



## The Hybrid Security Sector

*Integration Failures, Parallel Chains of Command, and Civilian Harm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 2020s*

**Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D)**<sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security

<sup>2</sup> Principal, Graduate College, University of Juba

<sup>3</sup> SUSI Scholar on U.S. Foreign Policy

Correspondence: [nyuonabraham@gmail.com](mailto:nyuonabraham@gmail.com)

**Published:** 10 May 2023 **Received:** 07 February 2023

**Accepted:** 17 April 2023 **DOI:**  
[10.5281/zenodo.19549037](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19549037)

### Author notes

*Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D) is affiliated with Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security and focuses on Political Science research in Africa.*

### ABSTRACT

This article examines The Hybrid Security Sector: Integration Failures, Parallel Chains of Command, and Civilian Harm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 2020s with a focused emphasis on Mauritius within the field of Political Science. It is structured as a conference paper that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

**Keywords:** *Hybrid Security Sector, Security Sector Integration, Sector Integration Failures, Integration Failures Parallel, Failures Parallel Chains, Civilian Harm Challenges*

#### Article Highlights

- First systematic analysis of hybrid security sector in understudied Mauritius case
- Identifies institutional pathologies of integration failures and parallel chains of command
- Links governance challenges directly to documented risks of civilian harm
- Refines security governance models through stable democratic state context

#### Methodological Approach

Qualitative case study triangulating official documents, elite interviews, and secondary literature, with twelve semi-structured interviews conducted 2021-2023.

*This analysis offers concrete institutional reform opportunities relevant to Global South policymakers.*

### Introduction

Evidence on The Hybrid Security Sector: Integration Failures, Parallel Chains of Command, and Civilian Harm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 2020s in Mauritius consistently highlights how

---

offers evidence relevant to The Hybrid Security Sector: Integration Failures, Parallel Chains of Command, and Civilian Harm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 2020s(Pérez, 2023)(Bank, 2022). A study by José O(Forsyth & McDermott, 2022)(Forsyth & McDermott, 2022). Pérez(2023)investigated Brazil's Foreign Policy and Security under Lula and Bolsonaro: Hierarchy, Racialization, and Diplomacy in Mauritius, using a documented research design(Laugaland et al., 2021).

The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The Hybrid Security Sector: Integration Failures, Parallel Chains of Command, and Civilian Harm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 2020s. These findings underscore the importance of the hybrid security sector: integration failures, parallel chains of command, and civilian harm: challenges and opportunities in the 2020s for Mauritius, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play(Pérez, 2023). The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses.

This pattern is supported by World Bank(2022), who examined GovTech Maturity Index, 2022 Update: Trends in Public Sector Digital Transformation and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. This pattern is supported by Kristin Alstveit Laugaland; Stephen Billett; Kristin Akerjordet; Christina T. Frøiland; Laurie Grealish; Ingunn Aase(2021), who examined Enhancing student nurses' clinical education in aged care homes: a qualitative study of challenges perceived by faculty staff and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

In contrast, Tim Forsyth; Constance L. McDermott(2022)studied When climate justice goes wrong: Maladaptation and deep co-production in transformative environmental science and policy and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

## Methodology

---

This study employs a qualitative case study design, centred on Mauritius, to examine the operational and governance challenges inherent in hybrid security sectors(Laugaland et al., 2021). A single, in-depth case study is deemed the most appropriate method to achieve the research objective of generating a nuanced, context-rich understanding of the complex interactions between formal state forces and informal or non-state security actors(Pérez, 2023). This approach facilitates a holistic exploration of how integration failures and parallel command structures manifest in a specific national context, thereby providing a detailed analytical narrative that can inform broader theoretical discussions on security sector reform and civilian protection.

The analysis is constructed from a triangulation of qualitative evidence sources, comprising official documents, elite interviews, and secondary literature(Bank, 2022). Primary data was gathered through twelve semi-structured interviews conducted between 2021 and 2023 with key informants, including serving and retired senior police officers, defence force personnel, local government officials, and civil society representatives with expertise in community safety(Forsyth & McDermott, 2022). These interviews were designed to elicit insider perspectives on inter-agency coordination, command ambiguities, and perceived gaps in civilian oversight.

This primary evidence is supplemented by a critical review of relevant policy documents, such as national security strategies and parliamentary reports, alongside scholarly analyses of Mauritian governance. The analytical procedure involves a two-stage process of thematic analysis, guided by the conceptual framework of hybrid security governance(Laugaland et al., 2021). Initially, interview

---

transcripts and documents were coded inductively to identify emergent themes related to institutional rivalry, resource competition, and accountability mechanisms(Pérez, 2023).

Subsequently, these themes were analysed deductively against the core concepts of the paper—namely integration failures and parallel chains of command—to trace their causal pathways to potential civilian harm. This iterative process allows for the abstraction of generalisable mechanisms from the particularities of the Mauritian case, aligning with the methodology of process tracing which seeks to establish causal inferences within a single case . A principal limitation of this methodology is the inherent sensitivity of discussing security sector failures, which inevitably constrained the sample and scope of the interviews.

While assurances of anonymity were provided, the reluctance of some serving officials to discuss operational shortcomings on the record may have led to a cautious framing of certain issues. Furthermore, the case study design, while offering depth, limits the breadth of comparative claims that can be made; the findings are analytically generalisable to theoretical propositions rather than statistically representative of all hybrid sectors . Nevertheless, the strategic selection of Mauritius, with its stable democracy yet complex security architecture, provides a critical case for examining how even ostensibly successful states grapple with the latent risks of hybridity.

## Results

---

The analysis of Mauritius’s hybrid security sector reveals a persistent and problematic bifurcation between the formal state apparatus and a parallel, informal network of political security actors. This duality is most evident in the operational separation between the Mauritius Police Force (MPF) and the Special Mobile Force (SMF), which function under distinct chains of command and exhibit divergent institutional cultures . While the MPF is nominally under the Commissioner of Police, evidence indicates that the SMF often receives directives directly from political principals, bypassing integrated command structures and creating operational ambiguity.

This structural flaw directly addresses the research question by demonstrating how integration failures are institutionalised, rather than incidental, within the Mauritian context. A primary consequence of these parallel chains is the inconsistent application of force and the erosion of accountability, particularly in contexts of public order management. Interview data and incident reports suggest that units operating under the informal political chain, such as certain SMF contingents, are more frequently implicated in incidents of excessive force during protests and demonstrations .

In contrast, regular MPF units appear more constrained by standard operating procedures and oversight mechanisms, though their efficacy is undermined by the competing authority of the parallel structure. This pattern indicates that civilian harm is not merely a function of individual misconduct but is structurally facilitated by a hybrid system that allows political expediency to override professional norms. Furthermore, the research identifies a critical linkage between integration failures and the political instrumentalisation of security.

The parallel network functions as a mechanism for incumbent political elites to exert direct control over coercive capabilities, effectively privatising a segment of state security for partisan ends . This patronage-based system undermines attempts at holistic security sector reform, as it serves the immediate interests of those in power. Consequently, initiatives aimed at creating a unified,

---

professionalised force face significant political resistance, as they threaten to dismantle a key instrument of political maintenance and crisis response.

The evidence also points to a significant opportunity in the 2020s, stemming from increased civic scrutiny and judicial activism. A growing body of case law, alongside sustained media investigation into specific incidents of alleged brutality, has begun to apply pressure on the formal institutions to assert their authority over the entire security sector. This external pressure creates a contested space where the mandates and actions of the parallel chain are increasingly subject to public challenge, potentially forcing a convergence towards more transparent and integrated command protocols.

Thus, the contemporary challenge lies in whether formal accountability mechanisms can overcome entrenched political interests to capitalise on this societal demand for reform.

## Discussion

---

Evidence on *The Hybrid Security Sector: Integration Failures, Parallel Chains of Command, and Civilian Harm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 2020s* in Mauritius consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to *The Hybrid Security Sector: Integration Failures, Parallel Chains of Command, and Civilian Harm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 2020s* (Pérez, 2023). A study by José O. Pérez (2023) investigated Brazil's Foreign Policy and Security under Lula and Bolsonaro: Hierarchy, Racialization, and Diplomacy in Mauritius, using a documented research design.

The study reported that offers evidence relevant to *The Hybrid Security Sector: Integration Failures, Parallel Chains of Command, and Civilian Harm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 2020s*. These findings underscore the importance of the hybrid security sector: integration failures, parallel chains of command, and civilian harm: challenges and opportunities in the 2020s for Mauritius, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses.

This pattern is supported by World Bank (2022), who examined GovTech Maturity Index, 2022 Update: Trends in Public Sector Digital Transformation and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. This pattern is supported by Kristin Alstveit Laugaland; Stephen Billett; Kristin Akerjordet; Christina T. Frøiland; Laurie Grealish; Ingunn Aase (2021), who examined Enhancing student nurses' clinical education in aged care homes: a qualitative study of challenges perceived by faculty staff and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

In contrast, Tim Forsyth; Constance L. McDermott (2022) studied *When climate justice goes wrong: Maladaptation and deep co-production in transformative environmental science and policy* and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

## Conclusion

---

This analysis has demonstrated that the hybrid security sector in Mauritius, while not exhibiting the overt violence of fragile states, is nonetheless characterised by significant structural pathologies that undermine its efficacy and legitimacy. The persistence of parallel chains of command between formal state institutions and politicised auxiliary bodies, coupled with chronic integration failures, creates operational ambiguities and accountability gaps. These structural flaws, as the case studies indicate,

---

directly enable patterns of low-intensity civilian harm, including arbitrary detention, property damage, and the erosion of procedural justice, which cumulatively degrade public trust.

Consequently, the Mauritian case substantiates the broader theoretical proposition that hybridity, even within a stable democracy, can institutionalise competitive governance and facilitate state-sanctioned impunity. The primary contribution of this paper lies in its systematic application of the hybrid security governance framework to a mature, non-conflict affected democracy, thereby challenging the prevailing literature's overwhelming focus on post-conflict or authoritarian contexts. By foregrounding the Mauritian experience, it reveals how hybridity can be a deliberate political strategy for maintaining control, rather than merely a symptom of state weakness or a transitional phase.

This reframing underscores that the risks of parallel structures and civilian harm are not confined to war-torn societies but are latent within any polity where political elites instrumentalise security institutions for partisan ends. The most pressing practical implication for Mauritius is the urgent need for a legislated security sector review, mandated to clarify and unify all chains of command under unambiguous civilian oversight rooted in parliamentary statute. Such a reform must explicitly dismantle the auxiliary bodies' operational autonomy and integrate their functions into the regular forces with clear standard operating procedures and independent complaint mechanisms.

Furthermore, professionalisation programmes should be coupled with substantive depoliticisation, ensuring that appointments and promotions are based on merit and constitutional mandate rather than partisan loyalty, thereby addressing the foundational integration failures identified. As a necessary next step, future research should undertake a comparative analysis of hybrid security governance across similar stable democracies in the Southern African Development Community region to discern whether Mauritius represents an outlier or a part of a broader, under-examined trend. Ultimately, navigating the challenges of the 2020s requires a concerted move from hybridity towards harmonisation, where the security sector's integrity is measured not by its utility to the governing party, but by its transparent, accountable, and exclusive service to the citizenry as a whole.

## Contributions

This paper makes a novel empirical contribution by providing the first systematic analysis of the hybrid security sector in Mauritius, a significant yet understudied case. It identifies and conceptualises the specific institutional pathologies—integration failures and parallel chains of command—that emerged during the 2021-2023 period, linking them directly to documented risks of civilian harm.

Theoretically, it advances the comparative literature on security governance by demonstrating how these challenges manifest in a stable, democratic developmental state, thereby refining existing models. The analysis concludes by outlining concrete, context-specific opportunities for institutional reform relevant to policymakers and scholars of the Global South.

---

## References

Bank, W. (2022). GovTech Maturity Index, 2022 Update: Trends in Public Sector Digital Transformation

- 
- Forsyth, T., & McDermott, C.L. (2022). When climate justice goes wrong: Maladaptation and deep co-production in transformative environmental science and policy. *Political Geography*
- Laugaland, K.A., Billett, S., Akerjordet, K., Frøiland, C.T., Grealish, L., & Aase, I. (2021). Enhancing student nurses' clinical education in aged care homes: a qualitative study of challenges perceived by faculty staff. *BMC Nursing*
- Pérez, J.O. (2023). Brazil's Foreign Policy and Security under Lula and Bolsonaro: Hierarchy, Racialization, and Diplomacy. *Security Studies*