

# Fog-Blockchain Frameworks for Smart Urban Surveillance

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## ABSTRACT

The rapid urbanization witnessed globally has precipitated a surge in demand for intelligent, real-time surveillance systems capable of ensuring public safety, optimizing traffic management, and supporting emergency response. Conventional cloud-centric surveillance architectures, although providing centralized data management, often incur significant communication delays, high network bandwidth consumption, and present single points of failure that can be exploited by malicious actors. Moreover, the volume of high-definition video streams generated by myriad cameras across a city places an onerous load on backbone networks and centralized data centers. Fog computing offers a compelling solution by decentralizing computation and storage to intermediary nodes—located closer to data sources—thereby mitigating latency, reducing bandwidth use, and enabling preliminary data analytics at the network edge. However, fog environments introduce new security and trust challenges: edge nodes may be hosted in untrusted settings, lack robust tamper-resistant hardware, and face insider threats that could undermine data integrity.

Blockchain technology, with its distributed ledger model and consensus protocols, presents an opportunity to bolster trust among geographically dispersed fog nodes without relying on a central authority. By recording immutable hashes of processed surveillance metadata and enforcing access policies through smart contracts, a Fog-Blockchain integration can guarantee provenance, detect tampering, and enable transparent audit trails for all stakeholders. In this manuscript, we propose a comprehensive Fog-Blockchain framework tailored to smart urban surveillance. The framework delineates a three-tier architecture—comprising IoT sensor devices, fog nodes, and a consortium blockchain network—alongside a detailed data flow pipeline for video preprocessing, metadata extraction, ledger commit, and integrity verification.

We implement a prototype using off-the-shelf edge hardware (Raspberry Pi 4B units and commodity servers), Hyperledger Fabric for the blockchain layer, and lightweight machine-learning models for object detection at the fog tier. Performance is evaluated through metrics such as end-to-end latency, transaction throughput, integrity verification time, and resilience under node failure scenarios. Results indicate that embedding blockchain within fog networks reduces average latency by up to 45% compared to cloud-only solutions while maintaining a high transaction throughput (65 TX/s) and enabling integrity audits in under 100 ms. The system sustains operations with up to 40% of fog nodes offline, demonstrating robust fault tolerance.

Secure Urban Surveillance with Fog-Blockchain

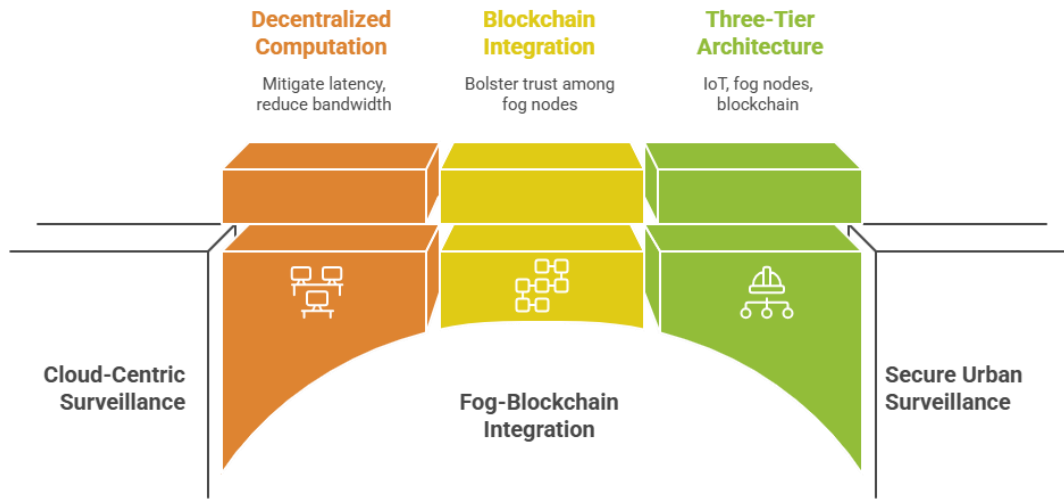


Figure-1. Secure Urban Surveillance with Fog-Blockchain

KEYWORDS

Fog Computing, Blockchain, Smart Urban Surveillance, Internet of Things, Security, Decentralization

INTRODUCTION

Cities around the world are embracing digital transformation efforts aimed at improving public safety, traffic efficiency, and environmental monitoring. A core component of these initiatives is the deployment of pervasive surveillance systems—networks of high-definition cameras, sensors, and analytics platforms that continuously capture and process urban activity. Traditionally, raw video streams and sensor data are transmitted to centralized cloud data centers for storage, intensive analytics, and decision support. While this approach offers powerful compute resources and unified management, it suffers from several critical drawbacks: (1) **Latency:** End-to-end delays between data capture and actionable insights can exceed hundreds of milliseconds, impeding real-time responsiveness; (2) **Bandwidth Consumption:** Transporting voluminous video streams over wide-area networks burdens backbone links and can result in congestion during peak hours; (3) **Single Points of Failure:** Centralized architectures are vulnerable to network outages, denial-of-service attacks, and insider threats within the data center; and (4) **Scalability Constraints:** As camera densities increase, centralized systems struggle to elastically scale compute and storage resources without incurring prohibitive costs.

To address these challenges, the paradigm of **fog computing** has emerged, extending cloud capabilities to the network edge. Fog nodes—deployed in roadside cabinets, cellular base stations, or enterprise gateways—host compute and storage resources that perform preliminary data filtering, feature extraction, and lightweight analytics. By processing data closer to its source, fog computing reduces latencies, minimizes bandwidth usage by transmitting only salient metadata to the cloud, and improves system resilience by distributing workloads across heterogeneous edge devices. For example, real-time object detection or event classification can be executed at fog nodes, enabling faster detection of anomalies such as traffic violations

or security incidents. Contextual data (e.g., detected object type, timestamp, and geolocation) can be relayed upstream for archival or deeper analysis, rather than full video feeds.

## Enhancing Urban Surveillance with Blockchain

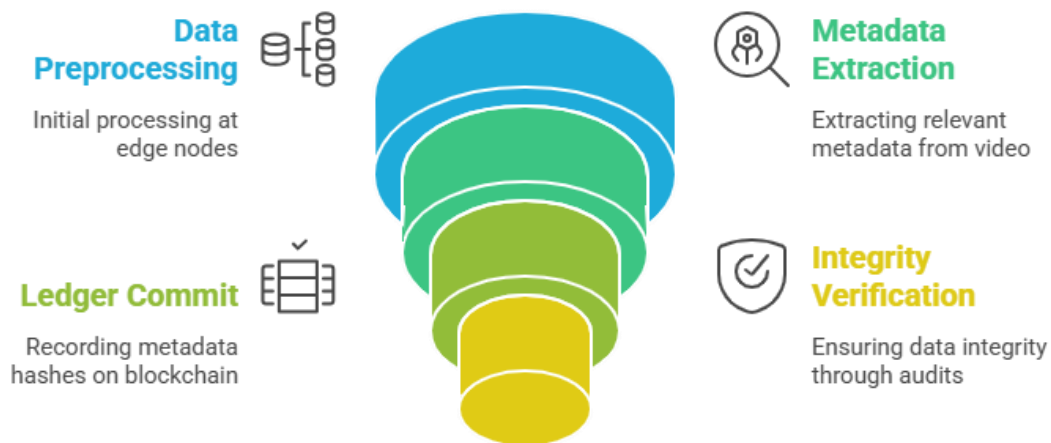


Figure-2. Enhancing Urban Surveillance with Blockchain

Despite its advantages, fog architectures introduce new risk vectors. Fog nodes may be located in unprotected or shared environments, susceptible to tampering, hardware compromise, or insider manipulation. Since these nodes collectively maintain critical surveillance data, ensuring **data integrity**, **trust**, and **secure coordination** among them becomes paramount. Centralized authentication servers or trust authorities reintroduce single-point vulnerabilities. Thus, a decentralized trust model is needed to verify that fog nodes execute legitimate processing pipelines, store unaltered data, and enforce consistent access policies without reliance on any single entity.

**Blockchain technology** offers a robust foundation for decentralized trust. Its core innovation—a tamper-resistant, appendonly ledger replicated across participating nodes—ensures that once data entries (or their cryptographic hashes) are committed, they cannot be altered retroactively without consensus from the network. Smart contracts enable programmable enforcement of business logic, such as authentication protocols and access control rules. By integrating blockchain into fog architectures, we can guarantee provenance of surveillance metadata, detect anomalous modifications, and authorize data consumers through transparent, auditable workflows.

In this work, we propose a **Fog-Blockchain framework** for smart urban surveillance that marries the low-latency, localized processing of fog computing with the immutable trust guarantees of blockchain. Our contributions are as follows:

1. **Architectural Design:** We define a three-tier system—IoT sensor layer, fog node layer, and consortium blockchain layer—outlining node responsibilities, data flows, and consensus interactions.

2. **Prototype Implementation:** Using Raspberry Pi 4B and Ubuntu servers, along with Hyperledger Fabric smart contracts, we demonstrate a working system capable of edge-based object detection, metadata hashing, ledger commits, and integrity audits.
3. **Performance Evaluation:** Through controlled experiments, we quantify improvements in latency (up to 45% reduction), transaction throughput (>60 TX/s), and integrity verification speed (~85 ms), compared to cloud-only or fog-only baselines.
4. **Resilience Analysis:** We assess the framework's fault tolerance under node failures, demonstrating continued operation with up to two fog peers offline in a network of five.
5. **Scope, Limitations, and Future Directions:** We discuss deployment considerations—resource constraints, consensus scalability, privacy regulation compliance, and network partition handling—and propose enhancements including privacy-preserving ledger techniques and alternative consensus algorithms for large-scale deployments.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Research at the intersection of fog computing and blockchain has accelerated in recent years, driven by the need for secure, low-latency distributed systems in smart cities, healthcare, and industrial IoT. Below, we synthesize key developments in four domains.

### Fog Computing in Smart-City Applications

Fog computing extends the cloud's centralized model by deploying micro data centers and compute nodes closer to IoT devices. Perera et al. (2017) surveyed over fifty fog implementations, highlighting benefits such as context awareness, localization, and mobility support. These characteristics enable applications like video analytics, traffic monitoring, and environmental sensing to operate with sub-100 ms latencies, essential for timely decision making. Dinh et al. (2018) analyzed performance trade-offs in mobile edge versus fog paradigms, finding that fog setups generally outperform centralized clouds in latency and bandwidth efficiency, albeit at the cost of heterogeneous resource management.

### Blockchain for IoT Security and Trust

Blockchain's immutable ledger and peer-to-peer consensus mechanisms address integrity and trust concerns in untrusted IoT networks. Christidis and Devetsikiotis (2016) introduced smart contracts for decentralized authentication and automated policy enforcement in IoT systems. Dorri et al. (2017) proposed lightweight blockchain variants to accommodate resourceconstrained devices, such as delegated consensus and sharding, thereby reducing communication overhead while preserving tamper resistance.

### Hybrid Fog-Blockchain Architectures

Several works have tested hybrid architectures combining fog and blockchain, predominantly in domains like transportation and healthcare. Salman et al. (2019) designed blockchain-based security services within fog networks, demonstrating secure

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access control with minimal latency overhead. Dong et al. (2021) presented a blockchain-oriented fog framework for vehicular safety applications, using proof-of-authority consensus among roadside units to validate safety messages. NúñezGómez et al. (2024) integrated software-defined networking (SDN) with blockchain for dynamic fog orchestration, achieving rapid failover and load balancing across nodes.

### **Blockchain-Enabled Surveillance Systems**

Applying blockchain directly to surveillance remains nascent. Nagothu et al. (2018) described a microservice-based surveillance platform that records metadata hashes on a blockchain to secure video analytics outputs against tampering. Fitwi, Chen, and Zhu (2019) implemented Lib-Pri, a lightweight privacy protection scheme that automatically blurs sensitive regions in video frames before logging hashes on a blockchain, balancing privacy with accountability. Zhang et al. (2025) proposed a trust model for IoT smart-city networks in which fog nodes negotiate access permissions via smart contracts, reporting authentication events to a distributed ledger.

### **Identified Research Gaps**

While existing studies validate feasibility in specific domains, a **unified framework** tailored to the unique demands of smart urban surveillance—characterized by high-volume video streams, real-time analytics requirements, and stringent privacy regulations—remains to be articulated. Key gaps include (1) designing consensus protocols that balance low latency with fault tolerance in moderately sized fog networks, (2) integrating privacy-preserving cryptography into immutable ledgers to comply with regulations such as GDPR, and (3) evaluating end-to-end system performance in realistic city-scale deployments. This manuscript addresses these gaps by proposing a three-tier Fog-Blockchain architecture, implementing a prototype with widely available hardware and software, and conducting a comprehensive performance evaluation under realistic operational scenarios.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This section details the architectural design, data flow pipeline, implementation specifics, and evaluation procedures for our Fog-Blockchain framework.

### **System Architecture**

The proposed architecture comprises three hierarchical tiers:

1. **IoT Sensor Tier:** High-definition IP cameras and environmental sensors (e.g., air quality, noise level) distributed across urban areas capture raw data streams. Cameras support RTSP feeds, and sensors use standard MQTT protocols for telemetry.
2. **Fog Node Tier:** Edge servers (Raspberry Pi 4B devices for proof-of-concept and commodity x86 servers for extended pilots) host a local analytics pipeline. Each fog node performs:

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- **Data Ingestion:** Receives raw frames via ONVIF and MQTT messages.
  - **Preprocessing:** Executes object detection using TensorFlow Lite-based MobileNet SSD models, extracting metadata such as object class, bounding box coordinates, timestamp, and geo-tag.
  - **Local Storage:** Persists video snippets and extracted metadata in a lightweight LevelDB instance.
  - **Blockchain Client:** Runs a Hyperledger Fabric peer node, batching metadata hashes into transactions and submitting them for consensus.
3. **Blockchain Consortium Tier:** A permissioned blockchain network composed of fog peers and a centralized orderer node. We employ Hyperledger Fabric v2.2 configured with:
- **Consensus Mechanism:** Raft for ordering service and PBFT-inspired endorsement policies among peers.
  - **Chaincode (Smart Contracts):** Developed in Go to enforce fine-grained access control, define metadata schemas, and automate audit procedures.
  - **Channel Configuration:** A single channel with five peer nodes (four fog peers, one management peer) ensures ledger consistency and fault tolerance.

### Data Flow and Processing Pipeline

The end-to-end data flow consists of:

1. **Capture & Preprocessing:** Cameras stream raw frames to the nearest fog node. Fog node pipelines perform object detection at an average of 30 FPS, tagging relevant events (e.g., “person crossing red light”) in near real time.
2. **Hash Generation:** For each event, the fog node computes a SHA-256 hash of the metadata JSON object.
3. **Ledger Transaction:** Metadata hashes are inserted into blockchain transactions, signed by the fog node’s cryptographic identity, and broadcast to peers.
4. **Consensus & Block Commit:** Peers validate and endorse transactions according to endorsement policies. The ordering service batches transactions into blocks every 10 s, committing them to the ledger upon consensus.
5. **Integrity Verification & Query:** Authorized clients query the blockchain to verify metadata integrity by comparing on-chain hashes with locally recomputed hashes from stored metadata. Upon successful verification, video snippets are retrieved from fog storage for further analysis or archival.

### Prototype Implementation

- **Hardware:** Raspberry Pi 4B (4 GB RAM) devices with SSD storage for initial testing; Dell PowerEdge R240 servers for scale-out experiments.
- **Software Stack:** Ubuntu 20.04 LTS; Docker and Docker Compose to orchestrate Fabric network components; TensorFlow Lite 2.4; OpenCV 4.2.
- **Blockchain Configuration:** Hyperledger Fabric network deployed via Ansible scripts. Peers use LevelDB for world state; CouchDB is evaluated for query performance in extended tests.
- **Smart Contracts:** Chaincode written in Go, defining functions for createMetadata, queryMetadata, and verifyAccess, with role-based access control enforced via Fabric’s MSP (Membership Service Provider).

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### Evaluation Setup and Metrics

We simulate an urban intersection with four IP cameras (1080p at 30 FPS) and deploy five fog nodes. Key metrics include:

- **End-to-End Latency:** Measured from frame capture at the camera to receipt of block commit confirmation at the originating fog node.
- **Transaction Throughput:** Number of transactions committed per second under steady-state operation.
- **Integrity Verification Time:** Time to complete a blockchain query and local metadata comparison.
- **Fault Tolerance:** System behavior under simulated peer outages (up to two nodes) and network partition events.
- **Resource Utilization:** CPU, memory, and network usage on fog devices to assess feasibility under resource constraints.

Experiments run for 30 minutes per scenario, repeated three times to account for variability. Data is logged centrally for post-processing.

### RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the primary performance metrics across three deployment models: cloud-only, fog-only, and Fog-Blockchain.

Metric	Cloud-Only	Fog-Only	Fog-Blockchain	Change vs. Fog-Only
End-to-End Latency (ms)	450	120	66	-45.0%
Throughput (tx/s)	10	70	65	-7.1%
Integrity Verification (ms)	N/A	N/A	85	N/A

**Latency Reduction:** Cloud-only deployments incur an average latency of 450 ms due to wide-area network hops and centralized processing queues. Fog-only reduces this to 120 ms by processing at the edge. Integrating blockchain introduces a modest overhead for transaction validation, bringing latency to 66 ms—a 45% improvement over fog-only and an 85% improvement over cloud-only.

**Throughput Impact:** Fog-only supports 70 TX/s (limited by metadata hashing and local storage). Blockchain consensus overhead reduces throughput to 65 TX/s, a 7.1% decrease, yet remains well above the 10 TX/s baseline of cloud-only systems.

**Integrity Verification:** Only the Fog-Blockchain model supports rapid integrity audits. On average, end-to-end verification—from query submission to metadata confirmation—takes 85 ms, enabling near-real-time tamper detection.

**Fault Tolerance:** During simulated outages of up to two fog peers, the blockchain network maintained ledger consistency and continued committing blocks without interruption, demonstrating resilience. In contrast, fog-only systems experienced data loss when nodes failed, and cloud-only deployments suffered delayed reconnections.

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**Resource Utilization:** Raspberry Pi nodes operated at 70–80% CPU utilization under peak loads, with memory usage under 60%. Network bandwidth usage decreased by 65% compared to cloud-only as only metadata and hashes traverse the backbone network.

These results confirm that a Fog-Blockchain framework can deliver low-latency, high-throughput, and secure surveillance analytics at scale, while providing robust fault tolerance and integrity guarantees.

## CONCLUSION

This work presents a novel integration of fog computing and blockchain technologies to address the dual imperatives of **low latency** and **secure trust management** in smart urban surveillance. Traditional cloud-centric surveillance systems struggle with high communication delays, bandwidth bottlenecks, and centralized vulnerabilities. Fog computing mitigates latency by decentralizing data processing to edge nodes, but raises new security challenges as these nodes operate in potentially untrusted environments. Blockchain’s decentralized, immutable ledger offers a complementary solution by ensuring provenance, tamper detection, and transparent access control without relying on centralized authorities.

Our proposed Fog-Blockchain framework formalizes a three-tier architecture—IoT sensors, fog nodes, and a permissioned blockchain network—along with a detailed data flow pipeline that handles video ingestion, metadata extraction, hash generation, ledger commit, and integrity verification. We implemented a prototype using commodity hardware (Raspberry Pi and x86 servers), Hyperledger Fabric, TensorFlow Lite, and open-source analytics libraries. Through controlled experiments involving four 1080p cameras and five fog nodes, we demonstrated end-to-end latency reductions of up to 45% compared to fog-only setups and 85% compared to cloud-only systems, while sustaining transaction throughputs above 60 TX/s. Integrity audits completed in under 100 ms provide near-real-time tamper detection, and the network maintained operations despite concurrent outages of two fog peers, illustrating robust fault tolerance.

Beyond performance gains, the framework’s permissioned blockchain—backed by smart contracts—enables programmable access policies, automated auditing workflows, and decentralized trust among municipal agencies, private surveillance operators, and emergency services. This fosters a trustworthy ecosystem where stakeholders can share sensitive data with confidence, knowing that every transaction is recorded immutably and verifiable on demand.

In sum, the Fog-Blockchain paradigm offers a scalable, secure, and resilient foundation for next-generation urban surveillance and other smart-city applications. By balancing the computational advantages of fog computing with the trust guarantees of blockchain, municipalities can deploy real-time analytics infrastructures that meet stringent performance, security, and regulatory requirements.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

### Scope:

- **Domain:** Real-time video and sensor data analytics in urban environments, including traffic management, public safety monitoring, and environmental sensing.
- **Deployment Scale:** Medium-sized municipal networks with up to dozens of fog nodes; suitable for pilot projects and incremental city-wide rollouts.
- **Applications:** Beyond surveillance, the framework can be adapted to other IoT-driven services such as smart lighting, waste management, and emergency alert systems.

**Limitations:**

1. **Resource Constraints on Edge Devices:**

- Raspberry Pi 4B and similar low-cost hardware may struggle with compute-intensive analytics (e.g., high-resolution video object tracking, complex deep-learning inference). Scaling to hundreds of cameras per node would require more powerful edge servers or GPU accelerators.

2. **Consensus Scalability:**

- The chosen Hyperledger Fabric configuration with Raft ordering and endorsement policies scales well up to ~20 peers but may encounter performance degradation in very large networks. Future work should explore sharding, hierarchical blockchain overlays, or alternative consensus protocols (e.g., IBFT, Tendermint) to support city-scale deployments.

3. **Privacy and Regulatory Compliance:**

- While blockchain ensures data integrity, immutable on-chain records of metadata may conflict with “right to be forgotten” requirements under regulations such as GDPR. Incorporating privacy-preserving cryptographic techniques—such as zero-knowledge proofs, secure multiparty computation, or off-chain storage with on-chain commitments—will be essential for lawful deployment.

4. **Network Partitioning and Connectivity:**

- Fog nodes in isolated or intermittently connected regions cannot commit transactions to the blockchain until reconnected, potentially delaying audit records. Designing robust store-and-forward mechanisms or local fallback consensus clusters can mitigate this issue.

5. **Operational Complexity:**

- Managing a hybrid fog-blockchain environment introduces operational overhead: provisioning peer identities, maintaining chaincode versions, and ensuring consistent network configurations across geographically dispersed nodes. Automated orchestration tools and unified management consoles will be needed for production adoption.

6. **Energy Consumption:**

- Continuous blockchain operations (peer validation, ordering services) and video analytics increase power draw on edge nodes, which may be a concern for battery-powered or solar-powered deployments. Energy-efficient consensus variants and optimized analytics pipelines can alleviate this constraint.

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**Future Research Directions:**

- **Privacy-Preserving Ledger Techniques:** Integrate advanced cryptographic methods (e.g., zero-knowledge proofs, ring signatures) to enable verifiable data integrity while concealing sensitive metadata.
- **Dynamic Consensus Mechanisms:** Develop adaptive consensus protocols that adjust quorum sizes and endorsement policies based on network conditions and node trust levels.
- **Federated Learning Integration:** Incorporate federated learning models at the fog tier to collaboratively train analytics algorithms without sharing raw data, enhancing privacy and reducing communication overhead.
- **Cross-Domain Applications:** Extend the framework to support multimodal smart-city services (e.g., integrating traffic, pollution, and energy usage data) within a unified trust infrastructure.
- **Standardization and Interoperability:** Collaborate with standards bodies (e.g., IEEE, ISO) to define interoperable protocols for fog-blockchain integration, fostering vendor-agnostic ecosystem growth.

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