheless, at present.

engagements and rule of law (Camilleri, 2007, p. 3). Kleinwächter (2011) also qualifies the challenges for participation in multistakeholder diplomacy from a developing world perspective, where on the one hand there is a greater range of nuances apart from bipolar *for-or-against* multistakeholderism on analysing the low participation of state actors from the developing world, and on the other hand there are further unique challenges (and cause for targeted action by Internet Governance actors) for participation by NSAs from the developing world. The foregoing positions illustrate a highly sophisticated form of multi-level governance, outside of the integrationist sense (as in the European Union, for example) and akin to the CAS that is the Internet, which could introduce a deeper sense of vulnerability to small states in conducting diplomacy.

In Trinidad and Tobago, while there may be recognition of i) the role of the state as an actor in Internet Governance diplomacy, ii) the changing dispensation of diplomatic work, and iii) some activity occurring in various policy spaces, the results of the dissertation survey painted a stark picture all the same. According to the survey most respondents felt that the state's presence in external discursive spaces was diminished or not optimised and there was a strong need for enhanced coordination between ICT and wider foreign policy, and enhanced communication between state actors and NSAs. The first statement is likely to point towards a long-standing problem in the *effectiveness* and *legitimacy* of state diplomacy as there has been a "growing range of actors claiming a voice in diplomatic arenas,…" while traditional diplomatic processes and structures may be incapable of meeting contemporary demands (NIIRC, 2012, p. 15). The communication aspect outlines a distinct dichotomy in that there is room for improvement of the Foreign Ministry as an actor accountable to domestic stakeholders, in addition to the room for improvement of state actors, be they from the Foreign Ministry or an OGD, in finding new balance to inform and persuade others within the unique power configurations of multistakeholderism.

In this Chapter, the aforementioned assertions, together with the overall findings of the dissertation survey issued to *knowledgeable persons* in the Trinidad and Tobago policy space, will be duly scrutinised with a view to further testing the two overarching hypotheses[16] of the dissertation. To this

16 As a recap, the overarching hypotheses of the dissertation include: the interplay of public and private ordering for Internet governance in Trinidad and Tobago may be unique and as such allude to a distinct role for the State to play; and domestically, the Internet-related policy implications for interactions within external discursive spaces, may occur at a faster rate externally than internal consideration of such matters.

end, various aspects of Trinidad and Tobago Internet Governance diplomacy will be dissected including, *inter alia*, policy authorities and the policy formulation process; determining foreign policy objectives and diplomatic method, for which the latter concept will tackle questions on representation/participation in external Internet Governance processes. To complement the findings of the dissertation survey that were presented in the previous Chapter, this Chapter will also benefit from historical accounts acquired through a face-to-face interview[17] that was conducted on 24 October 2014 with two government officials who proved to be instrumental to Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy during the investigation period, Mr John Gillette and Mrs Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds. Mr John Gillette is a former diplomat who served as a Management Consultant to the initial secretariat in 2003 within MPAI to operationalise ***fastforward***, and held responsibility for international cooperation and other diplomatic work until the establishment of a functional foreign policy unit for ICT within an OGD. Mrs Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds was a Geneva-based diplomat with responsibility for multilateral relations at the time of both phases of WSIS, and is now Head of the External Relations Unit, Ministry of Science and Technology – the aforesaid functional foreign policy unit within the government ministry with *de facto* responsibility for Internet-related public policy issues. Furthermore, Mrs Clarke-Hinds is still formally associated with the Foreign Ministry's establishment at the time of writing and therefore brings intimate knowledge of its contemporary workings.

Policy authorities

Trinidad and Tobago subscribes to a Westminster system of parliamentary government, which translates into a complex intertwining of executive and legislative state functions. During the investigation period the authority with the responsibility for ICT policy and strategy underwent considerable transformations. Interestingly, many of the major changes in the earlier part of the investigation period (between 2003 and 2010) coincided with changes with ICT Ministers pursuant to new government cabinets installed after general elections, and unanticipated adjustments to some government cabinets during electoral term. In particular, during the latter part of the investigation period (*i.e.* after 2010) changes in policy authority became more frequent. In terms of alignment between ICT and wider foreign policy, it will be reviewed below how this function was conducted and

[17] See Appendix 2 for the transcript of the interview.

officially run by one individual, namely Mr John Gillette, during ***fastforward*** (between 2003 and 2008) and later by a small sub-division under various constructs of the ICT policy authority beyond 2008. It is also worth considering that during the investigation period not only were there changes to ICT/Internet policy authority but also to ICT/Internet policy itself.

In May 2003 a small division of nine persons under the then Ministry of Public Administration and Information, called the NICT Secretariat, was created for the purposes of operationalising ***fastforward*** (GoRTT, 2003). The NICT Secretariat served as the main interlocutor between an executive strategic committee featuring then Ministers and Permanent Secretaries, foreign consultants to assist with strategic development, the Inter-American Development Bank as one of the main financial stakeholders, five *ad hoc* working groups for thematic strategic areas and three other support committees, of which another government department, the four-person e-Commerce Secretariat under the Trade Ministry, stood out significantly as a more permanent body in the plan's organisation (GoRTT, 2003). Internet-related public policy, though not referred to as such, could have been inferred as the tasks that straddled two specific bodies: the Working Group for Legal and Policy Matters – an Inter-Ministerial Committee, and the e-Commerce Secretariat under the Trade Ministry.

In the latter part of 2004 the Cabinet of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago took the decision to reconfigure the organisation of these bodies with a view to enhancing Government's coordination and capacity to give full effect to ***fastforward*** **(**GoRTT, 2004). As such, the NICT Secretariat and the Telecommunications and e-Government Units[18] under MPAI, and the e-Commerce Secretariat under the Trade Ministry were consolidated into a singular coordinating government division under MPAI known as the ICT Division (UNECLAC, 2006). However, since the operationalisation of TATT between 2004 and 2005, telecommunications policy in its strictest sense was formulated by the very TATT as recommendations for approval by the line Ministry (MPAI, 2006). In 2008, the ICT Division was merged with the National Information Systems Centre (NISC)[19], another MPAI division, and became the National ICT Centre (NICTC) under a reformed Ministry of

[18] The Telecommunications and e-Government Units were established in 2001 under the then Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. The Ministry was soon renamed to the Ministry of ICT and then the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE) in 2003 subsequent to changes in political administration that year. At the same time, the Telecommunications and e-Government Unit was transferred from MSTTE to MPAI (UNECLAC, 2006). Contained within the mandate of the ICTD, the telecommunications function sought to review draft telecommunications policies submitted by the TATT and make counter recommendations if necessary (MPAI, 2006).

[19] The National Information Systems Centre (NISC) was established in 1990 to replace the National Computer Agency and undertook several IT planning functions including consultancy services to other government agencies, development of standards and processes for IT procurement and deployment, etc. (UNECLAC, 2006).

Public Administration (MPA) as the previous Information portfolio had also been devolved to form a separate Ministry (GoRTT, 2008b). At this juncture, the concept of External ICT Relations was formalised for addressing international ICT affairs and ensuring vertical and horizontal policy alignment (with the national ICT agenda on the one hand, and other areas of foreign policy through liaising with the Foreign, Trade and National Security Ministries). It should be noted that the NICTC, MPA might have been the most adept organisational construct to oversee the domestic Internet agenda and pursue external objectives as an OGD for foreign policy. Furthermore, this construct, equipped with the External ICT Relations Unit, would have been best poised to conduct Internet Governance diplomacy given Kurbalija and Katrandjev's (2006) reasoning about the new diplomatic paradigm.

Between July and September 2009 another major shift occurred as most of NICTC, MPA was transformed into a wholly-owned state enterprise incorporated as the National ICT Company Ltd (and branded as iGovTT), for which all of the NICTC's subdivisions and personnel were reconfigured to perform under the new entity with the exception of its External ICT Relations Unit and a Senior Administrative Officer (PoRTT, 2011; GoRTT, 2009). The reduced ministerial division, the so-called ICT Secretariat, had five staff members and held residual responsibility for, *inter alia*, ICT policy formulation, international ICT affairs and *de novo* strategic oversight of iGovTT. The implicated shift in foci meant that iGovTT would serve as the execution arm of the central government ministry with responsibility for ICT, while the latter would retain authority for the formulation of guidelines and policy by default (GoRTT, 2009).

In July 2011, the ICT portfolio was transferred from the Ministry of Public Administration to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education; the latter having not exercised any ICT-specific functions since an earlier manifestation before 2003. At this time an interesting development occurred where telecommunications policy formulation was delegated to MPA through inference[20] of its oversight of TATT as determined by Government (GoRTT, 2011c). Nonetheless, the practice of telecommunications policy formulation by TATT via recommendations to the line Ministry remained unchanged.

[20] This inference is made further evident through the statutory interpretation of the responsible Minister of the Telecommunications Act as amended (GoRTT, 2005).

In June 2012, the Ministry with responsibility for ICT underwent a transformation once again as the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE) was split into two Ministries with separate portfolio – namely the Ministry of Science and Technology (MST), which now holds responsibility for a converged telecommunications/ICT sector and the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (MTEST), which largely concentrates on the higher education sector and vocational skills (GoRTT, 2012). It should be noted, however, that as the MSTTE configuration there were only three staff members for ICT from the so-called ICT Secretariat. At the end of the period, MST was the last recorded actor with inferred authority for the furtherance of Internet-related public policy issues.

In view of the dearth of performance data by the policy authority on the state's role in domestic Internet development, the aforementioned changes may not be considered as organic or in tandem with external economic or political-economic thrusts. The number of outputs stemming from national ICT agenda might serve as an indicator but would need to consider the complete chain of inputs, expected outcomes and potential. However, the internal transformations to Trinidad and Tobago's policy authority and leadership for Internet-related public policy do coincide with appreciable domestic political events including general elections and cabinet reshuffles (portfolio reassignments). These dates include:

General Elections

- 7 October 2002
- 5 November 2007
- 24 May 2010

Cabinet Reshuffles

- 27 June 2011
- 22 June 2012

In the interview with Mr Gillette and Mrs Clarke-Hinds it was explained that there has been formalised (Cabinet-decided) relations between the ICT Ministry and the Trade and National Security Ministries since 2007 and 2010 respectively, to address telecommunications, ICT and e-Commerce in

international trade agreements and cybersecurity. The ICT Ministry is a recognised stakeholder and active participant in the Trade Ministry's Technical Working Group and Specialist Subcommittee on Trade in Services, and was a full member of the National Security Ministry's Inter-Ministerial Committee on Cybersecurity. These Ministries did not undergo any transformations during the period. The Foreign Ministry did not experience any significant transformation in its organisation save for the Government's short-lived reassignment of the communications/information portfolio to said Ministry between June 2011 and June 2012 (GoRTT, 2011c).

While there has never been an institutionalised nexus between the ICT and Foreign Ministries on the subject of Internet-related public policy and Internet Governance diplomacy, Mr Gillette and Mrs Clarke-Hinds further revealed in the interview that there has always been a strong practice of formal and informal communications between both Ministries in a bid to ensure smooth coordination and alignment to foreign policy objectives. In terms of extra-ministerial networking, the current External Relations Unit, MST has been serving as the secretariat to the e-Business Roundtable since 2012, and had convened preparatory multistakeholder meetings in September 2012 in the lead-up to WCIT.

Diplomatic Method

Camilleri's (2012) three-pronged presentation on areas of responsibility within diplomatic method as understanding, informing and persuading is instructive to illustrating a theoretical guide to Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy, while equally taking into consideration Kurbalija and Katrandjev's (2006) assertion of the merging of diplomatic work and policy formulation vis-à-vis multistakeholder diplomacy. Metzl (2001) proffers an argument for a network model to state diplomacy which is reconciled with new information and communication patterns as enabled by the Internet, and new power and influence configurations characteristic of multistakeholderism. The network model can be loosely described as interconnected yet operationally independent units of authority, which is in contrast to *square* state control that is bureaucratic and hierarchical. That said, Metzl (2001) also underscores the role of hierarchical structure in at least one of the activities of the traditional state foreign policy system, that is to say the decision-making functions, as a measure of accountability at that level while accepting devolution of other discrete activities ranging from

intelligence, institutional learning and communications among others. In light of the research uncovered in this dissertation, and in particular the survey, the Trinidad and Tobago configuration for Internet Governance diplomacy has embraced the network concept to some extent although, for the most part, decision-making remains evidently hierarchical. Some consideration in this context, however, must be paid to *smallness* and *institutional readiness*.

As Internet Governance diplomats are to contend with the policy formulation process there are activities within the networked governance model that they must have sight of whether the conduct of such activities are directly attributable to them or not. The key driver of the participant in some multistakeholder environments is *interest,* on which aptitude would be judged, and this presents attendant pros and cons. Using Gilles Paquet's (2009) appeal for new practices and structures in the face of wicked problems, such as many of the issues encountered within Internet Governance, one can align the broad areas of responsibility of understanding, informing and persuading to three proposed foci best described in French as *savoir* (know-what, knowledge), *savoir-faire* (know-how, capabilities) and *savoir-être* (thought leadership). These correlations will be further described in the following paragraphs:

Savoir: Data for Internet Governance Diplomacy

Statistical data to analyse the performance of Internet actors can be derived from telecommunication/ICT indicators applied by TATT. More specifically, TATT collects market data on fixed Internet subscriptions, mobile Internet users, Internet penetration, total Internet revenues, fixed Internet market concentration and average revenue per user (TATT, 2014). In 2007 TATT also published a *Digital Divide Survey* that was outsourced to the Sir Arthur Institute of Social and Economic Studies of the University of the West Indies (UWI) (TATT, 2007). The aforesaid survey was based on the application of Digital Opportunity Index (DOI) and Digital Access Index (DAI) indicators and methodologies[21] during an investigation period that took place approximately in 2006 (TATT, 2007).

[21] DOI and DAI are ITU-driven frameworks to examine the potential for a citizen of a particular country to benefit from access to information, and is aligned to WSIS Tunis Commitment, paragragh 10 (ITU, 2007). It is understood that the Internet is the underlying technology to enable this activity.

There are undeniable broad baselines established by international organisations to collect high-level data for the purposes of comparative study and rankings. However, there appeared to be a dearth[22] of hard data to support Internet-related public policy for the issue areas of the Internet economy and cybersecurity. This dearth therefore implies that Trinidad and Tobago foreign policy objectives pursued under Internet Governance diplomacy would be largely premised on state-centric epistemic dialogue and broad interests in international regime setting, taking into account vestiges of multistakeholderism if we consider that dialogue with the e-Business Roundtable has an impact on the identification process for foreign policy objectives albeit indirect or out of concert with other stakeholders. There is undeniably Trinidad and Tobago's overarching political objectives to be included into this equation, which form part of the deliberations at the decision-making level. A determination as to whether this epistemic dialogue in the earlier part could allude to a *bottom-up* process will be subjective given the expected level of civic engagement within Trinidad and Tobago society and the applicability of subsidiarity and private ordering based on empiricism. In other words, realistically, each instance of Internet Governance diplomacy conducted by Trinidad and Tobago state actors may not yield theoretical multistakeholder benefit from *ex ante* consultation with NSAs if such consultation is primarily convened by the state on an *ad hoc* basis as opposed to ongoing dialogue between NSAs and the state, and the pursuit of interests directly by NSAs in domestic and external discursive spaces which currently appears challenged. It could be assumed that some NSAs such as the private sector face similar capacity constraints as the state and/or place a low priority on public policy formulation. As a proxy exhibited in Trinidad and Tobago, the collective of discrete discussions may compensate for succinct domestic multistakeholderism at a given instance in view of challenges, but this practice maintains a great burden on the state.

Savoir: Epistemology as a route for ICT/Internet Governance policy

Even with some public data on Internet development, specialist knowledge of the telecommunications/ICT sector and the Internet economy does not lie with the Foreign Ministry in Trinidad and Tobago, which is made further evident by its traditional relationship-type (*i.e.* bilateral

[22] This assertion had been deduced having consulted both virtual and physical presences for the identified policy authority and concerned Ministries, and related public bodies (including the Trinidad and Tobago Central Statistical Office) while comparing the overarching themes for international Internet-related public policy as outlined in the dissertation survey.

and multilateral) and geography-based structure (MFA, 2010a). As an OGD, specialist knowledge in this regard is closer to the ICT Ministry, but is all the same intricately dependent on the network model as the ICT Ministry is not the source of sector knowledge. What is more, it is quite apparent that data collection and usage by Trinidad and Tobago public authorities addressing ICT, including the Internet, has been problematic for reasons one may only assume are linked to capacity and capability thereby demonstrating Trinidad and Tobago's likeliness to *small state theory* in this respect. For this reason, epistemic dialogue as evidenced in the early days of ***fastforward*** has often played a critical role in knowledge construction in the ICT/Internet Governance space. In this respect, a semblance to *discourse perspectivalism* can be identified as the dominant policy practice through which limitations attributed to human and financial resources, and expertise, are recognised by the body holding authority and as such the need for relying on some form of a networked model is well-accepted and put into practice (Somerville, 2009). This practice, however, relegates evidence within a scientific process, and more specifically data, as a less practical means of arriving at fit-for-purpose policy. Despite the previous statement, according to the dissertation survey results in Trinidad and Tobago there are still some organisational deficits between this practice and objectives at the time of addressing Internet Governance diplomacy in that:

- There has been some extrication between external discursive spaces and internal ones owing to coordination challenges (specifically no formalised mechanisms/configurations between the Foreign and ICT Ministries and national constituents). Therefore, a dominant perception of uncertainty arises regarding the alignment of the national ICT agenda and international ICT trends and processes;
- The role of the Foreign Ministry is not clearly identifiable in the process and as a result, there may not be a strong informed contemplation of the political aspects of Internet Governance within the international policy space. Conceptually, diplomatic work is conducted and/or coordinated by agents directly linked to the Foreign Ministry. Through inference, the Foreign Ministry may still appear to be closed or secretive despite the exigencies of networking for Internet Governance;
- Government's general capacity to lead this knowledge process is perceived as insufficient; and

- There is a greater perception about the existence of barriers among state actors and NSAs as opposed to counterfact.

Savoir-faire: know-how/capabilities

As mentioned earlier there are two overarching considerations for contemporary state actors among the requirements for Internet Governance diplomacy. These considerations include i) increased participation in public policy formulation and capabilities to address the new diplomatic paradigm in which NSAs play significant roles in external discursive spaces and, ii) reconciliation of their role and room for manoeuvre in a governance (and power) configuration based on the network model. In terms of readiness of Trinidad and Tobago in this regard, there is a lack of formal public policy methodology compared to those found in public management literature such as Impact Assessments or the ACIDD[23] test (EC, 2014; Taylor, 1997). Implementation of policy can also be deemed problematic judging by the results of ***fastforward*** and understated policy rhetoric found in **smarTT** (GoRTT, 2003; GoRTT, 2013). On the other hand, Mrs Clarke-Hinds revealed in the interview that there has been the ongoing practice of diplomatic training for state diplomats as provided by the University of the West Indies and other entities[24]. However, she affirmed that said training does not extend to contemporary issues being addressed in the international community as the Foreign Ministry has had difficulty in moving beyond geographical classifications of work and attracting specialists and experts in contemporary international policy areas.

The interview with Mr John Gillette and Mrs Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds also gave key insights into the coordination paradigm between the Foreign and ICT Ministries. Organisationally, there are no formal mechanisms/configurations that systematically perform *ex ante* / *ex post* assessment of Internet Governance processes and meetings, which in turn places a higher burden on the ICT Ministry to perform a conformance role for state actors[25] conducting Internet Governance diplomacy in such

[23] Documented in a Canada-based publication called "Optimum, The Journal of Public Sector Management, Dr Carl Taylor (1997) scrutinises, *inter alia*, the increasing complexity in modern-day problems and their characterisation as *wicked problems*, and the foci of the traditional public policy cycle. He posits a methodology known as the test for Analysis, Choice, Implementation, Decision and Debate (ACIDD), which accommodates for the *no-stopping* rule of wicked problems.

[24] Mrs Clarke-Hinds expressed that in terms of hiring practices at the Foreign Ministry since the early 2000s there has been a strong emphasis on potential Foreign Service/International Relations Officers to already possess at least the postgraduate diploma in International Relations delivered by the Institute of International Relations, University of the West Indies or a comparable qualification (see http://sta.uwi.edu/iir/programmes.asp). Diplomatic training is further conducted through in-Ministry sessions, online courses and short-term stays abroad at regional diplomatic institutions although the occurrence of the last method has been less frequent in recent times.

[25] Officials from the TATT are known to regularly participate in Internet Governance-related meetings but in an observation/advisory role by default unless specially requested by the ICT Ministry to perform a more central/negotiating role, which implies a Cabinet decision.

meetings. Nevertheless, there are informal arrangements and expectations premised on the capabilities of the personnel at the ICT Ministry and the inter-personal rapports and communications between Mr Gillette (in the past) and Mrs Clarke-Hinds on the one hand, and staff at the Foreign Ministry on the other hand. Some coordination between ICT and wider foreign policy is ergo manifested through regular exchange of official correspondence (government memoranda, policy briefs, etc.) and *ad hoc* occasional meetings between the Foreign and ICT Ministries. This coordination had been remarkably consistent amidst the number of transformations to the policy authority for ICT. The key interlocutors for this coordination from the ICT Ministry's side had been Mr Gillette in the function of External ICT Relations from the inception of ***fastforward*** until May 2009 and then Mrs Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds, leading a small functional unit (namely the External Relations Unit) since May 2009 until present.

Savoir-être: thought leadership

While the ICT Ministry is the inferred authority for Internet-related public policy at the time of conducting Internet Governance diplomacy the question of thought leaders and the Foreign Ministry becomes less evident. There is a notable absence of trained diplomats, either at the ICT or Foreign Ministries, being assigned specific issue areas or desk responsibilities under the telecommunications/ICT/Internet umbrella for a determined period of time. In practice, however, since being established in 2008 the work of the External Relations Unit at the ICT Ministry had been gradually but informally organised according to IGOs for day-to-day monitoring purposes in view of the fact that the ICT Ministry serves as focal point to specific IGOs addressing telecommunications/ICT and Internet Governance while correspondence from general IGOs with Internet-related matters are first directed to the Foreign Ministry and then filtered to the ICT Ministry.

Delegations to represent Trinidad and Tobago at an Internet Governance meeting or representatives in general, as determined by Cabinet, are selected on a case-by-case basis through prior deliberations led by the Permanent Secretary, consultation with the responsible Minister and then submission and subsequent approval via Cabinet Note. This practice of determining delegations, regardless of the nature or substance of the external policy issue, has been the default position for home-based Foreign Ministry staff and/or any staff from an OGD travelling overseas even if a meeting forms part of an ongoing process, *i.e.* a series of related meetings within the framework of an instrument or report

negotiated at a specific IGO or other convening entity. As a result, while the External Relations Unit is positioned to perform an advisory role, continuity in a policy issue is contingent on the initiative of the travelling official to pursue intra-Ministerial engagement and preparation as regards familiarisation with past travel reports and proposed meeting agenda, and to share the outcomes and implications for the domestic landscape after the event.

Through the dissertation interview Mrs Clarke-Hinds revealed that foreign-based diplomats rely on a disparate system where they are arranged as desk officers for various IGOs to which the mission is accredited and may therefore be obliged to address several policy areas as generalists. As such, consistent with diplomatic practice, foreign-based diplomats attend regular meetings of IGOs to pursue basic foreign policy interests while highly important meetings depend on representation from a home-based high-ranking official or an ambassador plenipotentiary. Mrs Clarke-Hinds further added that because of resource constraints the implications of the said arrangement make it possible that one diplomat may be assigned as many as ten IGOs at relatively important missions (e.g. the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, Geneva), thereby making meaningful coordination with home-based diplomats and staff from OGDs along substantive policy lines highly problematic because of time constraints among many others. Ergo, Trinidad and Tobago is poised to achieve nominal participation in some external discursive spaces owing to practical considerations (i.e. coincidence with Trinidad and Tobago's Geneva-based foreign mission and ITU headquarters) as opposed to strategic ones and substantive policy lines.

The issue of thought leadership for Internet Governance diplomacy is therefore two-fold, where on the one hand there has been a relatively quick succession of transformations at the ICT Ministry that the clear identification of and leadership by Internet Governance champions has become less evident and on the other hand, the Foreign Ministry's comparatively low level of *readiness* has rendered its role less prominent in coordinating and spearheading international Internet-related public policy. However, in light of the uncertainty demonstrated in Trinidad and Tobago's approach to the diplomatic system for Internet Governance, especially as the substance of Internet Governance has been having a huge impact on the form because of the nature of the specialist knowledge involved, the foregoing case highlights that the precocity a domestic adaptation to a network model and its present state of

informality has afforded some dexterity at the time of Internet Governance diplomacy, especially in an attempt to bridge policy silos, even if it may appear to be for nominal participation.

International actors addressing Internet-related public policy

The detail accounts delivered in the previous paragraphs were necessary to situate the general character and starting positions of Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy, especially as it relates to Internet-related public policy. Malcolm (2008, pp. 174-175) elaborates extensively on the effect that Internet Governance dialogue, of which international Internet-related public policy is of central concern, has in creating non-binding *soft law* that is general but requiring direct tailored engagement to accommodate for cultural nuances and allowing the principle of subsidiarity to address difficult areas intentionally omitted from the international regime. This dissertation contends that *smallness* and *institutional readiness* are also significant axes to consider in Internet Governance policy space, for which small states such as Trinidad and Tobago place greater emphasis on multilateralism to achieve foreign policy objectives. Empirical evidence also points to Trinidad and Tobago state actors being more involved in external discursive spaces that lead to anticipated outcomes as opposed to generic information sharing. In Chapter Four, closer attention will be paid to whether multistakeholderism as regards Internet Governance diplomacy contributes to real or perceived vestiges of vulnerability and its overall benefits notwithstanding. In the following paragraphs will put into greater perspective the relationships between Trinidad and Tobago and key organisations that provide spaces to address international Internet-related public policy.

WSIS

Given the nascent stage of Trinidad and Tobago's national ICT agenda during the Geneva Phase of WSIS it could be easily deduced that the country's norm shaping potential would have been restricted at that time as said agenda might have been inadequate to serve a baseline for foreign policy in Internet Governance. Nonetheless a long-standing interest and key feature of Trinidad and Tobago's foreign policy has been to ensure the inclusion of special attention to SIDS given that Trinidad and Tobago, along with its other Caribbean island neighbours, are perpetually at risk to having its development initiatives thwarted faced with, *inter alia*, potential devastation due to an annually

recurrent hurricane season. Articles 16 and 21of the *Geneva Declaration of Principles* and the *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society* respectively are reflective of said interest in this regard (UN, 2003; UN, 2005).

ITU

Trinidad and Tobago has held an enduring relationship with the ITU as the country formally attained membership on 6 March, 1965 – a relatively short time after gaining independence from the United Kingdom. Seen as a key actor to facilitate ICT development especially in view of the WSIS process, Trinidad and Tobago has often participated in ITU meetings, and specifically activities under the Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) (and by extension the WTDC process), to achieve foreign policy objectives in international cooperation and pursuing technical assistance on issues including disaster management and capacity building for effective participation in spaces addressing global ICT policy. Additionally, as a treaty-based organisation the rules and precedents[26] in force at the ITU may appeal to the traditional diplomat and provide some sense of predictability outside of the international politics of the day.

Given the strategic role ITU-Council plays between Plenipotentiary Conferences, Trinidad and Tobago's election to ITU Council at ITU-PP-06 was pursued with a view to having influence on ITU-D activities not only for the benefit of the country but also on behalf of other Caribbean SIDS grouped as CARICOM.

Beyond participating in the external discursive space, in 2008 Trinidad and Tobago directly engaged ITU to secure technical assistance in *niche* areas of ICT development including standards, policies and international best practices (GoRTT, 2008c). Similar calls to ITU from other Caribbean states, in addition to the strategic engagement from ITU in Sub-Sahara Africa and the Pacific Islands, were the lead drivers behind the ITU-EC project titled, "Enhancing Competitiveness in the Caribbean through the Harmonisation of ICT Policies, Legislation and Regulatory Procedures" or **HIPCAR** for short (ITU News, 2011).

ICANN

[26] Reference is made to the Collection of the basic texts of the ITU adopted by the Plenipotentiary Conference (1999). Available at http://www.itu.int/aboutitu/Basic_Text_ITU-e.pdf.

ICANN is largely accepted as a technical body with a dynamic networked governance system that has been atypical to the organisation and composition of IGOs. Malcolm (2008, p. 341) documents some of the earliest considerations for striking a balance in organisational models for Internet Governance, including one of the WGIG's most significant proposals for ICANN's Government Advisory Committee (GAC), which foresaw as a key objective a means of addressing unilateralism from the US Government on the control of infrastructure and critical internet resources. More specifically, the proposal proffered a means to tackling the question of NTIA oversight for the IANA functions in the areas of number resources, domain names and protocol parameters. In general, the GAC provides the most evident diplomatic insertion for state actors within the wider networked governance model although observers such as Mueller (2012) have often called its role and value into question.

Despite this earlier proposition, throughout the investigation period the WGIG options were not given high regard but the role of the GAC still remains at the forefront as it pertains to public policy and the international domain name system (DNS). Trinidad and Tobago's position before the GAC has been enigmatic insofar as there has been a dearth of evidence concerning the linkages among the national ICT agenda, broad foreign policy objectives and the very agenda of the GAC. A baseline for Trinidad and Tobago's interests at the GAC could be deduced from **smarTT**, where adoption of the country's ccTLD, namely ".tt", is anticipated as part of a proposed programme for e-Commerce awareness among SMEs (GoRTT, 2013, p.114). What is more, the results of the dissertation survey reveal a high concurrence on administration of Internet resources, including new gTLDs and sovereignty concerns, as a substantive policy issue to be addressed.

IGF

Resulting from the WGIG's report and itemised as a chief action for the attention of the UN Secretary-General under the *Tunis Agenda*[27], the IGF is probably the most relevant space for discussing nascent or moot international Internet-related public policies outside of the mandates of existing institutions in a multilateral, multistakeholder, democratic and transparent manner (ITU, 2005). That being said, overlaps in the aforementioned mandates do exist. While focused on substantive issues, the IGF has

[27] Articles 72 to 82 of the Tunis Agenda (ITU, 2005) outline the expectations for the IGF and frame the Forum as a decision-shaping complementary space, which is a key observation when juxtaposed to the foregoing paragraphs on Trinidad and Tobago's national ICT agenda, deduced positions for Internet Governance diplomacy and actual performance in both respects thus far.

also served as an innovation in governance in its structure and function, which also attempts to reconcile the disparate cultures and professional dedications found under multistakeholderism. Norm-shaping at best; the IGF does not enjoy a norm-setting function with which Trinidad and Tobago state actors had been more familiar. Albeit the previous statement and cognisant of its utility, Trinidad and Tobago's low participation in the IGF from a strategic standpoint could be attributed to the slow progression of substantive policy issues in the domestic space and the noticeable absence of development solutions – a key focus – when compared to other agenda at IGOs. In terms of practical considerations, it should be noted that the relatively exotic and remote locations[28] of IGF meetings had rendered them less accessible for Trinidad and Tobago state actors because of the challenge of balancing costs with stakes (anticipated outcomes) based on a limited resource pool. Quite unfortunately and not limited to the IGF, state actors had not truly embraced remote participation as a means to conducting Internet Governance diplomacy although a review of practical considerations may again elucidate some of the challenges as they pertain to time differences, access to reliable facilities and the like. Besides, there is a clear advantage to on-site participation when compared to remote participation as regards externalities.

Baseline Trinidad and Tobago interests

Despite the shortfall of clear substantive policy positions at the time of conducting Internet Governance diplomacy one can state that Trinidad and Tobago has often made use of policy spaces convened by IGOs to pursue general foreign policy interests, including, *inter alia*:

- *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* – Given its strategic advantages in terms of resources and low energy costs when compared with other Caribbean SIDS, Trinidad and Tobago has often leveraged meetings to build its brand through public diplomacy and position the country as a Caribbean hub for ICT and broader investments.
- *Capacity-building* – As underscored earlier in the Chapter there are a number of challenges to the development of the domestic Internet agenda, especially in terms of capacity, to formulate Internet-related public policy. As such, recurrent calls for capacity-building are made.

[28] An exception to the statement lies with 2007 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which might have been the most accessible for Trinidad and Tobago state actors from OGDs and foreign-based diplomats.

- *Inclusion* – While most *soft law* in the international policy space is formulated with the question of adaptability in mind, Trinidad and Tobago consistently contributes the perspectives of SIDS to the procedural aspects of governance when pursuing action. Whereas the threat of natural disaster to national development is extremely relevant, this dissertation also contends that there may be further nuances in approaching Internet Governance in terms of *smallness* and *institutional readiness*.

Chapter Four: Opportunities and Threats to Multistakeholderism As Regards Internet Governance Diplomacy

Multilateralism and multistakeholderism: mutually exclusive?

Insanally (2012, p.122) aptly describes Caribbean small states' affinity to multilateralism and the UN system as a means of seeking balance in power due to the inherent vulnerability that could affect them because of size. Trinidad and Tobago's foreign policy statement largely substantiates the previous claim as it is generally focused on developing relations with and actively participating in multilateral arena (MFA, 2010b). This is a noteworthy issue in understanding Trinidad and Tobago's external engagement for national ICT agenda, and could explain the high frequency of the multilateral ITU in the dissertation survey responses relating to actors and main discursive spaces for Internet-related public policy issues. What is more is that one of the ITU's three bureaux is solely dedicated to telecommunications/ICT development. The direct democracy practice of multistakeholderism, however, distorts such comfort and power equation and breeds a heightened level of uncertainty, or at least a perception of the same, as a singular multistakeholder model does not exist, multistakeholder approaches are continuously evolving and the adherence to rules specifically designed for statecraft is not the norm.

Multilateralism affords small states the possibility of employing *group diplomacy* among other techniques where numbers provide strength, security and leverage (Henriksen, 2005). In this vein, many of the shortcomings of individual small states, especially in terms of knowledge and understanding, can be overlooked without losing sight of common foreign policy objectives that many similar states pursue under the rules of an international intergovernmental organisation. An assumption could be made from the outside that a group suing for a common goal draws from a unique

knowledge set or has at least undergone some significant process of *discourse perspectivalism* to arrive to united positions. Such an assumption could be extended for small states' baseline comprehension of the intricacies of issue areas as it might be expected that particular issues that are prominent in one part of the international community have equal or comparable effects in another part of the international community. In multistakeholderism, however, the direct democracy approach removes the *status* element granted to all states and places a premium on the depth of interests on any actor type, making the shortcomings of smaller states, in terms of knowledge and understanding divides, more apparent while their capacity limitations remain unchanged (NIIRC, 2012). This assertion is not intended to celebrate *status* as the prime legitimising factor for decision making or shaping, but demonstrate one of the ways how small states, via group diplomacy approaches, leverage rules to compensate for their individual shortcomings. Furthermore, it could be contended that a second assumption regarding the level of comprehension of international Internet-related public policy among small states is being applied in some multistakeholder fora without regard for the extant faults in such premise to begin with. Multistakeholderism in itself is not fixed as Bertrand de La Chapelle has identified at least four models along a continuum, which speak to distinct rights and expectations (cited in Kleinwächter, 2011, p. 68). Dexterity in such models could therefore be pinned to frequent and consistent participation in a specific process so as to conquer a learning curve, which, unfortunately, has been problematic in Trinidad and Tobago practice.

The affinity to multilateralism, therefore, could be reasoned more as the potential to wield *soft power* within that system while admittedly Kleinwächter (2011, p.68) observes that multistakeholderism, "has resulted in better and more sustainable governance frameworks for critical Internet resources than anything purely intergovernmental cooperation could have produced." There may be no question to the value of multistakeholderism in this regard as NSAs have been the facilitators of substantive policy issues within Internet Governance especially as it pertains to interpretations of the structure, technical workings of networks and developing function-based practices. Multistakeholderism may also provide an ideal avenue for policy entrepreneurship among NSAs. Power is, nonetheless, recalibrated along *interests* and actors with significant economic and financial clout. Similarly, as DeNardis (2014) writes, with greater understanding of the arrangements of technical architecture as arrangements of power coming to the forefront their implications for social order are continuously put

into perspective and sometimes culminate into the more charged debates of global Internet Governance. It may be intuitive to suggest that for Internet Governance diplomats, the stakes are directly correlated to the level of Internet development at home, which implicitly connotes the amount of social and economic interests they represent as well. These nuances regarding multilateralism and multistakeholderism, however, are instructive for understanding actors from small developing states during multistakeholder meetings where statistically participation by these actors is low or, when such is not the case relatively, concentrated on development solutions within Internet Governance dialogue. This position is linked to the lower domestication of the Internet as a CAS within their societies. As such, it could also be deduced that Trinidad and Tobago's absence from some Internet Governance fora goes far beyond a *for-or-against* proposition and is more aligned to some of Kleinwächter's (2011) observations. This claim may also avail itself to the distance between Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy and *Internet realpolitik*, as the country is far removed from real power or niches in the global Internet economy.

All the same, there has been and continues to be a lot of potential from Internet Governance multistakeholderism that affects policy approaches in Trinidad and Tobago. This is particularly useful because of its attendant procedural and compensating value for *readiness* in an increasingly globalised field, although not necessarily accommodating to *smallness*. This potential includes the reinforcement of two particular concepts that will be emphasised below, namely subsidiarity and complementarity.

Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity can be deemed as a practice whereby concerned stakeholders/actors employ the most practical problem-to-solution approach within their immediate locality. Malcolm (2008) notes that the principle is inherent in both the *Geneva Principles* and the *Tunis Agenda*, and is especially applicable for the IGF whenever issues do not fall within the purview of existing institutions. Subsidiarity is also highly relevant where the pursuit of global solutions for specific substantive policy issues is fraught with an overwhelming number of competing cultures and values. In the Trinidad and Tobago context, this concept might therefore be applicable where specificities of an issue are clearly identified at the country level. For example, DeNardis (2014) gives details about the discretionary power information intermediaries have on information flows, which is predicated on their terms of service agreements.

While the intermediaries themselves are responsible for determining the scope of policies to apply to end-users, the very end-users are also susceptible to mobilising themselves as watchdogs over the proper or improper application of said policies. As a juxtaposition, telecommunications law in Trinidad and Tobago speaks to intermediaries for telecommunications services, and therefore interpretation of the same may also extend to information intermediaries if, by all appearances, the Internet is treated as a telecommunications service. As Trinidad and Tobago's Internet-related public policy formulation is a centralised function that has not caught up with the gamut of contemporary issues, Internet Governance diplomats should engage these intermediaries (of which many are transnational). This will allow state actors to better understand their roles and to mitigate against incoherence especially where such roles create a functional governance regime in the absence of statute and *readiness* by state machinery. Trinidad and Tobago communities should equally be encouraged to take an active role as watchdogs.

Complementarity

Complementarity may be considered as the appropriateness of disparate fora to facilitate the momentum of Internet Governance policy along interest lines. *Tunis Agenda* Article 80 (ITU, 2005) outlines the development of national, regional and international multistakeholder processes as a means to ensuring dialogue on Internet at the service of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Further to this hierarchical approach, Trinidad and Tobago state actors may need to better comprehend and reconcile dialogue on selected interests between the discussion fora of the online world and face-to-face meetings.

As a key vehicle for *group diplomacy*, the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) is a *bona fide* organ of CARICOM and acts on its behalf to coordinate regional telecommunications/ICT policy. Since 2005[29] the CTU has been serving as a proxy entity between global Internet Governance dialogue and interests or concerns expressed by Caribbean stakeholders by hosting an annually recurrent Caribbean Internet Governance Forum. The forum also stimulates discussion on an Internet Governance Policy framework intended to serve as a Caribbean point of reference and case for action among Caribbean governments (CTU, 2013). The CTU's work in this respect is however restricted to

[29] Interestingly, the Caribbean IGF predates the global IGF, having held its first Forum from 5 to 6 September, 2005 in Georgetown, Guyana.

the baseline of the disparate levels of ICT development and Internet Governance dialogue across Caribbean countries.

Specifically coping with *smallness,* on the other hand, is a wicked problem put into focus since decolonisation and is often cited within the context of global economic and trade dialogue. *Smallness* seems to be virtually non-existent as a discussion point within Internet Governance save for implicit reference since 2012 within the nascent SIDS roundtables at the IGF (DiploFoundation Blog, 2014).

Development Agenda within Internet Governance

In the *Geneva Principles* and the *Tunis Agenda* there are several references to putting ICTs and the Information Society to the service of national development. While the former instrument primarily highlights the alignment of WSIS to "internationally agreed development goals" (the MDGs), Articles 49, 50 and 65, *inter alia*, of the *Tunis Agenda* further frames aspects of the development paradigm in citing the contrast of digital divide versus digital opportunity, requirements to enhancing international Internet connectivity and inclusion of developing countries in decisions regarding Internet Governance (ITU, 2005). Moreover, the *Tunis Agenda* also refers to the roles of key actors such as governments, IGOs, multilateral funding agencies and the like in elaborating multi-level ICTD strategies, and cites capacity building as a prime activity to be undertaken within the framework of the IGF.

At present, while there is an obvious need to improve the IGF and allow for, *inter alia*, greater inclusion, more enriched dialogue and more concrete outcomes beyond discussion, Kleinwächter (2011) outlines a key limitation to the IGF where the lack of financial contributions save from a few governments demonstrate a disparity between proponents of multistakeholder rhetoric and reality. Therein lies the other side of the *multistakeholder conundrum,* which warrants further innovative action if the intent of multistakeholderism in Internet Governance is to achieve true democratic governance of the Internet.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

The findings in the dissertation have uncovered a number of details concerning Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy, which are fundamental to better understanding the starting points of its actors and a way forward. The findings may be viewed as an amalgamation of similar challenges with which many other countries can identify, and attributes that make Trinidad and Tobago stand apart. Some of these attributes, however, may be more common among neighbouring SIDS in the Caribbean than globally given the shared quantitative and qualitative aspects of SIDS, and similar histories, politics and culture. The points below provide a recap of the findings:

i. **There appears to be no distinction between ICT and Internet-related public policy rhetoric.** Internet-related public policy is not framed as such but is deduced from articulated national ICT agendas and other actions, be they undertaken by state actors or NSAs. Examples of these exceptional actions include national efforts to address cyber security, administration of the *.tt* ccTLD and information rules on personal data developed by ISPs within the *Terms and Conditions* of customers' contracts;

ii. **The technical, policy and political dimensions of Internet Governance may not be fully understood within Trinidad and Tobago.** While respondents to the dissertation survey proffered lists of the primary Internet-related public policy matters, they also generally acknowledged that there was a perception of low understanding of the aforementioned dimensions within Internet Governance. This assertion was further substantiated in Chapter Three where low comprehension of the dimensions could be premised on the complexity of domestic institutions, and the contemporary knowledge paradigm and policy formulation processes Internet Governance diplomats must reconcile. *Smallness* comes into play in terms

of resources and how they are managed. All things considered, Internet Governance may still be a low priority on Government's agenda;

iii. **The relationships among domestic actors are unique.** The communication dichotomy among domestic actors demonstrated the need to bridge silos between the Foreign Ministry and OGDs, of which the ICT Ministry is the prime interlocutor for Internet Governance diplomacy, in addition to the need for enhanced communication between state actors and NSAs. The ICT Ministry, nonetheless, has had consistent practice in using the network model in its work. According to Farrell (2012), a peculiarity occurs in in Trinidad and Tobago along documented instances of development policy, where Government is doubtful of the private sector's abilities (both foreign and domestic) and leans towards localisation and parastatals for sector development. The Internet industry features, nonetheless, a number of transnational NSAs, for which closer relationships between Government and these entities are required. On the other hand, perception-based data collected and analysed by Schwab (2014) have highlighted another piece to the relationship puzzle in that public trust in the political class is low. It is worth noting that results for this indicator have been consistently and notoriously low in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Competitiveness Reports during the investigation period. At the domestic level, this lack of trust may also have a strong effect on bottom-up approaches in Internet Governance;

iv. **Private ordering and policy entrepreneurship may be low at the domestic level, and the latter may be inorganic.** The previous point gave some insight into Trinidad and Tobago dynamics as they pertain to the relationships among actors. An instance of subsidiarity and policy entrepreneurship is manifested in the e-Business Roundtable, although this body may be simply viewed as an institutionalised epistemic community, or rather a group of "knowledgeable persons", with whom Government conducts discourse for the legitimisation of policy. Other groups of knowledgeable persons have existed and continue to do so in the roll-out of the national ICT agenda, and they tend to be *ad hoc*;

v. There are hybrid arrangements for conducting Internet Governance diplomacy. Organisational innovation has occurred with the establishment of the External Relations Unit within the ICT Ministry, yet several aspects of the working relationships between the Foreign

and ICT Ministries are yet to be institutionalised. Coordination still occurs to an informal extent between key officers at both Ministries but it is largely *ad hoc*. Institutional challenges are twofold. The traditional arrangements of work at the Foreign Ministry according to areas, coupled with the significant organisational changes at the ICT Ministry during the investigation period, might explain why pursuit of specific interest areas within Internet Governance is problematic. There are, however, baseline interests that are consistently expressed by Internet Governance diplomats, which are closely linked to the development agenda;

vi. **The impact of Trinidad and Tobago's participation in Internet Governance may be greater on domestic policy form rather than substance.** The previous point alluded to some dexterity at the time of Internet Governance diplomacy in view of institutional challenges. What is more, in terms of the public policy process the ICT Ministry has been increasingly open and possibly influenced by some of the forms of multistakeholderism exercised in Internet Governance. One particular example of this trend has been the two-phased multistakeholder meeting to find consensus on national positions for treaty language in the lead-up to WCIT;

vii. **Trinidad and Tobago should determine some priorities for international Internet-related public policy, through which it could pursue *niche diplomacy*.** The results from the dissertation survey roughly demonstrated that given the perceived impacts of external ICT policy on the domestic agenda, in addition to the perception of Government's low participation in Internet Governance processes, there is a critical need for Trinidad and Tobago to be more active in Internet Governance dialogue. This sentiment may point to the issue of determining priorities, or rather a select number of interests, for which Trinidad and Tobago may be susceptible to conducting *niche diplomacy*;

viii. **Domestic politics and changes in policy direction may have great impacts on Internet Governance diplomacy for small countries such as Trinidad and Tobago.** *Smallness* has been characteristic of the challenges for institutional responses and resource management for Trinidad and Tobago Internet Governance, and has also had an impact on designing and executing diplomatic strategy for Internet Governance; and

ix. **Progress is being made.** Despite the number of real and perceived challenges to Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy, there are also several signs of progress. Actors from Trinidad and Tobago are becoming increasingly visible in global Internet Governance, while informal and *ad hoc* mechanisms on the home front have greatly served diplomatic intention.

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Appendix One: Survey Questions

Dear Colleague,

As a knowledgeable person of Internet Governance (IG) I am seeking your indulgence in completing the survey found below, which broadly addresses representation, policy alignment and relationships as core underpinnings of governance. Your invaluable contribution is essential to provide context for Trinidad and Tobago practices at multiple levels.

The data to be collected from this survey is intended to form part of wider research (including document research and interviews) for a dissertation I will be submitting within the framework of an MA in Contemporary Diplomacy with a specialisation in IG, convened jointly by the DiploFoundation and the University of Malta. For your information, the research is titled, "a small state's engagement in discursive processes for international Internet public policy and implications for its domestic Internet agenda: a case study of Trinidad and Tobago from 2003 to 2013."

The survey should take between 20 to 25 minutes to complete. You are encouraged to read each question carefully and provide a clear and honest response based on your experience, knowledge and/or perception. You are free to use the comment boxes to further express your views on matters related thereto. All responses are strictly confidential and their use will be limited to said research.

Should you have any questions regarding the survey please do not hesitate to contact me at kevonswift@gmail.com or via mobile phone at XXX XXXX.

Thank you tremendously, in advance, for you kind attention and consideration of this matter.

Best regards,

Kevon Swift

[Survey Start]

1. Full Name*Required

2. Occupation*Required

3. Organisation*Required

4. Are the technical dimensions of Internet Governance generally recognised, and understood? Please use the box below for any comments concerning this question. For this survey, the working definition of IG developed through WSIS is applicable and reads as follows, "Internet governance is the development and application by Governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet."

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

5. Are the public policy dimensions of Internet Governance generally recognised, and understood? Please use the box below for any comments concerning this question. While several definitions of "public policy" obtain in various contexts, for the purposes of this survey it can be described as the principled guide to action taken by the administrative executive branches of the state with regard to a class of issues in a manner consistent with law and institutional customs (Wikipedia, no date).

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

6. Are the political dimensions of Internet Governance generally recognised, and understood? Please use the box below for any comments concerning this question

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

7. In your opinion, which are the primary Internet-related public policy matters that are transnational in nature?

8. Which are the main discursive spaces through which Internet-related public policy matters are addressed? For this survey, discursive spaces relate to policy spaces where reasoned dialogue occurs through the interaction of various actors.

9. Who are the key domestic and international actors concerning transnational Internet-related public policy matters?

10. Do you believe there is horizontal alignment between transnational Internet-related public policy matters and Trinidad and Tobago's wider foreign policy?

11. Domestic stakeholders are aware of transnational Internet-related public policy matters

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

12. Government's constructs for the formulation of Internet-related public policy are identifiable and widely known

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

13. Government possesses sufficient capacity to formulate and implement Internet-related public policy

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

14. There are good relations between domestic state and non-state actors

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

15. There is sufficient interaction between state and non-state actors on Internet-related public policy matters

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

16. There are barriers between state and non-state actors, which hinder dialogue on Internet-related public policy matters

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

17. There are clear impacts from external ICT policy dialogue and processes on the development of domestic Internet

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

18. Market conditions determining the provision of Internet access to people and businesses are relatively fair and driven by competition

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

19. The national ICT agenda is or has been reflective of regional and international trends and processes

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

20. Government is or has been systematically represented in Internet Governance processes

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

21. Domestic non-state actors are or have been actively involved in the standards and protocol setting aspects of the Internet

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

22. Domestic non-state actors are or have been systematically represented in wider Internet Governance processes

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

23. Government is obligated to pursue Internet-related public policy matters in external spaces by virtue of its efforts towards bridging the digital divide

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

24. Government is obligated to pursue Internet-related public policy matters in external spaces by virtue of its efforts towards developing the new economy

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

25. Government should play in role in a multistakeholder approach relating to the oversight of decisions regarding the technical administration of the Internet

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

26. Regional dialogue of Internet Governance is or has been highly reflective of international dialogue on the issue

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally Agree

27. Further comments on any of the questions hereinabove

[Survey End]

Appendix Two: Interview Transcript

Interview conducted with Mr John Gillette and Mrs Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds on the subject of participation in discursive spaces for international Internet-related public policy and the domestic ICT/Internet agenda

24 October 2014

Participants:
John Gillette (JG)
Shelley-Ann Clarke-Hinds (SACH)

[START]

John, could you briefly explain your role in the development and implementation of the national ICT agenda for Trinidad and Tobago, in which the issue of international Internet-related public policy would have been included whether implicitly or expressly?

JG: In the early 2000s I supported the team that developed the first National ICT Strategy, ***fastforward***. This included:

- representing Trinidad and Tobago at the UN WSIS process to help develop synergies with ***fastforward*** and the WSIS process;
- assisting the ***fastforward*** team with external stakeholder engagement such as the conclusion of an ICT MOU with Canada and the facilitation of overseas consultants; and
- assisting with exploring synergies between ***fastforward*** and Government's Public Sector Reform Agenda from the perspective of public administration.

From the mid-2000s onwards I supported the national ICT agenda by:

- Conceptualising, developing and initially running Government's External ICT Relations portfolio; and
- providing governance, policy and strategy support to ICT public agencies (line Ministry, National ICT Company Ltd (iGovTT) and Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT).

Shelley, could you provide a similar outline of your role in the national ICT agenda between 2003 and 2013 from the perspective of foreign policy and diplomacy?

SACH: In 2003, as ITU Desk Officer at Trinidad and Tobago's Permanent Mission in Geneva, I served as the point of contact through which the country's input was channelled into the preparatory process for the 2003 Geneva Phase of WSIS. This involved working collaboratively with both headquarters, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry with responsibility for the ICT portfolio, the Ministry of Public Administration and Information at that time. There was also coordination with other Caribbean countries involved in the WSIS process, primarily Barbados and Jamaica. This ensured that the views and concerns of small states, particularly SIDS, were included in the outcome document as the latter is a key component of the country's foreign policy strategy. This coordination of positions was also in keeping with a standing diplomatic practice of Caribbean countries on issues of common interest. The collaborative process outlined previously continued during the 2nd WSIS Phase (Tunisia 2005) which included my participation as Trinidad and Tobago's representative on the Preparatory Committee for WSIS 2005 and in post-WSIS events such as the consultative process to establish the IGF. Upon re-assignment to headquarters in 2007, I was then assigned responsibility for the ITU within the context of the Ministry's Trade Portfolio. This allowed for continued collaboration with JG with respect to foreign policy implications of ***fastforward*** and the emerging public policy issues related to the Internet including Internet Governance.

Two years later, on the grounds of public policy, I assumed duty at the Ministry of Public Administration in the position of Executive Manager, External ICT Relations within the National ICT Centre. The establishment of the position and a supporting unit underscored the growing recognition of ICT as an area of international public policy. With the transfer of the ICT portfolio, to the Ministry of Science and Technology and Tertiary Education and then the Ministry of Science and Technology, the External Relations Unit and positions therein were similarly transferred which allowed for some consistency in the external ICT relations portfolio as demonstrated by participation in WCIT for which positions were developed through a consultative process with stakeholders.

What were the antecedents for establishing an External Relations unit within the ICT Ministry?

JG: The creation of the External Relations unit had been in line with Government's intention to consolidate the fragmented ICT portfolio and it facilitated relationships external to the Ministry at the domestic and international levels. There was a short-lived attempt at MPAI to start a project to "translate" technical telecoms / ICT issues into public policy / international relations (IR) language, which could also be considered one of the starting points for the unit.

Of course, the evolution of international diplomacy was also accounted for in conceptualising the unit, and judging by some of my meeting experiences I saw that we were forging a very useful mechanism. For example, at the time Trinidad and Tobago was actively engaged in the eLAC process, in the early stages, the country reps/focal points for El Salvador, Brazil and Argentina (Olga Cavalli) were all Foreign Ministry. I was MFA and MPA. Everyone else was ICT-type Ministry.

Now, on the domestic front External Relations has been the secretariat to the Ministerial Committee on ICT since 2010 and eBRT since 2012 but I would not necessarily say that there is a clear focus on Internet Governance within these committees. IG may be implied though. This, however, placed External Relations in a key position to support ICT governance vertically, from the technical officers to Ministers, and horizontally, within Government and stakeholders from the sector as with the eBRT.

SACH: Also of note, is that the establishment of the External Relations Unit was in keeping with the creation of similar units in other Government Ministries that focus on international development and engagement in particular areas of interest such as labour and security. This reflected the increasing specialisation required of international diplomacy; and also the inability of MFA to respond appropriately to the changes in the international environment by either establishing specialist units internally or assuming a coordinating role with respect to the units within other Ministries.

What would you say are the main areas of horizontal policy alignment, i.e. public policy with ICT-implications?

SACH: I would say that two principal areas in which horizontal policy alignment is actively pursued is trade and cybersecurity, for which there have been inter-Ministerial committees established by Cabinet given the complexity of the policy issues. For example, with (Ministry of) Trade we are asked to provide input to negotiation positions for telecommunications, e-Commerce and ICT although admittedly, given that these types of trade agreements Trinidad and Tobago engages in are plurilateral and involve CARICOM we ought to identify very clearly our interests in e-Commerce at the national[30] and regional level before entering into agreement. For the most part the policy issues include data protection, electronic transactions, consumer protection, etc.

The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (2001) seeks to address this under its Article 239, which calls for the development of a regional protocol on e-Commerce but to date it would appear that the region has not put this as a high enough priority to act on it as there has been very little development. To be fair, work on e-Commerce appears to compete for limited resources among Caribbean countries, and is deemed less important when looking at the range of vulnerabilities they need to address. That said, e-Commerce, and ICT in general, should not be treated as being mutually exclusive to regional development. Furthermore, while in the last two years there appears to be increasing recognition of the importance of e-Commerce to regional economic growth, the creation of the requisite, harmonised enabling environment has not been addressed meaningfully.

[30] There has been no express identification of a Ministry with responsibility for e-Commerce since the e-Commerce Unit under the Trade Ministry had been transferred to the ICT Ministry (MPAI) in 2004. All the same, discrete activities related to e-Commerce had been identified under ***fastforward***. The issue arises particularly in external discursive spaces and is recognised as cross-cutting between the ICT and Trade Ministries. This work, however, occurs in the preparation for trade negotiations but has not been framed and prioritised by Government in the same way as Cybersecurity, which was delegated to the Ministry of National Security for ultimate responsibility.

In cybersecurity, the Ministry (of Science and Technology) has been recognised as an indispensable organisation in guiding its development although ultimate responsibility for cybersecurity lies with the Ministry of National Security (MNS) as it is viewed as a critical undertaking for the survival of the state. By that I mean, the assignment of cybersecurity to MNS foresees the relevance of the Internet economy to Trinidad and Tobago but for the most part MNS has been more visible for addressing traditional crime. MST's work in cybersecurity had been formalised with the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Cybersecurity in 2010, and remains quite relevant today as MST remains the focal point for international organisations addressing ICT. Depending on the mandate of the (international) organisation, or rather, if its mandate is broader than ICT this role may not be exclusive - ultimately the Foreign ministry has responsibility for the strategic aspects of our relations with international organisations.

In terms of skills, do you believe that the Foreign Ministry is poised to address Internet Governance directly, or at least play a leading role in consolidating national positions for Internet Governance diplomacy?

SACH: In the past, Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) were sent abroad for diplomatic training in countries such as Brazil and Chile but in addition to that most were required to complete foundation training in IR, which was done at the University of the West Indies (UWI). Time off was given to allow unfettered participation and completion of training for a full academic year; while still receiving full salary. Upon completion, duty was resumed within the Ministry (of Foreign Affairs). However, this arrangement no longer obtains.

Interestingly enough, now that UWI has launched a Diplomatic Academy the type of training being offered locally is becoming more comprehensive, but it still may not be sufficient to develop global perspectives and look at contemporary issues such as Internet Governance to better understand the State's interests or stakes in them. MFA still organises work in a traditional manner and I think now things are becoming more difficult because of MFA's slow-adapting culture. FSOs used to come into the MFA from a variety of backgrounds including, history, geography, economics, politics, languages, the sciences, etc. and then be sent to do training in IR and diplomacy. Now, it would appear that there is just a preference for new officers to come in trained in just IR, so the variety of skills and knowledge has become limited at a time when international discourse has becoming increasingly specialised. But at least to top up on some areas, based on the schedules that officers are assigned, online training programmes have become extremely relevant and practical so that they can work and study at the same time. MFA has encouraged officers to follow online courses provided by UNITAR, OAS and DiploFoundation among others. And it may not be a question of developing deep expertise in all areas either but being able to identify and analyse issues as part of foreign policy work while having some in-house expertise on areas of particular national interest.

Could you give a view on the main accomplishments and setbacks of the national ICT agenda to date?

JG: In terms of accomplishments, I can underscore four prominent ones:

- Telecom sector opened to competition - 140% mobile penetration, #1 ranking for mobile network coverage according to the WEF's Networked Readiness Index, lowest mobile tariffs domestic and international) in the Americas Region, etc.
- ***ttconnect,*** developed as an early example of a multi-channel service delivery platform, was an excellent jump-off point for "no-wrong-door" solutions.
- Trinidad and Tobago nationals are heavy adopters of social media.
- Government's deployment of ICT "reasonable" and growing.

As for setbacks, I would probably say that:

- We haven't maintained momentum! No complete e-services; Government's ICT agenda has been essentially at a standstill for some time now.
- ICT governance is still somewhat fragmented. This includes ICT planning and strategy. Agencies appear to be doing their own thing.
- Establishing a Government ICT implementation agency might have been premature for what we were doing and what was required. We weren't ready to take that step.

SACH: I agree with JG re accomplishments and setbacks and would include the following:

- Recognition that ICT play a critical enabling role in sustainable development and can also be a discrete economic sector; thus identified within national development strategies.
- Identification and engagement, though not ideal, of stakeholders in elaborating various iterations of national ICT strategy including ICT policy and legislation – growing adoption of multistakeholder model of engagement.
- Buy-in from stakeholders.

Setbacks include:

- Inability to identify an ICT Champion/Tsar.
- Absence of political will and pursuit of ICT governance.
- Delayed elaboration of policy and legislation.
- Absence of up-to-date statistical information.

From a practical perspective, what are the coordination aspects of External ICT Relations like?

SACH: Based on our established working relationships with staff at MFA we use formal and informal communications to coordinate external ICT relations work. Formal communication would be required when we submit policy inputs, request particular advice, etc., especially as MFA operates in a very formal culture that sometimes relies on paper-based structured communication. Of course, I can call

up any one of my MFA colleagues to get basic information and advice on matters but the expectation quite often is for written communication to be sent, which is important for maintaining trails. Some flexibility on formality may be allowed if something needs to be done in a short time frame. Of course, when required face-to-face meetings with MFA help thrash out major issues such as candidatures for organisations like the ITU, or urgent requests to T&T on an ICT issue. Face-to-face meetings are good for developing context when there are time constraints.

JG: The issue of formal and informal communication with MFA as opposed to a formalised mechanism has also been to ICT's advantage given the number of organisational transformations that have occurred to the ICT Ministry, which imply "business as usual" isn't very smooth for the most part.

As for preparation for external meetings, is there sufficient interaction between MFA and the ICT Ministry?

SACH: There may not be a meeting *per se* when representation is to be undertaken by the ICT ministry but aspects of that representation is what is usually captured in the formal and informal communication aspects. We (MST) keep track through meeting reports but there isn't an instituted requirement for an *ex ante* meeting with MFA and the designated ICT officers. That's where External Relations fills in the gap. A major limitation is time, as MFA often has a huge amount of work and not enough officers. Intuition is used to determine which issues need to be scaled up or not.

How are foreign missions set up? Do they easily avail themselves to policy coordination with home-based staff, and in particular staff from OGDs as a matter of fact?

SACH: The missions operate in a different manner to head office and are even structured differently. Desk officers are assigned international organisations, meaning that they are required to follow the significant processes of the organisations in a general way. The organisations for which the desk officer has responsibility aren't all of the same nature. You may have instances where you may be required to follow trade discussions, telecommunications, environmental, etc. and balance them all, which is often the case at the multilateral missions such as PRUN, Geneva. Mission staff are also required to facilitate home-based staff and high-ranking officials who are coming to their location for a meeting. This departs from the theoretical view that the foreign mission is comprised of clear consular, economic, political sections, etc. I am not saying that the sections do not exist but because mission staff are often few in number you may only be able to address work as a generalist, while specialists would come in from time to time from the relevant Ministry.

Based on that last comment, what is the relationship like between generalists at missions and specialists at other Ministries (OGDs)?

SACH: The relationship is primarily based on the personal relationship between the generalists and specialists with some exception where there is an understanding within the other Ministry of the need for inputs to inform the articulation of positions in international forums. Unfortunately, the siloed approach within the public service also impacts the relationship between the generalists and specialists. Additionally, in some regards, the generalists do not possess the relevant negotiating skills or an understanding of diplomatic processes which sometimes require and refinement of the information which they provide. This can sometimes result in disagreement between the two parties. However, where there is cooperation, as that which existed between the specialists at MPA and the generalists at PRUN, Geneva or between the Ministry of Planning and PRUN, Geneva, there can be a mutually satisfying relationship.

In what ways do you think *smallness* affects Trinidad and Tobago's Internet Governance diplomacy?

JG: The concept of small states within world systems has been getting an increasing amount of attention over the last couple of decades and of course IG as an issue area is now added to the ensemble. Here's a conundrum:

- Large, developed countries may have good systems and capacity, but may therefore not find it easy to be flexible/adaptable in dealing with new emerging issues like IG; and
- SIDS, being much smaller, are also potentially faster and more flexible. In practice, however, they lack capacity, or rather **access** to capacity, and strong governance structures.

This therefore reinforces the argument that SIDS need help in strengthening ICT governance including IG, building capacity, and ensuring access to information, expertise, etc.

SACH: I am of the view that since the concept of SIDS has been recognised within the UN system, it provides small states such as Trinidad and Tobago with a platform from which it can pursue national interests in the international arena while working collaboratively with other SIDS.

On the other hand, there appears to be a view that smallness imparts some protection from the ills faced by larger states as a result of smaller populations, smaller land size etc. Yet, in the area of ICT and IG, it is this absence of economies of scale that has impacted the participation of small states in international IG fora.

Do you believe that a legitimate concern would be the reconciliation of small state diplomacy in the traditional sense with multistakeholder practice as demonstrated for IG issues?

JG: I don't entirely agree with the view that the emergence of a multistakeholder process is replacing the "old ways". Based on my own experience in meetings, which admittedly might be a few years old,

the opposite occurs. There is a genuine multistakehlolder process, but it is still often cosmetic. Even when it isn't cosmetic, the "old ways" still bubble under the surface.

The IG ecosystem is still evolving. One potential outcome is that as international politics take the fore, the "old ways" start to take centre stage again. This is not necessarily my personal conviction but it could happen. The focus on consensus, etc. is often lip-service. For example, the Non-Aligned Movement decisions were based on "consensus" for decades, according to their own rhetoric. The reality was quite different. On a different note, in international relations and in multilateralism particularly, Trinidad and Tobago has successfully branded itself over many years as a neutral country that respects all points of view, takes no sides, but also acts as a voice of reason in a polarised world. In short, we are on good terms with everyone.

SACH: I see the emergence of multistakeholderism as almost a natural evolution of international diplomacy which reflects the increasing participation of non-state actors in the international arena, particularly the growing role of civil society. As such, while this process does place a larger burden, financial and otherwise on small states in adopting the bottom-up approach, it is not, in my view, at variance with the pursuit of their national interest provided that stakeholders have not been co-opted/overly influenced by other interests.

If small states can better coordinate their positions within international ICT fora, then the multistakeholder model could prove to be a beneficial tool since its places emphasis on consensus, which does not mean unanimous agreement. For example, if CARICOM were to replicate its coordination process for international candidatures in the ICT/IG area, given its very limited participation, there could be better articulation of our concerns and interests.

[END]