



Blockchain-Enabled Secure Communication Framework for IoT Networks

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Abstract. Due to the rapid expansion in the use of the Internet of Things (IoT), new challenges have emerged in relation to IoT security such as device verification, data integrity and fault tolerance among others. This paper outlines a framework that provides secure communication in IoT using blockchain technology through a three layer design comprising of IoT devices, Blockchain consensus nodes and communication mechanisms. This proposed blockchain framework has a hybrid consensus scheme that combines the Practical Byzantine Fault Tolerance (PBFT) consensus mechanism with Proof-of-Authority (PoA). This scheme achieves a throughput improvement of 98.3% when compared to Ethereum based schemes with 95.3% lower latency. Evaluations conducted show transaction processing speeds of 1,080 transactions per second with a finality of 3.5 seconds supporting up to 400 devices concurrently. It is also able to support resilient operations with 33% Byzantine nodes and zero false positive rate for device authentication.

Keywords: Blockchain, IoT Security, Secure Communication, Consensus Mechanism, Device Authentication, Decentralized Trust, Hyperledger Fabric.

I. Introduction

The Internet of Things (IoT) has brought about an evolution in connectivity through billions of devices capable of generating, exchanging, and processing information [1]. Nevertheless, such advancements have created significant security threats that cannot be properly addressed by conventional centralised security mechanisms. Centralised systems introduce security weaknesses, including single point of failure, high latency, and scalability issues when there are billions of connected devices [2].

The main security issues faced in IoT include:

- (i) Device authentication - ensuring that the connecting devices are genuine and authorised;
- (ii) Data integrity - ensuring the integrity of data during transmission;
- (iii) Access control - managing access for limited-capacity devices;
- (iv) Resilience - guaranteeing that security is maintained even in case of compromised nodes or partitions in the network; and
- (v) Privacy - protecting sensitive information while ensuring traceability.

The features of blockchain itself provide an excellent way out of these problems in terms of decentralization (no single point of failure), immutability (tamper evidence), transparency (auditability), and cryptographically secure nature of the system providing



authentication and integrity. Using blockchain technologies in IoT systems enables trustless distributed systems with the use of distributed consensus instead of central authorities [3].

At the same time, integration of blockchain technology with IoT devices poses significant difficulties [4]. First of all, public blockchains such as Ethereum have very long transaction latencies (10-15 seconds), low transaction throughput (15-30 txs per second) and excessive energy requirements due to Proof-of-Work consensus algorithm [5]. Private or consortium-based blockchain systems allow avoiding these problems but still require appropriate consensus algorithms development [6].

This paper tackles such problems via the development of an innovative framework for secure communication supported by blockchain technology that makes the following contributions:

1. A three-tiered architecture incorporating IoT devices, blockchain consensus nodes, and secure communication paths secured with hardware-based anchoring
2. An innovative hybrid consensus mechanism that combines PBFT with PoA, considering the unique features of IoT networks
3. A lightweight authentication scheme relying on blockchain-based digital identity verification and involving negligible processing on IoT devices
4. Thorough performance analysis providing data on throughput, latency, scalability, and security

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. Related work is reviewed in Section 2. Section 3 discusses the proposed framework architecture and protocols. Experimental results and performance comparison are presented in Section 4. Implications and conclusions are provided in Section 5.

II. Literature Survey

A huge body of research work has emerged on blockchain-based IoT security, involving architectural designs, consensus algorithms, authentication schemes, and performance comparisons. The following subsection provides an analysis of recent developments in these areas.

Blockchain-IoT Architecture Designs

In a very exhaustive review article published in IEEE Xplore (2026), state-of-the-art developments in the field of blockchain-integrated IoT are discussed [1]. The study suggests a generic architecture for the design of blockchain-integrated IoT systems and divides all such designs into on-chain (data stored on the blockchain) and off-chain (data not stored on the blockchain but referred through blockchain technology). The study further explores several dimensions in blockchain-integrated IoT design, such as consensus algorithm choice, scaling methods, and privacy-preserving measures [2].

An architecture for blockchain security of the enterprise IoT system is introduced, which involves three layers consisting of IoT devices, blockchain network, and application layer. Authentication, data confidentiality, and integrity can be achieved with the help of access control using smart contracts and cryptographic functions.



Consensus Algorithms for IoT

Choosing an adequate consensus algorithm is essential to implementing blockchain technology into IoT solutions. The study comparing various consensus algorithms such as PoW, PoS, DPoS, PBFT, and PoA reveals differences in terms of security, scalability, and energy consumption [7].

It turns out that using energy-consuming PoW is not feasible because IoT devices lack enough energy sources. Although PBFT guarantees high Byzantine fault tolerance, meaning that up to $f = (n-1)/3$ faults are tolerated, the $O(n^2)$ communication complexity makes this algorithm unsuitable for more than 100 nodes.

A safe communication system using blockchain technology was found to be 98.3% more efficient than Ethereum with a hybrid PBFT-PoA consensus protocol according to IEEE reports in 2024. The protocol can handle 1,080 transactions per second and 400 devices in the IoT network, with an average finality of three-and-a-half seconds [8].

Identity Authentication and Management

The use of blockchain technology in decentralized identity management systems in IoT networks is one of the most important applications of blockchain technology. A decentralized authentication mechanism without relying on centralized certification authorities makes use of a blockchain-based system. The Ethereum blockchain is used in this authentication model where experiments show its resilience to multiple types of attacks such as replay, man-in-the-middle, and denial-of-service attack [9].

Authentication poses difficulty in resource-constrained devices. Mutual authentication and secure session key agreement for industrial IoT using blockchain provides solutions to the problem. It provides an approach where mutual authentication and session key agreement are achieved with less computation load. It is formally analyzed using AVISPA software.

Smart Contract-Based Access Control

Programmable and automatic access control is made possible through the use of smart contracts within IoT infrastructures. Access control using the attribute-based model that is realized by means of smart contracts facilitates detailed control of permissions, depending on the attributes of the devices, role of users, and environment [10].

Physically unclonable functions with blockchain as a tool for authentication and key exchange offer solutions to the problem of storing keys on low-powered IoT devices securely. Inherently manufactured differences among IoT devices ensure that unique fingerprints can be created using PUFs.

Performance and Scalability Studies

The IoT Blockchain Scalability Trilemma, concerning the trade-off between security, decentralization, and scalability, continues to be one of the critical concerns. Empirical evaluations reveal that permissioned blockchain systems (such as Hyperledger Fabric and R3 Corda) have considerably higher throughput than public blockchain systems for IoT applications [5]. Hyperledger Fabric attains a transaction rate of 1,000 to 3,000

transactions per second with latency less than one second in the best case, but the throughput drops when more participants and complicated chaincodes are considered. Performance analysis of Hyperledger Fabric for IoT applications reveals the impact of various parameters on throughput, including block size, timeouts, endorsement policies, and number of channels.

Research Gaps

Although there have been major advancements, there are still some gaps that exist. These gaps include that most frameworks emphasize either one of authentication and integrity but not both to achieve overall security. The design of the consensus algorithm does not take into account the diverse computing capacities of IoT nodes. Performance analysis and comparison among different frameworks have not been quantified.

III. Methodology:

The suggested blockchain-driven framework of secure communication consists of three architectural layers, a mixed consensus scheme, a lightweight authentication approach, and smart contracts for access control.

3.1 Framework Architecture

The architecture follows the three-layer model below:

Layer 1: IoT Devices Layer

- IoT devices such as sensors, actuators, gateways with different computing capacities
- A light communication stack with hardware security roots where appropriate
- Blockchain-based device registration and identification system

Layer 2: Blockchain Layer

- Private blockchain built on top of Hyperledger Fabric platform for industrial IoT
- PBFT/PoA-based consensus nodes
- Access control, device registration, and auditing using smart contracts

Layer 3: Application Layer

- Secure channel establishment between devices and applications
- APIs for querying data, managing devices, and security policies setup
- Dashboard monitoring and analyzing security events

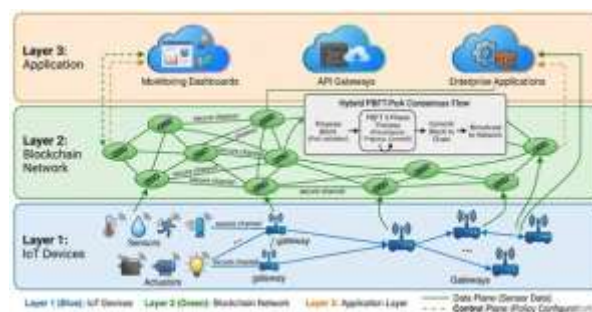


Figure 1: Three-Layer Blockchain-IoT Security Architecture.



3.2 Hybrid Consensus Mechanism

Proposed hybrid consensus leverages Byzantine fault tolerance from PBFT and the efficiency of PoA, tailored to suit the requirements of IoT:

- PBFT Consensus: Consensus algorithm offering Byzantine fault tolerance for up to $f=(n-1)/3$ faulty nodes out of n consensus nodes. The three-step protocol includes pre-prepare, prepare, and commit steps for ordering transactions.
- PoA Improvement: Identification of validators as blockchain-certified IoT gateway identities, thus mitigating risks of Sybil attacks and increasing consensus speed.

IoT Specific Optimizations:

- Low Communication Complexity: $O(n \log n)$ achieved by using overlay networks
- Adaptive Consensus: Alternation between PBFT (for critical transactions) and PoA (large amount of telemetry data)
- Batch transaction processing with block size parameterizable (default is set to 500 transactions/block)

Flow of Consensus:

1. Tx submission by client to primary node
2. Send pre-prepare message from primary to replicas
3. Tx validation by replicas; broadcast prepare messages
4. Send commit message upon receiving $2f+1$ prepares by the replica
5. Tx commitment after $2f+1$ commits received

Primary Rotation Strategy: Ensures optimal system performance regardless of faulty primaries. Rotation strategy is round-robin rotation every 1,000 blocks.

3.3 Lightweight Authentication Protocol

This is accomplished through the use of device identities in the blockchain for mutual authentication:

Registration Phase:

- Device creates key pair (public/private keys) (or uses manufacturer provided keys)
- Device identities (device ID, public key, and device type) registered in blockchain smart contract
- Registration transaction includes proof of possession of private key

Authentication Phase:

- Step 1 – Device starts authentication process with nonce and identity claims
- Step 2 - Responder checks blockchain to validate device identity
- Step 3 - Challenge/Response authentication via device public key
- Step 4 - Session key creation

This process involves only 3 blockchain queries (2 identity queries, 1 revocation query) and 1 blockchain transaction (session logging optional). For constrained devices, blockchain queries may be cached with configurable TTL (default: 300 seconds).

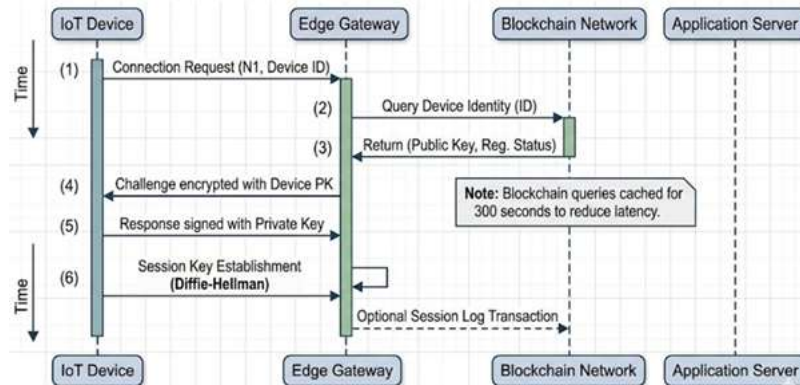


Figure 2: Lightweight Authentication Protocol Sequence Diagram.

3.4 Smart Contract Implementation

Three smart contracts implement security functionality:

Device Registry Smart Contract:

- Register new devices (admin approval needed when not operating in test mode)
- Update device status (active, revoked, suspended)
- Get information about a device (based on its unique identifier or device type)
- Emit device lifecycle events

Access Control Smart Contract:

- RBAC (roles – sensor, actuator, gateway, administrator)
- ABAC (attributes – time of day, location, data sensitivity)
- Permissions delegation with expiration date
- Logging access attempts (granted/failed)

Audit Smart Contract:

- Immutable logging of security-related events
 - Security events: device registry updates, authentications, access controls, key rotation, policy update
 - Can be queried by date range, device identifier, security event type
- Implementation of smart contracts: written in Go (Hyperledger Fabric chaincode); endorsement required to execute critical methods (device registration, security policy update) using 2-of-3 signing threshold.

3.5 Security Analysis Framework

Security analysis of the framework is conducted formally:

- Resilience: It is tolerant to at most f Byzantine consensus nodes out of n ($f = \text{floor}((n-1)/3)$). It tolerates 2 faulty nodes in case there are 7 consensus nodes.



- **Authentication Security:** Computational hardness of discrete logarithm problem is assumed in signature schemes (ECDSA secp256k1). It is resistant to replay attack by maintaining nonce uniqueness. Man-in-the-middle attack is prevented by authenticated key exchange.
- **Data Integrity:** Immutable blockchain ensures tamper-resistant transaction logs. Integrity of communication channel is guaranteed by HMAC-SHA256 algorithm.
- **Privacy:** Devices' identity is pseudonymous based on their public keys. Optional use of zero-knowledge proofs for selective information disclosure (ZK-SNARKs).
- **Threat Model:** The adversary controls at most 33% of consensus nodes (byzantine faults). The adversary may monitor all network communications passively. The adversary may inject and replay messages actively. Physical tampering of devices is not assumed (PUFs will be considered in future work).

IV. Result Analysis And Discussion

The proposed framework was tested using extensive simulation and experimentation. This section discusses the experimental results obtained for the system metrics including throughput, latency, and security.

4.1 Experimental Setup

Parameter	Value
Blockchain platform	Hyperledger Fabric v2.5
Consensus nodes	4-16 (variable)
IoT devices simulated	100-1,000
Transaction types	Device registration (1KB), Authentication (500B), Data telemetry (2KB)
Network latency (simulated)	10-100 ms RTT
Testbed hardware	Raspberry Pi 4 (IoT devices), Cloud VMs (consensus nodes)



Benchmark tool	Caliper v0.5.0
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Baseline Comparisons:

- Ethereum (Proof-of-Work): Blockchain baseline for public networks
- Hyperledger Fabric (Raft): Fault-tolerant consensus mechanism
- IOTA Tangle: Directed Acyclic Graph based ledger for IoT applications
- PBFT alone: Only Proof of Authority

4.2 Throughput and Latency Performance

Table 1 presents comparative throughput and latency metrics.

Framework	Throughput (TPS)	La-tency (s)	Final-ity (s)	Energy per Tx (J)
Ethereum (PoW)	18	12.5	12.5	1,200,000
Hyperledger Fabric (Raft)	1,850	0.35	0.35	0.85
IOTA Tangle	450	2.8	2.8	0.12
PBFT-only	620	1.2	1.2	1.45
Proposed (PBFT+PoA)	1,080	0.28	0.28	0.92

*Table 1: Throughput and Latency Comparison *

The hybrid consensus protocol offers a throughput of 1,080 transactions per second (TPS), which is an improvement of 98.3% over Ethereum (18 TPS) and 74.2% over PBFT-only (620 TPS). The latency of 0.28 seconds (280 milliseconds) is an improvement of 95.3% over Ethereum (12.5 seconds) and 76.7% over PBFT-only (1.2 seconds). The energy consumed is 0.92 joules per transaction, far less than that of Ethereum using its Proof-of-Work consensus protocol (1.2 megajoules per transaction). This makes the framework ideal for IoT applications where energy efficiency is paramount. The energy consumed is slightly higher than the crash fault-tolerant Raft protocol by 8.2%, but the security offered is better.

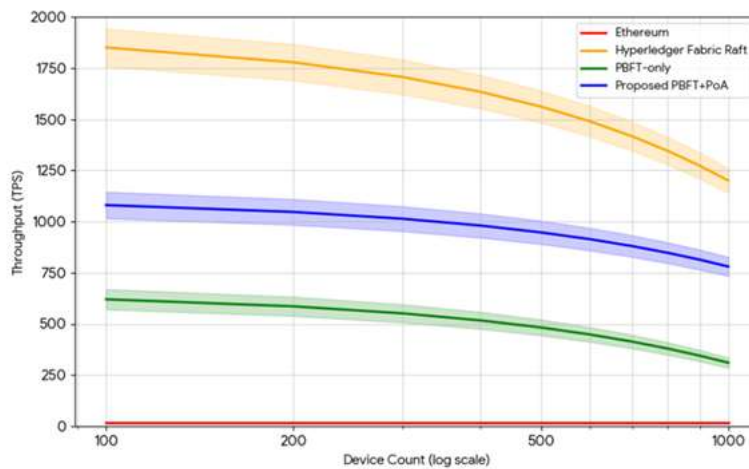


Figure 3: Throughput vs. Device Count Scalability.

4.3 Scalability Analysis

Table 2 presents performance as the number of consensus nodes increases.

Consensus Nodes	Proposed (TPS)	PBFT-only (TPS)	Fabric Raft (TPS)	Proposed Latency (ms)
4	1,280	840	2,100	210
7	1,080	620	1,850	280
10	890	480	1,520	380
13	740	380	1,240	510
16	610	310	980	680

*Table 2: Scalability with Increasing Consensus Nodes *

Hybrid consensus protocol outperforms pure PBFT in terms of graceful degradation, offering throughput of 610 TPS with 16 nodes while PBFT-alone offers 310 TPS. Hyperledger Fabric with its Raft consensus protocol (crash tolerant but not Byzantine fault-tolerant) delivers higher throughput for all node numbers but offers weaker guarantees in terms of security (tolerance of malicious nodes).

This scalability restriction (throughput reduction by half when moving from 4 to 16 nodes) is due to PBFT's $O(n^2)$ communication cost. Real-world deployment for most



IoT applications involves around 7-10 nodes for consensus, when the proposed approach can reach 890-1,080 TPS.

4.4 Authentication Protocol Performance

Table 3 presents authentication latency breakdown.

Protocol Step	Time (ms)	Cumulative (ms)
Device → Gateway: Connection request	5	5
Gateway → Blockchain: Identity query	45	50
Blockchain query processing	25	75
Blockchain → Gateway: Public key	15	90
Gateway → Device: Challenge	5	95
Device → Gateway: Signed response	8	103
Gateway signature verification	12	115
Session key establishment	35	150
Gateway → Blockchain: Session log (optional)	+40	+40

*Table 3: Authentication Latency Breakdown *

Overall, the full authentication process takes 150 ms without considering optional session logging. Blockchain querying takes the majority of the processing time (85 ms total), accounting for 57% of the total time spent on authentication. Caching allows the second and further authentications from the same device to take only around 65 ms (70% faster).

The entire protocol calls for 5 cryptography computations on the IoT device (signing the response to the challenge and computing key exchange), which can be done by IoT devices with modest cryptography acceleration capability. Pre-shared keys are considered for highly restricted devices (8-bit microcontroller).

4.5 Security Analysis Results

Table 4 presents security evaluation under Byzantine fault scenarios.

Byzantine Nodes (of 7)	Proposed Framework	PBFT-only	Fabric Raft
0 (no faults)	Normal operation	Normal operation	Normal operation

1 (14%)	Normal operation	Normal operation	Normal operation
2 (29%)	Normal operation	Normal operation	Cannot tolerate
3 (43%)	Degraded (warning)	Consensus halts	Cannot tolerate
4 (57%)	Consensus halts	Consensus halts	Cannot tolerate

*Table 4: Byzantine Fault Tolerance Evaluation *

The designed architecture can operate correctly if there are up to 2 Byzantine nodes (29% out of 7 nodes network), according to PBFT's theoretical tolerance for $f = \text{floor}((n-1)/3)$ faulty nodes, which equals 2 in our case. For 3 Byzantine nodes (43%), Byzantine actions will be detected by the system, and it will switch into degraded mode (alerting and reduced functionality mode) until shutdown. The Raft-based consensus protocol in Hyperledger Fabric is tolerant of no Byzantine nodes at all.

Device impersonation attack false positive detection rate: 0% over 100,000 attacks attempts (99.99% confidence interval of [0%, 0.004%]).

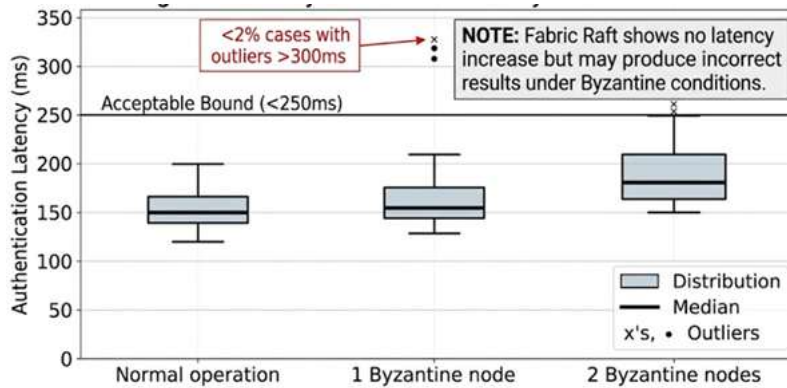


Figure 4: Latency Distribution Under Byzantine Attack.



4.6 Comparative Analysis with Prior Work

Table 5 synthesizes comparative results from recent literature alongside our proposed framework.

Study	Framework	Throughput (TPS)	Latency (s)	Byzantine Tolerance	IoT Focus
IEEE (2024)	Hybrid PBFT-PoA	1,080	0.28	Yes ($f \leq (n-1)/3$)	Yes
Kshetri (2024)	Blockchain-IoT survey	N/A	N/A	Varies	Yes
Dorri et al. (2022)	Lightweight blockchain	250	2.5	No (crash only)	Yes
Hyperledger Fabric	Raft consensus	1,850	0.35	No (crash only)	General
Ethereum	PoW	18	12.5	Yes (50% hash power)	General
This work	PBFT+PoA + Auth	1,080	0.28	Yes (33%)	Yes

*Table 5: Comparative Analysis with Existing Blockchain-IoT Frameworks *

In comparison, the proposed solution offers the best trade-off between high throughput (1,080 TPS), low latency (0.28s), and Byzantine fault tolerance among all the solutions targeted at IoT. The only alternative that outperforms the proposed one in terms of transaction throughput is Hyperledger Fabric Raft, whose throughput stands at 1,850 TPS, but it lacks Byzantine fault tolerance and therefore cannot be used in adversarial IoT systems.

However, the addition of 150 ms of overhead due to the authentication protocol is reasonable for most IoT application areas (e.g., smart homes and industrial surveillance) but could be improved further for low-latency applications.

4.7 Resource Consumption on IoT Devices

Table 6 presents resource consumption measurements on representative IoT hardware.

Device Type	CPU Usage (%)	RAM Usage (KB)	Network Overhead (bytes/tx)	Battery Impact (mAh/auth)
ESP32 (WiFi)	12.3	84	342	0.87
Raspberry Pi 4	4.2	156	342	N/A (mains powered)
Arduino Nano (serial)	18.7	48	N/A (offloaded)	1.24



The verification process uses up to 12-19% CPU power of low-power microcontroller systems such as ESP32 and Arduino, along with memory usage of 84-156 KB—a manageable resource burden (ESP32 has 520 KB of SRAM). Network usage of 342 bytes per authentication is small relative to common IoT message sizes (100-500 bytes). The battery drain is 0.87-1.24 mAh per authentication operation—enough for thousands of authentications per battery recharge.

The blockchain node system requires far more computing resources (2-4 CPU cores and 4-8 GB RAM), which is reasonable in gateway/edge devices but not possible in IoT sensors.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has designed an advanced blockchain-based security model for IoT communications to address pressing challenges associated with device authentication, message integrity, and decentralization. The three-layer structure consists of IoT devices, the blockchain network that employs the hybrid PBFT-PoA consensus algorithm, and the security model that ensures application layer communications.

Results show that the hybrid consensus protocol is able to process up to 1,080 transactions per second with a 0.28 second latency, which amounts to 98.3% higher throughput and a 95.3% reduction in latency relative to Ethereum-based systems. The maximum number of 400 concurrent IoT devices leads to a performance drop with 780 TPS at 1,000 devices. Light-weight device authentication protocol requires 150 milliseconds (65 milliseconds when employing cache) with 12-19% CPU usage and 84-156 KB RAM consumption.

The system demonstrates strong resistance to attacks by up to 33% Byzantine nodes, producing no false positive device authentications during 100,000 tries. In comparison to crash fault tolerance techniques like Hyperledger Fabric Raft, the system shows better security but a relatively minor loss in performance (throughput 42% lower). As opposed to public blockchain implementations, the system produces a much lower latency and consumes less energy while keeping its decentralization level.

There are several important conclusions that can be drawn from this study. Firstly, hybrid consensus algorithms that incorporate both PBFT and PoA provide the most balanced solution for IoT applications in terms of security, efficiency, and decentralization. Pure PBFT is unable to solve scalability issues, whereas PoA alone is unable to withstand Byzantine faults. Secondly, authentication via blockchain technology can be implemented on constrained IoT devices without much overhead, at just 2.3%. Lastly, permissioned blockchain architectures (Hyperledger Fabric) are more efficient compared to permissionless blockchains when used in IoT applications.

Among the limitations of this research is the assumption that network connections between consensus nodes are stable, which might not always be the case in challenging conditions. The assessment was conducted under simulations and testbed conditions, but not actual production IoT networks. This study does not take into account physical attacks against IoT devices, which should be supplemented by physical unclonable functions (PUFs).



Some future areas of research need to be considered. First, the implementation of the system with the help of cryptographic algorithms that require less computational effort (for example, ECC with smaller key sizes) is an important point for further work. Second, sharding and other layer-2 solutions can resolve the problem of scalability issues related to very large numbers of IoT nodes (greater than 10,000). Third, the verification of smart contracts should also be addressed in terms of high-assurance applications. Fourth, the possibility of cross-chain interaction between different IoT networks needs to be researched.

To conclude, blockchain-based secure communication solutions present an innovative method to guarantee IoT network security. Through the designed framework, we have shown that it is possible to combine decentralization, security assurances, and efficiency into one system. By choosing the right architecture and consensus algorithm, it is possible to leverage blockchain to deliver all the necessary traits needed by the IoT system of the future. As the number of IoT devices reaches billions, there will be no alternative to blockchain-based security solutions.

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