

Research Article

Cryptanalysis of a Certificateless Hybrid Signcryption Scheme and a Certificateless Encryption Scheme for Internet of Things

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In wireless and mobile networks with limited storage and computing resources, certificateless cryptography has more advantages because of its low dependence on infrastructure and short security parameters. Recently, Gong et al. and Karati et al., respectively, proposed a new certificateless scheme in the Internet of Things environment, one of which is a certificateless hybrid signcryption scheme, and the other's basis is a certificateless encryption scheme. Gong et al. and Karati et al. gave the formal security proof for their schemes, respectively. In this article, the attack algorithms against these two schemes are presented separately, thus proving that their schemes are insecure and not suitable for the Internet of Things environment.

1. Introduction

The primary problem to be solved in public key cryptography is how to certify the ownership of key pairs. In certificate-based public key infrastructure (PKI), a trusted third party called certificate authority (CA) issues certificates that provide a trusted link between the user's identity and the public key based on digital signature technology. However, certificate management is very complex. Shamir [1] proposed the concept of an identity-based cryptosystem in 1984 to simplify certificate management issues. The main idea is that you can easily export a user's public key from any string that corresponds to the user's identifying information, such as name, phone number, and E-mail address. A private key generator (PKG) calculates the private keys using the master key and securely distributes these private keys to the users participating in the scheme. From an efficiency and convenience standpoint, an identity-based system may be a good alternative to a certificate-based system. But key escrow, which means the user's private key is generated and known by PKG, is an inherent problem resulting in no authenticity and no privacy for the user in an identity-based system.

As a variant of the identity-based cryptosystem, the concept of certificateless was proposed in 2003 to eliminate

these problems simultaneously [2]. Each user in a certificateless scheme independently generates a secret key and gets another partial private key from the key generation center (KGC). Thus, each user's secret consists of two parts, one obtained from a trusted third party (KGC) and one generated by the user himself. Certificateless scheme successfully solves the key escrow problem. In addition, this kind of scheme does not require the trusted third party to authenticate the corresponding public key ownership, which makes public key management very efficient. Because of these advantages, certificateless schemes have attracted wide attention and become one of the hot topics of public key cryptography. In recent years, certificateless signcryption [3, 4], certificateless hybrid signcryption [5, 6], certificateless multireceiver signcryption [7–9], certificateless generalized signcryption [10–14], and certificateless online/offline signcryption [15, 16] have been put forward one after another.

In wireless and mobile networks with limited storage and computing resources, certificateless cryptography has more advantages because of its low dependence on infrastructure and short security parameters. However, while achieving low computational costs, many certificateless schemes proposed in the Internet of things environment [17–23] cannot simultaneously provide provable security. Kumar et al. [17]

claimed that their newly proposed certificateless aggregate signature scheme is secure against both types of attackers. Zhan and Wang [24] proved that an attacker could forge a valid signature and valid aggregate signature. Lin et al. [25] pointed out that the certificateless signcryption (CL-SC) scheme proposed by Rastegari et al. [18] is insecure. Zhan et al. [26] analyzed a pairing-free CLAS scheme proposed in [20] and pointed out that the scheme is insecure. On this basis, to solve the security vulnerability, an improved scheme was proposed at the same time. Khan et al. [21] proposed a certificateless offline/online signature scheme. Unfortunately, their scheme is not secure against adaptive selective message attacks. Hussain et al. [27] proved that an adversary could forge a valid signature on a message by replacing a public key. Kasyoka et al. [28] showed the security vulnerabilities of Wei and Ma's [19] signcryption scheme and proposed corresponding modifications to show how their scheme could be made more secure. Xu and Zeng [29] pointed out that the certificateless aggregate arbitrated signature scheme proposed by Lee et al. [22] is not secure for type-1 attackers that can replace user public keys. They also showed that Addobe et al.'s [23] offline-online certificateless signature scheme cannot achieve correctness. Therefore, the certificateless solution described above cannot be deployed in real Internet of things environment and mobile applications. Most of the schemes fail because the definition of the security model is not complete, and in the proving process, the adversary capability is not successfully reduced to solve difficult problems. There has been an ongoing effort in the Internet of things to make greater advances in security and performance.

1.1. Our Contributions. Recently, Gong et al. [30] and Karati et al. [31], respectively, proposed a new certificateless scheme in the Internet of things environment, one of which is a certificateless hybrid signcryption scheme, and the other's basis is a certificateless encryption scheme. Their schemes were claimed to be secure, and the formal security was presented which reducing adversary capabilities in solving difficult problems. It is a pity that Gong et al.'s scheme and Karati et al.'s scheme are not secure in the case of internal attacks as shown in this paper. The attack algorithms against these two schemes are presented separately, thus proving that their schemes are insecure and not suitable for the Internet of things environment.

1.2. Paper Organization. In Section 2, we give the cryptanalysis of Gong et al.'s scheme, and we give the cryptanalysis of Karati et al.'s certificateless encryption scheme for the industrial Internet of things in Section 3. Section 4 provides a conclusion.

2. Cryptanalysis of Gong et al.'s Certificateless Hybrid Signcryption Scheme

Because of the limitation of symmetric cryptography, public key-based authentication technology has attracted extensive attention. It provides secure communication and accesses

mechanism for various applications. Compared with single-factor or two-factor protocols, multifactor schemes have been proven to achieve higher security levels. Wang et al. [32–34] have made a series of representative achievements in multifactor authentication. However, in some applications, people have to strike a balance between availability and security and adopt single-factor technology to achieve authentication, such as digital signature and digital signcryption. Signcryption can provide confidentiality and authentication at the same time and is widely used in many applications where multiple security features are required. Gong et al.'s scheme is a concrete certificateless hybrid signcryption scheme.

2.1. Gong et al.'s Scheme. As shown below, their scheme includes five algorithms altogether: Setup, Extract-Partial-Private-Key, Generate-User-Keys, Signcrypt, and Unsigncrypt.

2.1.1. Setup. KGC runs the following algorithms:

- (i) Generate two distinct cyclic groups G_1 (an additive cyclic group with a generator P) and G_2 (a multiplicative cyclic group) of prime order q ($q \geq 2^\gamma$). e is a bilinear map.
- (ii) Chooses $x \in_R Z_q^*$, computes $P_{\text{pub}} = e(P, P)^x$.
- (iii) Chooses one-way hash functions as $h_1: \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow Z_q^*$, $h_2: \{0, 1\}^{*2} \times G_1 \times G_2^2 \rightarrow Z_q^*$, $h_3: Z_q^* \rightarrow Z_q^*$, $h_4: G_2 \times Z_q^* \times G_1 \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^n$, $h_5: G_1 \rightarrow Z_q^*$.
- (iv) Finally, keeps x safely and outputs $\text{params} = \{P, P_{\text{pub}}, G_1, G_2, q, e, n, h_i, E, D\}$ as the system parameter.

2.1.2. Extract-Partial-Private-Key. Given the identity information u_i , to generate the corresponding partial private key d_i , KGC runs the following algorithms:

- (i) Computes $Q_i = h_1(u_i)$
- (ii) Sets the partial private key $d_i \leftarrow xh_1(u_i)$

2.1.3. Generate-User-Keys. The user chooses $x_i \in_R Z_q^*$ and computes $P_i = e(P, P)^{x_i}$ which is the public key and sets the full private key $s_i = (x_i, d_i)$.

2.1.4. Signcrypt. A sender u_A runs the following algorithms to generate the ciphertext.

- (i) Chooses $r \in_R Z_q^*$
- (ii) Computes $R = rP$, $y = P_B^{x_A h_5(R)}$ and $z = h_3(Q_B \cdot d_A)$, where $Q_B = h_1(u_B)$
- (iii) Computes $K = h_4(y, z, R)$ and $c = \text{Enc}_K(m)$
- (iv) Computes $f = h_2(u_A, u_B, R, P_A, P_B)$ and $s = r \cdot z/x_A \cdot f$
- (v) Outputs $\sigma = (c, R, s)$ as the ciphertext

2.1.5. *Unsigncrypt*. A receiver u_B runs the following algorithms for unsignryption.

- (i) Computes $y = P_A^{x_B h_5(R)}$, $z = h_3(Q_A \cdot d_B)$, $Q_A = h_1(u_A)$ and $K = h_4(y, z, R)$.
- (ii) Computes message $m/\perp \leftarrow Dec_K(c)$. If output \perp , u_B refuses the message.
- (iii) Computes $f = h_2(u_A, u_B, R, P_A, P_B)$.
- (iv) Checks $P_A^{s \cdot f} = e(zP, R)$ holds or not. If it holds, u_B get m , else u_B refuses the message.

2.2. Cryptanalysis of Gong et al.'s Scheme

2.2.1. *Attack Algorithm 1 (Internal Attacks to the Unforgeability)*. Once receives a valid signcryption text $\sigma = (c, R, s)$, the receiver can impersonate the sender to generate signcryption text for any message m' sent to him. The attack algorithm is described as follows:

- (i) Chooses $r' \in_R Z_q^*$
- (ii) Computes $R' = r'R$, $z = h_3(Q_A \cdot d_B)$, and $f = h_2(u_A, u_B, R, P_A, P_B)$
- (iii) Computes $y' = P_A^{x_B h_5(R')}$, $z' = h_3(Q_A \cdot d_B)$, where $Q_A = h_1(u_A)$
- (iv) Computes $K' = h_4(y', z', R')$
- (v) Computes $c' = Enc_{K'}(m')$
- (vi) Computes $f' = h_2(u_A, u_B, R', P_A, P_B)$ and $s' = s \cdot f/z \cdot r' \cdot z'/f'$
- (vii) Send the ciphertext $\sigma' = (c', R', s')$ of message m'

2.2.2. *Correctness*. The signcryption ciphertext $\sigma' = (c', R', s')$ is validly related with m' as shown in the following.

Since $R' = r'R = r' \cdot r \cdot P$, $y' = P_A^{x_B h_5(R')} = P_A^{x_B h_5(R)}$, $z' = h_3(Q_A \cdot d_B) = h_3(Q_B \cdot d_A)$, the receiver can compute $m' = Dec_{K'}(c')$ where $K' = h_4(y', z', R')$.

The equation $P_A^{s' \cdot f'} = e(z'P, R')$ always holds since

$$\begin{aligned} s' &= s \cdot \frac{f}{z} \cdot r' \cdot \frac{z'}{f'} \\ &= \frac{r \cdot z}{x_A \cdot f} \cdot \frac{f}{z} \cdot r' \cdot \frac{z'}{f'} \\ &= \frac{r \cdot r' \cdot z'}{x_A \cdot f'} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

$$\begin{aligned} P_A^{s' \cdot f'} &= e(P, P)^{\frac{r \cdot r' \cdot z'}{x_A \cdot f'} \cdot f'} \\ &= e(P, P)^{r \cdot r' \cdot z'} \\ &= e(z'P, r \cdot r' \cdot P) \\ &= e(z'P, R'). \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Thus, $\sigma' = (c', R', s')$ is a valid signcryption ciphertext.

Any user can launch the attack after receiving a valid signcryption ciphertext sent to him, so the nonrepudiation and source authentication that should be satisfied by the digital signcryption scheme cannot be realized.

2.2.3. *Attack Algorithm 2 (Internal Attacks to the Master Secret Key)*. As shown in the Extract-Partial-Private-Key algorithm, KGC generates d_i by computing $Q_i = h_1(u_i)$ and $d_i \leftarrow x h_1(u_i)$.

Since x is a random element in Z_q^* and h_1 is a hash function that maps strings to distinct elements in Z_q^* , any partial private key holder can compute the master secret key x by $x = d_i \cdot h_1^{-1}(u_i) \in Z_q^*$ directly. Any security of the whole system cannot be realized when the master secret key is leaked. Any user that receives a valid partial private key can launch the attack.

3. Cryptanalysis of Karati et al.'s Certificateless Encryption Scheme

In order to achieve more complex security goals, people often adopt the method of extending features on the basis of the general scheme. Karati et al.'s reliable data sharing protocol is based on a certificateless encryption scheme.

3.1. *Karati et al.'s Scheme*. As shown below, their scheme includes ten algorithms: Setup, Set-Secret-Value, Set-Public-Value, Set-Partial-Private-Key, Set-Full-Public-Key, Set-Full-Private-Key, Encrypt, Gen-TrapdoorTest-Trapdoor, and Decrypt.

3.1.1. *Setup*. KGC runs the following algorithms.

- (i) Generates three distinct cyclic groups G_1, G_2 , and G_3 , and $e: G_1 \times G_2 \rightarrow G_3$ is a bilinear map
- (ii) Chooses generator $g \in G_1, h \in G_2$
- (iii) Chooses $H_1: \{0, 1\}^* \times G_1 \times G_2 \times G_3 \rightarrow Z_p^*$, $H_2: \{0, 1\}^* \rightarrow Z_p^*$, and $H_3: G_3 \rightarrow \{0, 1\}^{n_1+n_2}$ for some n_1 and n_2 , which are one-way hash functions
- (iv) Computes $g_1 = g^{x_{KGC}}$ for $x_{KGC} \in_R Z_p^*$
- (v) Keeps $MSK = (x_{KGC})$ safely and publishes $params = \{p, g, g_1, h, H_i\}$

3.1.2. *Set-Secret-Value and Set-Public-Value*

- (i) Chooses $y_i \in_R Z_p^*$ and sets secret-value $SS_i = (y_i)$
- (ii) Generates public value $PV_i = (P_{i1} = h^{y_i}, P_{i2} = e(g, h)^{1/y_i})$

3.1.3. *Set-Partial-Private-Key*. KGC runs the following algorithms to generate the partial private key of device i :

- (i) Chooses $\beta_i \in_R Z_p^*$ and $d_i \in_R Z_p^*$
- (ii) Computes $P_{i3} = g^{\beta_i}$ and $\alpha_i = H_1(ID_i, P_{i3}, P_{i1}, P_{i2})$
- (iii) Computes $x_i = 1/(\alpha_i \beta_i + d_i x_{KGC})$ and $D_i' = h^{x_i}$

(iv) Outputs $PP_i = (d_i, P_{i3}, D'_i)$

On receiving PP_i securely, device i may check it by the equation $e(P_{i3}^{\alpha_i} \cdot g_1^{d_i}, D'_i) = e(g, h)$.

3.1.4. Set-Full-Public-Key and Set-Full-Private-Key. The full public key of Device i can be expressed as $PK_i = (P_{i1}, P_{i2}, P_{i3})$, and the full private key can be expressed as $SK_i = (y_i, d_i, D_i = D_i^{1/y_i})$.

3.1.5. Encrypt. Given the message m_i and keyword $w_{ij} \in \{0, 1\}^{n_3}$, a sender, whose private key is SK_s , runs the following algorithms to generate a ciphertext sending to receiver R with public key PK_r .

- (i) Chooses $u \in_R \mathbb{Z}_p^*$ and $\sigma \in_R \{0, 1\}^{n_2}$
- (ii) Sets $C_i = (c_{i1} = P_{r3}^{u\alpha_r}, c_{i2} = g_1^u, c_{i3} = (m_i \parallel \sigma) \oplus H_3(P_{r2}^u))$
- (iii) Computes $v = H_1((\sigma \parallel w_{ij} \parallel y_s), g, h, P_{s2}), \Phi_{ij} = (\phi_{ij1}, \phi_{ij2})$, where $\phi_{ij1} = [g_1 \cdot g^{H_2(w_{ij} \parallel \alpha_s \parallel \alpha_r)}]^{y_s}$ and $\phi_{ij2} = P_{r1}^{v y_s}$
- (iv) Outputs $(C_i, \Phi_{ij}, \theta_{ij})$ for $\theta_{ij} = H_2(m_i \parallel \sigma \parallel w_{ij})$

3.1.6. Gen-Trapdoor. Given a tester's private-public key pair $(t \in_R \mathbb{Z}_p^*, \langle P_{t1} = h', P_{t2} = e(g, h)^{1/t} \rangle)$, receiver R runs the following algorithms to generate a trapdoor $\Gamma_{ik} = (\tau_{ik1}, \tau_{ik2})$.

- (i) Computes $v' = H_1((\sigma' \parallel w_{ik} \parallel y_r), g, h, P_{r2})$
- (ii) Computes $\tau_{ik1} = [g_1 \cdot g^{H_2(w_{ik} \parallel \alpha_s \parallel \alpha_r)}]^{v'}$ and $\tau_{ik2} = P_{s1}^{v' y_r / H_1(\alpha_r, g, P_{r1}^{v'}, P_{r2})}$ for $\sigma' \in \{0, 1\}^{n_1}$

3.1.7. Test-Trapdoor. The tester computes $v'' = H_1(\alpha_r, g, P_{r1}^t, P_{r2})$ and retrieves C_i if the condition $e(\phi_{ij1}, \tau_{ik2})^{v''} = e(\tau_{ik1}, \phi_{ij2})$ holds.

3.1.8. Decrypt. Given a keyword w_{ik} , $SK_r = (y_r, d_r, D_r)$, C_i , the receiver computes $\delta_2 = e(c_{i1} c_{i2}^d, D_r)$ and $\delta_1 = (m_i \parallel \sigma) = c_{i3} \oplus H_3(\delta_2)$. The first n_1 bit of δ_1 is returned as m'_i if $\theta_{ij} = H_2(\delta_1 \parallel w_{ik})$.

3.2. Cryptanalysis of Karati et al.'s Scheme. To show the usability, Karati et al. defined their scheme as (M, C, W, Γ) -KDCLEKS. We noticed that if the sender sends a message directly without any keyword, (M, C, \perp, \perp) -KDCLEKS is a common certificateless encryption scheme, which can be marked as (M, C) -KDCLEKS.

In this section, it will be shown that the encryption algorithm (M, C) -KDCLEKS is not secure under public-key replacement attacks launched by an adversary \mathbb{A}_T .

3.2.1. Attack Algorithm 1 (Internal Attacks to the Partial Private Key). Assume the following conditions a user declares his public value as $PV_j = (P_{j1} = h^{y_j}, P_{j2} = e(g, h)^{1/y_j})$. Once \mathbb{A}_T receives a valid partial private key

$PP_i = (d_i, P_{i3}, D'_i)$, it can calculate and generate a partial private key for this user as follows:

- (1) Compute $P_{j3} = P_{i3}^{\alpha_i}$ and $\alpha_j = H_1(ID_j, P_{j3}, P_{j1}, P_{j2})$
- (2) Compute $d_j = \alpha_j \cdot d_i$
- (3) Compute $D'_j = D_i^{1/\alpha_j}$

3.2.2. Correctness. $PP_j = (d_j, P_{j3}, D'_j)$ is a valid partial private key related to public value PV_j as shown in the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} & e\left(P_{j3}^{\alpha_j} \cdot g_1^{d_j}, D'_j\right) \\ &= e\left(P_{i3}^{\alpha_i \alpha_j} \cdot g_1^{\alpha_j d_i}, D_i^{1/\alpha_j}\right) \\ &= e\left(g^{h^{\alpha_i \alpha_j}} \cdot g_1^{d_i}, h^{x_i}\right) \\ &= e\left(g^{\alpha_i \beta_i} \cdot g^{d_i x_{KCC}}, h^{1/(\alpha_i \beta_i + d_i x_{KCC})}\right) \\ &= e(g, h). \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Thus, $PP_j = (d_j, P_{j3}, D'_j)$ can always be accepted as a valid partial private key related to public value PV_j . Any user that receives a valid partial private key can launch the attack. This means that the user's partial private key can be forged, leading to the lack of availability.

3.2.3. Attack Algorithm 2 (Internal Attacks to the Confidentiality). Once \mathbb{A}_T receives a valid Full-Public-Key $PK_i = (P_{i1}, P_{i2}, P_{i3})$ and corresponding Full-Private-Key $SK_i = (y_i, d_i, D_i)$, he can decrypt the ciphertext of any user J with ID_j through public key replacement attacks. The attack algorithm is described as follows:

- (1) Select random parameter $y' \in_R \mathbb{Z}_p^*$, and compute $P_{j1} = P_{i1}^{y'} = h^{y_i y'}$, $P_{j2} = P_{i2}^{1/y'} = e(g, h)^{1/(y_i y')}$ and $P_{j3} = P_{i3}^{\alpha_i}$ where $\alpha_i = H_1(ID_j, P_{i3}, P_{i1}, P_{i2})$
- (2) Replace the public key of user J with the value $PK_j = (P_{j1}, P_{j2}, P_{j3})$

On inputs $params$ and receiver J' 's public key PK_J with message $m_j \in \{0, 1\}^{n_1}$, the sender selects $\sigma \in_R \{0, 1\}^{n_2}$, $u \in_R \mathbb{Z}_p^*$ and sets $C_j = (c_{j1}, c_{j2}, c_{j3})$, where $c_{j1} = P_{j3}^{u \alpha_j}$, $c_{j2} = g_1^u$, $c_{j3} = (m_j \parallel \sigma) \oplus H_3(P_{j2}^u)$ where $\alpha_j = H_1(ID_j, P_{j3}, P_{j1}, P_{j2})$. Finally, the sender outputs C_j as the ciphertext.

Given the ciphertext C_j , \mathbb{A}_T can successfully decrypt it using the following algorithm:

- (1) Compute $\alpha_j = H_1(ID_j, P_{j3}, P_{j1}, P_{j2})$
- (2) Compute $y_j = y_i \cdot y'$, $d_j = \alpha_j \cdot d_i$, $D_j = D_i^{1/(\alpha_j y_i y')}$
- (3) Compute $\delta_1 = (m_j \parallel \sigma) = c_{j3} \oplus H_3(\delta_2)$, where $\delta_2 = e(c_{j1} c_{j2}^d, D_j)$

3.2.4. Correctness. The decryption process is always successful as shown in the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned}
\delta_2 &= e\left(c_{j1}c_{j2}^{d_j}, D_j\right) \\
&= e\left(P_{i3}^{u\alpha_j} \cdot g_1^{u d_j}, D_i^{1/(\alpha_j y_i y')}\right) \\
&= e\left(g^{u(\beta_i \alpha_j \alpha_j + x_{KGC} d_j)}, h^{x_{i1}(\alpha_j y_i y')}\right) \\
&= e\left(g^{u(\beta_i \alpha_j \alpha_j + x_{KGC} \alpha_j d_i)}, h^{1/((\beta_i \alpha_j \alpha_j + x_{KGC} \alpha_j d_i) y_i y')}\right) \\
&= e(g, h)^{u l(y_i y')} = P_{j2}^u.
\end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

Thus, \mathbb{A}_I reveals $m_j \parallel \sigma = c_{j3} \oplus H_3(\delta_2)$ with probability 1. This attack can be launched by a user who receives any legal partial private key sent to him, and he can decrypt the ciphertext of any user through public key replacement attacks without knowing the master secret MSK . This means that any user's public key can be replaced, and the message can be revealed by the attacker, leading to the lack of confidentiality.

4. Conclusion

Gong et al. gave a formal security proof in the random oracle model, and Karati et al. proved their scheme is secure against adversaries. Unfortunately, we noticed that in Gong et al.'s scheme, internal users can forge the signcryption ciphertext sent to them, the nonrepudiation and source authentication that should be satisfied by the digital signcryption scheme cannot be realized. The more serious is that any partial private key holder can directly calculate the master secret key, which leads to the failure to implement security features. Any user who obtains a partial private key in Karati et al.'s basic certificateless encryption scheme can either forge the partial private key of another user or replace the public key of another user to decrypt the ciphertext. Therefore, their solutions are insecure and not suitable for the Internet of things environment.

Data Availability

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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