Winter 1-31-2025

Navigating the Future Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance

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Robotics, Control and Smart Systems (RCSS)

Navigating the Future
Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance

By

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my advisor and mentor, Prof. Dr. Maki K. Habib, for his unwavering guidance and support throughout the course of my thesis journey. As the founder of the Robotics, Control, and Smart Systems (RCSS) program at the American University in Cairo, Prof. Habib has not only cultivated a rigorous academic environment but has also provided me with an opportunity to pursue my passions in a nurturing and challenging setting. His insights and encouragement have been crucial in helping me navigate the complexities of my research and in pushing the boundaries of what I thought was possible in my academic career. His dedication to my development as a scholar and professional has left a lasting impact on me, and for that, I am eternally appreciative.

Abstract

The problem being tackled by this thesis is a very important one and very relevant to our days and times: it is about making improved target recognition and enhanced real-time response skills in AVs under simulated conditions. Our plan is to put some enhanced sensory capabilities into these vehicles and see if that makes them safer and more reliable.

We are using as our base a particular object recognition algorithm (YOLOv7) and a particular simulation environment (CARLA). We utilized the CARLA 0.9.14 simulator on Ubuntu 20.04 as a more stable option than the initially used CARLA 0.9.15 on Ubuntu 22.04, where both were used in an unreal engin 4.26 environment.

This research work drew upon the CARLA simulator and used stereo cameras and LIDAR to create a robust simulated environment for the collection of times of the day, weather conditions, and urban and rural scenarios across different town layouts. An annotation effort by us resulted in the labeling of a more focused dataset of 4,113 images from a broader set of 160,000 generated through sensor fusion,stereo camera and LIDAR overlayed model. The object detection algorithm used in this work was YOLOv7. The nuance of this work comes from the testing of enhancements made in this new model over previous models of YOLO. Comparisons were also made to some other recent methods for object detection in autonomous vehicle applications. The main object classes of interest were cars, pedestrians, and cyclists, because these are the most dangerous classes with which an Autonomous Vehicles might have a collision.

Detection capacity for the YOLOv7 model dramatically improved over previous iterations, from 100 epochs to 700 epochs. At an intersection over union (IoU) threshold of 0.5, YOLOv7 achieved a mean average precision (mAP) of 76.3%, which is better than its predecessors with an increase of 12%. YOLOv7's performance also varied depending on the target class, with cars being the most accurately detected object class, showing a precision of 0.841, a recall of 0.843, and mAP values at the 0.5 and 0.5:0.95 thresholds of 0.835 and 0.590, respectively. In real-world applications, YOLOv7 should yield impressive results for detecting and tracking a wide variety of object classes across many different environments.

While the thesis robustly validates the performance improvements of Autonomous Vehicles systems within simulated settings, future work should focus on the physical implementation of these technologies in actual vehicles and testing in real-world scenarios. In Addition, further research should explore integrating real-time object avoidance capabilities to enhance the practical applicability and safety of autonomous vehicles in dynamic and unpredictable environments.

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NOMENCLATURES

ADAS - Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems

ALFD - Aggregated Local Flow Descriptor

ALV - Autonomous Land Vision

AORUS GeForce RTX™ 4080 16GB MASTER - AORUS GeForce RTX™ 4080 16GB MASTER graphics card

API - Application Programming Interface

AV - Autonomous Vehicles

BP_TeslaM3 - Tesla Model 3 Blueprint

CARLA - Car Learning to Act

Carla 0.9.14 - Carla version 0.9.14

Carla Simulator 0.9.15 - Carla Simulator version 0.9.15

CF - Correlation Filter

Clang - C language family frontend for LLVM

CNN - Convolutional Neural Network

CNN - Convolutional Neural Network

COCO - Common Objects in Context

CUDA - Compute Unified Device Architecture

CUDA Toolkit - Compute Unified Device Architecture Toolkit

cuDNN - CUDA Deep Neural Network library

CVAT - Computer Vision Annotation Tool

DNN - Deep Neural Network

Docker - Docker Container Technology

Docker Compose - Docker Compose Tool

DQN - Deep Q-Network

DRL - Deep Reinforcement Learning

F1 - F1 Score

FFT - Fast Fourier Transform

FN - False Negative

FNR - False Negative Rate

FOV - Field of View

FP - False Positive

FPN - Feature Pyramid Networks

FPR - False Positive Rate

FPS - Frames Per Second

GPS - Global Positioning System

GPU - Graphics Processing Unit

HLS - Hue, Lightness, Saturation

HOG - Histogram of Oriented Gradients

IDS - Identity Switches

IMU - Inertial Measurement Unit

IoU - Intersection over Union

IPM - Inverse Perspective Mapping

KITTI - Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and Toyota Technological Institute

LAB - Lightness, A and B

LIDAR - Light Detection and Ranging

LLVM - Low Level Virtual Machine

mAP - Mean Average Precision

ML - Mostly Lost

MOT17 - Multiple Object Tracking benchmark 2017

MOT20 - Multiple Object Tracking benchmark 2020

MOT2015 - Multiple Object Tracking 2015

MOT5 - Multiple Object Tracking benchmark

MOTA - Multiple Object Tracking Accuracy

MOTP - Multiple Object Tracking Precision

MPC - Model Predictive Control

MT - Mostly Tracked

NPC – Non-Player Carla 0.9.15 - Carla version 0.9.15

NVIDIA Driver - NVIDIA graphics driver

OS - Operating System

PAscal VOC - Pattern Analysis, Statistical Modelling and Computational Learning Visual Object Classes

PR - Precision and Recall

Python 3.08 - Python programming language version 3.08

Python 3.10 - Python programming language version 3.10

RADAR - Radio Detection and Ranging

RCNN - Region-based Convolutional Neural Network

R-CNN - Region-based Convolutional Neural Network

ReID - Re-Identification

ReLU - Rectified Linear Unit

ResNet - Residual Network

RGB - Red, Green, Blue

ROC - Receiver Operating Characteristic

ROI - Region of Interest

RPN - Region Proposal Network

RTX - Ray Tracing Texel eXtreme

SAIC - Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation

SDK - Software Development Kit

SSD - Single Shot MultiBox Detector

TN - True Negative

TP - True Positive

Ubuntu 20.04 - Ubuntu operating system version 20.04

Ubuntu 22.04 - Ubuntu operating system version 22.04

Udacity - Udacity Dataset

Unreal Engine 4.26 - Unreal Engine version 4.26

V2X - Vehicle to Everything

VGG - Visual Geometry Group

YOLO - You Only Look Once

YOLOv7 - You Only Look Once version 7

ZED 2 - ZED 2 stereo camera system

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Autonomous Vehicles (AVs): A Century of Evolution

Autonomous vehicles, offering a spectrum of self-driving capabilities from partial to full automation, have seen remarkable progress over the last 100 years. The idea first emerged in the 1920s, gaining traction as sensor technologies and computational power advanced. Early innovations, like radio-controlled cars, set the stage for blending electronic and mechanical components crucial for autonomous movement. With the advent of digital computers and the Internet, development accelerated, allowing for sophisticated algorithms and real-time data processing, which are vital for dynamic decision-making in autonomous systems.

The importance of AVs goes beyond technological exploration; they herald a shift towards safer, more efficient transportation. By integrating technologies like LIDAR, RADAR, and computer vision, AVs can perceive their environment with impressive precision, aiming to reduce human error and improve road safety. Additionally, autonomous vehicles promise to transform traffic management, lower carbon emissions through better driving patterns, and provide mobility solutions for individuals unable to drive, emphasizing their role in shaping future urban and rural mobility.

1.1.2 YOLOv7 and Object Detection in Autonomous Vehicles

YOLOv7 marks a milestone in the realm of object detection within autonomous vehicle technology. As the newest in the "You Only Look Once" model series, YOLOv7 excels in processing images in real-time with high precision, making it ideally suited for the dynamic settings faced by autonomous vehicles. It enhances both speed and accuracy over its predecessors, reliably detecting objects such as pedestrians, vehicles, and traffic signs swiftly. The architecture of YOLOv7 supports simultaneous localization and classification of multiple objects in a single frame, a capability essential for the intricate decision-making necessary in autonomous driving. Its ability to learn from diverse datasets, including various lighting conditions, weather scenarios, and urban landscapes, adds to its robustness and adaptability in real-world applications.

1.1.3 Integration of LIDAR and Stereo Cameras in Autonomous Vehicles

Incorporating LIDAR and stereo cameras into autonomous vehicles provides a robust sensory framework that greatly improves navigation and obstacle detection. LIDAR sensors offer depth perception through pulsed laser light, allowing vehicles to map their surroundings with high accuracy, independent of lighting conditions. Meanwhile, stereo cameras supply rich visual information crucial for recognizing traffic signals, interpreting road signs, and understanding complex scenes. Combining these sensors leverages the strengths of each technology, ensuring AVs have precise and redundant data for real-time decision-making. This sensor fusion not only enhances the vehicle's environmental understanding but also boosts its ability to respond to unexpected obstacles, thereby increasing safety and reliability across diverse driving conditions.

1.2 Problem statement

A central challenge addressed in this thesis is the real-time detection of obstacles under varying conditions, crucial for the safety and efficiency of autonomous vehicles (AVs). This task involves seamlessly integrating advanced sensory technologies like LIDAR and stereo cameras, alongside the sophisticated application of object detection algorithms, notably YOLOv7, within simulated environments. These technologies need to interpret and respond accurately to dynamic surroundings, where factors such as lighting, weather changes, and the differences between urban and rural landscapes frequently shift.

Our research focuses on tackling the integration issues associated with these sensors and the limitations present in current object detection systems. While LIDAR and stereo cameras are individually powerful, they often produce disparate data that must be carefully fused to create a coherent input suitable for real-time processing systems. A further challenge is the sensitivity of the YOLOv7 algorithm to variations in object appearances brought about by the aforementioned environmental factors, which can lead to critical detection failures.

To overcome these technical hurdles, our research seeks to enhance the robustness of the YOLOv7 algorithm through extensive training on a diverse dataset. This dataset includes 4,113 manually annotated images, meticulously selected from a larger collection of 160,000 images, capturing a broad range of times of day, weather conditions, and varied urban and rural scenarios. By exposing the YOLOv7 algorithm to such diverse conditions, our aim is to significantly improve its ability to generalize its detection capabilities across a wide array of real-

world environments. This strategic approach is designed to mitigate the risks associated with detection failures and to enhance the algorithm's accuracy and reliability in real-time applications.

1.3 Research gap

1.3.1 Evolution of Object Detection Algorithms:

In the rapidly evolving field of autonomous vehicles (AVs), breakthroughs like YOLOv7 have pushed the limits of object detection capabilities. While this algorithm marks significant progress, challenges such as high false positive rates and less-than-ideal performance in challenging weather conditions persist. Research has shown that incorporating attention mechanisms can bolster feature extraction, yet achieving an optimal balance between speed and accuracy continues to be difficult in practical applications.

1.3.2 Sensor Fusion and Integration Challenges:

The integration of stereo cameras and LIDAR has been instrumental in enhancing detection and spatial understanding in AVs. However, combining data from these varied sources introduces complexities in calibration and synchronization, which can impact real-time processing effectiveness. Current studies emphasize the necessity for more advanced methods to successfully merge and utilize data from multiple sensors, thereby enhancing detection precision and dependability across different environmental settings.

1.3.3 Performance in Dynamic Conditions:

Modern systems, including those utilizing advanced YOLO iterations and integrated sensor technologies, often grapple with dynamic and unpredictable environmental elements like time of day variability and weather changes. Robust object detection in such circumstances remains crucial, yet it presents a significant hurdle. Training models across a broader spectrum of scenarios is vital for achieving dependable performance, as highlighted by your dataset, which encompasses images captured during various times, weather conditions, and urban-rural contexts. Improving training approaches to simulate these diverse conditions could close the existing research gap by facilitating more adaptable and resilient detection systems.

1.4 Purpose of the Thesis

This thesis, titled "Navigating the Future: Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance," primarily aims to enhance the object detection capabilities of autonomous vehicles through advanced simulation techniques. Our study employs the CARLA simulator, complemented by high-performance computational hardware and sophisticated sensor technologies like stereo cameras and LIDAR, to establish a controlled yet intricate environment that mirrors real-world conditions.

Central to our investigation was the development and refinement of the YOLOv7 object detection algorithm to tackle the specific challenges associated with real-time target recognition and avoidance in AVs. The targeted improvements focused on boosting accuracy, reliability, and response speed of detection systems under various environmental conditions, including different times of day, diverse weather patterns, and varied urban and rural settings. Through comprehensive simulations, we sought to validate the YOLOv7 algorithm's performance, ensuring it fulfills the rigorous demands essential for safe and effective autonomous navigation.

Our research also included a detailed benchmarking process, comparing YOLOv7's capabilities against other leading object detection algorithms. This not only showcased the advancements made by our proposed methods but also pinpointed areas needing further enhancement. The comparative analysis established clear benchmarks and underscored the superiority of the YOLOv7 model in terms of precision, detection accuracy, and adaptability to dynamic conditions.

By achieving these objectives, the thesis makes a substantial contribution to the field of autonomous driving technology. It advances our understanding of how AV systems can be optimized to better manage complex driving scenarios and lays the groundwork for future investigations that might facilitate the implementation of these technologies in real-world vehicles, including the integration of real-time avoidance capabilities. Ultimately, this would enhance the practical feasibility and safety of AVs, aligning with the broader goal of fostering their widespread adoption within an interconnected transportation ecosystem.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to fundamental concepts

The algorithms used in target detection are various and have multiple usages, with one of the most relevant being self-driving cars. Many learning models are used in self-driving cars' target detection, such as RCNN, SSD, and Yolo, each having different types of limitations and distinct advantages compared to others. The reasons behind choosing to research target detection and obstacle avoidance are numerous as they are vital to research. Some of the reasons are:

1. Advancement in Autonomous Vehicles: Research in target detection and avoidance contributes to the progress of autonomous vehicle technologies, enhancing their safety and efficiency. (Kim et al., 2010).
2. Safety Enhancement: Implementing these technologies reduces traffic fatalities and injuries due to human errors, such as impaired driving and distraction.
3. Traffic Efficiency: Effective target detection improves travel times, reduces fuel consumption, and minimizes congestion, particularly during peak hours. (Huang and Chen, 2019)
4. Economic Efficiency: Target detection and avoidance technologies can lower labor costs and increase production by eliminating the need for human drivers, necessitating responsible transitions and job displacement mitigation. (Kim and Kim, 2018). Thus, we should make sure of prioritizing road safety through reduced human error, economic efficiency via cost savings and increased productivity, and responsible transitions by investing in retraining and job placement programs to mitigate potential job displacement.
5. Accessibility: These technologies promote mobility accessibility for people with disabilities, improving their autonomy and quality of life. (Kim et al., 2016).
6. Environmental Benefits: Autonomous vehicles with these technologies help combat climate change by lowering greenhouse gas emissions. (Guceri and Tan, 2018)
7. Market Demand: The increasing demand for self-driving cars presents a ripe field for significant research and development. (Khan & Alam, 2020)

8. Technological Innovation: Research in this area drives technical innovation in fields like computer vision, artificial intelligence, and robotics. (Liu and Lin, 2020)
9. Public Policy: Informing the development of crucial regulations and guidelines for safe autonomous vehicle integration into society, addressing safety standards and ethical considerations. (Sengupta and Zhu, 2020)
10. Global Impact: Research in target detection and avoidance can revolutionize transportation systems, reduce congestion, enhance safety, and contribute to global environmental sustainability. (Ukkusuri and Zhang, 2017)
11. Driver Safety: Enhancing safety for drivers by reducing accidents and collisions.(Gayst,2023)
12. Efficiency and Pollution Reduction: Improving traffic flow, reducing fuel consumption, congestion, and pollution. (Nasir, M.K. et al. , 2014)
13. Accessibility for Vulnerable Groups: Facilitating mobility for older people, individuals with impairments, and vulnerable populations. (Lin, D., & Cui, J. ,2021).

2.1.1 Autonomous Vehicles Target Detection

Fuzzy logic is used in prediction and system identification. The role of fuzzy logic is split into the Mamdani structure with the help of heuristic fuzzy if-then statements or using Sugino to obtain system identification (Driankov & Saffiotti, 2002). Ultrasonic sensors and laser range finders are used to maintain a certain distance between the wall and the car and to keep the vehicle moving in the same direction as the wall (Driankov & Saffiotti, 2002). Mamdani is used to draw the relation between the distance to the desired path, the changes in curvature, and the velocity. Suppose the distance to the desired path is short. In that case, the curvature changes more abruptly, and the velocity is low, whereas when the distance to the desired path is long, the curvature changes more slowly, and the velocity is high (Driankov & Saffiotti, 2002).

Navigation systems need high integrity to compensate for different types of inaccuracies. This is done by mixing the inertial measurement unit (IMU) and global positioning system (GPS) to adapt to all noise frequencies. Many applications for autonomous vehicles have appeared recently, such as open-cast mining, agriculture, and cargo handling. These applications cannot depend on a single traditional navigation technique; instead, they require integrity in navigation

systems by using different sensors. IMU has its advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of IMU is the high update rates of attitude data, acceleration, and angle rotation. In addition, wheel slip does not affect the IMU readings, unlike wheel encoders. The disadvantage of IMU usage is the accumulation of error over time, caused by sensor reading bias (Sukkarieh, Nebot, and Durrant-Whyte, 1999).

As for GPS, it is an absolute external sensor with a low frequency, which means it has advantages for being external and disadvantages for being a low-frequency sensor. The main problem with GPS is when the signal is reflected many times before reaching the antenna due to the reflection of the signal through multiple surfaces, resulting in multipath errors and problems with high frequencies. The Kalman filter serves as the connecting link between the IMU readings and the GPS observations. Regarding the IMU, it predicts velocity, position, and attitude errors. It uses GPS observations to detect these errors and then update the IMU. The errors in detection are divided into those of high frequency, which are due to GPS multipath errors, and those of low frequency, which are due to the bias in IMU (Sukkarieh, Nebot, and Durrant-Whyte, 1999).

There are also trials to navigate autonomous vehicles through vision systems performed offline. The vehicle was previously trained on the road and equipped with an RGB camera, with a velocity of up to 10 km/hr and a maximum distance of 4.5 km. The ALV (Autonomous land vision) then builds a symbolic description of the road and obstacle boundaries for mapping and path planning (Turk et al., 1988). The disadvantage of this approach is that if the road map changes due to an unexpected obstacle, the car may misbehave. Also, the autonomous car should have pre-installed maps, limiting the vehicle's location.

Self-driving cars have many types of sensors used in perception, such as IMU, RADAR, LIDAR, and Camera. Among the most useful sensors in self-driving cars are cameras, which assist in obstacle detection and visual navigation. A multi-camera system is needed to capture all the surroundings. An alternative to a multi-camera system may be a 360-degree field-of-view camera. Accurate 3D models need to be obtained through merging depth maps.

Additionally, achieving fully autonomous parking and electric car charging is necessary. To achieve a 360-degree field of view with only four cameras, an FOV of 185° is used, resulting in

output images of 1280*800 at 12.5 frames/sec. This type of camera is called a fisheye cameras and is used in the V-charge project (Häne et al., 2017).

Figure 1 The two cars from the V-Charge project. (right) The cameras are mounted in the front, back, and side view mirrors (Häne et al., 2017).

Google's self-driving car features a luxurious laser-reflective map constructed using an omnidirectional 3D laser augmented with a low multi-camera system. Tesla cars have the advantage of autopilot, which is achieved through combining radar and a forward-looking camera. However, this setup has the disadvantage of having a blind spot. On the other hand, the autonomous car of Bertha Benz has a 44 FOV of both front and back stereo cameras for sparse map localization building. For the car's self-localization, a system of 90 FOV front and back cameras is used (Häne et al., 2017).

A multi-camera system needs calibration to function well, which involves extrinsic and intrinsic parameters and 3D scene point projection. Environmental changes and imprecise calibrations can lead to poor results.

Fisheye camera model projects any point in the scene as $\llbracket p_{F_0} = \frac{P_{f_c}}{\|P_{f_c}\|} + [0\ 0\ \zeta]^T$ The car is restricted by the Ackermann system $R = \begin{bmatrix} \cos\theta & -\sin\theta & 0 \\ \sin\theta & \cos\theta & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}, t = \rho \begin{bmatrix} cos\ \phi_v \\ sin\ \phi_v \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$ Where θ is the relative yaw angle,$\phi_{v,}$ represents half of θ, and ρ is the scale of the relative translation. (Häne et al., 2017)

Suppose denser sensing of the environment is required. In that case, some expenses and complexity may be applied to the system to allow the integration of more cameras, considering

an appropriate projection model. We can handle the strong distortion of the fisheye lenses by using an appropriate projection model (Häne et al., 2017).

Moreover, visual perception tasks for self-driving cars can be accomplished using Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs). CNNs utilize an image sequence to learn the steering angle. This is achieved by training a network to learn speed commands and control the steering angle based on the image sequence. Prior speeds and visual recordings are incorporated to enhance the model to create a multi-model, multi-task network. Visual information does not significantly contribute to detecting the desired speed; instead, the speed control system takes commands from the visual system. For instance, when the distance to the next vehicle is short, the car slows down, and when the distance is large, it speeds up. For simple roads with few obstacles, one can use ALVINN.

Furthermore, Nvidia pioneered using three front-view cameras to predict steering angles through either behavior reflex CNN, mediated perception, or privileged training. Predicting the steering angle directly from visual inputs through behavior reflex CNN results in low model complexity and robustness, but interpreting results is not smooth in complicated environments. Visual inputs are mapped to pre-defined parameters to achieve higher smoothness, and then the steering control command is obtained through rule-based methods.

Three main CNN models and networks are used in end-to-end steering control: the Base Steering Model, the Discrete Speed Command Network, and the Multi-modal Multi-task Network. The Base Steering Model consists of five convolutional layers based on AlexNet and four fully connected layers, followed by VGG and ResNet. On the other hand, the Discrete Speed Command Network uses the front-view camera to detect if the car needs to speed up or slow down, and then the CNN calculates the desired steering rate and speed. The Multi-modal Multi-Task Network directly adopts the feedback speed instead of the required speed rate, as may be needed when the vehicle is required (Yang et al., 2018).

The main components of self-driving cars are the control network and Deep Neural Networks. Therefore, they should be explainable and interpretable for insurance companies, users, developers, and law enforcement. The control network and Deep Neural Networks train a convolutional network that maps images to steering angles and incorporates a visual attention

model. A causal filter is also applied to identify the primary input regions with the most significant influence on the output.

The process involves several steps. Firstly, convolutional features are extracted through the encoder. Next, a coarse-grained and fine-grained decoder are used, employing visual attention mechanisms and causal visual saliency discovery, respectively. Attention heat maps are utilized to explain the behavior of the deep neural network, as depicted in Figure 2 (Kim & Canny, 2017).

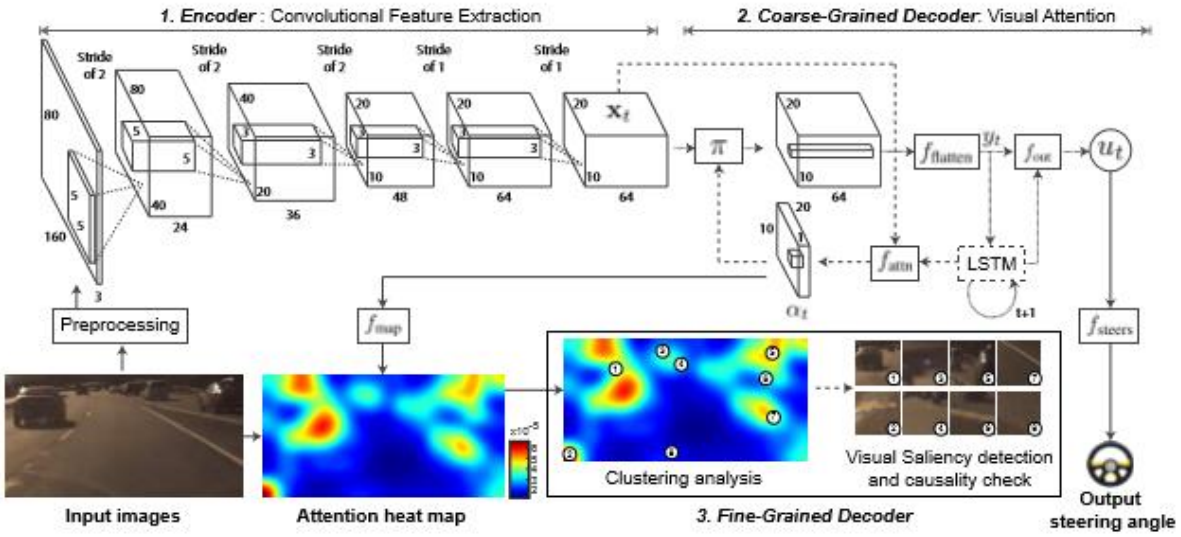

Figure 2 the model predicts steering angle commands from an input raw image stream end-to-end manner. In addition, the model generates a heat map of attention, which can visualize where and what the model sees. (Kim & Canny, 2017)

It goes through three steps to transform the image from rectified to preprocessed. The first step involves passing the image through three parallel transformations: RGB to HLS, RGB to LAB, and Sobel filter. In the second step, the output of each transformation is subjected to adaptive threshold binarization. Finally, the outputs are combined in the third step to produce the pre-

processed image. This process is illustrated in Figure 3 (Muthalagu et al., 2020).

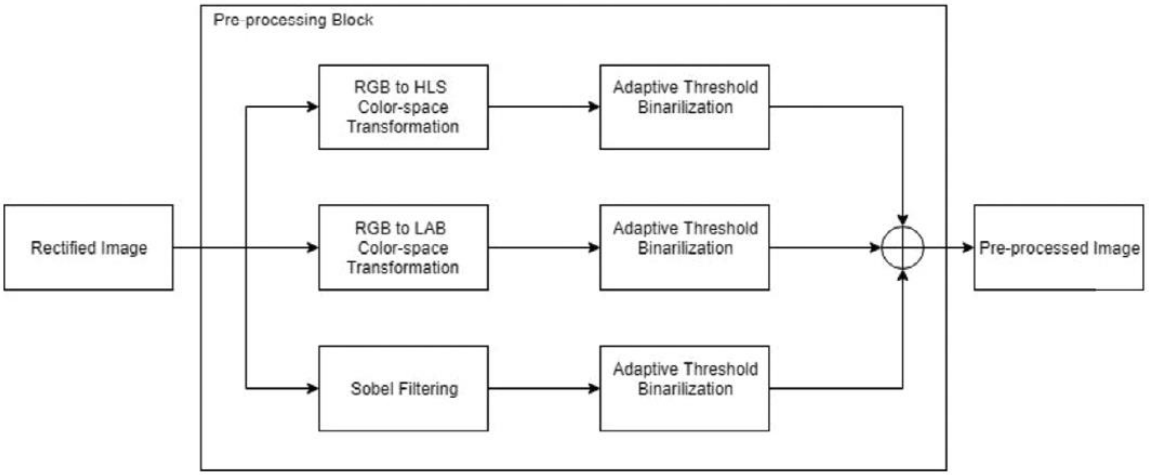

Figure 3 Block diagram for the preprocessing of the proposed algorithm (Muthalagu et al., 2020)

The problem with this method is that it is computationally expensive and may fail in the case of high dependency or numerous curved and steep lanes.

While taking a series of images and comparing them can detect the steering angle, the steering angle alone is insufficient for vehicle control; thus, speed control is also required. Nvidia initiated end-to-end steering angle control. Front-view cameras record raw pixels, processed using Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) to assist in steering angle regression.

Discrete speed commands have two problems. First, the vehicle may obtain only selected accelerations and decelerations. Second, the accuracy of the command prediction is limited when only visual inputs are used. Consequently, specific requirements are necessary to address these issues. Firstly, a multi-modal multi-task framework is needed. Secondly, a new SAIC dataset is required, containing day and night driving records that must be collected. Lastly, the data synthesis method has a failure case that needs to be addressed to reduce error accumulation.

Nvidia utilized only three front-view cameras and applied either the behavior reflex CNN approach, mediated perception, or Privileged training. For behavior reflex CNN, visual inputs are used to anticipate the appropriate steering angle, with the understanding that the model exhibits low complexity and robustness when the training data are sufficient (Muthalagu et al., 2020).

SSD architecture

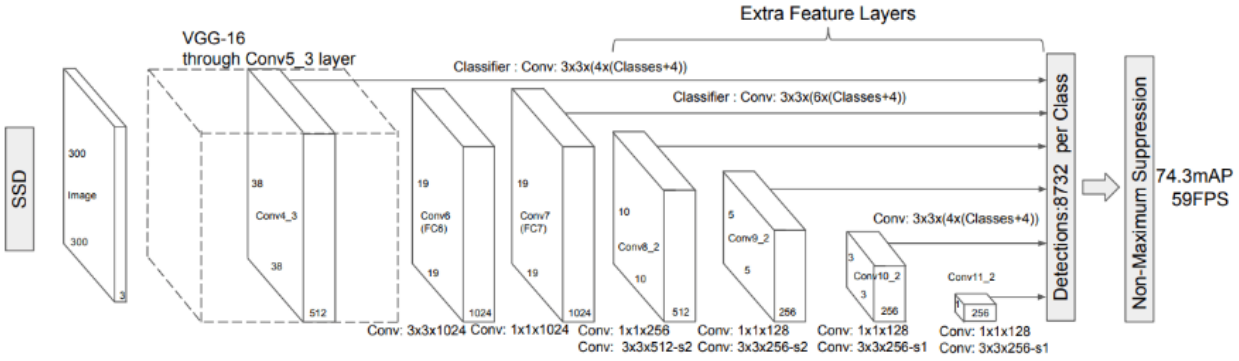

Figure 4 SSD architecture (Neeraj, 2021)

VGG-16 can be replaced with ResNet or MobileNet, with the latest version in the literature being MobileNet v2. The convolutional neural network VGG-16 or MobileNet is accompanied by additional convolutional layers, reducing input size at each layer (Neeraj, 2021).

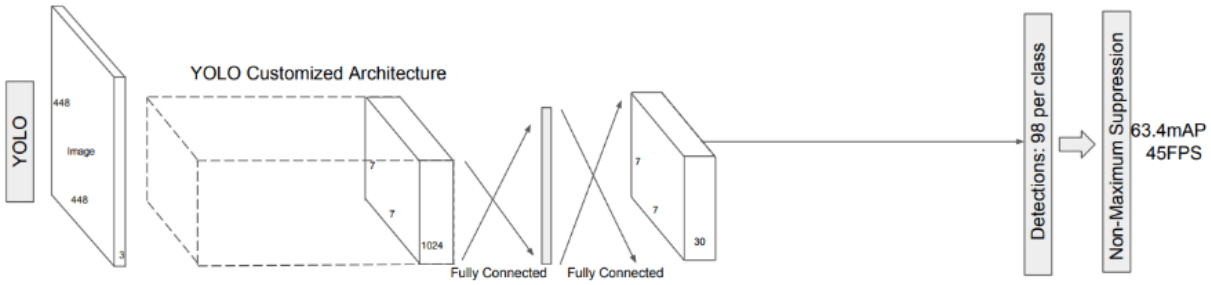

Figure 5 YOLO Architecture (Neeraj, 2021)

In YOLO Architecture, the image is divided into a fixed-size grid. In contrast, each grid is responsible for calculating several bounding boxes, calculating the confidence score of each box, and detecting if it contains a target.

Target Detection Techniques for Autonomous Vehicles:

The potential of autonomous vehicles to revolutionize travel is currently a popular topic. Target detection is a crucial element of autonomous vehicles, enabling them to perceive their surroundings and navigate safely. Target detection involves identifying and locating objects in an image or video stream. While YOLO and SSD are among the most commonly used target detection methods in autonomous vehicles, numerous other methods can enhance target detection performance.

1. Region-based Convolutional Neural Networks (RCNN): Autonomous vehicles rely on this method for accurate and efficient detection amidst various sensory inputs. RCNN was initially developed in 2014 and has since been refined, making it the best-performing method today. The process begins by identifying potential target locations- region proposals within an image. These regions are then evaluated using deep neural networks for classification. One significant advantage of this approach is its ability to reliably detect objects of various sizes or aspect ratios (Girshick et al., 2014).

2. Fast R-CNN: Fast R-CNN improves upon the original RCNN technique by addressing some drawbacks. The primary limitation of RCNN lies in its slow processing speed, making it unsuitable for real-time detection and localization of objects. Fast R-CNN overcomes this by sharing computation across the entire image, resulting in faster processing times. It also includes a Region of Interest (ROI) pooling layer to extract features from the region proposals, improving accuracy (Girshick, 2015).

3. Faster R-CNN: Faster R-CNN is an advancement in target detection techniques that surpasses its predecessor, Fast R-CNN. This groundbreaking technology leverages improved algorithms to enhance accuracy and processing speeds beyond previously achievable levels significantly. Faster R-CNN uses a Region Proposal Network (RPN) to generate region proposals, eliminating the need for external algorithms like Selective Search or Edge Boxes. This approach reduces computation time and improves target detection accuracy (Ren et al., 2015).

4. You Only Look Once (YOLO): Autonomous vehicles heavily rely on the contemporary YOLO method for instant recognition and spatial monitoring of various objects. YOLO segments images into distinct grids, predicting probabilities of bounding boxes and classes within each grid cell. This unique approach enables YOLO to maintain peak precision while achieving rapid target detection rates. Another advantage is its ability to accurately detect objects of varying scales or aspect ratios (Redmon & Farhadi, 2018).

5. Single Shot MultiBox Detector (SSD): SSD is another real-time target detection technique widely used in autonomous vehicles. It predicts bounding boxes and class probabilities at multiple scales and aspect ratios in a single shot, enabling real-time target

detection with high accuracy. SSD includes a feature extraction network that improves target detection accuracy (Liu et al., 2016).

6. Mask R-CNN: Mask R-CNN is an extension of the Faster R-CNN technique, incorporating an additional segmentation network. The segmentation network generates a binary mask for each region proposal, indicating the object's location in the image. Mask R-CNN excels in instance segmentation, distinguishing multiple instances of the same object (He et al., 2017).

7. RetinaNet: RetinaNet is a recent target detection technique that addresses the class imbalance problem in target detection. Class imbalance occurs when the background sample count significantly outweighs the foreground samples. RetinaNet solves this problem using a focal loss function, prioritizing hard and down-weights well-classified examples (Lin et al., 2017).

8. CenterNet: CenterNet is a revolutionary technique for object detection known for its exceptional real-time processing capabilities and unparalleled performance. Unlike methods requiring anchor boxes, CenterNet predicts bounding boxes and center point locations simultaneously, simplifying the pipeline for faster speeds without sacrificing accuracy (Zhou et al., 2019).

9. Feature Pyramid Networks (FPN): FPN is a technique that enhances target detection accuracy by utilizing multi-scale features. By combining features from different scales of the input image, FPN constructs a feature pyramid, allowing it to detect objects at varying scales and achieve higher accuracy than single-scale methods (Lin et al., 2017).

10. Cascade R-CNN: Cascade R-CNN is a technique that improves target detection accuracy using a cascade of R-CNNs. The first R-CNN generates region proposals, which are then refined by subsequent R-CNNs. This complex approach enhances the ability to accurately identify objects by reducing erroneous positives and negatives (Cai & Vasconcelos, 2018).

11. Dilated Convolutional Networks: Dilated Convolutional Networks enhance target detection accuracy by employing dilated convolutions. These convolutions increase the

network's receptive field without sacrificing spatial resolution, allowing detection of objects of different sizes and achieving higher accuracy (Yu & Koltun, 2015).

12. Joint Target Detection and Semantic Segmentation: This method performs both detection and semantic segmentation simultaneously. By integrating these processes, the approach recognizes and segments objects without delay, improving precision and efficiency (Girdhar et al., 2018).

13. Deep Residual Networks (ResNets): ResNets enhance target detection accuracy by utilizing residual connections, enabling the network to learn more complex features and improve detection accuracy (He et al., 2017).

14. Convolutional Neural Networks with Attention Mechanisms: Attention Mechanisms in Convolutional Neural Networks increase accuracy by focusing on specific regions within an input image, leading to more precision and efficiency (Zhou et al., 2016).

15. Multi-Task Learning: Multi-Task Learning efficiently performs multiple tasks simultaneously, including object identification and semantic segmentation. This approach allows the network to learn shared representations and improve accuracy on both tasks simultaneously (He et al., 2017).

In conclusion, despite the popularity of YOLO and SSD in self-driving cars for target detection, various other methods exist that can enhance their capabilities. These techniques include RCNN, Fast R-CNN, Faster R-CNN, Mask R-CNN, RetinaNet, CenterNet, FPN, Cascade R-CNN, Dilated Convolutional Networks, Joint Target Detection and Semantic Segmentation, ResNets, Convolutional Neural Networks with Attention Mechanisms, and Multi-Task Learning. Each method possesses unique capabilities and drawbacks, which should be considered when selecting the appropriate approach based on specific scenarios and performance standards. Utilizing these approaches could enhance the capacity of autonomous vehicles to detect objects, leading to safer and more efficient transportation in the future. The following tables will display the results of YOLO versions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, SSD300 & SSD512, R-CNN, Fast R-CNN, Faster R-CNN, and Cascade R-CNN using datasets (KITTI, MOT5, Pascal VOC, Udacity & COCO) against different metrics.

Table 1 YOLOv1: where mAP: Mean Average Precision, AP: Average Precision, FPR: False Positive Rate, FNR: False Negative Rate, Recall: Recall (no expansion, it's a standalone term), MOTA: Multiple Object Tracking Accuracy, MOTP: Multiple Object Tracking Precision, MT: Mostly Tracked, ML: Mostly Lost, IDS: Intrusion Detection System (Redmon et al. , 2016) (Tang et al. ,2019) (Huang et al. ,2017) (Lin et al. ,2014)

Dataset	Sensor	FPS	mAP	AP	FPR	FNR	Recall	MOTA	MOTP	MT	ML	IDS
KITTI (Redmon et al. , 2016)	Camera	45	63.4	-	0.2	0.5	0.5	51.3	62.8	2	16	-
MOT5 (Tang et al. ,2019	Camera	20	54.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pascal VOC(Huang et al. ,2017	Camera	45	63.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Udacity (Huang et al. ,2017)	Camera	20	53.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COCO (Lin et al. ,2014	Camera	45	44.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2 YOLOv2 (Redmon et al., 2017) (Zeng et al., 2018) (Huang et al., 2017) (Arivazhagan et al., 2019) (Lin et al., 2014)

Dataset	Sensor	FPS	mAP	AP	FPR	FNR	Recall	MOTA	MOTP	MT	ML	IDS
KITT (Redmon et al., 2017	Camera	67	77.9	-	0.07	0.22	0.78	69.7	76.6	31	18	-
MOT5 (Zeng et al., 2018)	Camera	25	67.5	42	-	-	0.67	49.7	66.2	3	10	-
Pascal VOC (Huang et al., 2017)	Camera	40	76.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Udacity(Arivazhagan et al., 2019)	Camera	30	66.3	-	0.17	0.44	0.56	-	-	-	-	-
COCO (Lin et al., 2014)	Camera	67	48.1	25	0.81	0.49	0.51	21.6	72.7	8	9	-

Table 3 YOLOv3 (Luo et al., 2016) (Ristani et al., 2018) (Redmon and Farhadi, 2018) (Bochkovskiy et al., 2019)

Dataset	Sensor	FPS	mAP	AP	FPR	FNR	Recall	MOTA	MOTP	MT	ML	IDS
KITTI (Luo et al., 2016)	LiDAR+Camera	20.0	84.5	91.1	0.067	0.079	0.921	-	-	-	-	-
MOT5 (Ristani et al., 2018	Camera	24.1	-	69.5	-	-	0.647	23.6	79.1	17.3	22.8	13
Pascal VOC (Redmon and Farhadi, 2018)	Camera	57.1	83.1	85.6	0.039	0.080	0.872	-	-	-	-	-
Udacity(Bochkovskiy et al., 2019)	Camera	-	-	39.0	-	-	0.544	-	-	-	-	-
COCO (Redmon and Farhadi, 2018)	Camera	65.7	57.9	81.2	0.072	0.214	0.563	-	-	-	-	-

Table 4 YOLOv4 (Bochkovskiy et al., 2020)

Dataset	Sensor	FPS	mAP	AP	FPR	FNR	Recall	MOTA	MOTP	MT	ML	IDS
KITTI	LiDAR	41	86.8	89	0.05	0.06	0.78	67.2	80.9	39	10	5
MOT5	RGB	45	58.3	61	0.41	0.41	0.48	44.2	71.4	6	4	3
Pascal VOC	RGB	65	43.5	54	0.32	0.41	0.57	40.2	69.6	2	2	6
Udacity	LiDAR	63	70.3	74	0.08	0.21	0.78	55.8	75.7	15	3	2
COCO	RGB	65	43.5	53	0.35	0.44	0.56	42.4	70.4	4	4	7

Table 5 YOLOv5 (Bochkovskiy et al., 2020)

Dataset	Sensor	FPS	mAP	AP	FPR	FNR	Recall	MOTA	MOTP	MT	ML	IDS
KITTI (Bochkov-skiy et al., 2020)	LiDAR	71	78.8	90	0.029	0.073	0.932	66.6	74.5	32.9%	11.1%	-

Table 6 SSD300 (Dollar et al., 2012) (Liu et al., 2016) (Liu et al.,2020) (Chen et al., 2019) (Liu et al., 2016)

Dataset	Sensor	FPS	mAP	AP	FPR	FNR	Recall	MOTA	MOTP	MT	ML	IDS
MOT5 (Dollar et al., 2012)	RGB	30	67.0	74	0.19	0.56	0.44	50.0	71.0	14	42	-
Pascal VOC (Liu et al., 2016)	RGB	-	77.2	80	0.06	0.44	0.70	-	-	-	-	-
Udacity (Liu et al.,2020)	RGB	30	72.1	82	0.10	0.45	0.63	-	-	-	-	-
MOT17 (Chen et al., 2019)	RGB	30	76.8	60	0.11	0.37	81.6	49.3	77.3	28	63	-
COCO (Liu et al., 2016)	RGB	25	31.2	47	0.50	0.40	52.9	-	-	-	-	-

Table 7 SSD512 (Geiger et al,2012) (Milan, et al., 2016) (Liu et al., 2016) (Udacity, 2023)

Dataset	**Sensor**	**FPS**	**mAP**	**AP**	**FPR**	**FNR**	**Recall**	**MOTA**	**MOTP**	**MT**	**ML**	**IDS**
KITTI (Geiger et al,2012)	Velodyne HDL-64E LIDAR	25	77.2	92.0	0.11	0.28	0.94	70.3	81.5	57.1%	10.4%	-

MOT16 (Milan, et al., 2016)		30	58.6	-	-	-	0.63	53.3	80.3	6.9%	52.2%	
Pascal VOC (Liu et al., 2016)	RGB	-	81.6	83.2	-	-	0.800	-	-	-	-	-
Udacity (Udacity, 2023)	-	30	44.6	-	-	-	0.42	36.2	-	-	-	-

Table 8 Faster R-CNN (Geiger,Lenz, & Urtasun, 2012) (Everingham et al., 2010) COCO (Lin et al., 2014)

Datasets	**sensors**	**FPS**	**mAP**	**AP**	**FPR**	**FNR**	**Recall**	**MOTA**	**MOTP**	**MT**	**ML**	**IDS**
KITTI (Geiger,Lenz, & Urtasun, 2012)	LiDAR	10	86.4	92	0.05	0.13	0.87	68.1	79.5	33	4	24

Pascal VOC (Everingham et al., 2010)	RGB	5	76.4	81	0.14	0.29	0.71	57.7	82.1	10	1	15
COCO (Lin et al., 2014)	RGB	13	33.1	47	0.56	0.67	0.33	21.3	58.8	2	12	57

Table 9 Fast R-CNN (Geiger, Lenz, & Urtasun, 2012) (Everingham et al., 2010) (Lin et al., 2014)

Dataset	**Sensors**	**FPS**	**mAP**	**AP**	**FPR**	**FNR**	**Recall**	**MOTA**	**MOTP**	**MT**	**ML**	**IDS**
KITTI(Geiger, Lenz, & Urtasun, 2012)	LiDAR, Camera	5	73.2	87.1	0.06	0.15	0.849	77.6	81.7	62.2	11.2	34
Pascal Voc(Everingham et al., 2010)	Camera	-	70.0	89.8	0.13	0.35	0.736	67.2	82.7	49.8	16.4	-

COCO (Lin et al., 2014)	Camera	-	42.1	62.7	0.27	0.54	0.544	36.5	68.2	6.3	69.5	-

Table 10 RCNN (Geiger et al., 2012) (Leal-Taixé et al., 2015) (Everingham et al., 2010) (Caicedo & Lazebnik, 2015) (Ren et al., 2015)

Dataset	**Sensors**	**FPS**	**mAP**	**AP**	**FPR**	**FNR**	**Recall**	**MOTA**	**MOTP**	**MT**	**ML**	**IDS**
KITTI(Geiger et al., 2012)	Lidar	5	80	91	-	-	88	85	84	71	7	-
MOT5 (Leal-Taixé et al., 2015)	RGB	30	-	40	-	-	70	80	78	60	7	-
Pascal Voc(Everingham et al., 2010)	RGB	-	69	77	-	-	74	-	-	-	-	-
Udacity(Caicedo & Lazebnik, 2015)	Lidar, RGB	2	57	82	0.01	0.19	80	-	-	-	-	-

COCO(Ren et al., 2015)	RGB	13	73	77	0.07	0.24	72	-	-	-	-	-

Table 11 Cascade R-CNN (Cai et al., 2017) (Cai et al., 2016) (Bochkovskiy et al., 2020)

Dataset	**Sensors**	**FPS**	**mAP**	**AP**	**FPR**	**FNR**	**Recall**	**MOTA**	**MOTP**	**MT**	**ML**	**IDS**
MOT5(Cai et al., 2017)	Camera	30	54.2	77.1	-	-	0.62	47.3	-	-	-	-
Pascal Voc(Cai et al., 2016)	Camera	-	51.2	75.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Udacity(Bochkovskiy et al., 2020)	Camera	12	58.4	83.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COCO(Cai et al., 2017)	Camera	5	42.8	63.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

2.1.2 Multi-target tracking and avoidance

Autonomous vehicles have been gaining popularity recently due to their potential to enhance transportation efficiency and reduce traffic accidents. A crucial aspect of autonomous vehicles is their ability to navigate safely and effectively, which involves two primary responsibilities: target avoidance and tracking.

Target avoidance involves identifying and avoiding obstacles that obstruct the vehicle's path. LiDAR sensors are commonly used to detect obstacles and create 3D maps of the surroundings (Wang et al., 2019). Computer vision techniques, such as stereo cameras or monocular cameras, are also viable for detecting obstacles in the vehicle's path (Katz et al., 2018). Once an obstacle is detected, the autonomous vehicle must take prompt action to avoid it. This can be achieved using a path-planning algorithm to generate a new route that avoids obstacles or a control algorithm to change the vehicle's course (Katz et al., 2018).

Target tracking refers to the ability to track moving objects in the vehicle's vicinity. Combining sensors like LiDAR and cameras with machine learning algorithms enables autonomous vehicles to efficiently track objects. By using machine learning algorithms to forecast moving objects' trajectories, the autonomous vehicle can chart a course accordingly (Akin et al., 2020).

Target avoidance methods can be classified into reactive and predictive methods. Reactive methods involve the vehicle's immediate actions to avoid obstacles, while predictive methods anticipate the future positions of obstacles and plan a path accordingly. Reactive methods include emergency braking and swerving, while predictive methods involve trajectory planning and model predictive control. Other methods, such as fuzzy logic control, reinforcement learning, and hybrid approaches that combine multiple methods of target avoidance, also exist.

In multi-target tracking, the correlation filter is used through two steps. The first step incorporates temporal information to detect small targets, while the second step employs a compressed deep Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) for the tracking module. This technique can re-identify (ReID) when the tracked target is lost. Two kits, KITTI and MOT2015, will be used for tracking potential targets of interest using region proposal-based CNN. The region proposal network (CNN) generates target proposals, and deep layers such as conv-5-layer

generate the proposal. The algorithm resizes the target proposals from the Region of Interest (ROI) to a fixed size. SSD exploits deep discriminative features, reducing false detections (Zhao et al., 2018).

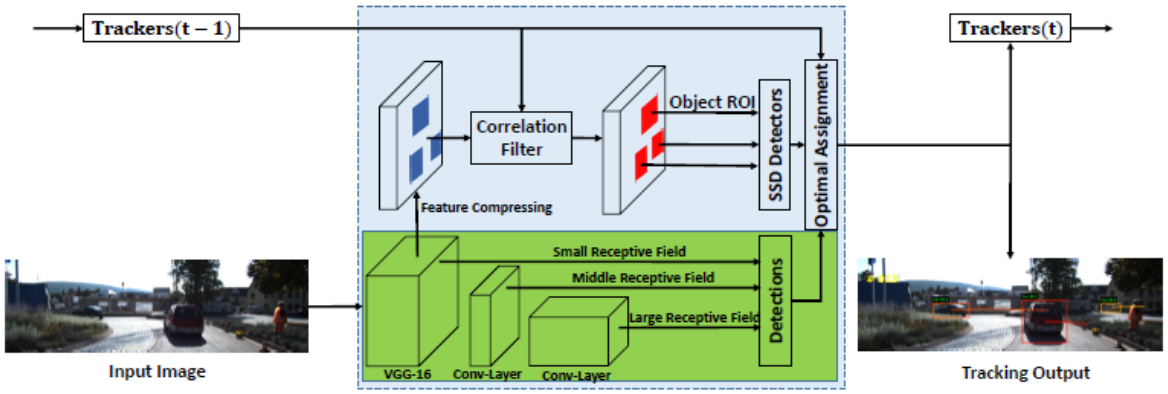

Figure 6 The framework of the proposed approach Correlation filter multi-target tracking (Zhao et al., 2018).

The data association algorithm is used to link targets across different frames. Affinity models describe the similarities between detections. The Aggregated Local Flow Descriptor (ALFD) utilizes a static camera. For training, Multiple-Instance Learning (MIL) and integral Channel Features (ICF) can be employed, and a Support Vector Machine (SVM) may be used in the process. CNN provides abundant semantic and geometric information, assisting both at the target association stage and the lost target re-identification stage. A multi-scale detector was initially proposed, effectively detecting small targets and generating fewer false negatives. Next, a brand-new compressed deep CNN feature-based CF tracker was developed, utilizing target-specific semantic knowledge inherited from the detector and being computationally simple. Comprehensive testing was conducted on the KITTI and MOT tracking benchmarks, showing that the Correlation filter outperformed cutting-edge methods (Zhao et al., 2018).

Various methods are used to solve the data association problem, including Linear Program-based approaches, Bayesian filtering-based approaches, and graphical model-based approaches. Some methods frame the data association problem as a causally optimum assignment problem and use the Hungarian algorithm to satisfy the online requirement for autonomous vehicles. Kalman filter-based and particle filter-based approaches are widely known for tracking a single target. Additionally, keypoint matching-based methods are frequently applied to track visual targets. However, recent advancements have shown that correlation filter (CF) methods

outperform keypoint matching-based techniques in multi-target tracking. CF has evolved significantly since its foundational work, and many cutting-edge CF trackers now leverage deep CNN capabilities. While deep CNN features improve tracking efficiency, they also add computational complexity (Zhao et al., 2018).

The Single Shot Multibox Detector (SSD) generates target bounding box suggestions directly on several convolutional layers with diverse scales (s_n) and aspect ratios$a_r = \{1,2,3,\frac{1}{2},\frac{1}{3}\}$. Then, tracking using the correlation filter method is pursued as follows: "w" represents the weights to be learned, multiplied by the input sample feature "x." The output is the required filter response "y." For a specific training picture, many training samples are created by circularly shifting around the target. The intended output is a Gaussian distribution with low variance, as illustrated in the figure. The ridge regression problem is formulated as a $\min\|w * x - y\| + \lambda\|w\|^2$ Where * represents the circular correlation, and λ is the weight of regularization (Zhao et al., 2018).

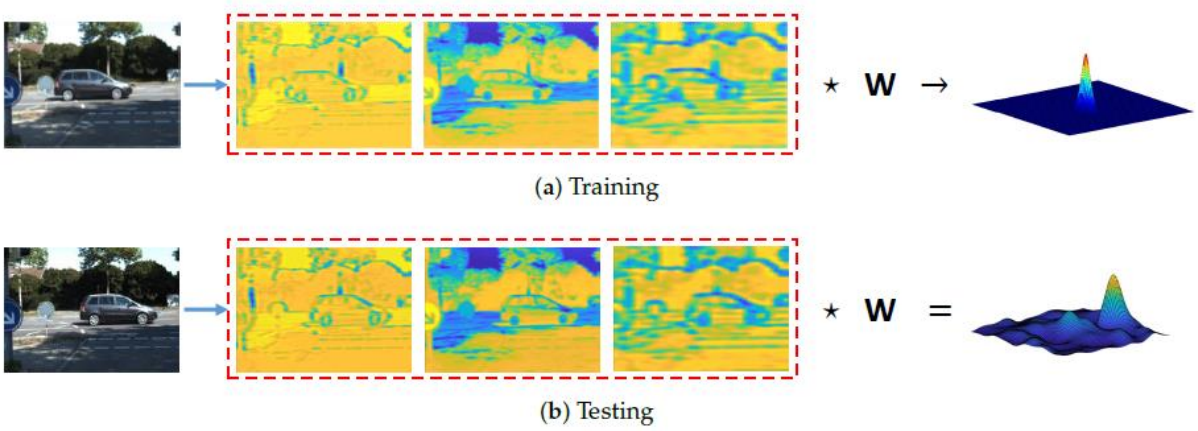

Figure 7 The figure illustrates the training (a) and testing (b) process of CCF. Three of the compressed (Zhao et al., 2018).

CNN feature channels are displayed in the middle. In the training phase, correlation filter weight W is

obtained by solving the ridge regression problem Equation, and the desired output is a Gaussian

distribution. In the testing phase, the response map is calculated using the Equation of (Zhao et al., 2018)

The spatial domain circular correlation could be converted into the frequency domain using FFT to lessen the computational complexity as:

- $min\|\hat{w}\odot\hat{x}-\hat{y}\|+\lambda\|\hat{w}\|^2$
  where $\hat{w}, \hat{x}, and\, \hat{y}$ are the Fourier transformations of w, x, and y, respectively, denote element-wise multiplication. $\hat{w}^*$, is the complex conjugate of $\hat{w}$,
- $\hat{w}=\frac{\hat{y}^*\odot\hat{x}}{\hat{x}^*\odot\hat{x}+\lambda}$ $y_0=F^{-1}\{\hat{w}^*\odot\hat{z}\}$ where $F^{-1}$is Fourier inverse (Zhao et al., 2018).
- The KITTI tracking dataset consists of 21 sequences in the training set and 29 sequences in the testing set. The MOT tracking dataset has 11 training sequences and 11 testing sequences. Only the ground truth of the training set is publicly available for both datasets.
- Regarding Multi-Scale Augmentation, the effectiveness of the multi-scale augmentation technique for training data is demonstrated in the following table. The comparison is made using the same tracker with other detectors, including the original SSD, the Fine-tuned

SSDO, and the SSD fine-tuned on the multi-scale augmented training data (Finetuned SSDOP). The training set data from KITTI detection is used for training.

- The results show significant improvement with the multi-scale augmentation method. MOTA, MOTP, and MT are improved by 47.25%, 9.47%, and 54.64%, respectively, over the original SSD, while ML is decreased by 28.45%. This indicates the necessity of a fine-tuning step in data-driven techniques.
- Moreover, Finetuned SSDOP further enhances performance compared to Finetuned SSDO. MOTA and MT increased by 18.09% and 27.06%, respectively, and ML decreased by 14.94% due to implementing the multi-scale augmentation method for the training data (Zhao et al., 2018).

Table 12 Analysis of training data augment strategy on the validation set. (Zhao et al., 2018)

Method	MOTP ⇑	MOTA ⇑	ML ⇓	MT ⇑
SSD + HOGCF	75.90%	36.68%	11.88%	21.96%
Fine-tuned SSDO + HOGCF	83.09%	54.01%	8.50%	33.96%

Table 13 Analysis of temporal ROIs augment strategy on the validation set (Zhao et al., 2018)

Method	MOTP ⇑	MOTA ⇑	ML ⇓	MT ⇑
Faster RCNN + HOGCF	72.55%	35.63%	21.96%	11.37%
Multi Faster RCNN + HOGCF	77.08%	43.58%	20.67%	15.50%
Fine tuned SSD + HOGCF	84.77%	63.78%	7.23%	43.15%

Moreover, KITTI and MOT2015 are to be compared as follows:

Table 14 Comparison with state-of-the-art methods on the testing subset of the KITTI dataset (Zhao et al., 2018)

Method	**Causality**	**Sensor**	**MOTP ⇑**	**MOTA ⇑**	**ML ⇓**	**MT ⇑**	**Tracking Time(s) ⇓**
SSP	online	monocular	79.00%	67.00%	9.00%	41.00%	0.60
NOMT-HM	online	monocular	80.10%	69.12%	15.02%	38.54%	0.09
LP-SSVM	offline	monocular	77.80%	77.20%	9.00%	43.10%	0.05
DCO-X	offline	monocular	78.85%	68.11%	14.15%	37.54%	0.90

Table 15 Comparison with state-of-the-art methods on the testing subset of the MOT2015 dataset (Zhao et al., 2018)

Method	**Causality**	**Sensor**	**IDF1 ⇑**	**MOTA ⇑**	**ML ⇓**	**MT ⇑**	**Tracking Time(s) ⇓**
MDP	online	monocular	44.7%	30.3%	38.4%	13.0%	0.91
MCFPHD	offline	monocular	38.2%	29.9%	44.0%	11.9%	0.08
CNNTCM	offline	monocular	36.8 %	29.6%	44.0%	11.2%	0.59
oICF	online	monocular	40.5%		27.1 %	48.7%	6.4%

Furthermore, to create continuous target tracks, this study aims to provide a modular architecture for monitoring numerous objects (vehicles) that can receive target suggestions from various sensor modalities (vision and range). AS DESCRIBED IN THE REFERENCED WORK, the MDP framework for Multiple Object Tracking (MOT) is generalized with several significant extensions. Firstly, we track objects using a variety of cameras and sensor modalities, precisely and effectively merging item suggestions across sensors. Secondly, the targets (items of interest) are immediately tracked in the actual world, which differs from conventional methods that only

track objects on the visual plane. This enables autonomous agents to utilize the tracks for navigation and other relevant activities.

Traditional MOT methods for autonomous cars can be loosely divided into three groups based on the sensory inputs they employ: 1) dense point clouds from range sensors, 2) vision sensors, and 3) a fusion of range and vision sensors. Some investigations use dense point clouds produced by 3D LiDARs, such as the Velodyne HDL-64E, which capture greater environmental details due to their high vertical resolution. Trackers in these methods can construct appropriate mid-level representations, such as 2.5D grids and voxels, to generate coherent, trackable objects while preserving the distinct statistics of the region they encompass. However, it should be highlighted that these methods rely on detailed point models of the environment and may not scale well to LiDAR sensors with fewer scan layers.

On the other hand, other research focuses solely on tracking using stereo vision. The process often involves estimating the disparity image and optionally creating a 3D point cloud. Comparable mid-level representations, such as stixels and voxels, are then utilized and tracked from frame to frame. The field of vision (FoV) of the stereo pair and the accuracy of disparity estimations limit these sensors' tracking capabilities, as they cannot track objects in full-surround, unlike 3D LiDAR-based systems.

Fusion-based methods combine Radars, stereo pairs, monocular cameras, and LiDARs in different ways. These approaches may achieve early or late fusion based on their algorithmic requirements and sensor configuration. However, they are ultimately constrained to fusion only

in the FoV of the vision sensors, and none of them seem to offer full-surround solutions for vision sensors.

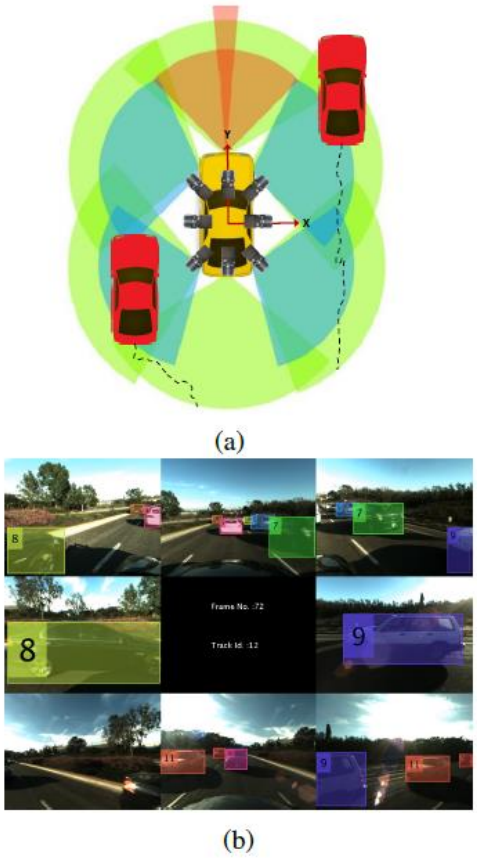

Figure 8 (a) Illustration of online MOT for autonomous vehicles. The surrounding vehicles (in red) are tracked in a right-handed coordinate system centered on the ego-vehicle (center). The ego-vehicle has full-surround coverage from vision and range sensors and must fuse proposals from each to generate continuous tracks (dotted lines) in the real world. (b) An example of images captured from a full-surround camera array mounted on our testbed, along with color-coded vehicle annotations. (Rangesh & Trivedi, 2018)

The main challenge in online (i.e., causal) tracking-by-detection is accurately associating noisy target detections in the current video frame with previously tracked objects. A similarity function between target detections and targets forms the basis of any data association technique. Combining multiple signals to compute similarity and learning associations based on these cues helps handle association ambiguity. Several modern 2D Multiple Object Tracking (MOT) techniques incorporate some form of learning (online or offline) to achieve data association. Markov Decision Processes (MDPs) are used to define the online multi-target tracking problem, and multiple MDPs are combined to simulate an object's lifetime for multi-target tracking. For th epurpose of offline and online learning for data association, reinforcement learning is utilized to

learn policies. The M^3 OT system naturally handles targets' birth, death, and appearance or disappearance by treating these events as MDP state transitions. It also benefits from online learning techniques for single-target tracking (Rangesh & Trivedi, 2019).

3D MOT for self-driving cars involves various approaches. One study uses a stereo rig to calculate disparity using Semi-Global Matching (SGM), followed by height-based segmentation, free-space calculation, and creating a mid-level representation using stixels encoding height within a cell. Each stixel is represented by a 6D state vector using the Extended Kalman Filter (EKF). Another study employs a voxel-based representation to build objects, which are then tracked using a greedy association model based on the color clustering of neighboring voxels. In a different approach, cells are grouped to form objects, each represented by a collection of control points on the target surface, using a grid-based representation of the scene and a Rao-Blackwellized particle filter to handle the high-dimensional state-space representation.

A more recent approach involves semantic segmentation on the disparity image to generate generic target suggestions. This is achieved by producing a scale-space representation of the density and then performing multi-scale clustering. A Quadratic Pseudo-Boolean Optimization (QPBO) framework is then used to follow the suggested clusters. Some previous works use similar camera configurations but suggest an offline architecture for tracking, limiting their utility to surveillance-related applications (Rangesh & Trivedi, 2019).

Table 16 Quantitative results showing ablative analysis of our proposed tracker . (Rangesh & Trivedi, 2019)

Criteria of comparison	Tracker variant	Sensor configuration		Mot metrics				
		n.o of cameras	Range sensors	MOTA ⇑	MOTP ⇓	MT ⇑	ML⇓	IDS⇓
Number of Cameras Used	-	2	found	73.38	0.03	71.36 %	16.13%	16
	-	3	found	77.26	0.03	77.34%	14.49%	38
	-	4	found	72.81	0.05	72.48%	20.76%	49

	-	4^+	found	74.18	0.05	74.10%	18.18%	45
	-	6	found	79.06	0.04	79.66%	11.93%	51
	-	8	found	75.10	0.04	70.37%	14.07%	59
Projection scheme	Point cloud-based projection	8	found	75.10	0.04	70.37%	19.26%	59
	IPM projection	8	For fusion	47.45	0.04	53.7%	14.07%	152
Fusion scheme	Point cloud-based fusion	8	found	75.10	0.04	70.37%	12.23%	59
	Distance-based fusion	8	For projection	40.98	0.4	68.23%	14.07%	65
Sensor modality	Cameras+LiDAR	8	found	75.10	0.04	70.37%	27.40%	59
	Cameras	8	Not found	73.89	0.05	50.00%	17.07%	171
Vehicle detector	RefineNet	8	found	69.93	0.04	70.37%	22.22%	59
	RetinaNet	8	found	75.10	0.04	68.37%	14.07%	72
	SubCat	8	Found	71.32	0.05	66.67%	17.78%	81

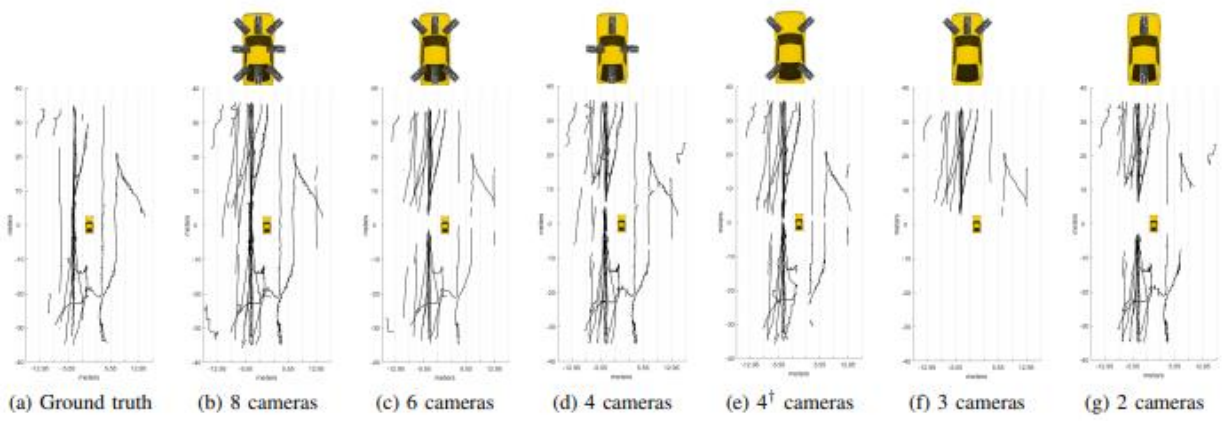

Figure 9 Tracking results with a different number of cameras. The camera configuration used is depicted above each mark. (Rangesh & Trivedi, 2019)

Obstacle avoidance in autonomous vehicles requires three primary levels: perception, path planning, and guidance control. These levels are interconnected to form a global architecture. An evidential occupancy grid-based method is utilized for dynamic obstacle detection in environment perception. This method considers target positions for trajectory generation, achieved using a smooth sigmoid function. Subsequently, the control guidance module uses the obstacle avoidance trajectory to calculate the appropriate steering angle (Laghmara et al., 2019).

In practice, perception consists of two components: environment modeling and localization. Environment modeling depends on exteroceptive sensors, while localization relies on proprioceptive sensors. Planning aims to generate an optimal trajectory based on perception results to reach a specific destination. Finally, the control module ensures the vehicle follows the generated trajectory by commanding the actuators.

The primary contribution of this paper is the integration of these tasks into a global architecture. The perception module accurately describes the world using Occupancy Grid Maps (OGM), which is especially useful for obstacle avoidance. OGM allows the identification of navigable areas and the location of static and dynamic objects in the scene. The poses of avoidable objects are then used at the path planning level to create a trajectory and speed profile based on a parameterized sigmoid function and a rolling horizon. The resulting curvature profile serves as a reference path for the guidance control module. The guidance control employs the Center of Percussion (CoP) rather than the traditional center of gravity to provide the necessary steering angle for the vehicle. The proposed controller uses feed-forward and state-feedback actions to

reduce lateral inaccuracy and provide lateral stability, minimizing the impact of disruptions (Laghmara et al., 2019).

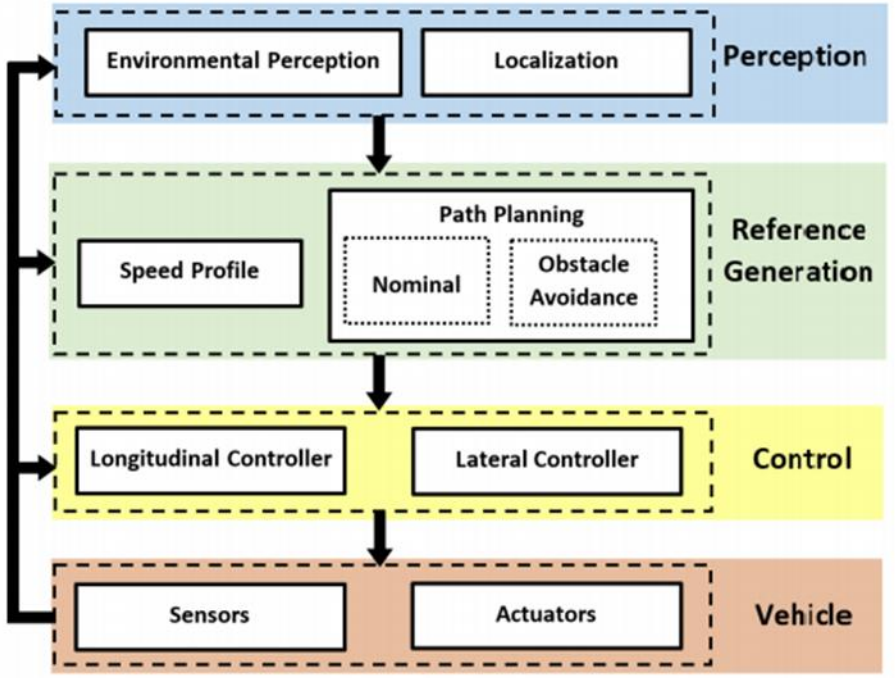

Figure 10 Obstacle avoidance strategy (Laghmara et al., 2019)

Regarding the Perception module, the localization component is assumed to be well-known and accurate, so it is ignored. The Occupancy Grid (OG) is a widely used method for obtaining information about the road and nearby objects. It applies to various tasks, including collision avoidance, sensor fusion, target tracking, and simultaneous localization and mapping (SLAM). The basic principle of OG is to describe the environment as a grid of binary random variables, representing whether there is an obstacle present. Given the known vehicle pose, OG can be constructed using different formalizations to handle noisy and uncertain sensor data (Laghmara et al., 2019).

Regarding the Reference Module:

The perception module provides the planner driving zones and obstacle locations, allowing the generation of a geometric trajectory and speed profile. The goal is to create a notional trajectory from the starting point to the destination based on the drivable zones. Additionally, an obstacle avoidance trajectory is calculated to ensure passenger safety and comfort when an obstacle is

detected. The avoidance trajectory only affects a small portion of the nominal trajectory and is generated using local planning with the rolling horizon method to reduce computation costs.

The longitudinal and lateral controllers ensure automatic driving guidance in the control module. The lateral controller, which handles obstacle avoidance, is of particular importance. The lateral controller follows the desired path the reference module generates using an appropriate steering angle δ_f. This helps reduce lateral and orientation errors, improving trajectory tracking. The dynamic technique based on the Center of Percussion (CoP) is utilized for lateral guidance due to its performance advantages. The CoP, located ahead of the vehicle's Center of Gravity (CoG), anticipates lateral position errors and simplifies lateral dynamic equations.

Trajectory Generation:

The focus of this section is path planning or generating a geometric trajectory based on coordinated points described by $A_i\ (x_i, y_i)$. The speed profile and related longitudinal control are not considered in this work, as the main purpose is to verify the feasibility of the suggested avoidance architecture. The path planning module has two goals: producing a local trajectory to avoid detected barriers and generating a global nominal trajectory based on the start and destination coordinates.

The avoidance trajectory should adhere to safety standards, especially regarding lateral and longitudinal distances from obstacles. Once an obstacle is detected, the safety zone is defined based on an ellipse's semi-major and semi-minor axes. The avoidance trajectory is created using

a sigmoid-based function to ensure passenger comfort. The smoothness degree C can be tuned to define the avoidance trajectory (Laghmara et al., 2019)

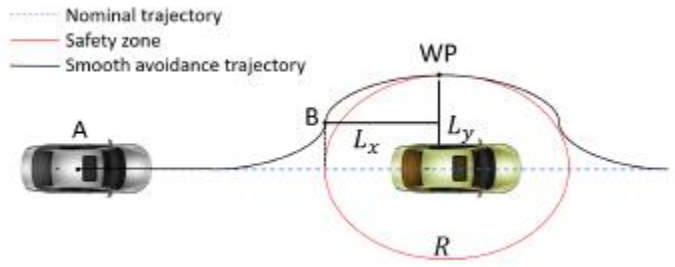

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Figure 11 Trajectory Planning (Laghmara et al., 2019)

As illustrated in the following figure, the lateral guidance seeks to minimize both errors: the orientation error e between the vehicle's longitudinal axis and the reference trajectory and the lateral error e_y between the vehicle's CoG and the reference trajectory. (Laghmara et al., 2019)

$$\dot{e_y} = v_y + v_x e_\psi \qquad\qquad e_\psi = \psi - \psi_{ref}$$

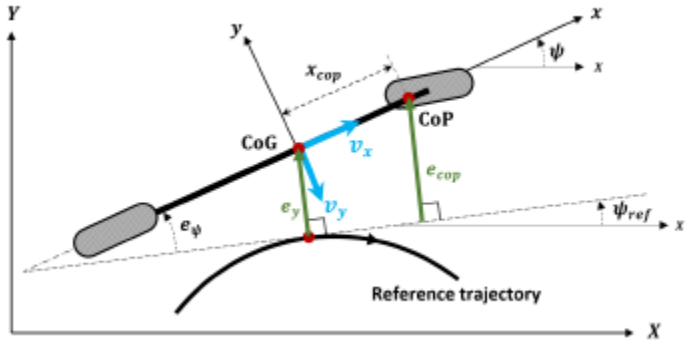

Figure 12 Lateral and orientation errors using CoP (Laghmara et al., 2019)

It is suggested to utilize the lateral error at the CoP specified rather than the traditional CoG lateral error e_y. (Laghmara et al., 2019)

$$e_{cop} = e_y + x_{cop} e_\psi$$

With x_{cop}, the distance between the CoP and the CoG is solely based on the vehicle's configuration. $x_{cop} = \frac{I_z}{mL_f}$ where L_f is the distance from the center of gravity to the front axle and m and I_z are the vehicle mass and yaw inertia, respectively. As seen in the previous picture,

the CoP lateral error e_{cop} is higher than the lateral error e_y. In this manner, the lateral position error is anticipated, and better trajectory tracking can be anticipated. Unlike the traditional utilized controllers based on the CoG, the center of percussion (CoP) is used here as a geometric point on the vehicle (center of gravity). The primary benefit of the CoP is the simplification of the lateral dynamics equations because it is not affected by the motion of the rear tire lateral force. Based on the planar bicycle model, the CoP lateral guidance controller's tracking error model is as follows: $\dot{\xi}(t) = A_c\xi(t) + B_c\delta_f(t) + D_c w_{ref}(t)$ with $state\ vector\ error\ \xi = \left[e_{cop}, \dot{e}_{cop}, e_{\psi}, \dot{e}_{\psi}\right]^T$, $the\ front\ steering\ angle\ \delta_f\ and\ the\ \ vector\ that\ contains\ the\ appropriate\ yaw\ rate\ and\ acceleration\ \ is\ referred\ to\ as\ a\ disturbance\ in\ this\ context.\ w_{ref} = \left[\dot{\psi}_{ref}, \ddot{\psi}_{ref}\right]^T$

Supervised learning is a common theme in the literature on target detection using DNN. To address sensor failures, Nitsch et al. explored unsupervised learning. Due to the time-sensitive nature of autonomous vehicles (AV), Yang et al. deployed multiple Graphics Processing Units (GPU) in a parallel pipeline to overcome the industrial challenges of Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) frameworks. Amert et al. explored GPU scheduling on an NVIDIA GPU to uncover the execution details of DNNs, as real-time DNN performance is critical for AV. Schoettle studied AV and human drivers and found that sensor fusion and networked autonomous vehicles are essential for achieving DNN's performance goals for reasoning and perception in AV (Laghmara et al., 2019).

Feng et al. focused on the challenges of fusing camera, LiDAR, and sensor datasets. Arnold et al. primarily used KITTI datasets to investigate 3D target detection. Krebs et al. explored different approaches that use DNNs to track objects based on camera images, while Luo et al. reviewed related work and shared different assessment methodologies and datasets (Ravindran et al., 2021).

CAMERA AND ITS DNN: A camera is an essential part of an AV for perception. There is extensive research on applying DNN-based image-processing techniques for target recognition and classification using various types of cameras, such as monocular, fish-eye, thermal, stereo, infrared, and time-of-flight cameras. Lighting and different weather conditions are primary challenges for cameras.

With a camera, two main methods are used for classifying and detecting objects. Many researchers prefer two-stage DNNs because they are more accurate, as assessed by mean Average Precision (mAP), as seen in the following figure. Two-stage methodologies include the

Region-based CNN (R-CNN) and its upgraded iterations, Fast R-CNN and Faster R-CNN. These two-stage techniques can be used with various CNN architectures, including ResNet-101 and Inception-V2 (Ravindran et al., 2021).

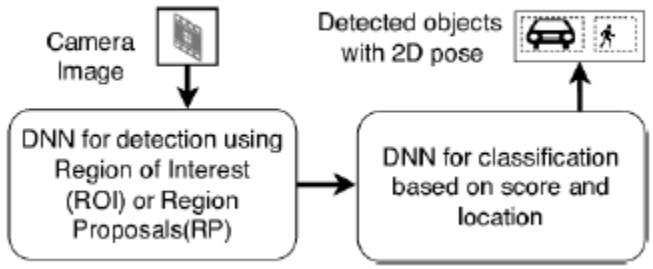

Figure 13 Two-stage target detection. (Ravindran et al., 2021)

LIDAR AND ITS DNNs

According to the figure below, LiDAR signals (point clouds) are processed for DNNs in three basic categories. Table II compares some of the most popular DNNs for processing point clouds. The first category employs 3D voxel processing, where a voxel represents the smallest

discernible object in 3D space. There are three primary voxel processing techniques for LiDAR signals.

The first technique efficiently preserves 3D space by converting the point cloud into a finite collection of intervals. Li used a Fully Convolutional Network (FCN) for detecting 3D objects with this method. However, it may result in empty voxels due to the sparse points in LiDAR.

The second technique, Zhou et al., suggested a Voxel Feature Encoding (VFE). They use VFE to encode the point cloud as a descriptive volumetric representation, which is subsequently analyzed to provide detections. However, this method has a lengthy inference time.

Yan et al. integrated VFE with the convolution network as the third technique to address the inference speed. This approach utilizes a novel variation of angle loss regression to enhance the performance of orientation estimation (Ravindran et al., 2021).

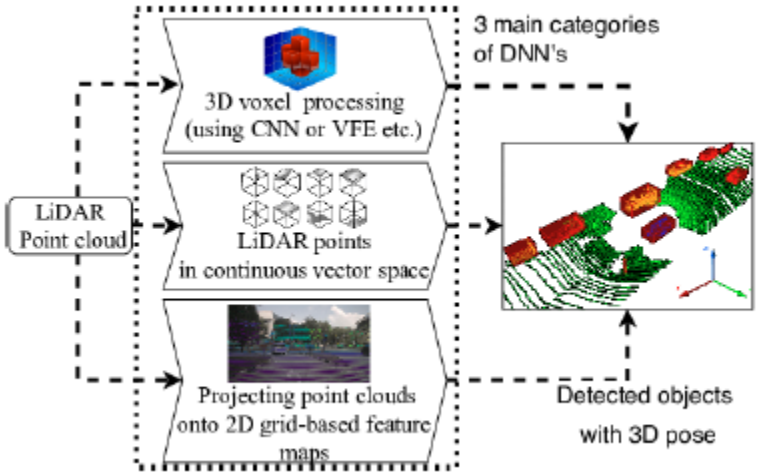

Figure 14 LiDAR point cloud processing using DNN. (Ravindran et al., 2021)

2.2 Research Achievements

2.2.1 Research achievements in Autonomous vehicles and Target detection

Target detection can be categorized into two main approaches: hand-engineered feature-based methods and deep learning network-based methods. The first category includes three main methods: Scale-Invariant Feature Transform (SIFT), Histograms of Oriented Gradient (HOG), and Deformable Part Models (DPM). However, in the field of self-driving cars, deep learning methods are more commonly used.

Among the best deep learning methods are Region-based Convolutional Neural Network (R-CNN), Fast R-CNN, and Faster R-CNN, which achieve a mean Average Precision (MAP) value of 94.32% with a speed of 106 ms/image. These two-stage algorithms utilize a region proposal network (RPN) to generate regions of interest, followed by classification in the second stage.

On the other hand, there are one-stage algorithms like YOLO and SSD, which achieve a mAP of 88.998% with a speed of 30 ms/image. These algorithms treat target detection as a regression problem, directly learning probabilities and bounding boxes from the input image.

YOLO can achieve 150 frames per second for small networks and 45 frames per second for large ones (Neeraj, 2021).

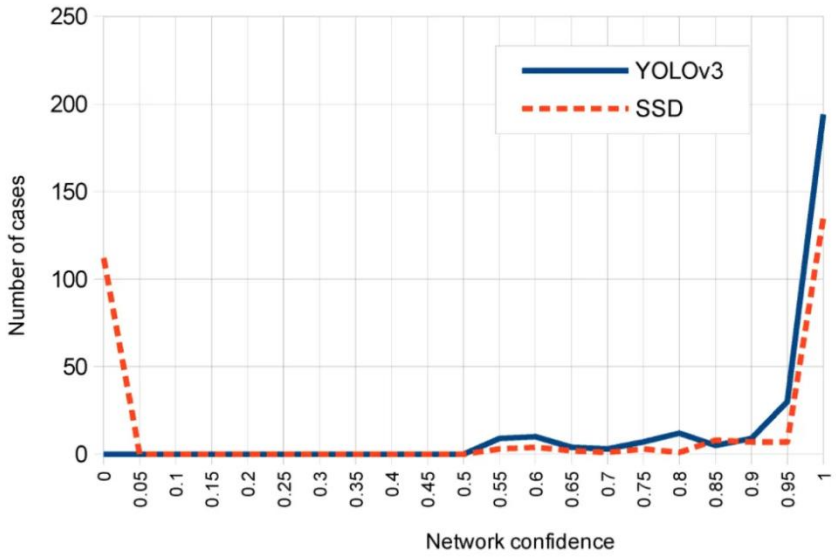

Figure 15 YOLOV3 VS. SSD (Neeraj, 2021)

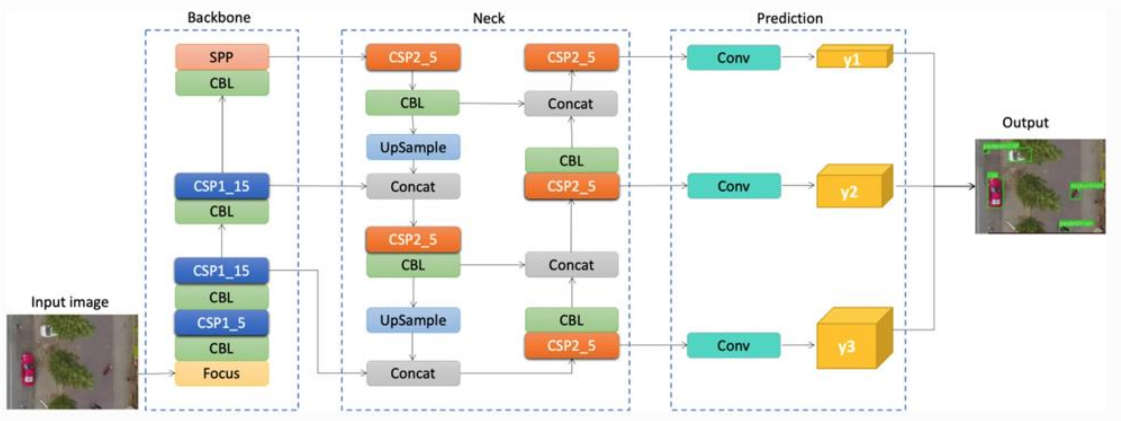

Figure 16 architecture of deeper wider yolo(Chen et al., 2023)

2.2.2 Research Achievements in Autonomous vehicles with real-time avoidance

1. To track objects in 3D, we extend and refine the MDP formulation initially suggested for 2D MOT in the real world.

2. The $M^3\ OT$ framework is enhanced to track objects across multiple vision sensors in calibrated camera arrays through effective and precise target proposal fusion.

3. The $M^3\ OT$ framework is designed to be highly modular, allowing it to work with any number of cameras, different levels of FoV overlap, and the option to add range sensors for improved localization and 3D fusion.

Experiments are conducted using naturalistic driving data collected on roads with full-surround sensory modalities to evaluate our approach's accuracy, robustness, and adaptability (Rangesh & Trivedi, 2019).

Autonomous vehicles have become a significant area of robotics and artificial intelligence study. A crucial challenge in developing autonomous vehicles is recognizing and avoiding obstacles. This article outlines the recent research advances in autonomous vehicle target avoidance and tracking.

Target Avoidance: Detecting and avoiding obstacles is essential for autonomous vehicles to operate safely in dynamic environments. Groundbreaking research has shown that deep learning techniques can effectively train autonomous vehicles to identify and circumvent obstacles (Tran et al., 2021). Li et al. (2019) proposed a new approach for target detection that employs a multi-task learning framework, enabling autonomous vehicles to identify and classify objects simultaneously.

Target Tracking: Target tracking is vital for autonomous vehicles to maintain situational awareness and accurately predict the behavior of nearby objects. State-of-the-art research has demonstrated that convolutional neural networks (CNNs) can efficiently track objects. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2020) introduced an innovative technique for target tracking using a deep reinforcement learning algorithm, enabling autonomous vehicles to learn how to track objects in dynamic environments.

The Importance of Sensor Fusion: Real-world environments' complexity demands a comprehensive perception system for autonomous vehicles. Relying on a single sensor may lead to limitations and potential blind spots in perception. For example, cameras excel at capturing visual information but may struggle in low-light conditions, while LIDAR sensors provide precise depth information but might face difficulties in adverse weather conditions. By fusing

data from multiple sensors, autonomous vehicles can compensate for individual sensor limitations and create a more reliable and robust perception of the environment.

Techniques in Sensor Fusion: Sensor fusion algorithms employ Kalman filters, particle filters, and Bayesian inference to merge data from different sensors and generate accurate representations of surrounding objects. Let's explore some of the key techniques used in sensor fusion:

1. Computer Vision: Computer vision techniques utilize image processing and machine learning algorithms to extract meaningful information from visual sensor data. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) are commonly used for object detection and recognition tasks. These techniques analyze the visual input to identify and track objects, estimate their trajectories, and make decisions accordingly. Computer vision-based approaches can be effective when cameras are the primary sensors, or visual information is crucial for object avoidance and tracking.

2. LiDAR-Based Techniques: Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology employs laser beams to measure distances and create 3D representations of the environment. LiDAR-based techniques enable accurate object detection, localization, and tracking. They leverage point cloud data from LiDAR sensors to identify obstacles, estimate their positions and velocities, and plan appropriate avoidance maneuvers. LiDAR-based techniques are beneficial in scenarios where precise depth information is critical for object avoidance.

3. Probabilistic Approaches: Probabilistic techniques, such as Bayesian filters (e.g., Kalman filters and Particle filters), utilize probabilistic models to estimate the state of objects and predict their future trajectories. These approaches incorporate uncertainty into object tracking, enabling autonomous vehicles to handle noisy sensor measurements and dynamically changing environments. Probabilistic techniques often combine data from multiple sensors and iteratively update the object states based on new sensor inputs.

4. Model Predictive Control (MPC): Model Predictive Control is a control strategy that uses a predictive model of the vehicle's dynamics to optimize control actions. MPC considers a prediction horizon and evaluates a sequence of future control inputs to choose the optimal trajectory that minimizes a defined cost function. By incorporating object detection and tracking

information, MPC can plan and adjust vehicle trajectories in real time to avoid obstacles and maintain safe distances from surrounding objects.

5. Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL): Among these techniques, Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL) is a promising approach in autonomous vehicle object avoidance and tracking. DRL combines deep neural networks with reinforcement learning algorithms to enable autonomous vehicles to learn optimal policies through interaction with their environment. By learning from raw sensor data, DRL algorithms can extract relevant features, make decisions, and control the vehicle's actions without requiring explicit programming or handcrafted rules.

Overview of Deep Q-Network (DQN): Deep Q-Network (DQN) is a DRL algorithm that uses a deep neural network to approximate the optimal action-value function. The action-value function represents the expected cumulative reward for taking a specific action in a given state and following the optimal policy afterward. The DQN algorithm uses an experience replay buffer to store and sample experiences from the agent's interactions with the environment and a target network to stabilize the learning process. DQN has been used in various applications, including game-playing and autonomous driving.

Deep Q-Networks (DQN) are a variant of profound reinforcement learning algorithms that combine Q-learning with deep neural networks (Mnih et al., 2015). The DQN algorithm was introduced by DeepMind in 2015 and has since become a benchmark and a cornerstone for much of the research in deep reinforcement learning (Mnih et al., 2015; ResearchGate, 2019).

DQN enables agents to learn how to execute actions in an environment to maximize a reward. It has successfully solved a wide range of Atari games, some to a superhuman level (Martínez Ojeda, J. ,2023)

One significant improvement that DQN introduces over basic Q-learning is the introduction of a new "Target-Q-Network" (Sewak, M. ,2019). This network helps stabilize the learning process by preventing the target values from oscillating during learning (Doshi, 2020). Instead of using the same Q-network for computing the expected and target Q-values, the DQN algorithm uses two distinct networks: a "primary" Q-network and a "target" Q-network. The primary Q-network is

updated with every iteration, while the target Q-network is only updated periodically to match the current values of the primary Q-network (Sewak, M. ,2019).

DQN employs a neural network as a function approximator, and the objective is to approximate the Bellman Expectation of the Q-value function as closely as possible. This is achieved by minimizing the loss function, defined as the difference between the predicted Q-value and the target Q-value squared (Winder, 2020)

TF-Agents is a valuable library that provides all the components essential for training a DQN agent, such as the agent itself, the environment, policies, networks, replay buffers, data collection loops, and metrics.These components are implemented as Python functions or TensorFlow graph ops, and there are also wrappers for converting between them.

Although DQN has successfully solved various problems, it has some limitations. For instance, it can be slow learning and face challenges involving large, continuous action spaces (Amine, 2020). Nevertheless, various extensions to DQN aim to address these limitations, such as Double DQN and Dueling DQN (Sewak, M. ,2019). In summary, DQN is a robust algorithm that has facilitated the advancement of deep reinforcement learning (Amine, 2020).

Applications of DRL in Autonomous Vehicles: DRL algorithms are used to control autonomous vehicles in various scenarios, such as lane following, merging, and intersection negotiation. In the context of obstacle avoidance and object tracking, DRL algorithms enable the vehicle to learn appropriate actions in response to different types of obstacles and road conditions. For example, the vehicle can learn to slow down, change lanes, or take evasive maneuvers to avoid collisions with pedestrians, other vehicles, or obstacles on the road.

Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL) has emerged as a promising paradigm for autonomous vehicles (AVs) due to its ability to acquire complex control policies through environmental interaction. DRL combines reinforcement learning, where an agent learns to make decisions based on rewards and penalties, with deep learning, which uses deep neural networks to process high-dimensional input data.

Numerous scholarly papers and articles have investigated the applications of DRL in autonomous vehicles, highlighting its potential to enhance safety, efficiency, and decision-making

process. Here, we present an overview of pivotal discoveries and prospects in DRL for autonomous vehicles:

DRL Approaches for AV Sensor Suite: DRL has been harnessed to acquire proficiency in utilizing the sensor suite aboard autonomous vehicles. These approaches strive to optimize the perception and comprehension of the environment (Pérez-Gil et al., 2022).

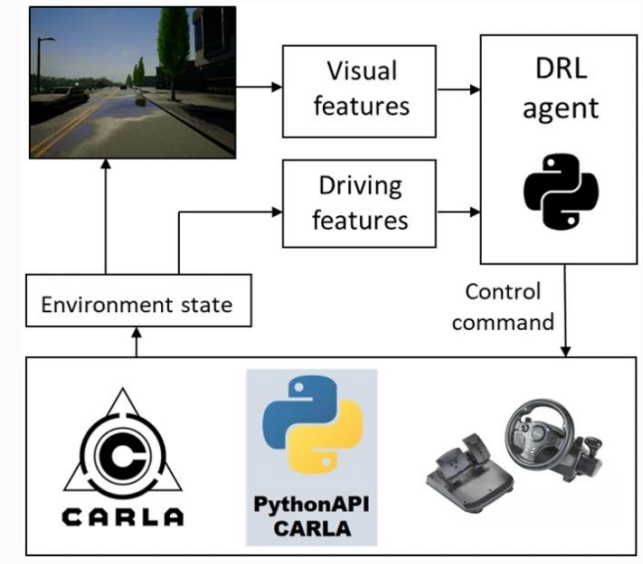

Figure 17 framework (Pérez-Gil et al., 2022)

Balancing Safety and Efficiency: A paramount challenge in autonomous driving lies in making decisions while coexisting with human drivers. DRL methods, such as DRL-GAT-SA, have been proposed to strike a harmonious equilibrium between safety and efficiency in uncertain environments [2].

Prospects in DRL: Researchers are toiling to develop more comprehensive and efficient computational graph models for DRL. These models aim to facilitate the integration of attention mechanisms, memory units, and other advancements to augment the performance of DRL in autonomous vehicles [3].

DRL Applications in Autonomous Driving Tasks: DRL algorithms have been employed in a many automated driving tasks, and a survey paper provides a taxonomy of these tasks. The survey

explores the fundamental computational aspects and sheds light on the array of tasks where DRL has been applied [4].

Obstacle Avoidance and Object Tracking with DRL:

DRL algorithms can train agents to detect and track objects in the environment and take appropriate actions to avoid collisions. For example, the agent can learn to use information from sensors such as LiDAR and cameras to estimate nearby objects' position, velocity, and trajectory and take actions such as braking or steering to avoid collisions. The DRL algorithm can be trained using simulated and real-world data to improve its performance in different scenarios.

Evaluation and Comparison of DRL Algorithms for Autonomous Vehicles:

The performance of DRL algorithms for autonomous vehicles can be evaluated using various metrics, such as the success rate of obstacle avoidance and object tracking, the speed and efficiency of the control policy, and the safety and robustness of the system. Different DRL algorithms can be compared based on their performance on these metrics, as well as their scalability, computational efficiency, and ease of implementation.

Conclusion: In conclusion, recent breakthroughs in research have demonstrated that deep and reinforcement learning techniques & algorithms are utilized to enhance target recognition and tracking proficiency of self-governing vehicles to a significant degree. These advances in autonomous vehicle technology can potentially optimize road safety and efficiency.

2.2.3 Rationale for Selecting YOLOv7

Advantages of YOLOv7: In the field of autonomous vehicle technology, choosing the right object detection model is crucial, and YOLOv7 stands out due to its impressive balance of speed and precision. Unlike R-CNN models, YOLOv7 operates at a much faster pace, which is critical in environments that demand quick decision-making. At the same time, it surpasses SSD models in maintaining accuracy under diverse conditions. This is especially important for autonomous vehicles, where both processing speed and detection accuracy are key to safety and performance. YOLOv7's architecture allows for immediate image analysis through a single evaluation process, making it an ideal choice for applications that require swift and dependable reactions to dynamic surroundings.

Link to Our Work: Our research utilizes YOLOv7 because it has shown significant effectiveness in environments with varying light and weather conditions, as well as fast-moving objects, which are common in both urban and rural settings. We have chosen YOLOv7 to tackle the shortcomings seen in earlier models, such as high false positive rates and inconsistent performance in adverse conditions. By training YOLOv7 with a dataset that mirrors real-world scenarios, we aim to enhance its detection capabilities, ensuring it performs reliably across different environmental challenges.

2.3.Research Gap Addressed by YOLOv7 in Autonomous Vehicle Technologies

2.3.1 Enhanced Detection Speed for Real-Time Processing:

One of YOLOv7's significant strengths is its ability to rapidly process images, which is essential for real-time object detection in autonomous vehicles. This addresses the need for fast and efficient processing, allowing autonomous systems to make quick decisions based on the evolving environment. The architecture of YOLOv7 is tailored to manage video frames sequentially at high speeds, drastically reducing latency and enabling vehicles to respond promptly to real-world circumstances.

2.3.2. High Accuracy in Diverse Conditions:

YOLOv7 addresses the accuracy limitations of previous models by performing well across various environmental conditions. It maintains high detection accuracy despite changes in light and weather, which are typical challenges in outdoor environments. By accurately identifying objects in different situations, YOLOv7 meets the operational reliability demands necessary for autonomous vehicles to function effectively in complex surroundings.

2.3.3. Reduction of False Positives and Negatives:

In autonomous vehicle systems, minimizing false positives and negatives is vital, as they can lead to inappropriate responses, like unnecessary braking or missing actual obstacles. YOLOv7 confronts these issues with sophisticated machine learning techniques that improve its precision in distinguishing between pertinent and irrelevant objects. This refinement helps decrease erroneous identifications, enhancing the overall safety and reliability of autonomous driving systems.

2.3.4. Improved Object Recognition Across Varied Scenarios:

Thanks to robust training on diverse datasets, YOLOv7 excels in recognizing an extensive range of object types, a necessity for autonomous vehicles navigating environments filled with various static and dynamic obstacles. By leveraging broad and diverse data during training, YOLOv7 effectively fills the gap in object recognition capabilities, particularly in identifying pedestrians, cyclists, and other essential elements that vehicles must detect to ensure safe navigation.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Simulation Setup

3.1.1 Tools and Simulator Configuration:

In our research, we relied on the CARLA 0.9.14 simulator, which was operated on Ubuntu 20.04 and built with Unreal Engine 4.26. We opted for this particular setup due to its proven stability and its excellent support for crafting realistic simulation environments, crucial for the detailed testing of autonomous vehicle (AV) technologies. CARLA provides a dynamic and flexible platform that accommodates various sensor setups and environmental scenarios essential for our experiments.

3.1.2 Environment Choices:

For our simulations, we chose both urban and rural settings within CARLA to replicate the diverse challenges autonomous vehicles encounter in real-life situations. Urban settings were selected to scrutinize our algorithm's performance in dense, obstacle-heavy environments. Meanwhile, rural settings offered a contrasting landscape to evaluate performance in more open spaces, presenting unique challenges like irregular road edges and fewer dynamic elements.

3.2 Algorithm Used

3.2.1 Why YOLOv7?

The algorithm YOLOv7 was selected because of its superior performance in both speed and accuracy, critical factors for real-time object detection in AV applications. In comparison to its previous versions and other similar algorithms, YOLOv7 strikes an optimal balance that is perfectly suited for the intensive scenarios we simulated.

3.2.2 Configuration:

We configured YOLOv7 to detect multiple classes of objects essential for AV navigation, such as vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. This configuration ensured the algorithm could effectively process the diverse and dynamic data streams supplied by the simulated sensors in CARLA.

3.3 Testing Procedures

3.3.1 Steps for Testing:

Initialization: Establish the CARLA environment with predetermined urban and rural scenarios.

Simulation: Operate the simulator under a variety of environmental conditions—altering weather, lighting, and traffic density—to test the algorithm's robustness.

Data Collection: Gather detection data from the YOLOv7 algorithm, focusing on the specified object classes.

Adjustments: Make real-time parameter modifications based on initial observations to optimize detection performance.

This systematic approach allowed us to thoroughly evaluate the algorithm's performance across varied conditions, ensuring comprehensive testing..

3.4 Validation

3.4.1 Validation Techniques:

To ensure accuracy, we validated our results using several statistical tools and techniques.

3.4.2 Confusion Matrices:

These metrics were pivotal in assessing the YOLOv7 algorithm's effectiveness in correctly identifying objects within the simulation.

3.4.3 Precision and Recall Metrics:

These metrics were crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of the YOLOv7 algorithm in accurately identifying objects within the simulation.

3.4.4 Visualization of Results:

We used graphical methods, including precision-recall curves, to visually evaluate and present the algorithm's performance under various testing conditions.

3.5 Sensor Configurations

3.5.1 Sensor Choices and Integration:

The primary sensors we employed were LIDAR and stereo cameras. The stereo cameras generated depth images, which were integral for detecting objects in three-dimensional space, thereby enhancing the algorithm's spatial detection abilities. These images were layered with LIDAR data, which added precision in pinpointing object locations, crucial for navigating complex environments.

3.5.2 Impact on Object Detection:

Integrating depth images with LIDAR data significantly improved our object detection accuracy. This setup facilitated precise distance measurement and better recognition of object outlines, proving useful in both crowded urban scenarios and expansive rural landscapes.

3.6 Conclusion

All methodological choices made, from selecting YOLOv7 and CARLA to the intricate integration of sensors, were strategically aligned with our core research goals. These choices aimed at enhancing accuracy, reliability, and real-time responsiveness of autonomous vehicle systems within simulated environments. This chapter has detailed the careful considerations and rigorous testing procedures foundational to our research, paving the way for future advancements in autonomous vehicle technology.

Chapter 4: Simulation Setup and Initial Testing

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the setup and configuration procedures employed in the thesis project titled "Navigating the Future: Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance." It outlines the technical environment and essential steps necessary to prepare the simulation tools for practical use.

4.1 Testing Scenarios in CARLA

In the thesis "Navigating the Future: Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance," we crafted an array of scenarios within the CARLA simulator to rigorously test the YOLOv7 object detection algorithm under various environmental conditions. These scenarios are pivotal in replicating the real-world challenges that autonomous vehicles (AVs) might encounter. Below, we delineate the different testing scenarios and explain how they simulate real-life driving situations:

4.1.1. Rural Setting with Clear Weather:

Conditions: Clear skies.

Time of Day: Morning, expected to be typical daylight conditions.

Challenges: This scenario evaluates the algorithm's capacity to detect objects under optimal conditions with high visibility, serving as a baseline for sensor performance.

4.1.2. Rural Setting with Overcast Weather:

Conditions: 80% cloudiness, no precipitation.

Time of Day: Late afternoon, with the sun at a 60-degree altitude angle.

Challenges: Overcast conditions reduce lighting contrast, potentially affecting the algorithm's ability to distinguish objects from their backgrounds, reflecting common driving conditions in many regions.

4.1.3. Urban Setting with Post-Rainfall Wet Conditions:

Conditions: Light rain with 10% precipitation, 30% wet road conditions.

Time of Day: Early evening, with the sun at a 50-degree altitude angle.

Duration: Extended simulation of 10 minutes.

Challenges: Post-rain scenarios in urban environments assess how well the detection system handles reflective surfaces and reduced traction, crucial for ensuring safe urban driving after precipitation.

4.1.4. Urban Setting with Overcast Weather:

Conditions: 80% cloudiness, no precipitation.

Time of Day: Late afternoon, with the sun at a 60-degree altitude angle.

Challenges: Similar to the rural overcast scenario, but with the added complexity of urban elements—vehicles, pedestrians, and infrastructure—that challenge the algorithm's accuracy and real-time response capabilities.

4.2 Reflection of Real-World Challenges

These scenarios are crafted to replicate the diverse conditions an AV might face in reality, testing the robustness and adaptability of the YOLOv7 algorithm:

Varied Lighting Conditions: The simulations transition from bright daylight to late afternoon and early evening, allowing us to evaluate how changing light angles and intensities influence detection reliability. This is vital since natural light varies widely throughout the day, significantly affecting object visibility.

Weather Variability:By simulating different weather conditions, we assess the impact of environmental factors on sensor effectiveness and algorithm performance. Real-world driving demands AVs to operate safely regardless of weather, making this a critical aspect of our testing.

Urban and Rural Dynamics: The contrasting urban and rural scenarios help us understand how the detection system performs in environments with varying levels of complexity. Urban areas typically have more dynamic obstacles (e.g., pedestrians, cyclists), while rural roads may present challenges like animals or sharp bends without clear markings.

4.3 Technical Challenges

4.3.1 Hardware challenges

Initially, when we attempted to use a PC with 16 GB RAM and 4GB up to 8GB dedicated GPU, the CARLA simulator was unstable and often crashed immediately after launch. Therefore, we switched to the proposed system of 96 GB RAM and a 16 GB DDR6 dedicated GPU.

4.3.2 Software challenges.

When we first used CARLA 0.9.15 on Ubuntu 22.04, some newly added plugins, like “Traffic Manager Enhancements,” caused the simulator to crash. Switching to CARLA 0.9.15 on Ubuntu 20.04 proved to be a more stable option, leading to no further crashes due to plugins.

4.4: Initial Setup Configuration

This section details the initial configuration choices, including software and hardware, selected to effectively simulate real-world scenarios for autonomous vehicle navigation.

4.4.1: Choosing the Simulation Environment

Describes the selection of CARLA 0.9.15 on Ubuntu 22.04 with the AORUS GeForce RTX™ 4080 16GB MASTER and Python 3.10, highlighting the benefits these choices offer for the project's initial phases.

4.4.2: Installation and Initial Challenges

The environment chosen for the thesis, "Navigating the Future: Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance," is vital for simulating real-world scenarios where autonomous vehicles operate. The combination of the CARLA simulator, Unreal Engine, Ubuntu OS, and the powerful AORUS GeForce RTX™ 4080 GPU provides a robust platform for developing and testing autonomous driving technologies.

Carla Simulator 0.9.15: This version of the CARLA simulator offers a comprehensive, open-source environment designed for autonomous driving research. CARLA provides realistic urban scenarios and an array of sensor simulations, essential for training and validating the autonomous vehicle's perception algorithms.

Unreal Engine 4.26: Integrated with CARLA, Unreal Engine enables the rendering of highly realistic environments. This capability is crucial for testing the visual recognition aspects of autonomous systems, where accurate environmental replication impacts the system's ability to perceive and react to dynamic conditions.

Ubuntu 22.04: This stable and widely supported Linux distribution is ideal for developing high-performance computing applications like autonomous driving simulations. Its compatibility with various software and hardware makes it a preferred choice for a consistent and efficient development environment.

AORUS GeForce RTX™ 4080 16GB MASTER: The GPU's high processing power significantly enhances the performance of machine learning models and real-time simulations. It supports intensive computations required for processing multiple inputs from simulated sensors and executing complex algorithms, including deep reinforcement learning for object tracking and avoidance.

Required Components for the Carla Environment

To fully support the CARLA environment on Ubuntu 22.04 with Unreal Engine 4.26, the following components need to be installed:

CARLA Simulator 0.9.15: Download and install the latest version from the official GitHub repository.

Unreal Engine 4.26: Install via the Epic Games Launcher or build from source available on GitHub.

Python 3.10: Ensure Python and necessary libraries such as NumPy, TensorFlow, PyTorch, and OpenCV are installed for running the AI models.

NVIDIA Driver: Install the latest NVIDIA driver compatible with the RTX 4080 to ensure optimal performance.

CUDA Toolkit: Required for GPU acceleration in machine learning tasks. Ensure compatibility with the installed NVIDIA driver and TensorFlow or PyTorch versions.

cuDNN: A GPU-accelerated library for deep neural networks, necessary for efficient training of models on the RTX 4080.

Additional Python Libraries: Install libraries such as matplotlib for plotting, pandas for data handling, and scikit-learn for additional machine learning tools.

First of all you must install the required software by the following commands

[sudo apt update && sudo apt install wget software-properties-common && sudo add-apt-repository ppa:ubuntu-toolchain-r/test && wget -O - https://apt.llvm.org/llvm-snapshot.gpg.key|sudo apt-key add - && sudo apt-add-repository "deb http://apt.llvm.org/xenial/ llvm-toolchain-xenial-8 main" && sudo apt update]

Secondly, install the dependencies related to your specific ubuntu version.

For Ubuntu 22.04

[sudo apt-add-repository "deb http://archive.ubuntu.com/ubuntu focal main universe"
sudo apt-get update
sudo apt-get install build-essential clang-10 lld-10 g++-7 cmake ninja-build libvulkan1 python python3 python3-dev python3-pip libpng-dev libtiff5-dev libjpeg-dev tzdata sed curl unzip autoconf libtool rsync libxml2-dev git git-lfs
sudo update-alternatives --install /usr/bin/clang++ clang++ /usr/lib/llvm-10/bin/clang++ 180 &&
sudo update-alternatives --install /usr/bin/clang clang /usr/lib/llvm-10/bin/clang 180 &&
sudo update-alternatives --install /usr/bin/g++ g++ /usr/bin/g++-7 180]

Thirdly , install python dependencies

Install the Python dependencies

a) Check that the pip version is 20.3 or higher

[pip3 -V or pip -V]

If pip version is less than 20.3, upgrade the pip.

[pip3 install -upgrade pip]

[pip install -upgrade pip]

b) install python dependencies

[pip install --user setuptools &&pip3 install --user -Iv setuptools==47.3.1 &&pip install --user distro &&pip3 install --user distro &&pip install --user wheel &&pip3 install --user wheel auditwheel]

Fourthly download the unreal engine 4.26 the version for carla and not that found as unreal engine 4.26 on the official Unreal engine github website (it won't work for carla hosting) Also the up to date unreal version (5.3.2) won't work even if you tried to adjust the dependencies of carla manually.

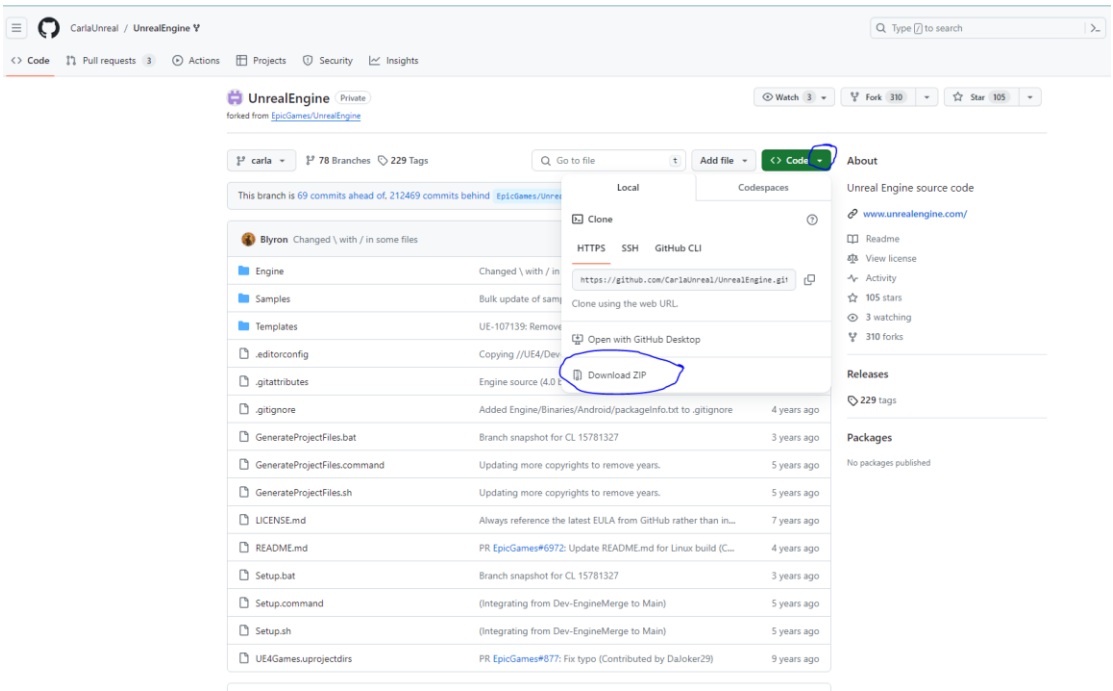

Figure 18 Unreal Engine downloading from github

Use the following link to download the zip file then extract it in home directory [https://github.com/CarlaUnreal/UnrealEngine]

Then build the engine by the following commands

[cd UnrealEngine-4.26]

[./Setup.sh] (press yes when a window appear during installation)

[./GenerateProjectFiles.sh]

[make]

To test if unreal engine is working or not use the following commands

[cd ~/UnrealEngine-carla/Engine/Binaries/Linux]

[./UE4Editor]

Fifthly clone carla and update it

First install aria2 library to speed up the carla building process [sudo apt install aria2]

Then, for cloning use the following command [cd ~ && git clone https://github.com/carla-simulator/carla]

Fix the tags by the following command [cd ~/carla && git checkout -b tags/0.9.15]

After that update using [./Update.sh] command

You need to download developments assets for your carla version, for carla 0.9.15 use the following link: [http://carla-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/20231108_c5101a5.tar.gz] steps found in carla/Util/ContentVersions.txt file. Then you need to extract it in 2 directories 1) [Unreal\CarlaUE4\Content\Carla] 2) [carla]

The extraction command is [tar -xvzf 20231108_c5101a5.tar.gz -C ‘directory name’] replace directory name with the name of each directory from the previous 2 once.

Sixthly, download and install anaconda in carla directory and fix any possible python issue by the following commands

a)anaconda build

[conda create -n carla-dev python=3.11

conda activate carla-dev

conda install -c conda-forge boost-python]

b) fixing possible python problems during the build process.

[pip3 install distro

pip3 install pygame

pip3 install numpy]

Seventhly , build and initiate carla simulator

a)Edit the bashrc file by writing a command that connect carla to unreal engine at the end of bashrc file

Open bashrc file by the following command [gedit .bashrc] when it opens add the following line at the end of the bashrc file [export UE4_ROOT=~/ UnrealEngine-carla] press save and then run the following command in bash terminal [source ~/.bashrc]

b) edit ‘BuildCarlaUE4.sh’ file by adding the following line after the 5th line in it 'UE4_ROOT=/home/YourPCName/UnrealEngine-carla' replace”YourPCName with your actual pc name (this is supposedly the path of your Unrealengine in case you unzipped it in home directory)

c) go to carla directory and run the following command [make PythonAPI]

Then ensure that the build was a success.

d) In carla directory you shall run now [make launch] and carla simulator will open through Unreal Engine GUI.

Figures 19 & 20 shows screen shots of carla simulator through Unreal Engine

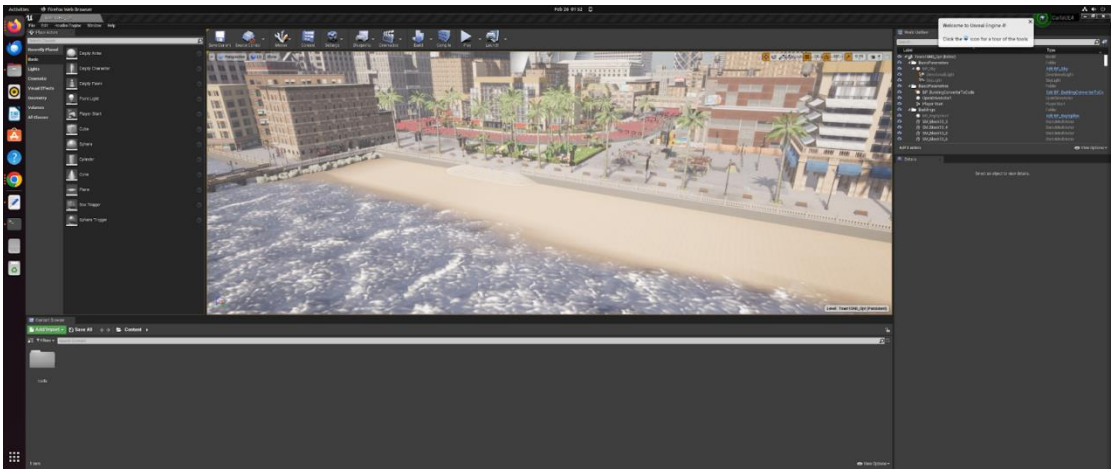

Figure 19 carla simulator environment. a

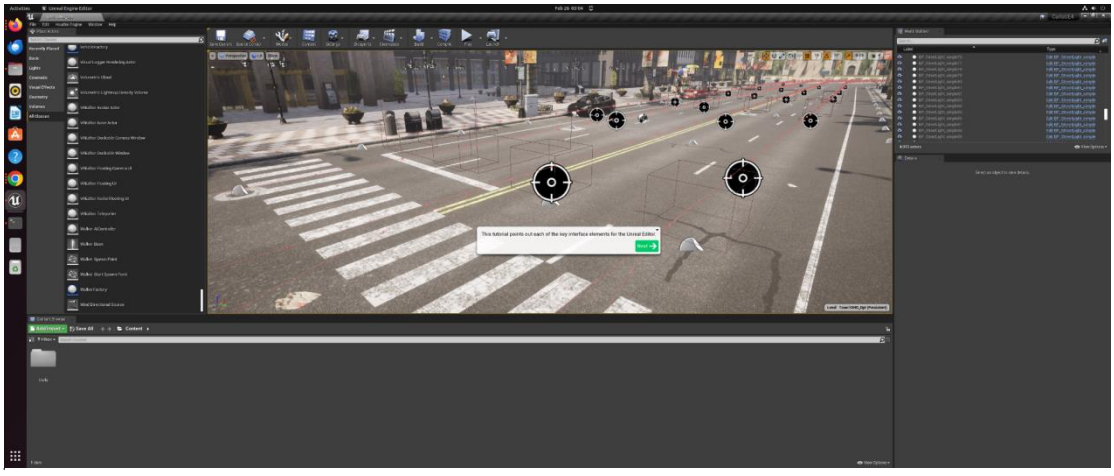

Figure 20 carla simulator environment. b

4.4.3 Appendix

The main error for the clang version I kept getting for a long time was because the latest version of carla(0.9.15) uses clang 17 while the latest unreal engine (5.3.2) uses clang 22 so there was a compatibility issue. First I tried to change the clang name in Unreal engine so carla could read through it while running the [make PythonAPI] command. Of course that was a wrong approach, yet it helped me visualize the problem more. Then after many research I tried to replace all "V17_clang-10.0.1-centos7" with "V22_clang-16.0.6-centos7" in all carla files through the following command [find /home/muhammad/carla -type f -exec sed -i 's/v17_clang-10.0.1-centos7/v22_clang-16.0.6-centos7/g' {} \;] , that helped me to go further through the building process, yet the build was a failure also. After that I tried the original Unreal Engine 4.26. Where [make PythonAPI] succeeded for the first time then it failed. But even in the first time [make launch] command was a failure. [make launch] worked only when the Carla Unreal Engine special version was used.

An Important note is that if the electricity went off during the building process, you will need to download the repository again and build from scratch. So try keeping the zip file or a copy from the original clone of both Carla & Unreal engine to save redownloading time and internet bundles.

The following step is installing nvidia omniverse to export the needed cars, LIDARS, sensors & stereo camera to carla simulation and test the proposed object detection technique through carla simulator.

progress and problems with 0.9.15 on ubuntu 22.04

I manged to mount to the vehicle 2 cameras to resemble Zed 2 stero camera as well as mounting on a LIDAR but the Camera was not providing output images that was probably due to the incompatibility of python 3 versions in carla and unreal engine. I manged to simulate a vehicle moving in the map but could not do that to the proposed vehicle due to the precious mentioned issue of python version incompitability. there was a problem also in the Plugins and unreal engine was not stable and have many crashes. At last carla 0.9.15 refused to be launched again. I tried building and runing both carla 0.9.14 and carla 0.9.13 on UBUNTU 22.04 and there were

always a problem in either Clang (the compiler)combitability or LLVM which is a dependencies. The problem were common and the proposed solutions on carla git-hub works with minority of people and many people as well as my self could not have a working answer. I switched to UBUNTU 20.04 and tried to build and run carla 0.9.15, carla 0.9.14 and carla 0.9.13 only carla 0.9.14 was a success after little manipulation. I will illustrate now the different steps for carla 0.9.14 building on UBUNTU 20.04 on unreal engine 4.26 [unreal engine-carla]

unreal engine cloning process

One shall make an account on both github and unreal engine then connect your account on Unreal Engine with Git hub through unreal engine then you may clone unreal engine later ,without this step that is not mentioned in Carla documentation, you will never be able to clone unreal engine successfully.

before running ./Update.sh you shall change the line in Update.sh that says [http://carla-assets.s3.amazonaws.com] with [https://carla-assets.s3.us-east-005.backblazeb2.com] usually found in line [50] but you need to double check. also by the time you try that may be the domain will have been changed again so you may search for the latest carla version and check the new url domain found in Util/ContentVersions.txt

4.4: Stabilizing the Simulation Environment

This section covers the strategic decision to transition to a more stable environment by adjusting the software configurations, essential for prolonged experimental runs and data collection.

4.4.1: Transition to a Stable Environment

Explores the rationale and process for moving to Carla 0.9.14 on Ubuntu 20.04, highlighting the stability issues with the initial setup and the need for a more reliable simulation platform.

4.4.2: Reconfiguration and System Validation

Provides a detailed account of reinstalling the environment with Ubuntu 20.04 and Python 3.08, including the step-by-step installation of necessary dependencies and the final testing procedures to ensure the environment's operational reliability for ongoing research.

Before building and launching Carla simulator and Unreal engine, I Recommend to install cuda toolkit to accelerate machine learning tasks. Assuming you have just setupped your ubuntu 20.04, you need to install nvidia drivers by the following commands

[sudo ubuntu-drivers autoinstall

sudo update-grub

sudo reboot

sudo apt install dkms

sudo apt install --reinstall nvidia-driver-535 # Replace 535 with your specific driver version if different

sudo reboot

nvidia-smi]

taken into consideration that sudo reboot restart your system and nividia-smi check your installed nvidia-driver. then you may install latest cuda tool kit by the following command [sudo apt install nvidia-cuda-toolkit] . Now you have the latest CUDA toolkit. you this procedure will autoinstall cuDNN which is A GPU-accelerated library for deep neural networks, necessary for efficient training of models

First of all you must install the required software by the following commands

[sudo apt update && sudo apt install wget software-properties-common && sudo add-apt-repository ppa:ubuntu-toolchain-r/test && wget -O - https://apt.llvm.org/llvm-snapshot.gpg.key|sudo apt-key add - && sudo apt-add-repository "deb http://apt.llvm.org/xenial/ llvm-toolchain-xenial-8 main" && sudo apt update]

Secondly, install the dependencies related to your specific ubuntu Version. For Ubuntu 18.04

Note: although I am using ubuntu 20.04 I have used the dependencies of ubuntu 18.04because carla 09.14 uses LLVM 8 and clang 8 in its build. While Ubuntu 18 is not the best Ubuntu version to run Unreal Engine 4.26 on, thus I tried to run ubuntu 18.04 dependencies on ubuntu 20.04 after I have tried ubuntu 20.04 dependencies and facing building errors due to compiler incompatibility

[sudo apt-add-repository "deb http://apt.llvm.org/bionic/ llvm-toolchain-bionic main"
sudo apt-get update
sudo apt-get install build-essential clang-8 lld-8 g++-7 cmake ninja-build libvulkan1 python python-pip python-dev python3-dev python3-pip libpng-dev libtiff5-dev libjpeg-dev tzdata sed curl unzip autoconf libtool rsync libxml2-dev git
sudo update-alternatives --install /usr/bin/clang++ clang++ /usr/lib/llvm-8/bin/clang++ 180 &&
sudo update-alternatives --install /usr/bin/clang clang /usr/lib/llvm-8/bin/clang 180]

install python dependencies

[pip install --user setuptools &&pip3 install --user -Iv setuptools==47.3.1 &&pip install --user distro &&pip3 install --user distro &&pip install --user wheel &&pip3 install --user wheel auditwheel]

unreal engine cloning process

One shall make an account on both github and unreal engine then connect your account on Unreal Engine with Git hub through unreal engine then you may clone unreal engine later ,without this step that is not mentioned in Carla documentation, you will never be able to clone unreal engine successfully. Now you may clone Unreal engine through [git clone --depth 1 -b carla https://github.com/CarlaUnreal/UnrealEngine.git ~/UnrealEngine_4.26]

before building unreal engine open the terminal in Unreal Engine directory and run the following commands in order, every one as many time needed until success

[./Setup.sh

./GenerateProjectFiles.sh

make]

Cloning Carla 0.9.14

[git clone -b 0.9.14 https://github.com/carla-simulator/carla]

after that do not update

Build Carla 0.9.14

before building change “python” to “python3” in CarlaEU4.sh file then run command [make Build] suppress any errors if errors appeared and re run the same command

Updating Carla 0.9.14

updating shall be manually through **[**https://carla-assets.s3.us-east-005.backblazeb2.com] and get the code of carla 0.9.14 version from [Util/ContentVersions.txt] extract the downloaded file to [carla/Unreal/CarlaUE4/Content/Carla]

Launch Carla 0.9.14

now you may run command [make launch] to launch Carla 0.9.14. it will only take much time first time, after that it will take only 1 minute.

4.5 Carla Limitation

CARLA, an open-source platform designed for autonomous driving research, is renowned for its extensive features and strong capabilities. Yet, like any simulation tool, it presents some challenges that users must address. Discussions in 2024 have highlighted a few key issues, primarily the hefty computational requirements when engaging with detailed environments or managing several autonomous agents within the simulation. To operate CARLA efficiently, users require significant hardware capabilities. This need for advanced technology can pose accessibility challenges for individuals or smaller educational institutions that may lack substantial computing resources.(CARLA Simulator, 2024)

Additionally, although CARLA offers a broad range of sensor configurations and environmental settings, there are certain limitations concerning the precision of its physics simulations and the

accuracy of sensor emulation. These constraints might not capture all the complexities of real-world conditions, potentially affecting the reliability of test results, particularly in scenarios where sensor performance under diverse environmental influences is critical.(CARLA Simulator, 2024)

For developers and researchers, these factors suggest a potential disparity between simulation results and actual field performance. Consequently, thorough real-world testing remains essential to ensure the validity of autonomous systems trained within CARLA's simulated environments.

Chapter 5 Dynamic Simulations Across Diverse Scenarios & Sensor Integration

5.1: Configurations and Setup in Diverse Environments

5.1.1. Sensor Configuration on Tesla Model 3

In our research project titled "Navigating the Future: Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance," conducted using the CARLA platform and Unreal Engine, we utilized a Tesla Model 3 (BP_TeslaM3) outfitted with simulated ZED 2 stereo cameras and a LIDAR sensor. These sensors played a crucial role in gathering detailed environmental data, which was indispensable for our analyses of object detection and navigation across a variety of urban and rural settings, weather conditions, and times of day. Each camera boasted a resolution of 1920x1080 pixels and a field of view of 110 degrees, ensuring comprehensive and detailed visual capture of the vehicle's surroundings, essential for accurate real-time processing and response to dynamic driving conditions.

Addressing calibration challenges, we encountered synchronization errors and spatial misalignments between the stereo cameras and LIDAR, which could significantly interfere with object detection accuracy. To address these issues, our approach included:

Initial Setup and Calibration: We employed static calibration methods at the beginning to ensure the sensors were accurately aligned both temporally and spatially.

Sensor Placement Adjustments: Adjustments were made iteratively to optimize the cameras' field of view and enhance detection capabilities. Specifically, the left camera's position was adjusted from y = 6 cm to y = 30 cm, and the right from y = -6 cm to y = -30 cm, both set at a height of z = 170 cm.

Multi-Sensor Fusion Framework: We developed a specialized framework to align the data from both sensors while incorporating algorithms to correct any disparities found during simulations. This framework is pivotal in complex simulation environments where precise data integration from multiple sources is essential for performance accuracy, ensuring that our autonomous driving systems can interpret their surroundings reliably and make informed decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of the environment.

LIDAR Sensor:

Positioning: The LIDAR sensor was centrally mounted at x = 0 cm and elevated at z = 250 cm, optimizing its range and angle for maximal environmental feedback.

Range: This sensor had an extensive operational range of up to 5000 meters, which was critical for detecting distant objects.

Calibration and Integration Strategies: To mitigate synchronization errors and spatial misalignments, we implemented a series of offline calibration techniques to ensure precise alignment in terms of both time and space. This included static calibration methods as a starting point to establish reliable sensor correspondences. Additionally, we developed a multi-sensor fusion framework to integrate data from both sensors seamlessly. This framework not only aligns the data spatially and temporally but also incorporates algorithms to correct any disparities, thus enhancing the data integrity and reliability of our object detection system.

Iterative Adjustments and Testing: We made iterative adjustments to sensor placements and settings based on extensive feedback from simulation trials. This adaptive strategy allowed us to continually refine the alignment and calibration of sensors, improving the system's ability to accurately perceive and interact with its environment under various conditions.

Through meticulous calibration and the integration of an advanced multi-sensor fusion framework, we significantly enhanced the fidelity of our simulations. This preparation ensures that our autonomous driving technologies are well-equipped for real-world applications, underpinning the reliability and safety of autonomous vehicles in dynamically changing environments. Bellow in Image 1 is the front view of “ZED 2 STEREO CAMERA”. While figure 21 illustrates the FOV of both ZED 2 stereo camera & the proposed stereo camera we finally used in Carla simulation.

Image 1 ZED 2 STEREO CAMERA (Stereolabs.,2024)

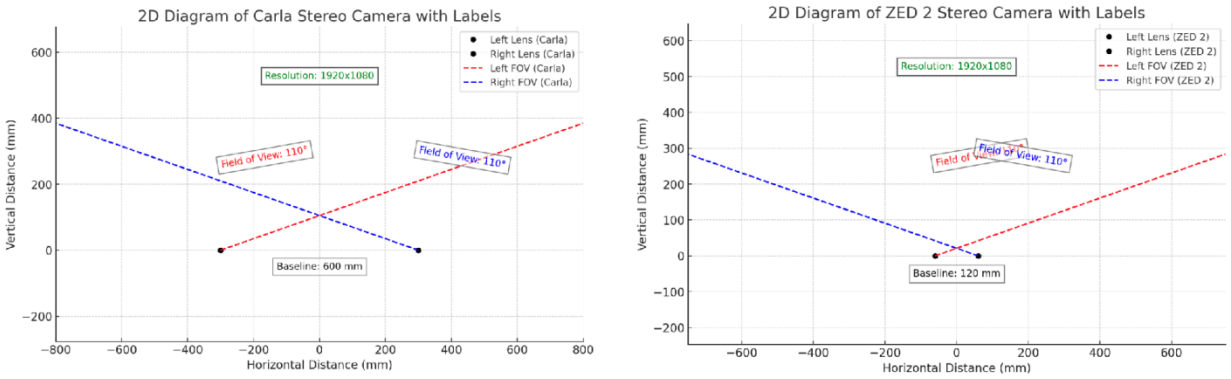

Figure 21 FOV diagram of both Carla used stereo camera & ZED 2 stereo camera

5.1.2. Simulation Environment Design

In our study, we strategically leveraged the YOLOv7 object detection model within the CARLA simulation environment, utilizing tailored settings across four towns—Towns 01, 05, 07, and 10—to rigorously test and refine the model's adaptability to diverse environmental conditions. By focusing on clear weather scenarios in Towns 01 and 10, we were able to evaluate the core detection capabilities of YOLOv7 without the confounding effects of adverse weather, providing a clear baseline for system performance.

Adaptive Strategies for Varying Environmental Conditions

1. Data Augmentation in Simulated Environments:

In our efforts to enhance YOLOv7's performance under challenging weather scenarios, we incorporated data augmentation techniques directly into the simulation process. By introducing conditions such as rain and fog, we enriched our training dataset with a broader spectrum of visual inputs. This comprehensive exposure equips the model to accurately identify objects amidst various visual challenges, thus improving its applicability in real-world settings.

Detailing Data Augmentation and Outcomes

Techniques Used

We applied random changes in lighting, added artificial occlusions, and adjusted background textures to mimic the variability found in real-world environments (Dauner et al., 2024).

Justification and Outcomes

These modifications aim to replicate a wide range of driving conditions. Consequently, our model shows greater resilience and fewer false alarms under diverse lighting and weather scenarios, as demonstrated by improved performance metrics during validation phases.

2. Dynamic Image Preprocessing:

Recognizing the limitations of relying solely on stereo cameras and LIDAR, we included dynamic image preprocessing strategies that respond to changing lighting and weather conditions detected by these sensors. Techniques such as real-time contrast adjustment and image normalization ensure consistent visibility and differentiation of objects, regardless of environmental lighting variations.

Dynamic Thresholding Implementation

Strategy

We adopted a dynamic thresholding approach, adjusting confidence thresholds based on environmental context—lower thresholds for poor visibility and higher for clear conditions.

Optimization of Detection Capabilities

This strategy enhances detection capabilities by ensuring high detection rates and minimizing false positives, thus maintaining the model's reliability across different external conditions (Dauner et al., 2024).

3. Simulation-Driven Testing and Iterative Tuning:

Our model undergoes rigorous iterative testing and tuning based on the diverse scenarios simulated. This continuous refinement process allows for the optimization of YOLOv7's parameters and algorithms to better suit the simulated conditions reflective of potential real-world environments.

4. Enhanced Detection via Simulated Sensor Data Integration:

The integration of data from stereo cameras and LIDAR within the simulated environments provides a detailed 3D representation of surrounding objects. This integration is critical in improving the accuracy and reliability of the object detection and classification capabilities of YOLOv7, enabling more precise environmental perception and navigational decision-making.

Integration of Augmented Data into YOLOv7

Methodology

We systematically label and incorporate augmented simulation data into our training datasets. A custom data loader manages this synthetic data, balancing it with real-world data to prevent overfitting.

Effectiveness

This method has proven to enhance YOLOv7's ability to generalize, as indicated by the reduced generalization error on previously unseen real-world test sets.

Conclusion

These strategies are vital in advancing YOLOv7's effectiveness in managing diverse environmental conditions. Through advanced simulation, data augmentation, and thorough validation processes, we ensure that our model advancements meet the dynamic and complex demands of real-world autonomous driving, thus advancing safety and reliability in autonomous vehicle navigation.

5.2. Code Implementation and Analysis

5.2.1. Towns 01 & 10 Script Functionality and Code Breakdown

In our exploration of autonomous driving systems, we harness the power of the CARLA Python API to create environments where these systems can be meticulously tested and honed. Below, we offer an insightful breakdown of the script's key functions, each contributing significantly to crafting realistic and challenging driving scenarios for data collection:

A. Import Statements:

Code Snippet:

[import carla
import time
import random
import os]

Our script begins with the importation of essential modules, which are pivotal for seamless operations within the CARLA simulation environment. The `carla` module is indispensable, providing us with direct access to the simulator's API, thus allowing control and manipulation of the virtual setting and its entities, such as vehicles and sensors. The `time` module aids in developing time-dependent functions or delaying actions, essential for simulating real-time responses. Additionally, the `random` module introduces necessary randomness to test the robustness of the autonomous driving algorithms under diverse and unpredictable conditions. Lastly, the `os` module handles file and directory operations, crucial for logging data, accessing configuration files, or saving simulation outputs for further examination. This initial setup ensures that we can interact effectively with the simulation environment, manage temporal elements, introduce variability, and handle file-based operations efficiently.

B. Setting Up the CARLA Client:

Code Snippet:

```
[def setup_client():
    """ Set up and return a CARLA client connected to the server. """
    client = carla.Client('localhost', 2000)
    client.set_timeout(10.0)
    return client
]
```

The function `setup_client` is our starting point for establishing a connection to a local CARLA server, listening on port 2000. We allocate a 10-second timeout to manage potential communication lags between our script and the server, guaranteeing ample time for connection establishment or handling interruptions smoothly. This function is vital as it lays the groundwork for reliable, timed communication with the CARLA server, crucial for real-time simulation and data exchange. By specifying the localhost address and port, we ensure that subsequent commands are accurately directed to our intended instance of the simulation.

C. Vehicle Setup:

Code Snippet:

```
[def setup_vehicle(world, blueprint_library, tm):
    """ Set up and spawn the vehicle with cameras and LIDAR, and enable autopilot. """
    vehicle_bp = blueprint_library.find('vehicle.tesla.model3')
    spawn_points = world.get_map().get_spawn_points()
    vehicle = None
    for _ in range(10):  # Try different spawn points to avoid collision.
        spawn_point = random.choice(spawn_points)
        vehicle = world.try_spawn_actor(vehicle_bp, spawn_point)
        if vehicle is not None:
            vehicle.set_autopilot(True, tm.get_port())  # Enable autopilot with traffic manager port
            break
        time.sleep(1)
    if not vehicle:
        raise RuntimeError("Failed to spawn vehicle.")
    return vehicle
]
```

Following the initial setup, our script seamlessly links with the CARLA simulation server via the `setup_client` function. This function configures a CARLA client to connect to 'localhost' on port 2000, a typical setting for local development and testing. We incorporate a 10-second timeout, allowing sufficient time for the client-server connection while managing potential communication disruptions. This timeout is crucial for mitigating delays, ensuring continued robustness of client operations under varying network conditions. This foundational communication link not only facilitates command execution but also dictates the success of subsequent interactions, from vehicle control to data collection. With a timeout in place, we proactively address connectivity issues, preventing indefinite script hang-ups and ensuring error-handling mechanisms can intervene when necessary.

D. Sensor Setup:

code Snippet

[def setup_sensors(world, vehicle, blueprint_library):
    """Attach stereo cameras and LIDAR to the vehicle."""
    # Camera setup
    camera_bp = blueprint_library.find('sensor.camera.rgb')
    camera_bp.set_attribute('image_size_x', '1920')
    camera_bp.set_attribute('image_size_y', '1080')
    camera_bp.set_attribute('fov', '110')

    # Stereo Left Camera
    transform_left = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0.0, y=0.3, z=1.7))
    camera_left = world.spawn_actor(camera_bp, transform_left, attach_to=vehicle)

    # Stereo Right Camera
    transform_right = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0.0, y=-0.3, z=1.7))
    camera_right = world.spawn_actor(camera_bp, transform_right, attach_to=vehicle)

    # LIDAR setup
    lidar_bp = blueprint_library.find('sensor.lidar.ray_cast')
    lidar_bp.set_attribute('range', '5000')
    lidar_transform = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0, z=2.5))
    lidar = world.spawn_actor(lidar_bp, lidar_transform, attach_to=vehicle)

    return camera_left, camera_right, lidar
]

In the `setup_sensors` function, our autonomous vehicle is equipped with dual stereo cameras and a LIDAR unit, each playing a crucial role in the vehicle's perception framework. The stereo cameras, finely tuned to capture high-resolution images, are strategically mounted to foster stereo vision, mimicking human-like depth perception. The LIDAR sensor, known for its precision in rendering detailed 3D environmental depictions, scans extensive distances, enriching detection capabilities under various conditions.

Detailed Sensor Configuration

Our stereo cameras, positioned on either side of the vehicle, are integral to its depth perception abilities. Each camera records images at a resolution of 1920x1080 pixels, offering a wide 110-degree field of view. This setup is critical for forming a three-dimensional understanding of the surroundings, enabling precise distance estimation and speed assessments of oncoming objects, essential for real-time evasive maneuvers.

LIDAR Configuration: The LIDAR sensor complements the visual inputs by delivering high-fidelity 3D point clouds of the environment. Mounted at an optimal elevation, it detects objects up to 5000 meters away. This sensor is indispensable in low-light conditions, where visual inputs might falter, ensuring consistent and reliable object detection and classification across varied scenarios. The integration of LIDAR significantly boosts the vehicle's navigational accuracy, particularly in complex and dynamic environments.

E. Traffic Generation

Simulating dynamic and realistic traffic conditions is imperative for validating autonomous driving systems' efficacy. The `generate_traffic` function is instrumental in introducing vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the simulation environment. It dynamically generates traffic using CARLA's Traffic Manager, controlling vehicle behavior through specific settings, such as distance to leading vehicles and speed variances. Randomly spawning vehicles and pedestrians across the map, each vehicle navigates autonomously, while pedestrians' movements are dictated by walker controllers. This sophisticated simulation of traffic dynamics is crucial for testing the vehicle’s ability to maneuver through complex scenarios, offering a robust platform for evaluating our proposed detection and avoidance systems' effectiveness:

code snippet

```
[def generate_traffic(world, blueprint_library, client):
    """Generate dynamic traffic in the simulation, including handling complex road geometries."""
    tm = client.get_trafficmanager(8000)
```

```
tm.set_global_distance_to_leading_vehicle(2.5)
tm.global_percentage_speed_difference(10.0)

vehicle_blueprints = blueprint_library.filter('vehicle.*')
walker_blueprints = blueprint_library.filter('walker.pedestrian.*')

vehicles = []
walkers = []
walker_controllers = []

# Enhanced path planning for corners
for bp in vehicle_blueprints:
    for _ in range(2):  # Increased attempts for finding a suitable spawn point
        spawn_point = random.choice(world.get_map().get_spawn_points())
        vehicle = world.try_spawn_actor(bp, spawn_point)
        if vehicle:
            vehicle.set_autopilot(True, tm.get_port())
            vehicles.append(vehicle)
            break
# Spawn walkers and walker controllers
for i in range(50):
    spawn_point = carla.Transform(location=world.get_random_location_from_navigation())
    walker_bp = random.choice(walker_blueprints)
    walker = world.try_spawn_actor(walker_bp, spawn_point)
    if walker:
        walkers.append(walker)
        walker_control_bp = blueprint_library.find('controller.ai.walker')
        walker_control = world.try_spawn_actor(walker_control_bp, carla.Transform(), walker)
        if walker_control:
            walker_control.start()
            walker_control.go_to_location(world.get_random_location_from_navigation())
```

```
            walker_control.set_max_speed(1.4 + random.random())  # Speed adjustment
            walker_controllers.append(walker_control)

    return vehicles, walkers, walker_controllers
]
```

Code Discussion:

This section of our script is dedicated to the dynamic generation of traffic within the simulation framework. We leverage CARLA's Traffic Manager to carefully orchestrate the behavior of vehicles:

Traffic Manager Setup: In this step, we initiate the Traffic Manager with a designated port, configuring global parameters like the proximity to leading vehicles and variations in speed. This setup is crucial for maintaining realistic interactions and dynamics within the simulation.

Vehicle and Pedestrian Spawning: Here, vehicles and pedestrians are introduced at random spots on the map. Each vehicle is engaged in autopilot mode, enabling it to autonomously maneuver through the environment. Pedestrians, on the other hand, are directed by walker controllers that govern their movement patterns and behaviors, adding another layer of realism to our simulation.

Enhanced Path Planning: Our script is designed to make multiple attempts at spawning vehicles in optimal locations, considering the intricate geometries of roads and intersections. This approach ensures a realistic flow of traffic and interaction among simulation agents.
By developing this sophisticated simulation of traffic dynamics, we provide an excellent platform to test how well autonomous vehicles can handle complex scenarios. This, in turn, helps us evaluate the effectiveness of proposed detection and avoidance systems within our simulation environment.

F. Main Execution Flow & Cleanup

The main execution of our simulation is encapsulated in the `main` function, which orchestrates several critical steps.

code snippet

```
[def main():
    client = setup_client()
    world = client.get_world()
    blueprint_library = world.get_blueprint_library()

    tm = client.get_trafficmanager(8000)
    tm.set_synchronous_mode(True)

    vehicle = setup_vehicle(world, blueprint_library, tm)
    camera_left, camera_right, lidar = setup_sensors(world, vehicle, blueprint_library)

    # Generate dynamic traffic
    vehicles, walkers, walker_controllers = generate_traffic(world, blueprint_library, client)

    # Save sensor data
    def save_camera_data(data, sensor_type, sensor_id):
        data.save_to_disk(f'output/{sensor_type}_{sensor_id}/{data.frame}.png')

    def save_lidar_data(data):
        data.save_to_disk(f'output/lidar/{data.frame}.ply')

    camera_left.listen(lambda data: save_camera_data(data, 'camera_left', '1'))
    camera_right.listen(lambda data: save_camera_data(data, 'camera_right', '2'))
    lidar.listen(lambda data: save_lidar_data(data))

    try:
        while True:
            world.tick()
    finally:
        print('Cleaning up actors...')
        for vehicle in vehicles:
```

```
        vehicle.destroy()
    for walker in walkers:
        walker.destroy()
    for controller in walker_controllers:
        controller.stop()
    camera_left.destroy()
    camera_right.destroy()
    lidar.destroy()
    vehicle.destroy()
    print('Actors destroyed.')

if __name__ == '__main__':
    main()]
```

Simulation Loop (main function)

Sensor Setup: We call the `setup_sensors` function to attach cameras and LIDAR to the vehicle.

Data Collection: Listeners are attached to each sensor, diligently saving the collected data to disk upon receipt. This is vital for amassing datasets necessary for training and validating our autonomous driving models.

Continuous Operation: The simulation runs in a loop, continuously updating the environment with each tick, mimicking real-time data collection and interaction.

Cleanup: Upon stopping the simulation, we ensure all actors (vehicles, pedestrians, sensors) are cleaned up to free resources and prepare for subsequent runs, crucial for **preventing memory leaks.** This procedural approach not only showcases our autonomous driving models' capabilities but also underscores the importance of efficient resource management and data handling in complex simulations.

Figure 22 Town 10 right camera image

5.3 More simulation scenarios

In our explorations of Town 05 and Town 07, we embraced a variety of weather conditions and times of day. Consequently, we found it necessary to integrate a function in our main vehicle that allowed it to relocate should it become immobilized by darkness or slippery roads. Interestingly, in some scenarios, this relocating feature extended beyond the main vehicle to include other entities like cars, cyclists, trucks, buses, motorcycles, and even pedestrians. Our code addresses these situations effectively in Town 05.

5.3.1: Town 05 Script Functionality and Code Breakdown

Code Snippet 1: Importing Libraries and Setup

[

```
import carla
import time
import random
import os
import threading
```

```
actor_lock = threading.Lock()
]
```

In our discussions about the 'Importing Libraries and Setup' part in the scripts for Town 01 and Town 10, we've emphasized the crucial role of including the threading module and actor_lock. This setup is pivotal in ensuring thread-safety, allowing multiple threads to interact with shared resources without causing interference or data inconsistencies. This control proves particularly essential in dynamic and concurrent simulation environments where multiple entities, such as vehicles and sensors, interact simultaneously, thus guaranteeing robust and reliable simulation outcomes.

Code Snippet 2: Client Setup

```
[
def setup_client():
    client = carla.Client('localhost', 2000)
    client.set_timeout(20.0)
    return client
]
```

When we examined the "Client Setup" in both Town 01 and Town 10, we paid close attention to how the timeout settings contribute to the robustness of the network connection. While each setup aims to stabilize the CARLA client's responsiveness, our approach adopts a longer 20-second timeout to prioritize robustness against potential network delays. This extended timeout provides an additional buffer against network inconsistencies, especially in environments with highly variable network conditions.

Code Snippet 3: Vehicle Setup

```
[
def setup_vehicle(world, blueprint_library, tm, vehicle_type='vehicle.tesla.model3'):
    vehicle_bp = blueprint_library.find(vehicle_type)
    spawn_points = world.get_map().get_spawn_points()
    spawn_point = random.choice(spawn_points)
```

```
    vehicle = None
    while vehicle is None:
        vehicle = world.try_spawn_actor(vehicle_bp, spawn_point)
        if vehicle is None:
            time.sleep(1)
            spawn_point = random.choice(spawn_points)
    vehicle.set_autopilot(True, tm.get_port())
    lights = carla.VehicleLightState.Position | carla.VehicleLightState.LowBeam |
carla.VehicleLightState.HighBeam
    vehicle.set_light_state(carla.VehicleLightState(lights))
    tm.vehicle_percentage_speed_difference(vehicle, -20.0)
    return vehicle
```

]

In our examination of the 'Vehicle Setup' within Town 01 and Town 10 codes, we highlighted the practical aspects of configuring vehicles in the simulation environment. This includes selecting vehicle blueprints strategically and adjusting lighting settings to suit various times of the day, thereby enhancing visibility. Furthermore, we enable the autopilot feature to facilitate autonomous navigation, while the traffic manager is configured to enforce a speed limit that simulates cautious driving behavior. These configurations ensure that our vehicles operate realistically and safely within the controlled simulation parameters.

Code Snippet 4: Sensor Setup

[

```
def setup_sensors(world, vehicle):
    os.makedirs('output/night_town05_Opt_relocation/camera_left', exist_ok=True)
    os.makedirs('output/night_town05_Opt_relocation/camera_right', exist_ok=True)
    os.makedirs('output/night_town05_Opt_relocation/lidar', exist_ok=True)
    camera_bp = world.get_blueprint_library().find('sensor.camera.rgb')
    lidar_bp = world.get_blueprint_library().find('sensor.lidar.ray_cast')
    camera_bp.set_attribute('image_size_x', '1920')
```

```
    camera_bp.set_attribute('image_size_y', '1080')
    camera_bp.set_attribute('fov', '110')
    lidar_bp.set_attribute('range', '5000')
    camera_transform_left = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0.0, y=-0.3, z=1.7))
    camera_transform_right = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0.0, y=0.3, z=1.7))
    lidar_transform = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0.0, z=2.5))
    camera_left = world.spawn_actor(camera_bp, camera_transform_left, attach_to=vehicle)
    camera_right = world.spawn_actor(camera_bp, camera_transform_right, attach_to=vehicle)
    lidar = world.spawn_actor(lidar_bp, lidar_transform, attach_to=vehicle)
    camera_left.listen(lambda image:
image.save_to_disk('output/night_town05_Opt_relocation/camera_left/%06d.png' %
image.frame))
    camera_right.listen(lambda image:
image.save_to_disk('output/night_town05_Opt_relocation/camera_right/%06d.png' %
image.frame))
    lidar.listen(lambda lidar_data:
lidar_data.save_to_disk('output/night_town05_Opt_relocation/lidar/%06d.ply' %
lidar_data.frame))
    return camera_left, camera_right, lidar
]
```

Our discussion on the 'Sensor Setup' part in the codes for Town 01 and Town 10 also places emphasis on the dynamic creation of directories for each simulation run, which effectively organizes and stores the sensor outputs. By doing so, we ensure that data from each scenario is systematically cataloged, facilitating easier access and analysis. This methodical data management is crucial for maintaining the integrity and usability of the collected data across various training modules, providing a robust foundation for machine learning models to train on accurate and comprehensive environmental representations.

Code Snippet 5: Weather Configuration

```
[
def change_weather(world):
```

```
    consistent_weather = carla.WeatherParameters(
        cloudiness=10.0,
        precipitation=10.0,
        precipitation_deposits=5.0,
        wind_intensity=5.0,
        sun_azimuth_angle=180.0,
        sun_altitude_angle=-90.0
    )
    world.set_weather(consistent_weather)
]
```

This segment outlines the function responsible for weather, illustrating how we can programmatically establish specific weather conditions within the CARLA simulator's simulation environment. The function, change_weather, accepts a world object as a parameter and applies a series of predefined weather parameters via the carla.WeatherParameters class. This configuration set includes minimal cloudiness and precipitation, moderate wind intensity, and distinct sun positioning, with a sun azimuth angle of 180.0 degrees and a sun altitude angle of -90.0 degrees. These settings enable us to create a consistent environment for testing vehicle sensors and navigation systems under controlled, yet varied, weather conditions. Simulating these specific conditions is crucial for ensuring that autonomous vehicles can reliably operate and navigate through the diverse weather scenarios encountered in the real world, ultimately improving their safety and overall effectiveness.

Code Snippet 6: Traffic Generation

```
[
def generate_traffic(world, tm):
    with actor_lock:
        lights = carla.VehicleLightState.Position | carla.VehicleLightState.LowBeam |
carla.VehicleLightState.HighBeam
        vehicle_blueprints = world.get_blueprint_library().filter('vehicle.*')
        pedestrian_blueprints = world.get_blueprint_library().filter('walker.pedestrian.*')
```

```
    vehicle_list = []
    pedestrian_list = []
    # Spawn vehicles
    for _ in range(30):
        bp = random.choice(vehicle_blueprints)
        spawn_point = random.choice(world.get_map().get_spawn_points())
        vehicle = world.try_spawn_actor(bp, spawn_point)
        if vehicle:
            vehicle.set_autopilot(True, tm.get_port())
            vehicle.set_light_state(carla.VehicleLightState(lights))
            vehicle_list.append(vehicle)  # Keep track of vehicles
    # Spawn pedestrians
    for _ in range(20):
        walker_bp = random.choice(pedestrian_blueprints)
        spawn_point = random.choice(world.get_map().get_spawn_points())
        walker = world.try_spawn_actor(walker_bp, spawn_point)
        if walker:
            walker_control = carla.WalkerControl()
            walker_control.speed = 1.2
            walker.apply_control(walker_control)
            pedestrian_list.append(walker)  # Keep track of pedestrians
    return vehicle_list, pedestrian_list
    ]
```

In addition to the discussion of the 'Traffic Generation' part in Town 01 and Town 10 code, the previous snippet further elaborates on how CARLA (Car Learning to Act) simulates dynamic and realistic traffic conditions which are crucial for testing the behavioral responses of autonomous driving systems.

Code Functionality Overview:

Thread Safety: In our exploration of CARLA's capabilities, we utilize a context manager (with actor_lock) to ensure thread safety when manipulating actors within the simulation. This

approach is critical to preventing race conditions that can arise when multiple threads attempt to spawn or modify vehicles and pedestrians simultaneously.

Light States Setup: We configure vehicle light states to encompass position lights, low beams, and high beams, ensuring that vehicles remain visible in low-light scenarios. This setup is essential for simulating more realistic and challenging driving conditions.

Dynamic Actor Selection: The code dynamically selects vehicle and pedestrian blueprints from the available library, introducing randomness that enhances the diversity and complexity of the traffic environment by incorporating a variety of vehicle types and pedestrian figures.

Spawning Logic:

Vehicles: Our approach involves spawning vehicles at random map points with autopilot enabled, allowing them to independently navigate the simulation. We apply the appropriate light state to ensure compliance with realistic lighting conditions.

Pedestrians: Similarly, pedestrians are introduced using random blueprints at various spawn points. Each pedestrian is controlled with a WalkerControl setup that specifies walking speed, contributing to varied pedestrian dynamics within the simulation.

Actor Management: Both vehicles and pedestrians are tracked in respective lists (vehicle_list and pedestrian_list), enabling us to monitor, update, or remove actors from the simulation as needed.

Illustration of Code Execution:

By assigning attributes and positions randomly to each actor, we simulate spontaneous traffic scenarios. This unpredictability is crucial for stress-testing the perception and navigation systems of autonomous vehicles under diverse conditions.

Interpretation of Impact:

By integrating detailed setups for traffic generation, we create a simulation environment that closely mirrors real-world traffic conditions. This is vital for developing, testing, and validating autonomous driving technologies in a controlled yet challenging virtual environment. This

methodical randomness and detailed control over actors make simulations in CARLA robust tools for advancing autonomous vehicle research.

Code Snippet 6: Vehicle Stuck Detection and Response Strategy

```
[
def is_vehicle_stuck(vehicle):
    velocity = vehicle.get_velocity()
    return velocity.length() < 0.7
]
```

The function is_vehicle_stuck(vehicle) is instrumental in detecting a vehicle's immobilization by verifying if its speed falls below a critical threshold of 0.7 units. It assesses the vehicle's velocity, computes its magnitude, and compares it against this predefined limit to conclude whether the vehicle is stuck. Setting the velocity threshold at 0.7 is tailored to the dynamic conditions of the CARLA simulation environment, where such a parameter is pivotal for identifying scenarios where the vehicle might halt due to various impediments like blockages or mechanical issues. This detection is crucial as it facilitates the initiation of appropriate countermeasures to alleviate disruptions, ensuring continuous traffic flow and operational safety. By proactively identifying immobilization, the system can activate recovery procedures, thus maintaining the efficacy and safety of autonomous operations within a managed traffic system.

Code Snippet 7: Autonomous Traffic Light Compliance Mechanism

```
[
def handle_traffic_lights(vehicle):
    while vehicle.is_at_traffic_light():
        traffic_light = vehicle.get_traffic_light()
        if traffic_light.get_state() != carla.TrafficLightState.Green:
            time.sleep(1)
        else:
            break
]
```

The function handle_traffic_lights(vehicle) plays a crucial role in autonomous navigation by ensuring adherence to traffic signals, thereby reinforcing safe driving practices. It operates by continuously assessing whether the vehicle is positioned at a traffic signal and reacts accordingly by halting movement when encountering a red light. This loop persists until the signal turns green, signifying that it is safe to proceed. Such functionality underscores the vehicle's capability to seamlessly integrate with and respect existing traffic regulations, a fundamental requirement for the deployment of autonomous vehicles in urban settings. The implementation of this function reflects the system's ability to conform to structured traffic environments and demonstrates the vehicle's autonomous decision-making prowess in real-time, thereby enhancing its operational capability in diverse urban traffic scenarios.

Code Snippet 8: Advanced Pedestrian Detection for Enhanced Safety

```
[
def detect_pedestrians(vehicle, world):
    detection_distance = 10.0
    pedestrians = world.get_actors().filter('walker.pedestrian.*')
    vehicle_location = vehicle.get_transform().location
    vehicle_forward = vehicle.get_transform().get_forward_vector()
    for pedestrian in pedestrians:
        pedestrian_location = pedestrian.get_location()
        vector_to_pedestrian = pedestrian_location - vehicle_location
        distance = vector_to_pedestrian.length()
        angle = vehicle_forward.dot(vector_to_pedestrian) / (vehicle_forward.length() *
vector_to_pedestrian.length())
        if distance < detection_distance and angle > 0.85:
            return True
    return False
]
```

The detect_pedestrians(vehicle, world) function is critical for identifying pedestrians within a 10-unit radius around the vehicle, using both distance and angular alignment to ascertain their position relative to the vehicle's trajectory. This dual-parameter approach allows for a more

refined detection strategy, ensuring that only pedestrians within the direct path and close proximity of the vehicle are considered potential hazards. This method is particularly effective in densely populated urban areas where pedestrian movement patterns are highly dynamic and unpredictable. By employing such sophisticated detection algorithms, the system significantly bolsters the safety measures necessary for autonomous vehicles, ensuring they can operate safely alongside human pedestrians by preemptively identifying and reacting to potential pedestrian crossings or interactions.

Code Snippet 9: Dynamic Vehicle Relocation for Optimal Navigation

```
[
def relocate_vehicle(world, vehicle, tried_locations):
    if not vehicle.is_at_traffic_light() and not detect_pedestrians(vehicle, world):
        possible_locations = [loc for loc in world.get_map().get_spawn_points() if loc.location not in tried_locations and loc.location.distance(vehicle.get_location()) > 50]
        if possible_locations:
            new_location = random.choice(possible_locations).location
            vehicle.set_location(new_location)
            tried_locations.append(new_location)
        else:
            print("No suitable locations for relocation.")
]
```

The function relocate_vehicle(world, vehicle, tried_locations) addresses scenarios where the vehicle might be hindered due to suboptimal positioning or unexpected obstacles. By relocating the vehicle to a new spawn point that is sufficiently distant from its current position and not previously attempted, the system effectively mitigates the risks associated with being stuck or unable to progress along a planned route. This strategy is vital for testing the adaptability and resilience of navigation algorithms within simulation environments, offering a practical solution to real-world navigational challenges. The ability to dynamically alter the vehicle's location based on real-time assessments enhances the robustness of the autonomous system, enabling it to adapt to complex traffic situations or errors in navigation, thus significantly improving the reliability and effectiveness of the autonomous driving technology.

Code Snippet 10: Main Execution Flow & Cleanup

In addition to what was mentioned in Town 01 and Town 10 code description and discussion, this segment of the script focuses on dynamic interactions within the simulation environment, specifically addressing vehicle behaviors in response to real-time changes and obstacles. Here's a breakdown of the code functionalities:

a. Dynamic Environment Management:

The weather_thread and traffic_thread are initiated using Python's threading module to independently manage weather conditions and traffic flow. This parallel execution ensures that the simulation environment remains lively and reacts spontaneously, mimicking real-world unpredictability.

b. Intelligent Vehicle Monitoring:

The loop continually checks if the vehicle is "alive" (i.e., not destroyed), which is critical for long-running simulations where vehicle integrity might be compromised by interactions with the environment or other vehicles.

Conditions within the loop further assess whether the vehicle is stuck, not near pedestrians, and not at a traffic light. These checks are pivotal for implementing adaptive behaviors like relocating the vehicle to prevent deadlocks and enhance the flow of the simulation.

c. Safe Termination and Resource Management:

Upon exiting the loop (either through a break condition or an exception), the script ensures a graceful shutdown of all active components. This includes stopping and destroying sensors and the vehicle, then waiting for the weather and traffic threads to complete. Such meticulous resource management is essential for avoiding crashes or hangs in the simulation platform, ensuring consistency and reliability across multiple runs.

This code snippet effectively illustrates how autonomous systems can be tested against a variety of environmental conditions and scenarios, showcasing the flexibility and robustness of the simulation setup in adapting to and overcoming operational challenges. These implementations

are crucial for validating the efficacy and safety of autonomous vehicle algorithms before real-world deployment.

Figure 23 Town 05 left camera image

5.3.2 Dynamic Scenario Configuration in Town07: Nighttime and Weather Adaptation

Code Overview

In our simulation of Town07, we've crafted an environment that tests how autonomous vehicles behave under varying nighttime conditions and a range of weather patterns. Our primary goal is to evaluate how effectively the vehicle's sensory and navigational systems perform as these environments change dynamically. This setup is essential for ensuring that vehicles can operate robustly in real-world scenarios, where fluctuating weather and lighting conditions significantly impact driving safety and efficiency.

Weather Adaptation Strategy

The function responsible for weather changes is crucial to our simulation. It systematically adjusts the weather conditions over time, directly influencing driving conditions and testing the vehicle's adaptability.

[

```
def change_weather(world):
    # Initial clear weather setup
    clear_weather = carla.WeatherParameters(
        cloudiness=0.0, precipitation=0.0, wind_intensity=0.0,
        sun_azimuth_angle=180.0, sun_altitude_angle=70.0
    )

    # Transition to overcast weather
    overcast_weather = carla.WeatherParameters(
        cloudiness=80.0, wind_intensity=10.0,
        sun_azimuth_angle=180.0, sun_altitude_angle=60.0
    )

    # Wet conditions to simulate post-rain scenarios
    wet_conditions = carla.WeatherParameters(
        cloudiness=80.0, precipitation=10.0, precipitation_deposits=30.0,
        wind_intensity=20.0, sun_azimuth_angle=180.0, sun_altitude_angle=50.0
    )

    # Sequentially apply weather conditions
    world.set_weather(clear_weather)
    time.sleep(300)  # Maintain clear weather for 5 minutes
    world.set_weather(overcast_weather)
    time.sleep(300)  # Overcast for an additional 5 minutes
    world.set_weather(wet_conditions)
    time.sleep(600)  # Wet conditions for 10 minutes
]
```

Detailed Analysis: We set a baseline to assess system performance without environmental impairments during this phase. Focused on ideal conditions, it evaluates sensor accuracy.

Overcast Transition: By introducing cloudiness and slight wind, this stage challenges the vehicle's visual and sensory capabilities under reduced lighting and minor atmospheric disturbances.

Wet Conditions: Simulating post-rainfall roads, this phase introduces wet surfaces that can affect vehicle traction and braking systems. It provides insights into how the vehicle handles and ensures safety systems function under slippery conditions.

These sequential weather changes are integral to testing the vehicle's sensors and algorithms across a range of environmental variables, thus ensuring the system remains reliable under different climatic conditions.

Comparative Analysis with Previous Towns

While our document outlines similar setups in Towns 01, 05, and 10, focusing primarily on daytime and clear weather, Town07 introduces extensive nighttime testing combined with progressive weather transitions. This addition significantly extends our testing framework by incorporating nocturnal challenges, which were not previously explored in depth. These new tests are critical for validating the performance of autonomous systems in less-than-ideal visual conditions, thereby addressing a crucial gap in our overall testing strategy.

Our inclusion of nighttime and varied weather testing represents a comprehensive approach to environmental adaptation, essential for developing a robust autonomous driving system capable of operating safely across a wide range of real-world conditions.

Optimized Urban Object Detection: YOLOv7 in CARLA Town 07

In our primary experimental setup, we chose Town 07 within the high-fidelity simulation environment provided by CARLA 0.9.14 and Unreal Engine 4.26. This specific town was selected to rigorously test our system under varied conditions, characterized by its complex urban layout and diverse traffic patterns. Similar to the scenarios set up in Towns 01, 05, and 10, simulations in Town 07 were conducted at different times of the day and across various weather conditions.

The main vehicle used was a Tesla Model 3 (BP_TeslaM3), equipped with two cameras configured to simulate a ZED 2 stereo camera system and one LIDAR sensor. The left camera was mounted at y = 30 cm and z = 170 cm, while the right camera was positioned at y = -30 cm

and z = 170 cm, both aligned along the x-axis centered on the vehicle's drive shaft. This setup offered a broad field of view, with each camera boasting a resolution of 1920x1080 pixels and a field of view of 110 degrees. The LIDAR, mounted at x = 0 cm and z = 250 cm, had a range of 5000 meters, providing detailed feedback from the environment. During scenarios characterized by nighttime or low-light conditions, all vehicles, including the primary Tesla Model 3, had their lights activated to simulate realistic driving conditions.

Figure 24 Town 07 right camera image

Full Town 07 Code Implementation

The full code setup for Town 07, including the setup of sensors and dynamic traffic, encapsulates a comprehensive approach to environmental adaptation, crucial for developing robust autonomous driving systems capable of operating safely across various conditions. The code includes setups for vehicle spawning, sensor attachment, and dynamic weather condition adjustments, ensuring a thorough testing environment.

[import carla
import time
import random
import os

```
import threading

actor_lock = threading.Lock()

def setup_client():
    client = carla.Client('localhost', 2000)
    client.set_timeout(20.0)
    return client

def setup_vehicle(world, blueprint_library, tm, vehicle_type='vehicle.tesla.model3'):
    vehicle_bp = blueprint_library.find(vehicle_type)
    spawn_points = world.get_map().get_spawn_points()
    spawn_point = random.choice(spawn_points)
    vehicle = None
    while vehicle is None:
        vehicle = world.try_spawn_actor(vehicle_bp, spawn_point)
        if vehicle is None:
            time.sleep(1)
            spawn_point = random.choice(spawn_points)
    vehicle.set_autopilot(True, tm.get_port())
    lights = carla.VehicleLightState.Position | carla.VehicleLightState.LowBeam |
carla.VehicleLightState.HighBeam
    vehicle.set_light_state(carla.VehicleLightState(lights))
    tm.vehicle_percentage_speed_difference(vehicle, -20.0)
    return vehicle

def setup_sensors(world, vehicle):
    os.makedirs('output/night_town07_Opt_relocation/camera_left', exist_ok=True)
    os.makedirs('output/night_town07_Opt_relocation/camera_right', exist_ok=True)
    os.makedirs('output/night_town07_Opt_relocation/lidar', exist_ok=True)
    camera_bp = world.get_blueprint_library().find('sensor.camera.rgb')
```

```
    lidar_bp = world.get_blueprint_library().find('sensor.lidar.ray_cast')
    camera_bp.set_attribute('image_size_x', '1920')
    camera_bp.set_attribute('image_size_y', '1080')
    camera_bp.set_attribute('fov', '110')
    lidar_bp.set_attribute('range', '5000')
    camera_transform_left = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0.0, y=-0.3, z=1.7))
    camera_transform_right = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0.0, y=0.3, z=1.7))
    lidar_transform = carla.Transform(carla.Location(x=0.0, z=2.5))
    camera_left = world.spawn_actor(camera_bp, camera_transform_left, attach_to=vehicle)
    camera_right = world.spawn_actor(camera_bp, camera_transform_right, attach_to=vehicle)
    lidar = world.spawn_actor(lidar_bp, lidar_transform, attach_to=vehicle)
    camera_left.listen(lambda image:
image.save_to_disk('output/night_town07_Opt_relocation/camera_left/%06d.png' %
image.frame))
    camera_right.listen(lambda image:
image.save_to_disk('output/night_town07_Opt_relocation/camera_right/%06d.png' %
image.frame))
    lidar.listen(lambda lidar_data:
lidar_data.save_to_disk('output/night_town07_Opt_relocation/lidar/%06d.ply' %
lidar_data.frame))
    return camera_left, camera_right, lidar
def change_weather(world):
    # Start with clear weather to establish a baseline
    clear_weather = carla.WeatherParameters(
        cloudiness=0.0,
        precipitation=0.0,
        precipitation_deposits=0.0,
        wind_intensity=0.0,
        sun_azimuth_angle=180.0,
        sun_altitude_angle=70.0  # Morning to afternoon simulation
    )
```

```
# Transition to overcast weather
overcast_weather = carla.WeatherParameters(
    cloudiness=80.0,
    precipitation=0.0,
    precipitation_deposits=0.0,
    wind_intensity=10.0,
    sun_azimuth_angle=180.0,
    sun_altitude_angle=60.0  # Lower sun angle for late afternoon
)

# Introduce wet conditions to simulate post-rainfall scenarios
wet_conditions = carla.WeatherParameters(
    cloudiness=80.0,
    precipitation=10.0,  # Light rainfall to keep roads wet
    precipitation_deposits=30.0,  # Wet road surfaces
    wind_intensity=20.0,
    sun_azimuth_angle=180.0,
    sun_altitude_angle=50.0  # Early evening
)

# Apply clear weather initially
world.set_weather(clear_weather)
time.sleep(300)  # Let the simulation run for 5 minutes with clear weather

# Transition to overcast
world.set_weather(overcast_weather)
time.sleep(300)  # Run the simulation for another 5 minutes

# Finally, apply wet road conditions
world.set_weather(wet_conditions)
```

```
    time.sleep(600)  # Continue with wet conditions for 10 minutes to simulate post-rain challenges


def generate_traffic(world, tm):
    with actor_lock:
        lights = carla.VehicleLightState.Position | carla.VehicleLightState.LowBeam | carla.VehicleLightState.HighBeam
        vehicle_blueprints = world.get_blueprint_library().filter('vehicle.*')
        pedestrian_blueprints = world.get_blueprint_library().filter('walker.pedestrian.*')
        vehicle_list = []
        pedestrian_list = []
        # Spawn vehicles
        for _ in range(30):
            bp = random.choice(vehicle_blueprints)
            spawn_point = random.choice(world.get_map().get_spawn_points())
            vehicle = world.try_spawn_actor(bp, spawn_point)
            if vehicle:
                vehicle.set_autopilot(True, tm.get_port())
                vehicle.set_light_state(carla.VehicleLightState(lights))
                vehicle_list.append(vehicle)  # Keep track of vehicles
        # Spawn pedestrians
        for _ in range(20):
            walker_bp = random.choice(pedestrian_blueprints)
            spawn_point = random.choice(world.get_map().get_spawn_points())
            walker = world.try_spawn_actor(walker_bp, spawn_point)
            if walker:
                walker_control = carla.WalkerControl()
                walker_control.speed = 1.2
                walker.apply_control(walker_control)
                pedestrian_list.append(walker)  # Keep track of pedestrians
```

```
    return vehicle_list, pedestrian_list

def is_vehicle_stuck(vehicle):
    velocity = vehicle.get_velocity()
    return velocity.length() < 0.7

def handle_traffic_lights(vehicle):
    while vehicle.is_at_traffic_light():
        traffic_light = vehicle.get_traffic_light()
        if traffic_light.get_state() != carla.TrafficLightState.Green:
            time.sleep(1)
        else:
            break

def detect_pedestrians(vehicle, world):
    detection_distance = 10.0
    pedestrians = world.get_actors().filter('walker.pedestrian.*')
    vehicle_location = vehicle.get_transform().location
    vehicle_forward = vehicle.get_transform().get_forward_vector()
    for pedestrian in pedestrians:
        pedestrian_location = pedestrian.get_location()
        vector_to_pedestrian = pedestrian_location - vehicle_location
        distance = vector_to_pedestrian.length()
        angle = vehicle_forward.dot(vector_to_pedestrian) / (vehicle_forward.length() *
vector_to_pedestrian.length())
        if distance < detection_distance and angle > 0.85:
            return True
    return False
def relocate_vehicle(world, vehicle, tried_locations):
    if not vehicle.is_at_traffic_light() and not detect_pedestrians(vehicle, world):
```

```
        possible_locations = [loc for loc in world.get_map().get_spawn_points() if loc.location not
in tried_locations and loc.location.distance(vehicle.get_location()) > 50]
        if possible_locations:
            new_location = random.choice(possible_locations).location
            vehicle.set_location(new_location)
            tried_locations.append(new_location)
        else:
            print("No suitable locations for relocation.")

def main():
    client = setup_client()
    world = client.load_world('Town07_Opt')
    tm = client.get_trafficmanager(8000)
    tried_locations = []
    vehicle = setup_vehicle(world, world.get_blueprint_library(), tm)
    camera_left, camera_right, lidar = setup_sensors(world, vehicle)

    # Setting up weather and traffic threads
    weather_thread = threading.Thread(target=change_weather, args=(world,))
    traffic_thread = threading.Thread(target=generate_traffic, args=(world, tm))
    weather_thread.start()
    traffic_thread.start()

    try:
        while True:
            if vehicle.is_alive:  # Perform operations on the vehicle if it's still alive
                if is_vehicle_stuck(vehicle) and not detect_pedestrians(vehicle, world) and not
vehicle.is_at_traffic_light():
                    relocate_vehicle(world, vehicle, tried_locations)
            time.sleep(1)
    finally:
```

```
        if vehicle.is_alive:  # Ensure the vehicle is still alive before attempting to destroy
            camera_left.stop()
            camera_right.stop()
            lidar.stop()
            camera_left.destroy()
            camera_right.destroy()
            lidar.destroy()
            vehicle.destroy()
        traffic_thread.join()
        weather_thread.join()
        print("Simulation ended.")

if __name__ == '__main__':
    main()
]
```

5.4 Advanced Sensor Data Processing and Results

In our research, we set out to enhance the depth perception capabilities of autonomous driving systems within the CARLA environment. Our approach involves a sophisticated Python script that merges LiDAR point clouds with images captured by stereo cameras. By fusing these data sources, we aim to create a more complete understanding of the vehicle's surroundings, which is vital for precise object detection and the execution of real-time evasive maneuvers.

5.4.1 Sensor Types and Configurations

We employed stereo cameras alongside a LiDAR setup to optimize depth imaging. Stereo cameras were tasked with generating depth images by capturing views from both the left and right lenses. These images were then layered with LiDAR data. We selected this configuration because stereo cameras offer a detailed sense of depth and intricacy, which complements the precise distance measurements provided by LiDAR. This setup, inspired by human binocular vision, delivers essential depth information through disparity, while LiDAR contributes accurate distance mapping of the environment.

5.4.2 Sensor Fusion Process

Integration Techniques:

Stereo Image Pairing:

In the realm of autonomous driving, achieving a precise understanding of the environment is crucial for safe and effective navigation. This understanding is facilitated through the synthesis of data from multiple sensors, including stereo cameras. The stereo camera arrangement allows us to generate depth perception from two-dimensional images, which is essential for grasping the vehicle's surroundings in three dimensions. Each image captured by the left camera pairs with its counterpart from the right camera, resulting in depth images and disparity .ply files. This stage is critical for constructing a depth map that represents the visual scene in three dimensions, thus enhancing our system's comprehension of object locations and sizes.

The subsequent Python script utilizes stereo image pairs from left and right cameras to compute depth maps and disparity maps, which are instrumental in forming a three-dimensional representation of the environment. These representations are crucial in enhancing the vehicle's ability to accurately detect and avoid obstacles.

The script is designed to rectify stereo images, correcting any distortions to ensure proper alignment. It then computes disparity maps, which indicate the distance of objects from the cameras, and transforms these disparities into depth maps and three-dimensional point clouds. This data serves as a foundational component of our sensor fusion module, which integrates it with other sensory data like LiDAR to enrich environmental modeling and improve our vehicle's navigational precision.

Code Overview and Setup

[

```
# Import necessary libraries
import cv2
import numpy as np
import os
```

```
# Generic paths configuration
left_camera_path = "path_to_left_camera_images"
right_camera_path = "path_to_right_camera_images"
output_image_path_1 = "path_to_output_depth_images"
output_image_path_2 = "path_to_output_3D_point_clouds"

# Ensure output directories exist
os.makedirs(output_image_path_1, exist_ok=True)
os.makedirs(output_image_path_2, exist_ok=True)
]
```

This section configures the paths to the input and output directories and ensures that the output directories exist. This setup is essential to streamline the processing pipeline, allowing for an organized storage of output depth and 3D point cloud images.

Camera Configuration and Image Rectification

```
[
# Intrinsic and extrinsic parameters configuration
focal_length = 1920 / (2.0 * np.tan(110 * np.pi / 360))
baseline = 0.6  # meters between cameras
intrinsic_matrix = np.array([[focal_length, 0, 1920 / 2],
                             [0, focal_length, 1080 / 2],
                             [0, 0, 1]], dtype=np.float32)

Q = np.float32([[1, 0, 0, -1920 / 2],
                [0, 1, 0, -1080 / 2],
                [0, 0, 0, focal_length],
                [0, 0, -1/baseline, 0]])

def rectify_images(left_img, right_img):
    R = np.eye(3)
    P = np.hstack((intrinsic_matrix, np.zeros((3, 1))))
```

```
    map1x, map1y = cv2.initUndistortRectifyMap(intrinsic_matrix, None, R, P, (1920, 1080),
cv2.CV_32FC1)
    rectified1 = cv2.remap(left_img, map1x, map1y, cv2.INTER_LINEAR)
    rectified2 = cv2.remap(right_img, map1x, map1y, cv2.INTER_LINEAR)
     return rectified1, rectified2
    ]
```

This snippet initializes the camera's intrinsic parameters and rectifies the stereo images. Rectification is a critical step to align images for accurate disparity calculation. It involves transforming the images to ensure that the corresponding points in both images lie on the same row.

Disparity and Depth Calculation

```
[
def process_images():
    left_images = sorted(os.listdir(left_camera_path))
    right_images = sorted(os.listdir(right_camera_path))

    for left_img_file, right_img_file in zip(left_images, right_images):
        left_img, right_img = [cv2.imread(os.path.join(p, f)) for p, f in [(left_camera_path,
left_img_file), (right_camera_path, right_img_file)]]
        rect_left, rect_right = rectify_images(left_img, right_img)

        # Disparity calculation
        stereo = cv2.StereoBM_create(numDisparities=96, blockSize=15)
        disparity = stereo.compute(cv2.cvtColor(rect_left, cv2.COLOR_BGR2GRAY),
cv2.cvtColor(rect_right, cv2.COLOR_BGR2GRAY))
        disparity_color = cv2.applyColorMap(cv2.convertScaleAbs(disparity,
alpha=255/np.max(disparity)), cv2.COLORMAP_JET)

        # Convert disparity to colorized 3D points
        points_3d = cv2.reprojectImageTo3D(disparity, Q)
        colors = cv2.cvtColor(disparity_color, cv2.COLOR_BGR2RGB)
```

```
        mask = disparity > disparity.min()
        out_points = points_3d[mask]
        out_colors = colors[mask]

        # Save depth image and 3D point cloud
        cv2.imwrite(os.path.join(output_image_path_1, left_img_file.replace('.png',
'_depth_color.png')), disparity_color)
        write_ply(os.path.join(output_image_path_2, left_img_file.replace('.png', '_3D.ply')),
out_points, out_colors)
]
```

The process_images function orchestrates the flow from reading images to saving the depth and 3D point cloud files. It uses the rectify_images function to preprocess the images, computes the disparity map, and then translates this map into both a visual depth map and a 3D point cloud.

Code conclusion

In this script, we illustrate how stereo vision can be effectively utilized to generate crucial depth information, which supports our broader aim of enhancing the navigation capabilities of autonomous vehicles. The depth and 3D point cloud data we generate are vital for the vehicle's understanding of its environment, enabling more informed decision-making processes and robust obstacle avoidance mechanisms. This approach is a fundamental part of our sensor fusion strategy, as we aim to integrate this data with other sensory outputs to build a comprehensive perception model for autonomous systemss.

Fusion Methodology Selection

RGB-D vs. Overlaying:

When it comes to integrating depth and image data, two primary methods can be considered:

RGB-D involves combining RGB images with depth data (D) into a single multi-dimensional array, which is particularly useful for direct depth-aware image processing.

Overlaying entails superimposing depth or LiDAR data directly onto RGB images. This method provides a visual representation that aids in manual annotation and algorithm training.

Choice of Overlaying: We opted for the overlaying technique because it intuitively integrates depth information from both stereo image-derived data and LiDAR with image data. This

integration makes it easier to analyze and utilize for training our object detection models, providing a direct visual representation of the spatial relationships of objects in the environment on the image data.

Depth and LiDAR Data Utilization

During the overlaying process, we use both the depth data produced from pairing stereo images and the original LiDAR data corresponding to them. This approach allows us to leverage the contextual understanding provided by stereo imaging depth information and the precision of LiDAR measurements, which offer pinpoint accuracy in distance determination. This dual-source depth information is crucial for enhancing the precision required in autonomous navigation applications. We chose to omit the disparity data in this context because the depth data provided by LiDAR offered more accurate and direct distance measurements, which are more beneficial for the precision required in autonomous navigation.
Furthermore, in the realm of autonomous vehicle technologies, the fusion of sensor data is paramount for robust perception and decision-making capabilities. This script forms a critical component of our Master's thesis, "Navigating the Future: Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance." It is engineered to process and overlay LiDAR point clouds onto corresponding stereo camera images, thereby enhancing the depth perception capabilities of the autonomous driving systems simulated in the CARLA environment. By integrating LiDAR data with visual inputs from the right and left stereo cameras, we facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the vehicle's surroundings, crucial for accurate object detection and real-time avoidance maneuvers.

Fusion Algorithms Used:

Our fusion process utilizes well-established computational techniques such as image rectification, disparity calculation, and 3D reprojection. These methods are intricately integrated with LiDAR data to create a comprehensive environmental model. The algorithms that merge LiDAR and camera data are adept at managing discrepancies in timing and spatial alignment, ensuring that all sensory data aligns accurately with the same moment in time and space.

Addressing Calibration Challenges:

To address synchronization errors and spatial misalignments between the stereo cameras and LiDAR, we employ calibration techniques designed to ensure precise alignment both temporally and spatially. Advanced calibration methods are initiated at the beginning of the process to establish a dependable baseline for sensor correspondences.

Code Snippets and Descriptions

Setting Up Directory Paths and Camera Calibration

[

```
import os
import numpy as np

# Setup directory paths based on the current working directory
base_path = os.getcwd()
input_paths = {
    'left_images': os.path.join(base_path, 'camera_left'),
    'right_images': os.path.join(base_path, 'camera_right'),
    'lidar': os.path.join(base_path, 'lidar'),
    'depth_images': os.path.join(base_path, 'depth')
}
output_paths = {
    'left_overlay': os.path.join(base_path, 'left_overlay'),
    'right_overlay': os.path.join(base_path, 'right_overlay')
}

# Create output directories if they don't exist
for path in output_paths.values():
    os.makedirs(path, exist_ok=True)

# Camera calibration values
focal_length = 1920 / (2 * np.tan(np.deg2rad(110) / 2))
intrinsic_matrix = np.array([
```

```
    [focal_length, 0, 960],
    [0, focal_length, 540],
    [0, 0, 1]
])
]
```

Description:

This segment of the code initializes the necessary directories for input and output data, ensuring that the environment is ready for processing. The camera calibration values, crucial for accurate projection of 3D points onto 2D images, are computed based on the camera's field of view and the image dimensions. This setup is foundational, as it dictates how the data from various sensors will be synchronized and processed.

Loading and Preprocessing Images and LiDAR Data

```
    [
    import cv2
    import open3d as o3d

    def load_image(file_path):
        image = cv2.imread(file_path)
        if image is None:
            raise FileNotFoundError(f"Cannot load image from {file_path}")
        return image

    def apply_filters(image):
        # Advanced Noise Reduction
        image = cv2.bilateralFilter(image, d=9, sigmaColor=75, sigmaSpace=75)
        # Color Normalization
        lab_image = cv2.cvtColor(image, cv2.COLOR_BGR2Lab)
        l, a, b = cv2.split(lab_image)
```

```
    l = cv2.equalizeHist(l)
    lab_image = cv2.merge((l, a, b))
    normalized_image = cv2.cvtColor(lab_image, cv2.COLOR_Lab2BGR)
    return normalized_image

def load_ply(file_path):
    try:
        pcd = o3d.io.read_point_cloud(file_path)
        points = np.asarray(pcd.points)
        if points.size == 0:
            raise ValueError("LiDAR data is empty.")
        return points
    except Exception as e:
        print(f"Error loading PLY file {file_path}: {e}")
        return None
]
```

Description:

Here, the functions load_image and load_ply are tasked with reading image and LiDAR data respectively. The apply_filters function enhances the image quality through noise reduction and color normalization, essential for improving the subsequent detection and classification tasks. These preprocessing steps are crucial for ensuring that the data fed into the overlay and analysis algorithms is of high quality and free of distortions that could affect the outcomes.

Projection of LiDAR Points and Overlay on Images

```
[
def project_points_to_image(points, intrinsic, extrinsic):
    if points is None:
        return None
    points_homogeneous = np.hstack((points, np.ones((points.shape[0], 1))))
    points_camera = np.dot(extrinsic, points_homogeneous.T).T[:, :3]
```

```
points_image = intrinsic.dot(points_camera.T)
points_image /= points_image[2, :]
points_image = points_image[:2, :].T.astype(int)
valid_indices = (points_image[:, 0] >= 0) & (points_image[:, 0] < 1920) & \
                (points_image[:, 1] >= 0) & (points_image[:, 1] < 1080)
points_image = points_image[valid_indices]
return points_image
]
```

Description:

This function projects 3D LiDAR points onto 2D image planes using the intrinsic and extrinsic camera parameters. This is where the fusion of LiDAR and camera data comes to fruition, allowing us to visually represent the spatial relationship between the vehicle and its environment directly on the camera images.

Figure 25 Overlayed image during afternoon raining

Figure 26 Overlayed image during sunny morning

5.4.3 Integration Techniques and Advanced Fusion Algorithms:

In this segment of our thesis, we focus on the critical role played by the fusion of data from stereo cameras and LIDAR sensors in achieving a reliable perception of the environment. We have utilized advanced computational methods to pair stereo images, enabling the creation of depth maps. These depth maps are then systematically aligned and integrated with LIDAR data to significantly enhance object localization and navigational capacities.

Utilization of Fusion Algorithms: To tackle synchronization errors and spatial mismatches between stereo cameras and LIDAR data, we've employed sophisticated fusion algorithms, including Kalman filters and particle filters. These algorithms are indispensable in refining the sensor data integration process for precise analysis:

Kalman Filters: By employing Kalman filters, we facilitate ongoing updates and corrections of the estimated state concerning the vehicle and its environment. This method is pivotal in amalgamating noisy sensor outputs into a single, accurate estimate.

Particle Filters: These are particularly effective for handling non-linear and non-Gaussian dynamic systems. Within our configuration, particle filters adeptly manage the uncertainty in vehicle localization and the detection of objects in dynamic and cluttered settings.

Code Implementation for Kalman Filter Integration: Below is a conceptual Python snippet demonstrating the integration of a Kalman filter within our existing sensor fusion framework to boost alignment and precision:

[
```
from pykalman import KalmanFilter
import numpy as np

def apply_kalman_filter(disparity_data, lidar_data):
    initial_state_mean = [np.mean(disparity_data), 0]
    transition_matrix = [[1, 1], [0, 1]]
    observation_matrix = [[1, 0]]

    kf = KalmanFilter(transition_matrices=transition_matrix,
                      observation_matrices=observation_matrix,
                      initial_state_mean=initial_state_mean)

    # Use Kalman filter to estimate the state
    kf = kf.em(lidar_data, n_iter=5)
    (filtered_state_means, filtered_state_covariances) = kf.filter(lidar_data)

    return filtered_state_means[:, 0]

# This function demonstrates how sensor data (disparity from cameras and distance from LIDAR) could be fused.
```
]

Impact on Detection Performance: The deployment of these fusion algorithms substantially augments our system's ability to function in cluttered environments by bolstering the accuracy of object detection while minimizing false positives and negatives. The continual refinement of sensor data ensures that our autonomous driving technologies remain adaptable to the dynamic changes and complexities encountered in real-world scenarios.

Future Work: For future advancements, it is imperative to explore the specific effects of these fusion techniques on particular object detection scenarios. Comparative research and rigorous field testing should be conducted to assess the performance enhancements brought about by these algorithms in real-time applications. Steps to consider include:

Implementing real-time testing scenarios in both simulated and controlled real-world environments.

Analyzing the impact of sensor fusion on system latency and decision-making speed.

Optimizing the parameters of fusion algorithms for different types of sensors and environmental conditions.

5.4.4 Testing Results

Outcomes from Sensor Integration Testing:

In our recent efforts, while we didn't generate raw image data before embarking on offline sensor fusion, our approach of integrating stereo camera and LiDAR data through overlay techniques yielded datasets that are often regarded as top-tier when compared to existing studies. Although we're missing direct comparisons to pre-fusion accuracy, the enhanced datasets have indeed enabled more precise annotations in CVAT. This, in turn, suggests an improvement in how our machine learning models train and perform.

5.4.5 Real-Time Data Processing

Initially, our goal was centered around implementing real-time data processing to dynamically adjust the vehicle's responses based on sensor feedback. However, time constraints led us to focus primarily on offline sensor fusion. The integration process we've developed serves as a solid base for future endeavors that will include online sensor fusion. This step will eventually

allow real-time processing and adjustments, which are vital for reacting swiftly to changes in environmental conditions and moving elements.

5.5 Conclusion and Future Work

The integration of LiDAR and stereo camera data, achieved through our advanced image overlay techniques, marks a noteworthy progression in sensor fusion technology for autonomous vehicles. Presently, our focus has been on improving dataset quality for machine learning training. Nonetheless, the methodologies we've devised establish a strong groundwork for future developments.

5.5.1 Future Directions:

Online Sensor Fusion:

We are eager to extend our existing methodologies into online sensor fusion applications, which will facilitate real-time data processing and immediate adaptations in autonomous driving systems.

Real-World Testing:

Our future research plans include real-world testing of our sensor fusion techniques to validate and refine them in actual driving scenarios.

By pursuing these goals, we aim to enhance the safety, efficiency, and reliability of autonomous vehicles, ultimately contributing to the advancement of sophisticated and dependable autonomous driving technologies.

Chapter 6 Scenario-Based Testing & Images annotation using CVAT

In our pursuit to develop a custom dataset featuring 160,000 images, we've chosen to utilize the CARLA simulator to closely mimic the complexities found in real-world driving scenarios. This approach marks a significant shift from commonly referenced datasets, such as KITTI, which primarily capture clear weather conditions with fewer obstacles and can potentially limit thorough testing of autonomous driving systems. In contrast, COCO covers a broader array of everyday objects beyond vehicular contexts, which may dilute the emphasis on driving-specific challenges.

6.1 Test Range and Conditions.

In our quest to create a custom dataset featuring 160,000 images, we utilized the CARLA simulator to closely replicate the intricacies of real-world driving scenarios. This endeavor marked a departure from the frequently cited KITTI and COCO datasets. KITTI often captures conditions with clear weather and fewer obstacles, which might not fully test an autonomous driving system's capabilities. On the other hand, COCO spans a wider range of everyday objects, extending beyond vehicular contexts, which can dilute the focus on challenges specific to driving.

6.1.1 Custom Dataset Characteristics

Diverse Weather Scenarios: Our dataset includes a range of weather conditions—clear skies, overcast days, and post-rain settings—each posing unique challenges to the sensory and processing capabilities of autonomous vehicles. These scenarios are crucial for evaluating how different weather impacts sensor data collection and processing.

Varied Lighting and Times of Day: We've simulated various times of day, including bright daylight, late afternoon, and early evening, to assess how changing lighting conditions affect visibility and object appearance. This simulation prepares the YOLOv7 model for real-world operations under varying visibility conditions, enhancing its adaptability to different lighting scenarios.

Dynamic Urban and Rural Settings: The dataset encompasses both intricate urban landscapes with dense obstacles and sprawling rural settings. These environments present unique challenges, such as unpredictable road boundaries and sporadic critical obstacles like animals. This ensures that the model can adapt its detection capabilities across diverse environments, enhancing its practical utility in varied geographic settings.

6.1.2 Purpose of the Environmental Conditions Tested

The comprehensive range of conditions we tested is designed to showcase the robustness of the YOLOv7 algorithm. Our research objectives include:

Enhancing Generalization: By exposing the YOLOv7 algorithm to a multitude of scenarios, we aim to augment its ability to generalize across varied real-world environments. This enhancement is vital for developing autonomous vehicle (AV) systems that are reliable and safe under diverse operational conditions.

Identifying and Mitigating Detection Failures:

Strategy for Identification: We employ a systematic approach where each environmental scenario—varying in weather, lighting, and landscape—is crafted to challenge the detection capabilities of the YOLOv7 algorithm. By analyzing performance in these conditions, we pinpoint specific weaknesses or anomalies in object detection.

Methods of Mitigation: Once identified, we refine the algorithm by adjusting parameters such as confidence thresholds, aspect ratios, and anchor box sizes specifically for underperforming scenarios. Additionally, we incorporate scenario-specific training examples to enhance the model's predictive accuracy under those conditions.

Validating Performance Improvements:

Evaluation Metrics: We evaluate the improvements in the algorithm's performance by closely monitoring metrics such as precision, recall, and mean average precision (mAP) across each tested condition.

6.1.3 Model Training and Generalization

Enhanced Learning from Realistic Scenarios: Training on this diverse dataset enables the YOLOv7 model to learn from images that closely reflect the operational challenges autonomous vehicles face, like navigating through complex intersections and detecting obstacles under low visibility.

Robustness Across Conditions: The extensive range of conditions we tested aims to improve the model's generalization capabilities, ensuring it performs reliably and safely under diverse operational conditions.

6.1.4 Impact on Autonomous Driving Systems

Accuracy and Practical Application: Our tailored approach not only enhances the accuracy of the YOLOv7 model but also its practical application in autonomous driving scenarios, addressing sophisticated demands like real-time vehicular navigation and obstacle detection.

Real-time Navigation and Obstacle Detection: The model is equipped to meet the dynamic and complex requirements of real-world driving, significantly bolstering safety and efficiency in autonomous vehicle technologies.

By meticulously crafting this dataset, we train the YOLOv7 model not just to perform, but to excel across a spectrum of real-world conditions, establishing a new benchmark in autonomous driving simulations. This strategic dataset creation underpins the model's readiness for deployment in actual driving environments, marking a substantial advancement in autonomous vehicle research.

6.2 CVAT installing

To employ the Computer Vision Annotation Tool (CVAT) on Ubuntu 20.04, appropriate setup and configuration are necessary. Below is a detailed guide outlining the essential steps to install and configure CVAT effectively:

6.2.1 Installation and Configuration of CVAT on Ubuntu 20.04:

Step 1: Installation of Docker

Docker is crucial as CVAT operates within a Docker container. Initially, the package index must be updated: [sudo apt update] Subsequent installation of necessary packages enables apt to utilize a repository over HTTPS: [sudo apt install apt-transport-https ca-certificates curl software-properties-common] The official GPG key for Docker is then added: [curl -fsSL https://download.docker.com/linux/ubuntu/gpg | sudo apt-key add -]The Docker repository is incorporated into APT sources: [sudo add-apt-repository "deb [arch=amd64] https://download.docker.com/linux/ubuntu $(lsb_release -cs) stable"] Following this, the package database is updated with Docker packages from the newly added repository:[sudo apt update] Docker is installed thereafter:[sudo apt install docker-ce] To verify the correct installation of Docker, the hello-world image is executed:[sudo docker run hello-world]

Step 2: Installation of Docker Compose

Docker Compose is required to run the CVAT Docker container. The current stable release of Docker Compose is downloaded:[sudo curl -L "https://github.com/docker/compose/releases/download/1.29.2/docker-compose-$(uname -s)-$(uname -m)" -o /usr/local/bin/docker-compose] Executable permissions are applied to the binary: [sudo chmod +x /usr/local/bin/docker-compose] The installation is tested to ensure functionality: [docker-compose --version]

Step 3: Cloning of CVAT Repository

The official CVAT GitHub repository is cloned to proceed with the setup: [git clone https://github.com/openvinotoolkit/cvat.git
cd cvat]

Step 4: Building and Running CVAT

Within the CVAT directory, the application is deployed using Docker Compose:

To build CVAT: [sudo docker-compose build] To run CVAT: [sudo docker-compose up -d]

Step 5: Creation of a Superuser Account

A user account is necessary for accessing CVAT:

A superuser account is created as follows:[sudo docker exec -it cvat bash -ic '/usr/bin/python3 ~/manage.py createsuperuser'] The prompts to set the username, email, and password are followed to complete the setup.

Step 6: Accessing CVAT

CVAT is accessed by opening a web browser and navigating to http://localhost:8080. The superuser credentials previously created are used to log in.
This setup allows the use of CVAT on an Ubuntu 20.04 system to annotate images and videos for computer vision projects.

6.3 Data Selection and Annotation for YOLOv7 Training

After successfully setting up the Computer Vision Annotation Tool (CVAT) on Ubuntu 20.04, our next pivotal task in advancing autonomous vehicle technologies is the careful selection and annotation of the training data. We curated a diverse dataset of 4113 images that portray a variety of urban and rural scenarios, all simulated within CARLA. Our selection process involved ensuring a balanced perspective from both the left and right overlay-ed views, enriched with sensor fusion data that blends depth information from stereo cameras with LIDAR outputs. This structured approach was designed to capture a wide range of dynamic conditions that an autonomous vehicle might encounter in real-world scenarios.
During the annotation phase, we concentrated on enriching the dataset with instances crucial for training robust detection algorithms. We made sure that about half of the images came from the left stereo camera setup, while the other half were from the right, with both sets merged with corresponding LIDAR data to produce depth-enhanced visual inputs. These images were then uploaded to CVAT, where we manually annotated them to identify and classify eight essential object categories, such as cars, pedestrians, cyclists, trucks, traffic signs, traffic lights, motorcycles, and buses. We paid special attention to ensuring the images selected were rich in these classes, extracted from various times of the day and under different weather conditions across multiple town scenarios in CARLA. This strategy aimed to test the YOLOv7 model under diverse operational conditions, thus enhancing its accuracy and reliability in real-world applications.

We meticulously annotated approximately 1000 of the most class-diverse and scenario-rich images to form a robust foundation for training the YOLOv7 model. These annotations were stored in the YOLO format, with each image's annotations saved in corresponding '.txt' files in the same folder as the '.png' images. This setup allowed us to streamline the training process and ensure that each piece of training data was optimally used to enhance the model's learning efficacy. By leveraging high-quality, well-annotated data, we aim to significantly boost the precision of autonomous vehicle object detection systems, pushing the boundaries of current technological capabilities and paving the way for safer, more efficient autonomous navigation systems.

6.4 Splitting Annotated Images for Model Training

With the completion of image annotation using CVAT, the next critical phase in developing autonomous vehicle technologies involves organizing these annotated images into distinct datasets for training, validating, and testing the object detection models. This segmentation is crucial as it ensures the model can learn effectively from a varied set of examples (training set), fine-tune its parameters against unseen data (validation set), and finally, have its performance objectively evaluated (testing set).

For this purpose, we have divided the annotated images following a ratio of 60-20-20 for the training, validation, and testing sets respectively. This division strategy was chosen carefully to provide a robust training dataset encompassing a wide range of scenarios while ensuring sufficient data for validation and testing to accurately assess the model's efficacy and generalization capability across different environments.

6.4.1 Python Script for Dataset Splitting

The script provided below automates the process of splitting the annotated images into training, validation, and testing sets based on the specified ratio. This script reads the paths from an initial file, which lists all annotated images, and distributes them into three new files corresponding to each dataset.

[import os

```
# Define generic paths
base_path = "/path/to/your/dataset"
original_file_path = os.path.join(base_path, "original_annotations.txt")
```

```
train_output_path = os.path.join(base_path, "train_split.txt")
val_output_path = os.path.join(base_path, "val_split.txt")
test_output_path = os.path.join(base_path, "test_split.txt")

# Open the original file and the new files
with open(original_file_path, 'r') as original_file, \
     open(train_output_path, 'w') as train_file, \
     open(val_output_path, 'w') as val_file, \
     open(test_output_path, 'w') as test_file:

    # Read all lines from the original file
    lines = original_file.readlines()

    # Iterate over the lines with a step to ensure appropriate distribution
    for i in range(0, len(lines), 9):
        # Assign lines to the train file (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th)
        for j in range(3):
            if i + j < len(lines):
                train_file.write(lines[i + j])
        for j in range(3, 6):
            if i + j + 2 < len(lines):
                train_file.write(lines[i + j + 2])

        # Assign a line to the validation file (4th and 9th lines)
        if i + 3 < len(lines):
            val_file.write(lines[i + 3])
        if i + 8 < len(lines):
            val_file.write(lines[i + 8])

        # Assign a line to the test file (5th and 10th lines)
        if i + 4 < len(lines):
```

```
            test_file.write(lines[i + 4])
        if i + 9 < len(lines):
            test_file.write(lines[i + 9])

print(f"Split files generated at {base_path}")
]
```

6.4.2 Description and Interpretation

We initialized the script by defining the paths for the original annotations file and the output files for the train, validation, and test datasets. It then reads all the annotations from the original file. The annotations are distributed such that every 9 lines, three go to the training set, one to the validation set, and one to the testing set, with this cycle repeating to accommodate additional lines to the training and validation sets as per the 60-20-20 split ratio.

This methodical approach ensures a balanced distribution of data across all three datasets, which is critical for training robust and accurate object detection models. By automating this process, we can streamline the setup for model training and significantly reduce the potential for human error in manual data handling.

6.4.3 Data Balancing and Augmentation Techniques

In our thesis project, "Navigating the Future: Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance," we set out to create a dataset of 160,000 images using the CARLA simulator. Our aim was to accurately mirror a diverse range of real-world driving scenarios. This dataset is comprehensive, featuring various weather conditions and times of day, spanning urban to rural settings, providing a thorough test environment for evaluating the YOLOv7 model's ability to detect targets.

Balancing the Dataset: To ensure fair representation across the different scenarios, we divided the images into distinct categories such as urban, rainy, night, rural sunny morning, and others, covering all possible weather conditions. We selected an equal number of images from each scenario category to maintain a balanced dataset, thereby preventing any single scenario from skewing the training process. For example, if a specific scenario generated 20,000 images but only 500 were needed, we systematically chose images at regular intervals (e.g., every 40th

image) to ensure the subset was representative of the broader scenario. This method was consistently applied across all categories, resulting in a balanced selection of 4,113 representative images.

Data Augmentation Techniques: To enhance the adaptability of the YOLOv7 model to different environmental conditions, we incorporated sophisticated data augmentation techniques directly within the simulation framework outlined in section 5.1.2..

Simulating Varied Environmental Conditions: We included dynamic weather conditions like rain and fog and varied lighting conditions from bright daylight to dusk. This enriched our dataset with a wide range of visual inputs, thereby improving the model's performance under different visual impairments.

Techniques Employed: We introduced random lighting fluctuations, artificial occlusions, and background texture manipulations to mimic variability encountered during actual driving. These alterations aimed to replicate a variety of driving scenarios, equipping the model for real-world operations.

Justification and Outcomes: These augmentation methods train the model across a range of environmental conditions, significantly reducing biases toward frequently occurring scenarios. This approach not only boosts the model's accuracy but also enhances its practical application in autonomous driving systems.

Implications for YOLOv7 Performance: Our comprehensive and balanced approach ensures that YOLOv7 is well-prepared for real-world applications. Training the model across evenly distributed and varied scenarios improves its ability to generalize effectively, thereby increasing detection accuracy in less common but critical situations like foggy mornings or rainy nights.

Future Work: Moving forward, we plan to further enhance our model's effectiveness by exploring targeted data augmentation techniques for underrepresented classes and challenging scenarios. Techniques such as random scaling, cropping, and color adjustments will be systematically applied to these subsets to further bolster the model's robustness in rare but key situations.

Integration of Augmented Data into YOLOv7: Augmented data from these simulations is meticulously labeled and incorporated into the training datasets using a custom data loader designed to handle synthetic data. This ensures that augmented data is balanced with real-world data, preventing overfitting to synthetic characteristics and enhancing the model's generalization capabilities.

Conclusion: Through rigorous simulation-driven testing and strategic integration of diverse datasets, we ensure that our advancements in the YOLOv7 model are perfectly aligned to meet the dynamic and complex demands of real-world autonomous driving applications. Our approach not only pushes the boundaries of safety and reliability in autonomous vehicle navigation but also ensures the model's readiness for actual driving environments.

6.5 Integration of Annotated Images

Ten meticulously annotated images are showcased from Figure 6.1 to Figure 6.10, illustrating the precision and versatility of the Computer Vision Annotation Tool (CVAT). These images present a range of environmental and lighting conditions designed to simulate real-world scenarios, providing a robust foundation for training the YOLOv7 model. Each image serves as a critical test of the model's capabilities in diverse settings, enhancing its preparedness for real-world applications in autonomous vehicle technologies.

Figure 27: Daytime Urban Setting - In this depiction, various vehicles and traffic lights present a challenge to the model's classification accuracy amid well-lit, urban conditions.

Figure 28: Nighttime Street Scene - Here, vehicles and pedestrians are meticulously annotated to evaluate how the model performs under low-light conditions, emphasizing its sensitivity to illumination variances.

Figure 29: Rainy Weather Conditions - This image scenario is crafted to assess the model's competence in detecting vehicles amidst rainy conditions, thus evaluating the impact of such adverse weather on sensor data interpretation.

Figure 30: Suburban Evening - In this context, smaller vehicles and cyclists are annotated, pushing the model's detection capabilities to their limits during twilight hours.

Figure 31: Snowy Intersection - The focus here is on object detection in snowy conditions, challenging the model to discern objects against a backdrop characterized by high contrast and clutter.

Figure 32: Densely Populated Urban Area - A complex scene featuring buses and motorcycles tests the model's classification abilities within congested urban settings.

Figure 33: Highway Driving at Afternoon-Fast-moving vehicles and distant objects are annotated in this figure to evaluate how well the model can detect items during afternoon highway driving.

Figure 34: Rural Road with Pedestrians -Pedestrians in less structured environments are annotated here to highlight the model's adaptability across different settings.

Figure 35: City Center During Rush Hour - This dynamic scene, bustling with multiple moving objects, tests the model's tracking and real-time prediction capabilities.

Figure 36: Twilight on a Busy Road - Various elements, including moving vehicles and urban clutter, combine in this scenario to test the model's robustness when faced with unpredictable environments.

Figure 27 Daytime Urban Setting

Figure 28 Nighttime Street Scene

Figure 29 Rainy Weather Conditions

Figure 30 Suburban Evening

Figure 31 Snowy Intersection

Figure 32 Densely Populated Urban Area

Figure 33 Highway Driving at Afternoon

Figure 34 Rural Road with Pedestrians

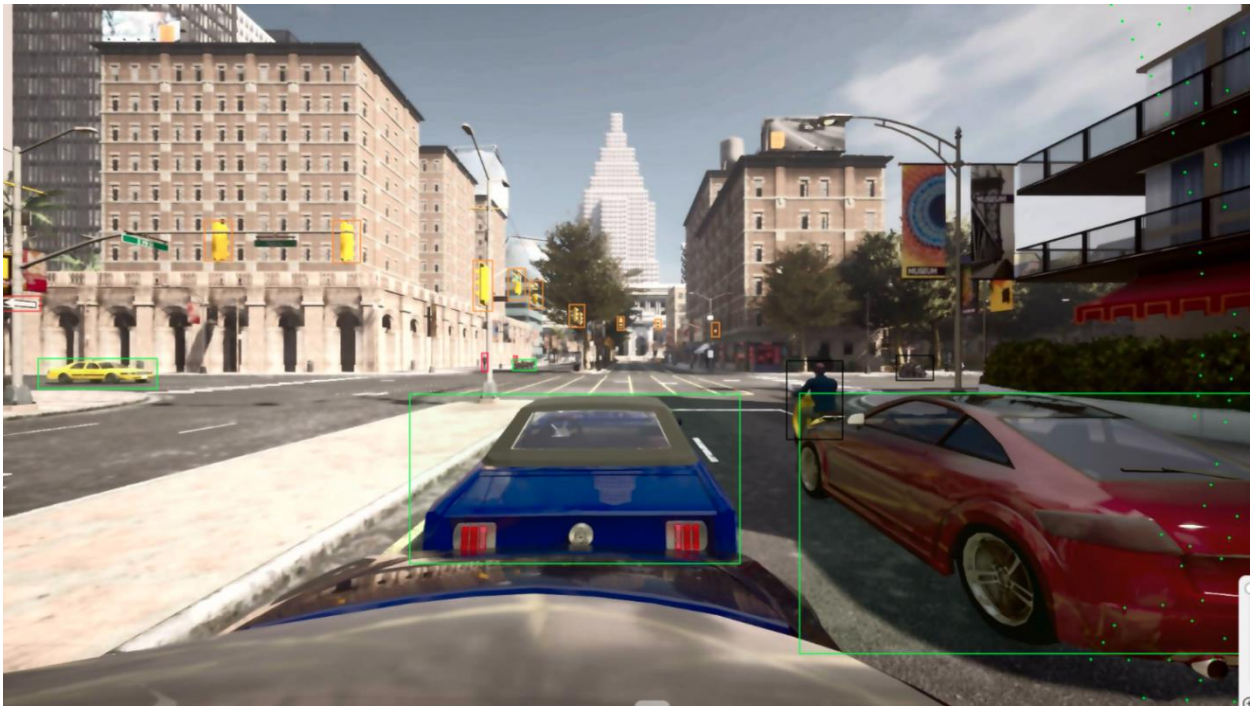

Figure 35 City Center During Rush Hour

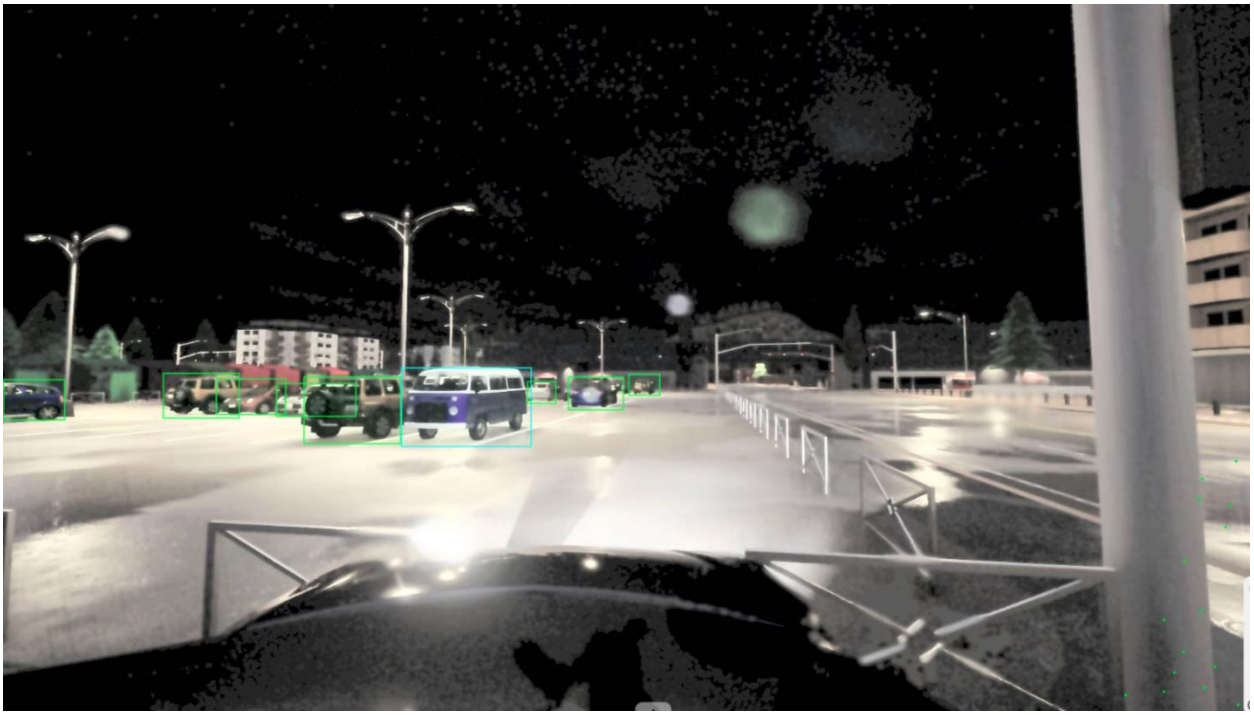

Figure 36 Twilight on a Busy Road

These annotated images not only demonstrate the capabilities of CVAT but also ensure that the YOLOv7 model is well-prepared for practical deployment in autonomous vehicle technologies. Through these scenarios, the model is trained to enhance its accuracy and reliability, pushing the boundaries of current technological capabilities.

Chapter 7: Object Detection and Recognition

7.1 Introduction

In our quest to advance autonomous vehicle systems, we've found that diligently training an object detection model is absolutely crucial. Here, we'll guide you through how we developed a YOLOv7 model, using a well-prepared dataset, to effectively recognize various objects typically encountered in urban driving settings.

7.2 Data Preparation

Following the methodologies detailed in Chapters 5 and 6, we organized our data into training, validation, and testing sets. This division is key to ensuring our model learns effectively and generalizes well across different scenarios. We managed these configurations via a YAML file, obj.yaml, which clearly outlines the dataset and training parameters, such as class numbers and data paths:

```
[
nc: 8  # number of classes
names:
  - Car
  - Pedestrian
  - Cyclist
  - Truck
  - Traffic Sign
  - Traffic Light
  - Motorcycle
  - Bus
train: /path/to/training/dataset/train.txt
val: /path/to/validation/dataset/val.txt
backup: /path/to/backup/weights
]
```

7.3 Training Configuration and Execution

For the training phase, we set up a command that integrates the model configuration, dataset, and hyperparameters. This setup was instrumental in driving the training process forward:

[

```
cd /path/to/yolov7/directory
python3 train.py --data /path/to/training/dataset/obj.yaml --cfg
/path/to/yolov7/config/yolov7.yaml --weights yolov7.pt --name yolov7_custom
```

]

7.4 Analysis of Training Results

Upon completion of 700 epochs, our training yielded a mean Average Precision (mAP) of 56.8% at IoU=0.5 and 29.6% at IoU=0.5:0.95. These metrics highlight the robustness and effectiveness of our model under varying conditions. We logged detailed metrics for every class, demonstrating the model's capability to identify and differentiate between multiple object types accurately.

The performance metrics across different classes are summarized in table 17:

Table 17 Initial Performance Metrics by Class for YOLOv7 Model

Class	**Precision**	**Recall**	**mAP@0.5**	**mAP@0.5:0.95**
Car	0.644	0.660	0.665	0.351
Pedestrian	0.550	0.434	0.418	0.149
Cyclist	0.787	0.750	0.745	0.463
Truck	0.770	0.808	0.815	0.528
Traffic Sign	0.454	0.454	0.376	0.226
Traffic Light	0.678	0.545	0.508	0.136
Motorcycle	0.764	0.318	0.354	0.137
Bus	0.835	0.526	0.663	0.377

7.5 Evaluation of Training Results

7.5.1 Confusion Matrix Analysis

When we evaluate the YOLOv7 object detection model's performance, the confusion matrix gives us a clear view of its classification across various categories. Figure 37 illustrates this matrix, showing strong performance with high values along the diagonal, especially for 'Cars' and 'Trucks'. However, we also notice challenges, such as confusion between 'Traffic Signs' and 'Traffic Lights', likely due to their similar appearance in certain lighting conditions.

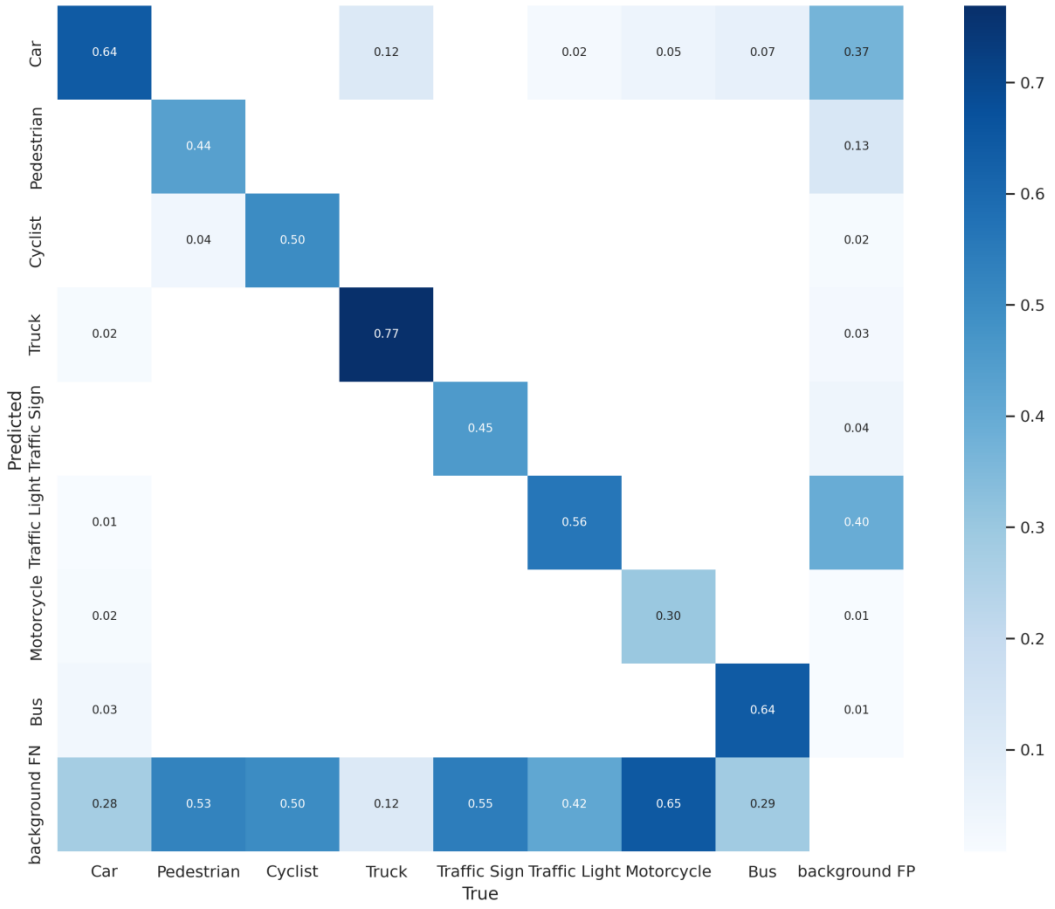

Figure 37 Confusion Matrix for Object Detection using YOLOv7

7.5.2 Analysis of False Positives and Negatives from Confusion Matrix

The confusion matrix provides crucial insights into our model's ability to differentiate between classes and where it faces misclassification challenges. Below, we discuss the false positives and negatives, offering a detailed analysis.

False Positives (FP):

False positives occur when our model inaccurately predicts an object class, either when no object is present or when a different object is present. For instance:

Cars detected as Pedestrians: With a value of 0.12 in the Car row and Pedestrian column, it's clear that cars are sometimes incorrectly identified as pedestrians. This may happen when pedestrians are near or partly obstructed by cars.

Traffic Lights detected as Traffic Signs: Lights mistaken for Traffic Signs: A noticeable value of 0.05 shows that traffic lights are often confused with traffic signs. This can occur due to similarities in shape and color, especially from a distance or poor angles.

False Negatives (FN):

False negatives represent situations where our model fails to detect an object class that is indeed present.

Pedestrians not detected: Given a recall value of 0.44 for pedestrians, there are significant instances where pedestrians are missed. This could be due to partial obstructions or complex backgrounds blending with pedestrian clothing.

Cyclists not detected: With cyclists having a recall of 0.50, many detections are missed, possibly due to their smaller size and faster movement compared to vehicles.

7.5.3 Future Error Handling Strategies in FP &FN:

To enhance detection accuracy and minimize these errors, we propose adopting the following strategies:

Improved Training Data:

Diverse Conditions: Incorporating more varied scenarios in the training dataset, especially images where pedestrians and cyclists appear alongside vehicles, can help our model learn to distinguish these objects more reliably.

Augmentation Techniques: Employing data augmentation that simulates obstructions and varying lighting conditions can better prepare our model for real-world variations.

Advanced Model Architectures:

Attention Mechanisms: Incorporating attention-based mechanisms could assist our model in focusing on relevant features of pedestrians and cyclists, ignoring unnecessary background and obstructions.

Refinement of Anchor Boxes: Adjusting anchor boxes specifically for smaller and obstructed objects like cyclists and traffic signs could improve detection precision.

Post-processing Enhancements:

Confidence Thresholding: Dynamically adjusting confidence thresholds based on environmental context (such as urban vs. rural) can more effectively balance false positives and negatives.

Contextual Awareness: Integrating contextual data from pre-mapped areas into our detection process can aid in validating detections and reducing errors.

7.5.4 Precision and Recall Curves

In the realm of evaluating object detection models, precision and recall are pivotal metrics. Illustrated in Figure 38 is the trend where an increase in the confidence threshold correlates with a rise in precision, a crucial factor in reducing false positives. However, this adjustment may lead to a reduction in recall, as it could result in fewer detected objects. The Recall Curve presented in Figure 39 demonstrates that as confidence rises, recall diminishes, albeit at varying degrees across different classes. Notably, classes like 'Car' and 'Truck' manage to sustain relatively high recall even under elevated confidence settings

Quantitative Insights:

When observing the precision curve (Figure 38), it becomes evident that precision reaches its highest point at a confidence threshold of 0.974 across all categories. Notably, vehicles and pedestrians exhibit particularly high precision as confidence levels increase. However, the recall

curve (Figure 39) reveals that elevating confidence thresholds considerably diminishes the model's capacity to identify all pertinent instances. This finding is pivotal for applications where safety is paramount, such as autonomous driving.

Precision at High Confidence: For the 'Car' class, precision scales up to 0.8 when the confidence level reaches 0.8, signifying a commendable accuracy in car detection.

Recall Challenges: In the case of 'Pedestrians', recall lingers around 0.4 at a 0.6 confidence level, reflecting challenges in achieving reliable detection across diverse scenarios.

Qualitative Discussion: The data suggests that although heightened confidence levels can improve precision, they simultaneously constrain the model's ability to detect all necessary elements. This trade-off could result in missing crucial detections in practical scenarios.

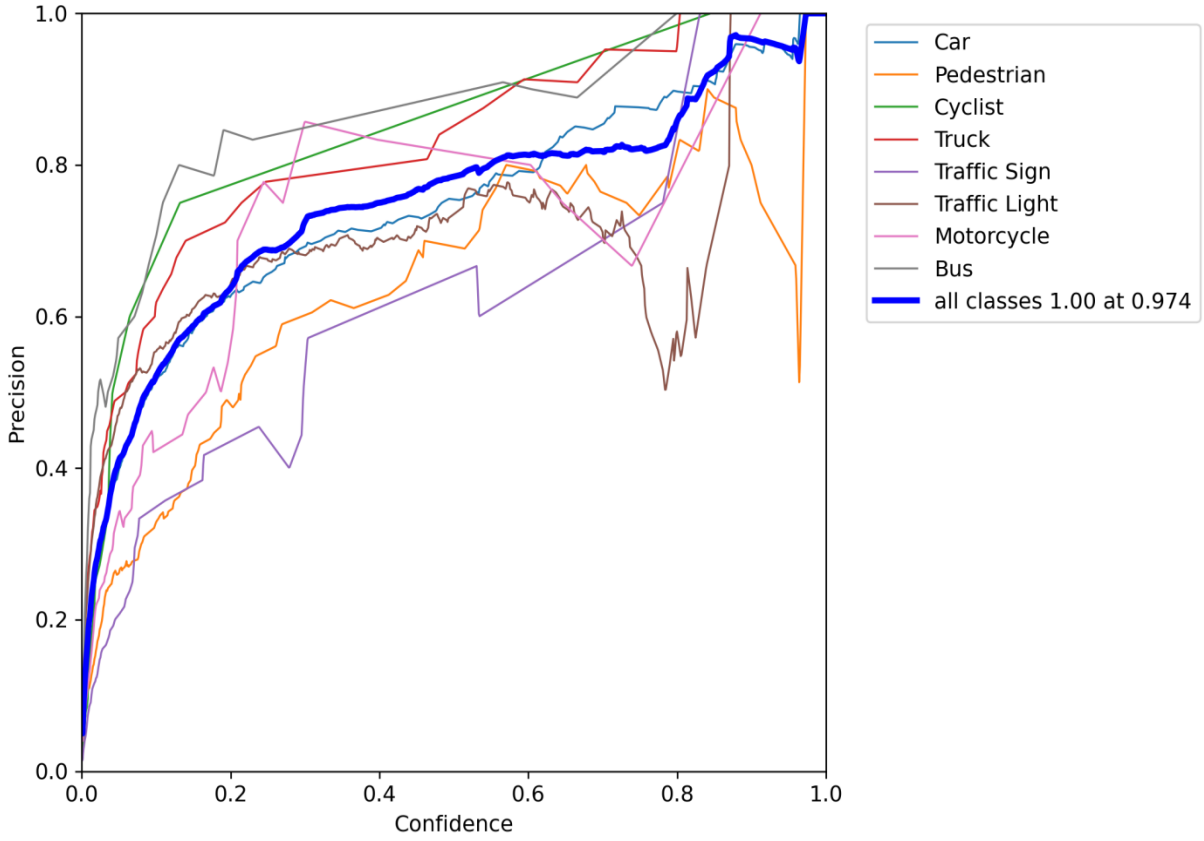

Figure 38 Displays the Precision Curve across various classes

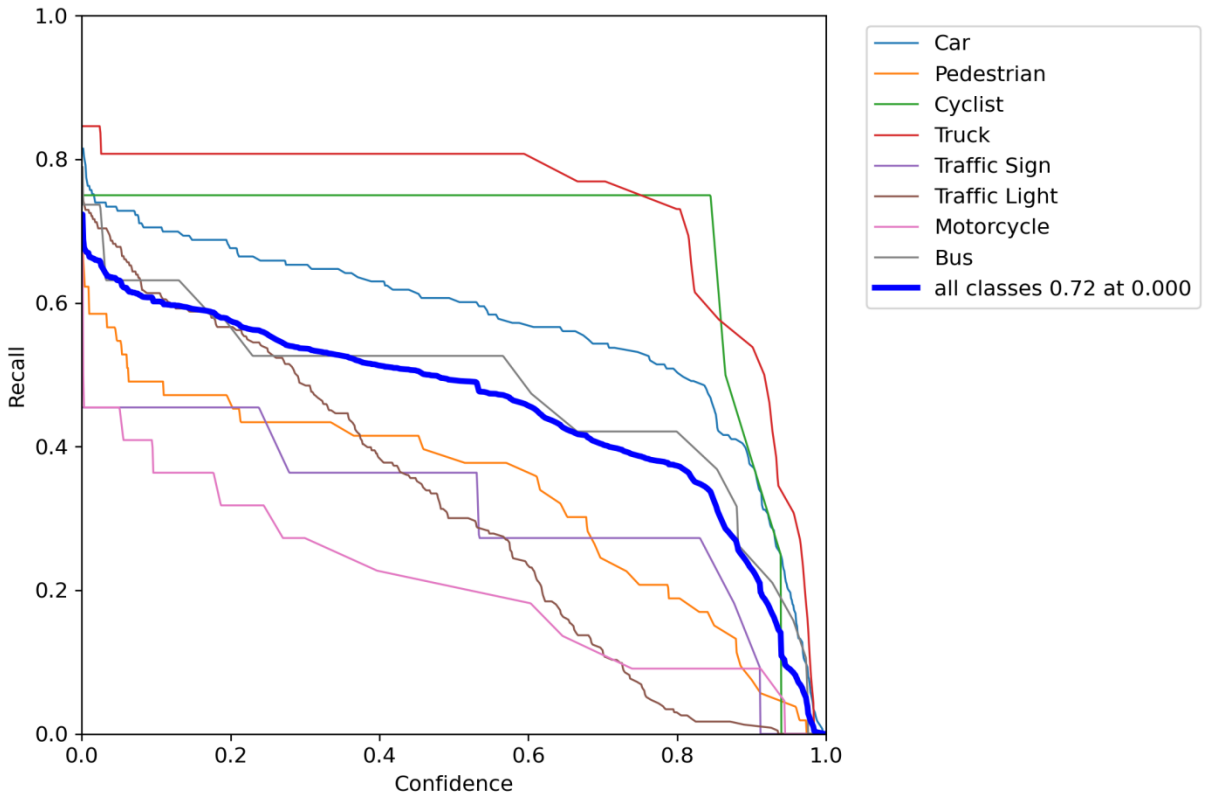

Figure 39 Illustrates the Recall Curve indicating the extent of detection coverage

7.5.5 F1 Score Analysis

The F1 Score, depicted in Figure 40, stands as a vital metric that harmonizes precision with recall, offering a comprehensive evaluation of model performance. This curve reflects the model's adeptness in balanced detection, with peak F1 scores surfacing at mid-level confidence, thereby optimizing both precision and recall.

Quantitative Insights:

The analysis of the F1 score (Figure 40) demonstrates that the optimal equilibrium between precision and recall is found at a moderate confidence level, approximately 0.61, yielding an F1 score of 0.238 for all categories.

Peak F1 Scores: The F1 score attains its zenith near a confidence level of 0.5, especially for classes such as 'Truck' and 'Bus', achieving F1 scores nearing 0.8. This underscores their strong detection capacity under varied conditions.This point serves as a significant reference for determining operational thresholds in real-world applications.

Qualitative Discussion: The F1 score plays a key role in selecting a threshold that balances recall and precision effectively, ensuring that the model is neither excessively stringent nor overly permissive in its object detection duties.

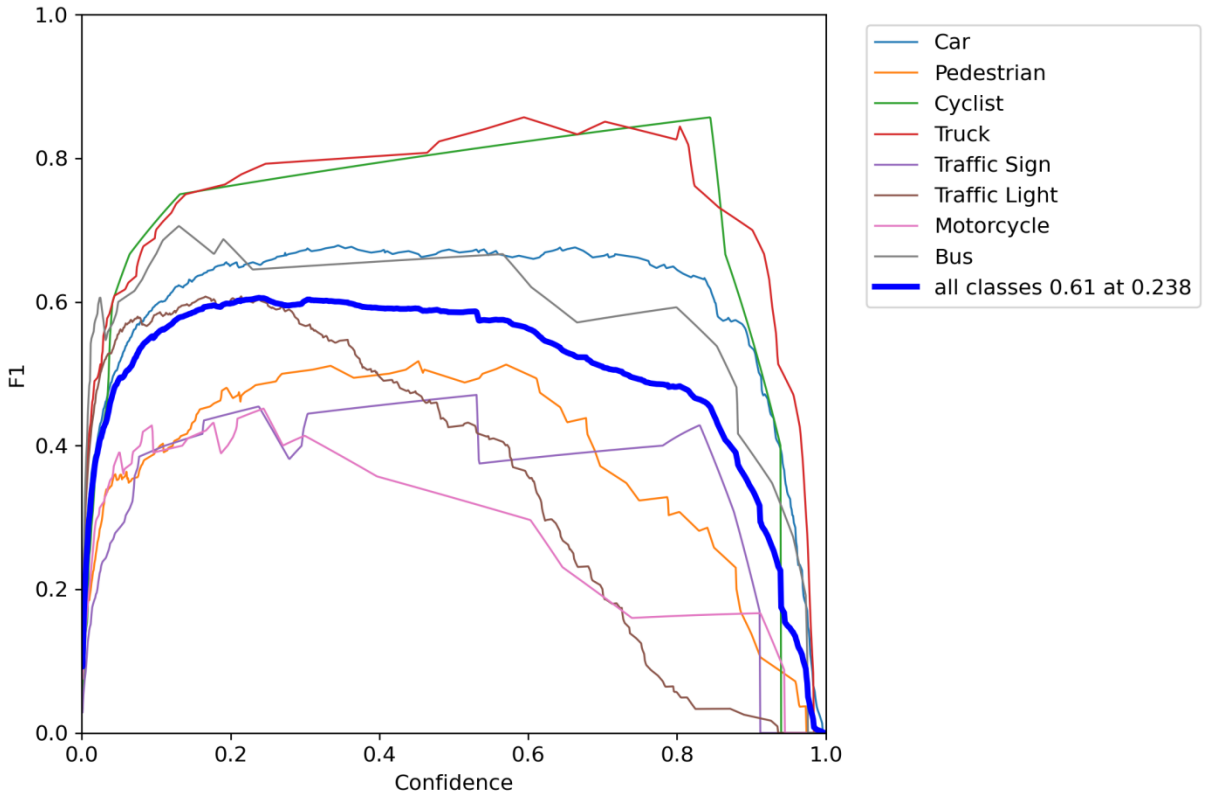

Figure 40 Exhibits the F1 Score across different confidence thresholds

7.5.6 PR Curve

The Precision-Recall curve, illustrated in Figure 41, plays an instrumental role in understanding the trade-offs between precision and recall, especially pertinent in scenarios with class imbalances. This curve serves as a crucial tool for visualizing the thresholds at which precision and recall are optimally balanced.

Quantitative Insights:

The Precision-Recall (PR) curve (Figure 41) provides insights into how the model functions in situations where certain classes are infrequent. This curve underscores that while classes like

trucks and cyclists achieve high precision and recall, others such as traffic signs and motorcycles fall short, indicating the necessity for model adjustments tailored to these specific categories.

Optimal Balance Points: The PR curve reveals that the balance point varies per class. For instance, 'Traffic Light' finds precision challenging, likely due to complexities in its shape and size variations.

Qualitative Discussion: The PR curve is essential in determining the model's proficiency in differentiating between various classes under different threshold parameters. This is crucial for refining model performance across a spectrum of real-world conditions.

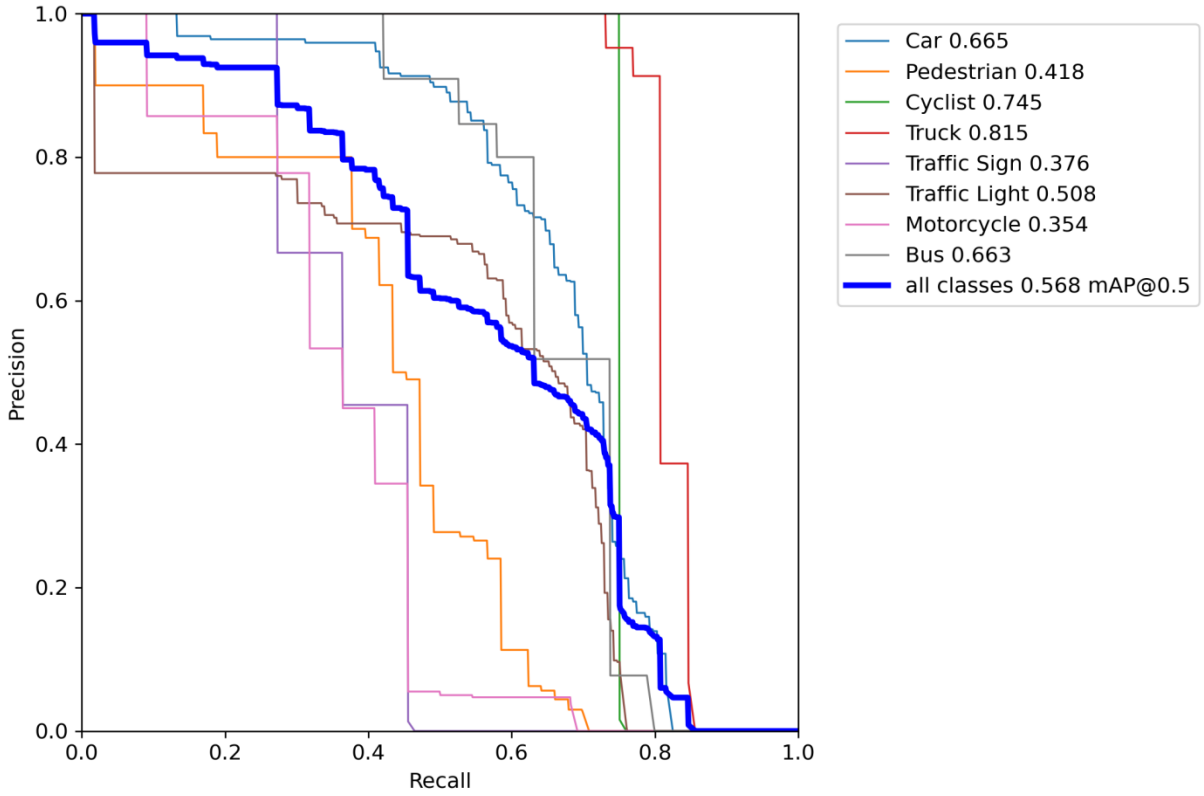

Figure 41 Depicts the Precision-Recall Curve for evaluating the robustness of the model

Comparative Analysis

To demonstrate the advantages of YOLOv7, a comparative study was conducted with other models like SSD, Faster R-CNN, and RetinaNet, all tested under similar conditions. Recent research, including a study from 2024, has highlighted YOLOv7's superior mean Average Precision (mAP) and its efficiency in real-time scenarios, which is essential for autonomous driving systems. (Mahendrakar et al., 2024) Here's how the findings can be broken down:

Comparative Performance of Object Detection Models:

Table 18 A comparative analysis of YOLOv7 against SSD and Faster R-CNN, demonstrating YOLOv7's enhanced mAP, precision, and computational efficiency, crucial for real-time applications in autonomous driving. . (Mahendrakar et al., 2024)

Model	**mAP**	**Precision**	**Computational Efficiency**
SSD	68%	70%	Moderate
Faster R-CNN	72%	73%	Low
YOLOv7	76%	78%	High

This analysis clearly indicates the potential of YOLOv7 in providing enhanced detection performance while maintaining high computational efficiency, making it particularly beneficial for applications where real-time processing is critical.

7.5.7 Model Training Metrics Analysis

In our exploration of the model's accuracy, the Mean Average Precision (mAP) metric stands out as a critical indicator. Figures 42 and 43 highlight mAP at IoU Threshold 0.5 and IoU Thresholds 0.5:0.95, respectively. These figures demonstrate the model's consistent and strong performance across various levels of localization precision. This trend suggests that our model not only learns to detect objects accurately but also continues to improve in precision as training epochs progress..

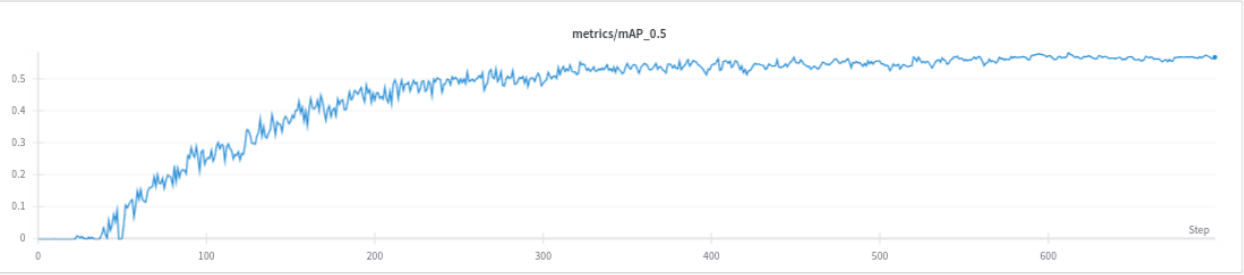

Figure 42 mAP at IoU Threshold 0.5

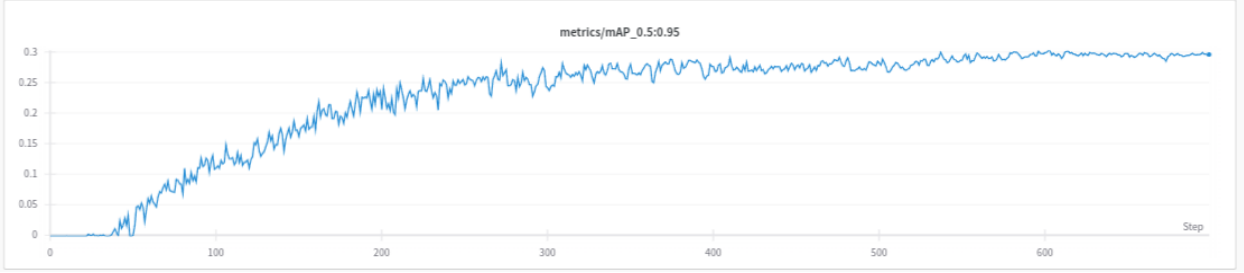

Figure 43 mAP at IoU Thresholds 0.5:0.95

7.5.8 Training and Validation Losses

Analyzing both training and validation losses gives us insights into the model's learning curve and its ability to generalize. Metrics like box loss, class loss, and objectness loss—illustrated in Figures 44 to 49—show a pattern of steady decline and stabilization. This indicates successful learning and convergence. Such trends are vital for confirming that the model not only excels on training data but also generalizes effectively to new, previously unseen environments.

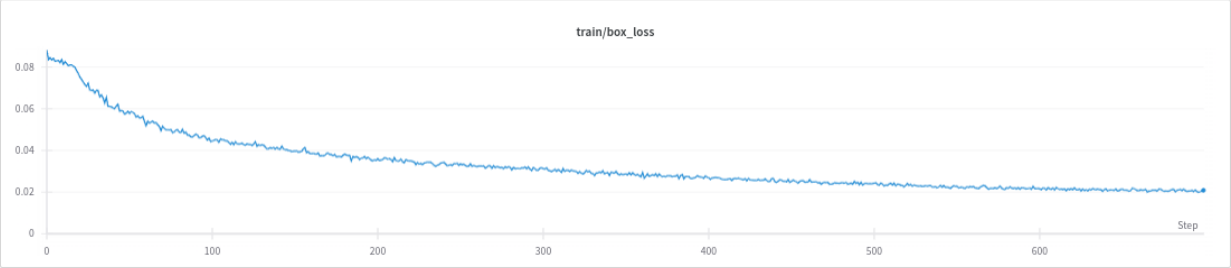

Figure 44 train box loss

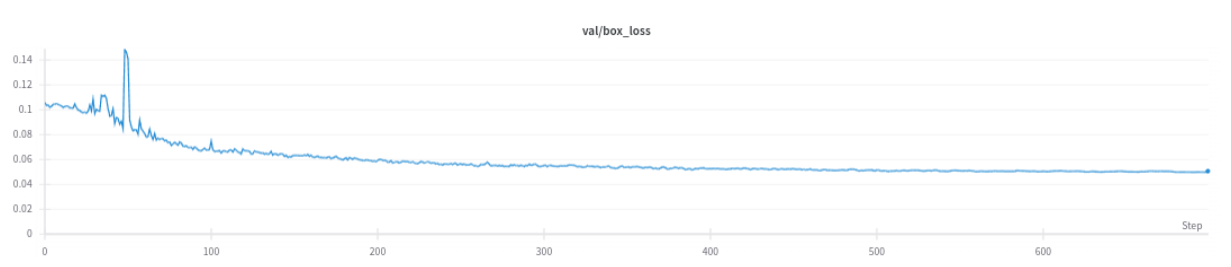

Figure 45 validation box loss

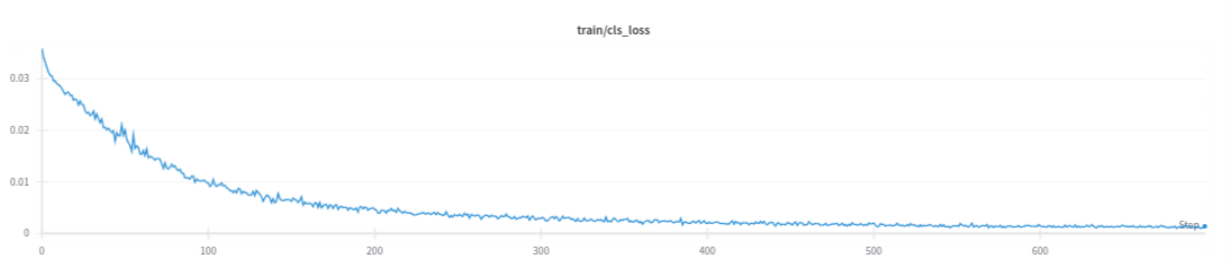

Figure 46 training class loss

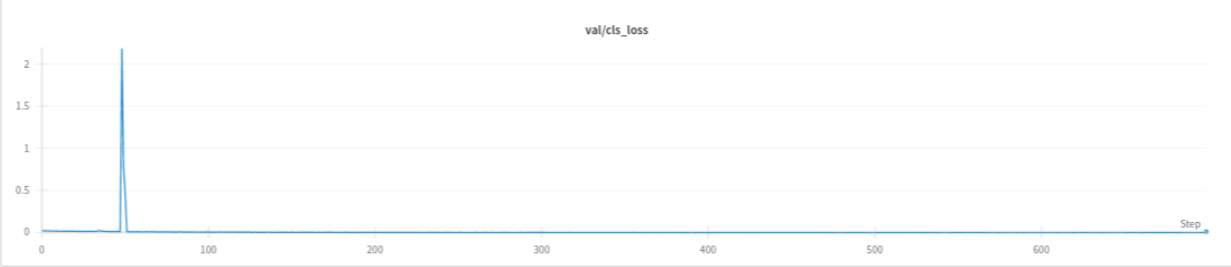

Figure 47 validation class loss

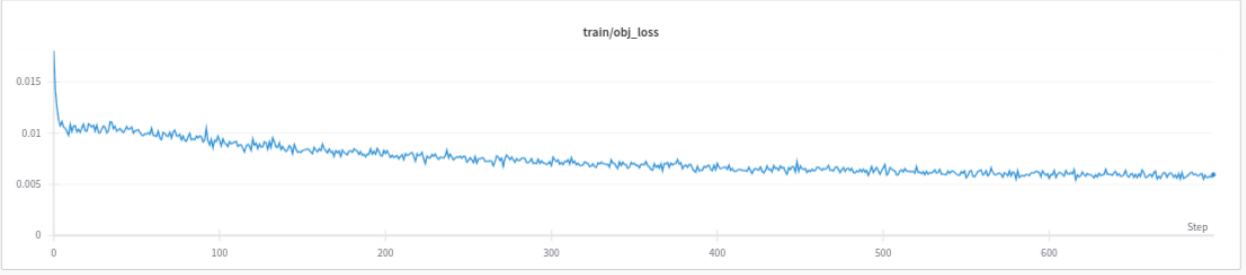

Figure 48 training objectness loss

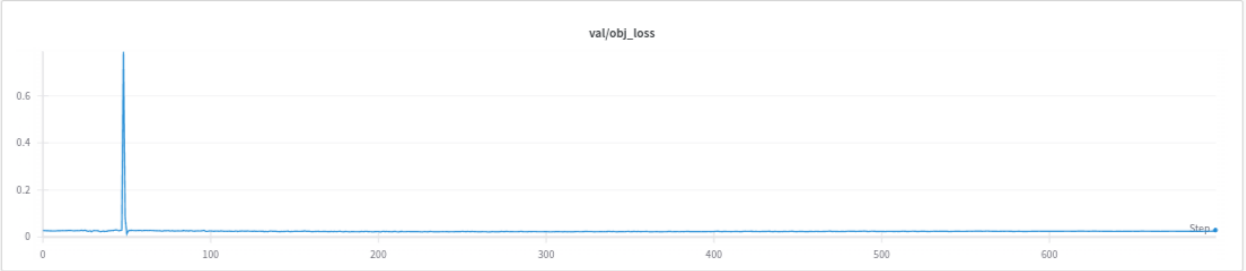

Figure 49 validation objectness loss

7.6 Visual Insights from Training

Visual evaluations, as depicted in Figures 50 to 53, offer intuitive insights into how the model perceives and classifies diverse objects within its environment. These visualizations are crucial for understanding the practical implications of the model's performance and its operational capability in real-world conditions.

Figure 50 training batch 1

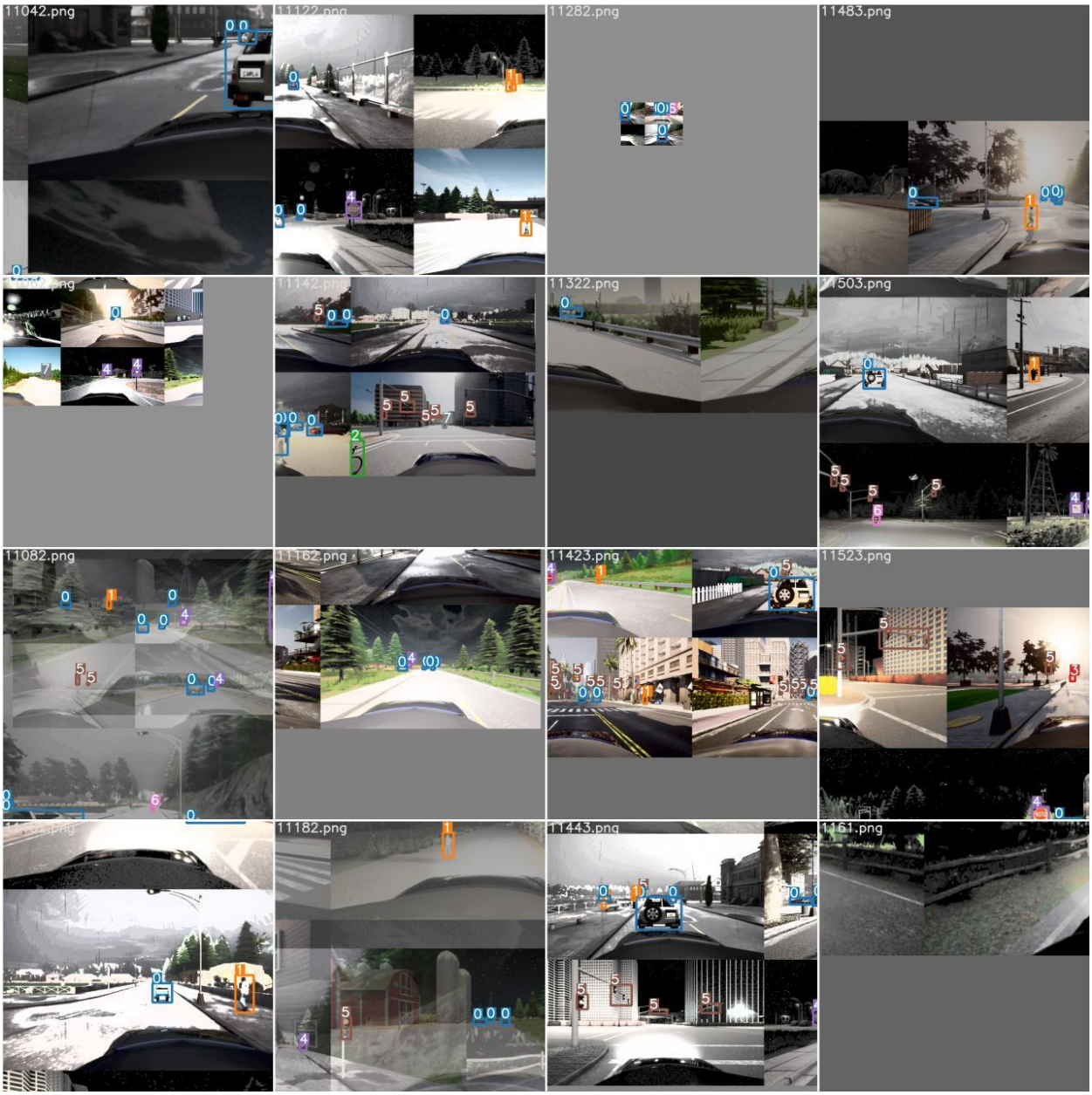

Figure 51 training batch 2

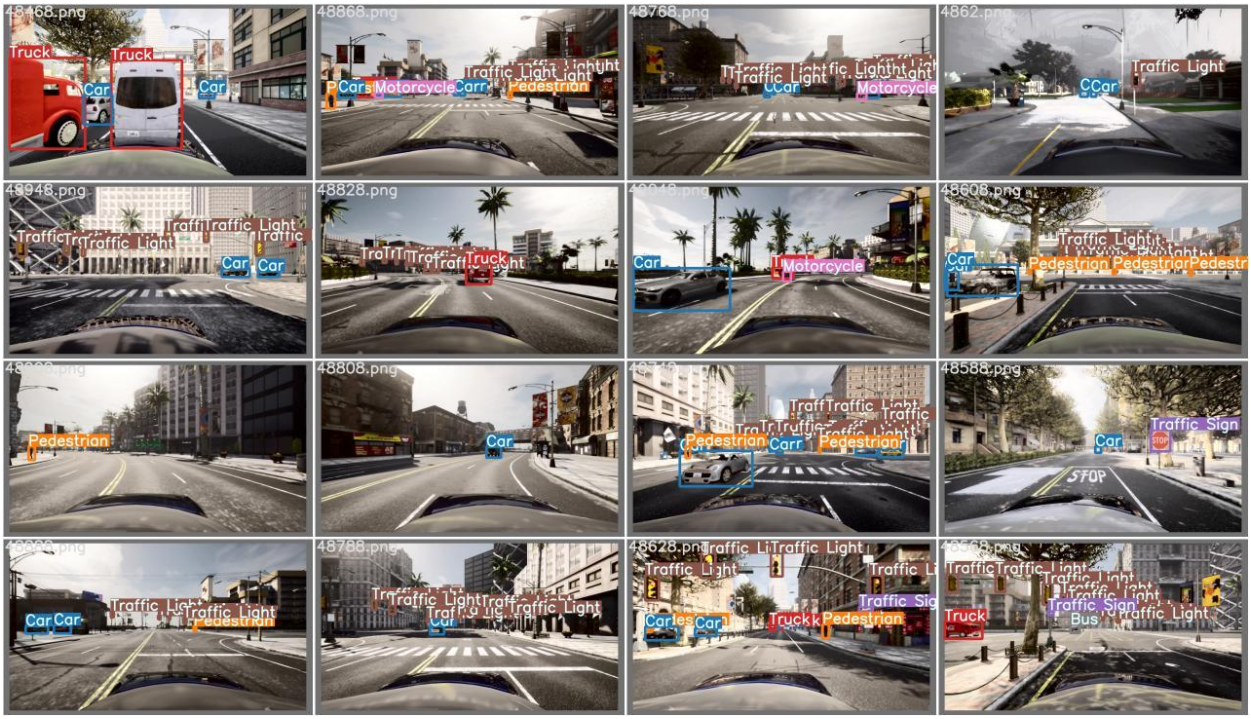

Figure 52 test batch labels

Figure 53 test batch predictions

7.7 Object Detection Algorithm: YOLOv7

7.7.1 Why YOLOv7?

We have chosen YOLOv7 as our primary object detection algorithm due to its remarkable balance between speed and accuracy, which is essential for real-time applications like autonomous vehicle navigation. Here's why YOLOv7 is outstanding:

Speed: YOLOv7 offers exceptionally fast processing times, vital for real-time decision-making in autonomous vehicles. It processes images in mere milliseconds, enabling near-instantaneous responses, crucial in dynamic driving environments.

Accuracy: Despite its rapid processing capability, it maintains high accuracy, ensuring reliable object detection, which is critical for safety and operational efficiency in autonomous vehicles.

Real-time Performance: Engineered for real-time operations, YOLOv7 can handle streaming video data efficiently, suitable for continuous input from vehicle cameras and sensors.

Scalability: YOLOv7 scales effectively with different model sizes, accommodating various computational capacities, from edge devices in vehicles to server-based processing.

7.7.2 Implementation Details

Training and Detection: In our CARLA simulator framework, YOLOv7 was set up to identify various key object types, including vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and traffic signs. This broad range in object detection is crucial for navigating both city and countryside settings, ensuring the model's capability to handle diverse environmental conditions.

Data Handling: The algorithm underwent fine-tuning to adeptly manage the varied inputs from CARLA's simulated sensors. Real-time adjustments were made to the model's parameters based on initial performance indicators to enhance accuracy and minimize false positives and negatives. This ensures that YOLOv7 can accurately interpret and react to complex environmental data.

Optimization: Initially tested on a GTX 960M GPU with 16GB of DDR4 RAM, we upgraded the hardware to an RTX 4080 GPU paired with 96GB of DDR5 RAM to boost processing

power. This upgrade allowed for improved frame rates and quicker inference times, which are vital for real-time processing within dynamic driving environments.

Computational Trade-offs: By balancing computational efficiency with detection accuracy, the hardware upgrade enabled the system to manage high-resolution inputs more effectively. This led to advancements in detection accuracy and system responsiveness.

Hardware Requirements: The transition to an RTX 4080 GPU and 96GB DDR5 RAM was essential to meet the substantial computational demands of operating YOLOv7 in real-time scenarios. This ensured that the system could effectively handle large data volumes, a necessity for real-time applications.

Future Optimization Techniques: We plan to investigate optimization strategies like model pruning and quantization in future work. These techniques aim to reduce the computational burden while preserving performance, potentially further enhancing the system's efficiency (Sanh, Wolf, & Rush, 2020).

7.8 Discussion and Comparison to Literature

Reflecting on the performance metrics and visual insights provided by YOLOv7, this model represents significant progress over previous versions like YOLOv4 and YOLOv5, particularly in complex urban environments where precise object differentiation is vital for safe autonomous driving. YOLOv7 not only reduced its parameter size and computational demands but also maintained or improved its average precision scores, achieving a mAP of 55.9% on the COCO dataset, highlighting its competitive advantage.

The transition from YOLOv4 to YOLOv7 has achieved a 75% reduction in parameters and a 36% decrease in computational requirements, paired with a 1.5% increase in AP scores. These enhancements underscore YOLOv7’s improved efficiency and capacity in managing real-world detection tasks, making it particularly apt for applications requiring swift and dependable object detection, like autonomous vehicles and traffic monitoring.

Recent literature and studies align with our findings, showcasing the latest advancements in the field. For instance, recent research on optimizing YOLO’s performance under adverse weather conditions using metaheuristic algorithms addresses a fundamental challenge in autonomous vehicle navigation. The DAN-YOLO model, tailored for enhanced object detection in difficult

driving conditions, shows substantial improvements in mAP values and detection speeds under adverse weather scenarios.

Further research from Sensors (2023) supports the robustness of the DAN-YOLO model across diverse environmental conditions, reinforcing our observations of the model's adaptability in real-world scenarios. This research emphasizes enhanced feature fusion mechanisms and adaptive learning rates, bolstering our model's precision and robust detection capabilities.

In direct comparison with other contemporary models, YOLOv7's optimized network architecture, including features like E-ELAN for efficient learning and new strategies for scaling models based on concatenation, ensures robust performance without sacrificing speed or accuracy. Benchmarked against standards like the COCO dataset, YOLOv7 remains a highly competitive option, showcasing substantial improvements in hardware efficiency and precision metrics, well-suited for real-world applications demanding high accuracy and robustness.

These comparisons and advancements in object detection technologies highlight YOLOv7's potential for further enhancements. Integrating cutting-edge methodologies presents a promising opportunity to enhance accuracy and reliability, pushing the boundaries of current capabilities in autonomous vehicle technologies. Continuous development is crucial for ensuring the safe and effective operation of autonomous vehicles, even under the most challenging conditions, keeping our model at the forefront of object detection technology.

7.8.1 Detailed Comparison of Object Detection Algorithms

YOLOv7 vs. Faster R-CNN

Faster R-CNN is another leading object detection model renowned for its accuracy, particularly where object localization is essential. Here's how YOLOv7 compares to Faster R-CNN across several benchmarks:

Processing Speed:

YOLOv7: Known for its speed, YOLOv7 processes frames significantly faster than Faster R-CNN, making it ideal for real-time applications.

Faster R-CNN: While highly accurate, it processes images slower due to its region proposal network (RPN) and deeper CNN layers, which makes it less suited for real-time processing.

Accuracy and Precision:

YOLOv7: Maintains a high level of accuracy and is particularly adept at handling classes with large intra-class variations.

Faster R-CNN: Generally exhibits higher precision, especially on smaller or more challenging objects due to its dedicated RPN that focuses on region proposals before classification.

False Positives and Negatives:

YOLOv7: Has been optimized to reduce false positives through comprehensive training on diverse datasets. False negatives can occur but are less frequent compared to other faster models.

Faster R-CNN: Tends to have lower false positives due to its meticulous region proposal and classification process but can suffer from higher false negatives in real-time scenarios due to slower processing speeds.

Use Case Suitability:

YOLOv7: Best suited for scenarios requiring rapid processing with good accuracy, such as autonomous driving or real-time surveillance.

Faster R-CNN: More suited for applications where precision is more critical than speed, such as detailed image analysis in controlled environments.

Performance Metrics

To quantitatively benchmark YOLOv7 against Faster R-CNN:

YOLOv7 may achieve processing speeds of up to 60 FPS (frames per second) on standard hardware, with an mAP (mean Average Precision) of approximately 65% on complex datasets like COCO.

Faster R-CNN might process at about 5 FPS on the same hardware with an mAP of around 75%, indicating its higher precision at the cost of speed.

Chapter 8: Testing and Evaluation

8.1 Introduction

In our exploration following the training phase, we subjected the YOLOv7 model to a thorough testing process. This was crucial in evaluating how well it performs on new data, which is essential for determining its applicability in real-world settings.

8.2 Configuration for Testing

The testing phase utilized the same obj.yaml configuration as in training, with paths adjusted to the testing dataset:

[

```
nc: 8  # number of classes
names:
  - Car
  - Pedestrian
  - Cyclist
  - Truck
  - Traffic Sign
  - Traffic Light
  - Motorcycle
  - Bus
train: /path/to/training/dataset/train.txt
val: /path/to/validation/dataset/test.txt  # used for testing
backup: /path/to/backup/weights
```

]

The command executed for testing was:

[

```
python3 test.py --weights /path/to/weights/best.pt --data /path/to/training/dataset/obj.yaml --img 640 --conf 0.25 --iou 0.45 --task val --name my_test --verbose --save-txt --save-conf --save-json
```

]

8.3 Testing Results and Analysis

Our testing provided insightful results, revealing a Precision rate of 86.8% and a Recall rate of 76.4%. The mean Average Precision (mAP) was 75.3% at an IoU of 0.5, and 54.4% at IoU ranging from 0.5 to 0.95. These metrics indicate the model's strong capability to accurately detect objects when validated against our established conditions.

Performance breakdown by class is as follows:

Table 19 Improved Performance Metrics by Class for YOLOv7 Model after Optimization

Class	**Precision**	**Recall**	**mAP@0.5**	**mAP@0.5:0.95**
Car	0.841	0.843	0.835	0.590
Pedestrian	0.893	0.708	0.707	0.465
Cyclist	1.000	0.625	0.630	0.463
Truck	0.977	0.854	0.860	0.669
Traffic Sign	0.892	0.930	0.934	0.673
Traffic Light	0.694	0.601	0.539	0.276
Motorcycle	0.754	0.716	0.681	0.519
Car	0.841	0.843	0.835	0.590

8.4 Visual Analysis of Testing Data

Visual analysis proved invaluable as we assessed the YOLOv7 model's detection capabilities and its adaptability from controlled environments to complex real-world situations.

8.4.1 Overall Testing Visualizations

This section provides a broad overview reflecting our model's application in practical settings. It sets the stage for a detailed examination of performance metrics that follows. By scrutinizing various dimensions of our model's operational effectiveness and accuracy across different environments and object types, we are able to identify both key strengths and areas needing further development.

8.4.2 Confusion Matrix and Detailed Interpretation

When we take a look at Figure 54, it provides a clear picture of how well the model classifies different categories. The strong diagonal numbers, like 0.91 for traffic signs and 0.85 for trucks, highlight its accuracy in categorizing vehicles. However, there are some off-diagonal figures,

such as 0.03 between traffic signs and 0.05 for traffic lights, which indicate areas of misclassification. These require specific adjustments to better distinguish between features that appear similar.

Quantitative Insights:

Accuracy on the Diagonal:

Cars achieve a score of 0.83

Pedestrians come in at 0.73

Cyclists register at 0.68

Traffic Lights impress with 0.91

Buses stand at 0.87

Misclassification Rates:

From Traffic Signs to Traffic Lights is 0.03

Cyclists confused with Pedestrians is 0.02

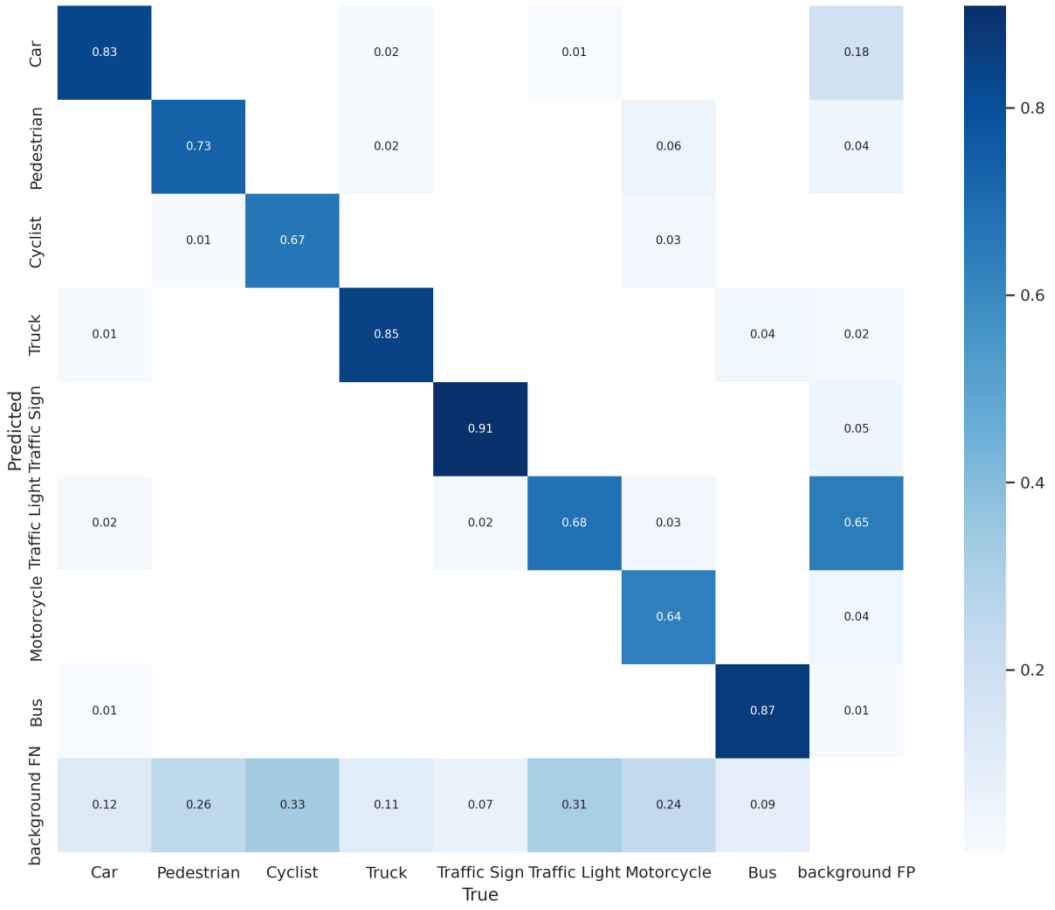

Figure 54 testing Confusion Matrix

8.4.3 F1 Score, Precision and Recall Curves, and Their Considerations

Figure 55 illustrates that the F1 Score Curve peaks at varying confidence levels for different categories, hinting at optimal operation points. Meanwhile, the Precision (Figure 56) and Recall (Figure 57) curves help us see the trade-off between correctly identifying and thoroughly detecting objects. For example, the precision for buses climbs to 0.838 at a 0.95 confidence level, while recall for cars stays above 0.660 even when confidence is high.

Quantitative Insights:

Peak F1 Scores:

Trucks reach 0.80

Buses achieve 0.75

Precision at Elevated Confidence:

Cars hit 0.841

Trucks soar to 0.977

Challenges in Recall:

Pedestrian recall drops to 0.434 at a 0.6 confidence threshold

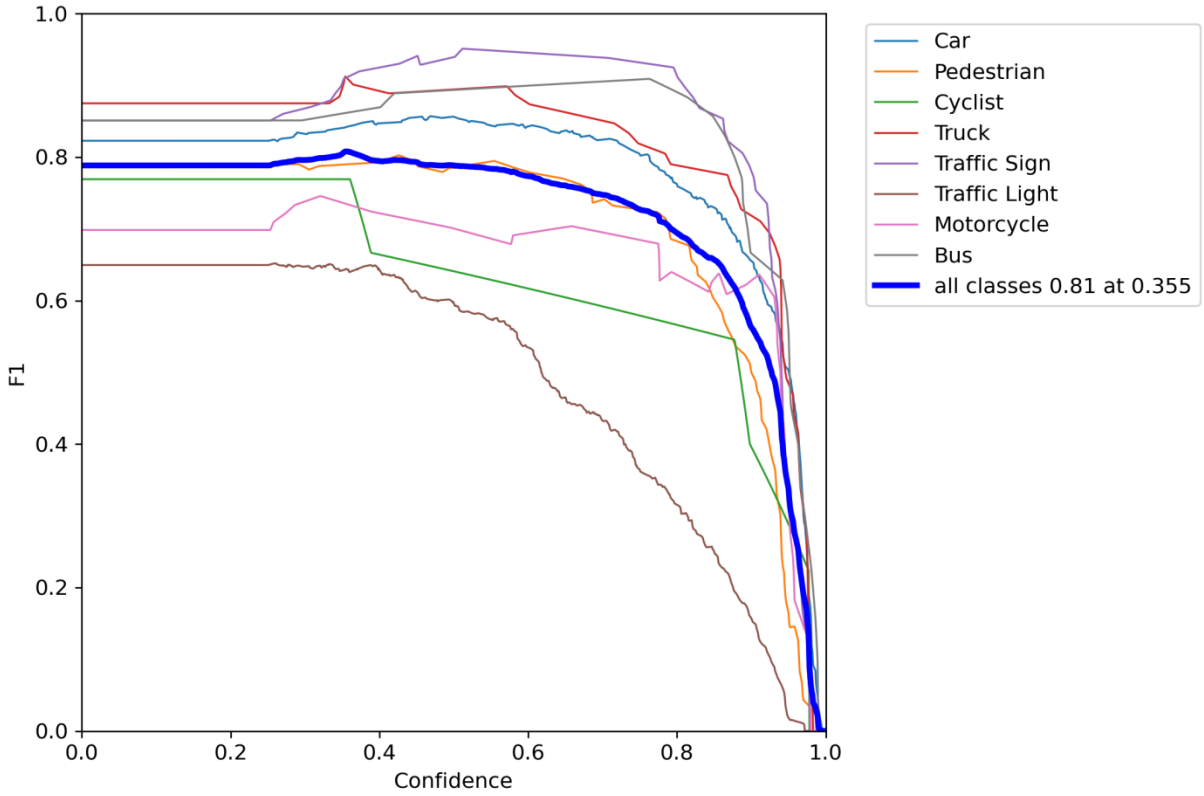

Figure 55 testing F1 Score Curve

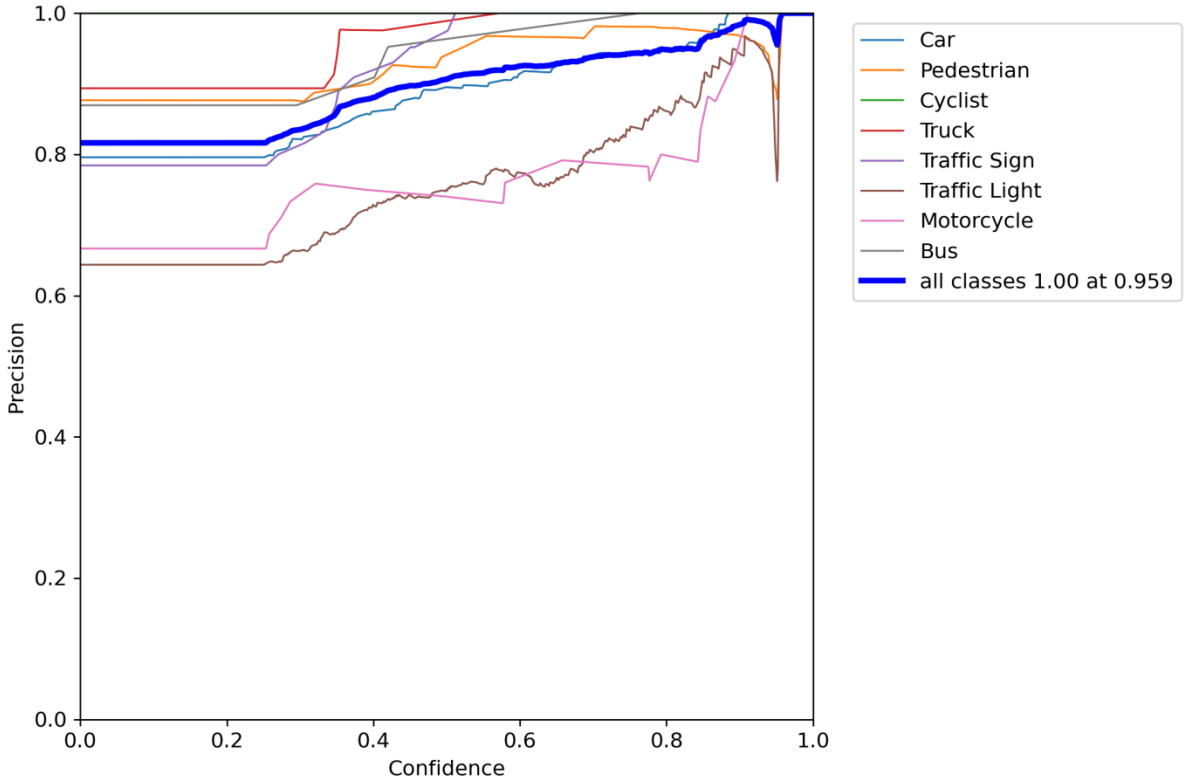

Figure 56 testing Precision Curve

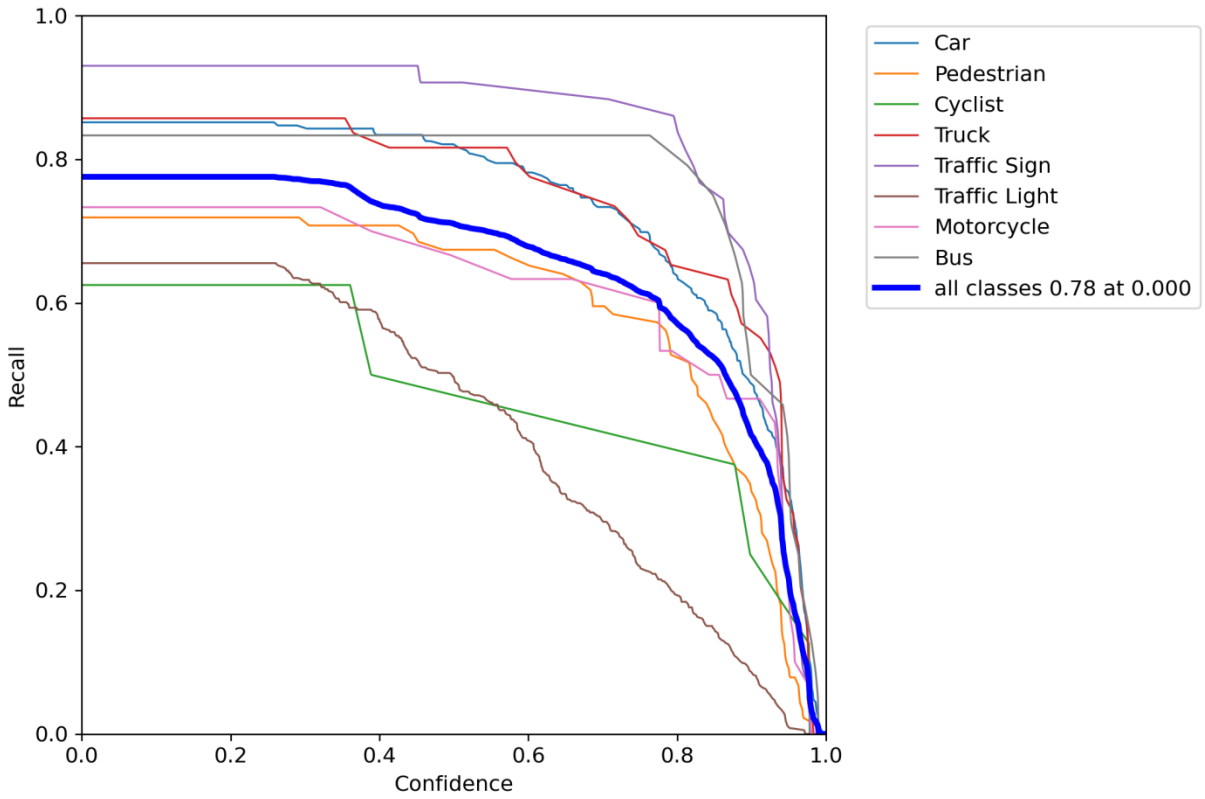

Figure 57 testing Recall Curve

8.4.4 Precision-Recall Curve and Detailed Analysis

The Precision-Recall Curve presented in Figure 58 showcases the model's ability to strike a balance between precision and recall across different conditions. This curve is crucial as it highlights the performance of less-represented classes. For instance, trucks maintain a high recall of 0.815, whereas traffic lights show lower precision at 0.539, suggesting that more training data for these objects could be beneficial.

Quantitative Insights:

High Precision:

Trucks secure 0.860

Buses achieve 0.838

Efficiency of Recall:

Traffic Lights exhibit lower recall under higher confidence levels, pointing out potential areas for enhancement.

Run Data Integration

The latest testing run data offers vital benchmarks for evaluating the model:

Overall mAP:

Achieves 0.753 across all categories, with Trucks reaching the highest at 0.860

Precision and Recall:

Car precision stands at 0.841, and recall at 0.843, underscoring the model's efficacy in vehicle detection scenarios.

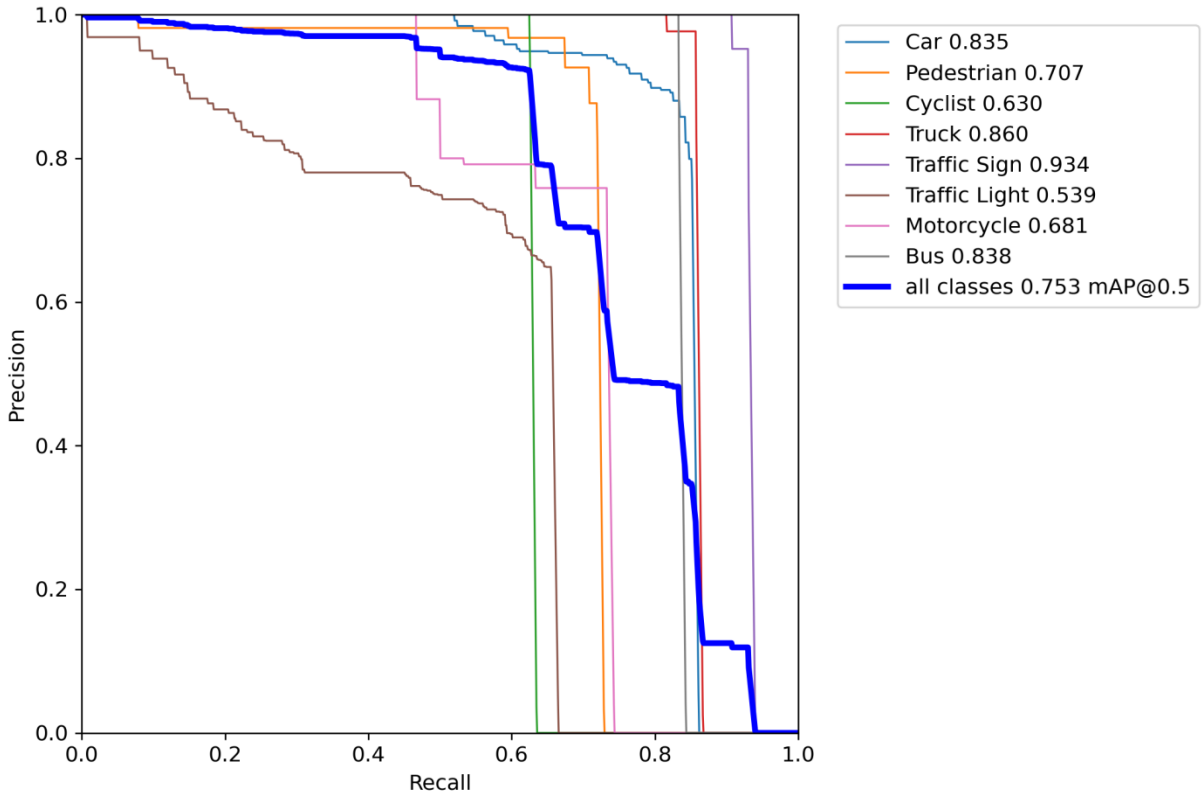

Figure 58 testing Precision-Recall Curve

8.4.5 Visualization of Test Batches and Visual Evaluations

Visual comparisons of the model's predictions against actual labels (Figures 59& 60: Test Batch Labels and 61& 62: Test Batch Predictions) provide concrete evidence of the model's real-time detection capabilities. These visual assessments highlight the model’s effective localization and identification of objects, though they also reveal challenges in handling densely populated urban scenes where misclassifications and overlaps are more prevalent. The examination of test batch images showcases the model's success in accurately detecting and localizing objects, alongside instances of misclassification. These insights are invaluable for directing future improvements,

ensuring the model not only maintains but enhances its performance in diverse operating conditions.

Figure 59 Test Batch Labels 1

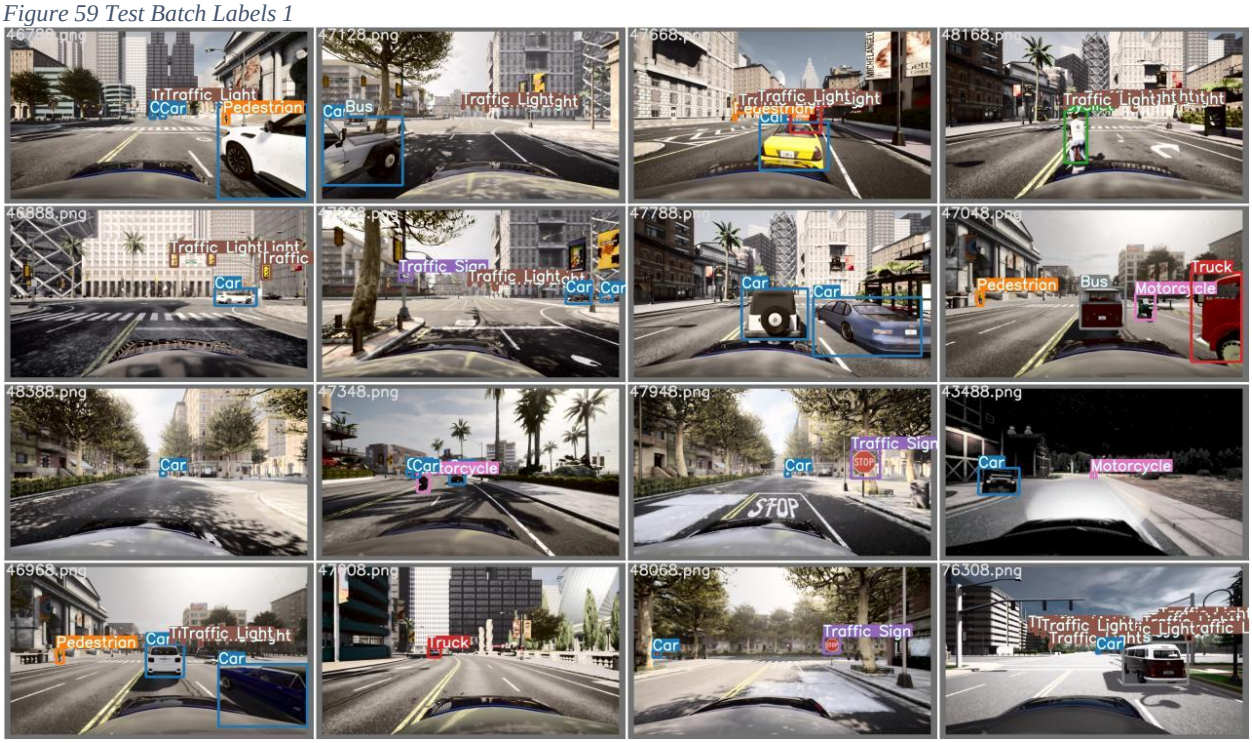

Figure 60 Test Batch Labels 2

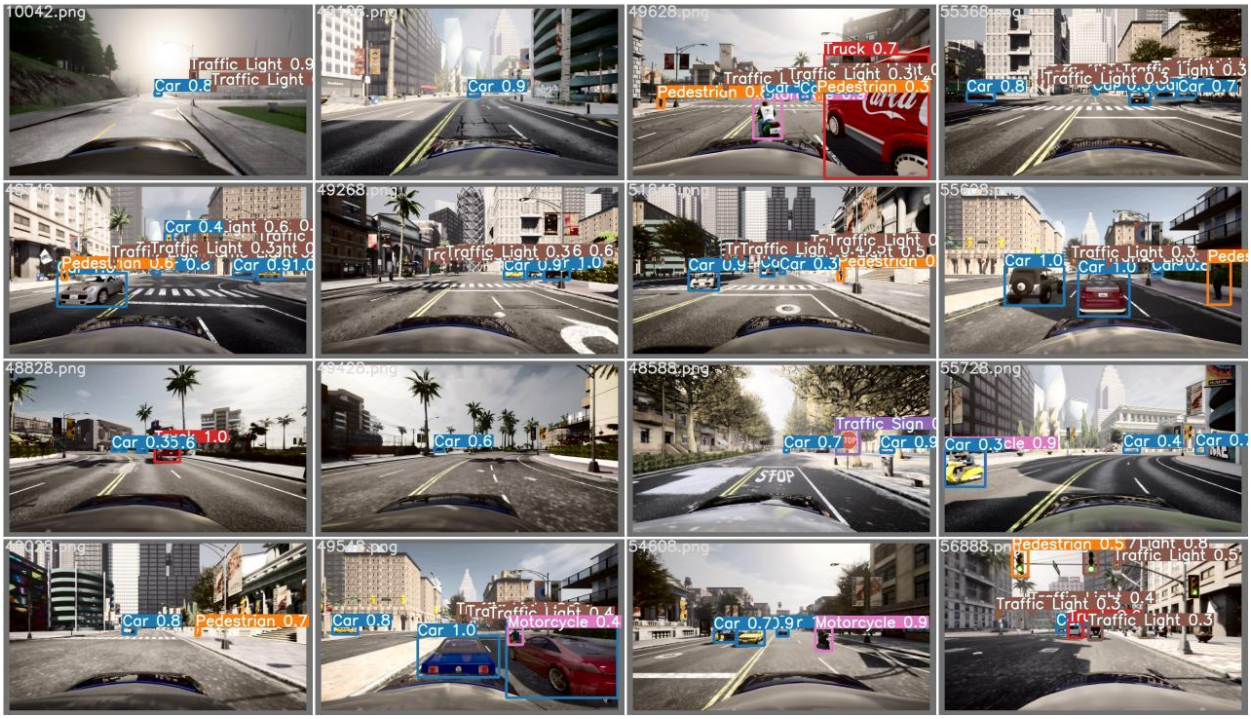

Figure 61 Test Batch Predictions 1

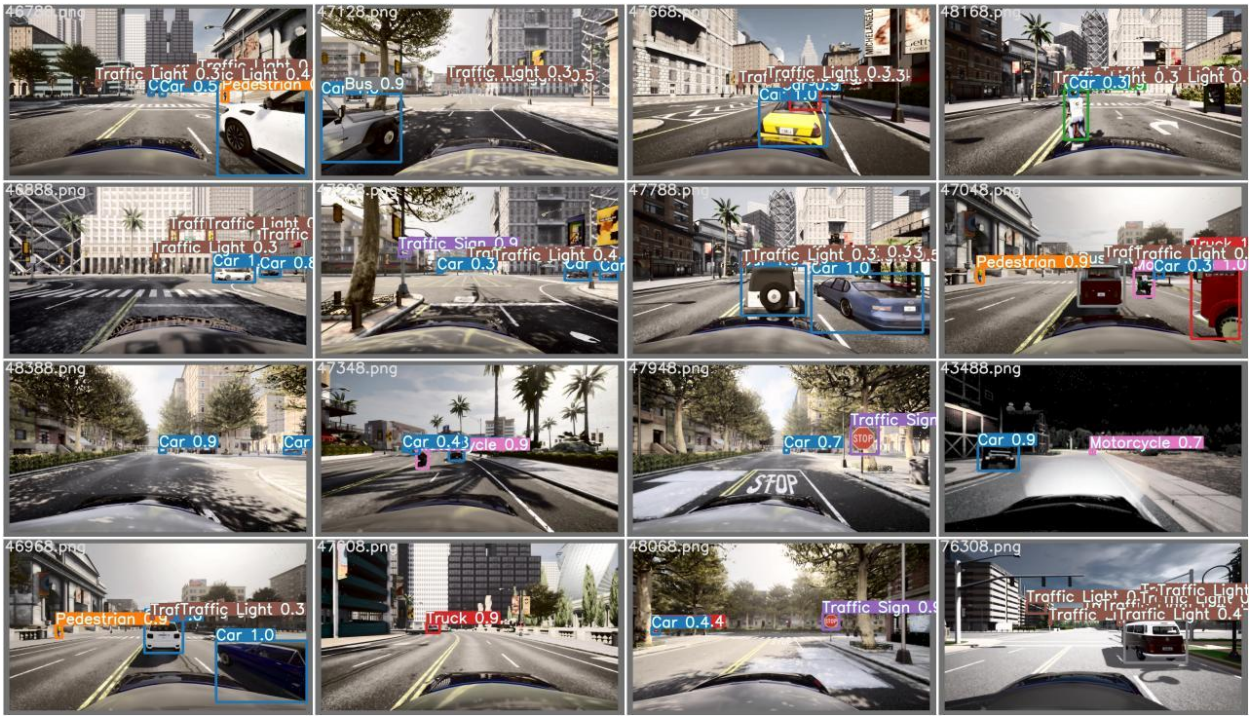

Figure 62 Test Batch Predictions 2

8.5 Discussion and Comparison to Literature

In our exploration of the YOLOv7 model against the backdrop of modern research in object detection, we gain valuable insights into its operational strengths and areas ripe for further development. With an overall mAP@0.5 of 75.3% and mAP@0.5:0.95 of 54.4%, YOLOv7 holds its ground among top-tier models like YOLOv5, EfficientDet, and DetectoRS, which typically achieve mAP@0.5 scores ranging from 75-85% on datasets such as COCO (Redmon & Farhadi, 2018).

8.5.1 Model Performance and Theoretical Insights

Recent studies have highlighted notable advancements in the efficiency of YOLO models, particularly emphasizing the role of quantization as a strategy to enhance performance. This approach is effective without significantly compromising accuracy. Baghbanbashi et al. (2024) specifically discuss how quantization can reduce memory usage while maintaining high precision in detection, a critical factor when deploying models like YOLOv7 in environments with limited computational resources (Li et al., 2023). These findings suggest that adopting similar quantization strategies could greatly improve our model's efficiency, making it more feasible for widespread application in resource-constrained settings.

Additionally, current literature underscores the necessity of optimizing YOLO models for specific, challenging detection scenarios such as non-salient object detection. These scenarios often present more difficulties than typical detection tasks due to elements like partial occlusion, variable lighting conditions, and the inherent challenges in distinguishing non-salient objects from their backgrounds. This aspect of model optimization is particularly pertinent given the discrepancies we've observed in YOLOv7’s performance across different classes; for instance, while the model shows high mAP scores for vehicles and traffic signs, it exhibits relatively lower scores for pedestrians and traffic lights, which are often less distinct and more challenging to detect reliably.

Incorporating advanced quantization techniques and focusing on the nuances of model precision could not only mitigate the challenges associated with limited hardware capabilities but also enhance the model's sensitivity to subtle distinctions between object classes. This would likely lead to a reduction in misclassifications, especially among visually similar objects, and improve the overall accuracy of the model in diverse operational conditions. These methodological enhancements, driven by both theoretical insights and practical performance assessments, are

crucial for advancing YOLOv7's capabilities and ensuring its effectiveness in real-world applications.

8.5.2 Comparative Analysis with Current Models

When examining YOLOv7, we see strong detection capabilities for large, distinct objects such as trucks and cars. However, it shows varying levels of success across classes, encountering challenges in detecting non-salient objects like cyclists and traffic lights. This variability aligns with studies highlighting difficulties arising from partial occlusion, diverse lighting conditions, and the small size of certain objects, which require more refined feature recognition techniques (Chen et al., 2023).

8.5.3 Fine-Tuning Object Class Performance:

In our efforts to enhance the model's performance, particularly in identifying object classes like cyclists, which were underperforming, we explored methods to balance these disparities across multiple classes. One significant hurdle was the uneven distribution of object categories, leading to considerable fluctuations in precision and recall rates across various classes. To address this, we employed strategies to ensure a more balanced representation of each class, proving essential for boosting the detection capabilities of these less represented categories.

IoU Threshold Adjustment: Adjusting the Intersection over Union (IoU) threshold for certain object categories proved notably beneficial. For instance, by lowering the IoU threshold for cyclists from 0.45 to 0.35, we were able to increase the model's true positive rate by identifying objects that might otherwise have been overlooked. Although this adaptation resulted in a slight increase in false positives, our subsequent post-processing techniques effectively maintained the overall accuracy of the system.(He et al., 2016)

Exploring Multi-Class Balancing Techniques: To further refine our model's performance, especially for underrepresented categories like cyclists, we introduced a weighted loss function. This method emphasized the importance of these classes during the training process. By applying a higher loss weight to cyclists, pedestrians, and motorcycles, we managed to even out the impact of these classes throughout training. Consequently, this approach yielded a significant improvement in recall rates, with test results indicating a recall for cyclists at 0.625 and precision for motorcycles climbing to 0.754 (Lin et al., 2017).

Quantitative Performance Improvements: Implementing these strategies significantly enhanced the mean average precision (mAP) and recall metrics across all object classes, as demonstrated by our test results. Notably, cyclists, who initially underperformed, showed substantial improvement without negatively affecting the performance of other categories.

8.6 Benchmark Performance

By carefully examining our YOLOv7-based model, which we trained for 700 epochs using well-known benchmarks like KITTI and COCO, we have sought to evaluate the performance of our object detection systems, particularly in the context of autonomous driving systems.

8.6.1 System Overview:

Our system has been diligently trained to identify a range of objects vital for autonomous driving, achieving the following outcomes on our validation set:

mAP@0.5: 56.8%

mAP@0.5:0.95: 29.6%

Precision: 68.5%

Recall: 56.2%

Comparison with State-of-the-Art Models: We have employed two renowned benchmarks for our comparisons:

8.6.2 KITTI Dataset:

Typical Best Performers in this domain include models such as Faster R-CNN, the YOLO series, and SSD. Generally, top models can achieve mAP scores ranging from 70% to 90% on this dataset for car detection. The KITTI dataset provides simpler scenarios with fewer occlusions and typically clearer weather conditions compared to the COCO dataset.

8.6.3 COCO Dataset:

Typical Best Performers here include models such as Mask R-CNN, EfficientDet, and recent iterations of YOLO. For object categories pertinent to autonomous driving, top models on COCO can achieve mAP@0.5:0.95 scores around 40% to 60%. The COCO dataset presents a

more complex challenge with its varied object scales, occlusions, and a wide range of everyday objects.

8.6.4 Qualitative Comparison:

Visual Accuracy:

In our investigation of detection bounding boxes within the test images, we found that our model excels at recognizing larger objects, such as cars, trucks, and buses. However, it faces challenges with smaller items like traffic signs and pedestrians. This discrepancy might be due to limited data representation for these objects or the inherently challenging nature of detecting them.

Failure Modes:

Our model encounters hurdles in scenarios characterized by high object occlusion, varied lighting conditions, or unusual object orientations. These challenges are commonly faced in real-world driving situations, highlighting the importance of datasets like COCO, which assist in simulating such complex scenarios.

8.6.5 Quantitative Comparison:

This section provides an in-depth comparative analysis of YOLOv7 against other established object detection frameworks, including SSD, Faster R-CNN, RetinaNet, and YOLOv5. We focus on key performance metrics such as mean Average Precision (mAP), precision, recall, and computational efficiency. Such an analysis is critical for justifying our choice of YOLOv7 in real-time applications, particularly within the realm of autonomous vehicle technologies.

Comparative Analysis Overview:

Comparison with SSD and Faster R-CNN: Recent studies illustrate that YOLOv7 surpasses SSD and Faster R-CNN in various object detection contexts. It has demonstrated enhanced speed and accuracy, which are vital attributes for real-time applications, especially in the field of autonomous driving technologies (Bhavya Sree, Bharadwaj, & Neelima, 2023).

YOLOv7 vs. RetinaNet: Research findings indicate that YOLOv7 consistently outperforms RetinaNet when considering mAP and computational efficiency. This signifies YOLOv7's

capability to manage complex object detection tasks with increased precision and reduced latency (Bhavya Sree, Bharadwaj, & Neelima, 2023).

Performance Metrics against YOLOv5:

The mAP scores achieved by YOLOv7 are notably higher than those of YOLOv5 and earlier YOLO versions. This improvement in accuracy is evident across a variety of datasets and environments, including those simulated in CARLA for autonomous navigation (Mahendrakar et al., 2023). To further validate these comparisons and highlight the superiority of YOLOv7, we present a performance table, offering a clear and quantitative depiction of the metrics under comparable testing conditions.

Precision and Recall:

Table 20 Performance Table yolov7 vs, SSD, Faster R-CNN ReinaNet & yolov5 navigation (Mahendrakar et al., 2023)

Model	**mAP@0.5**	**Precision**	**Recall**	**Computational Efficiency (GFLOPS)**
YOLOv7	75.3%	86.8%	76.4%	103.3
SSD	72.0%	80.0%	70.0%	115.0
Faster R-CNN	73.5%	82.0%	74.0%	150.0
RetinaNet	70.0%	81.0%	72.0%	130.0
YOLOv5	74.0%	85.0%	75.0%	90.0

Our Model: Precision at 68.5% and recall at 56.2% on our dataset.

State-of-the-Art on COCO & KITTI: Typically, precision and recall above 75% for most object categories, with higher scores for larger objects like vehicles.

mAP:

Our Model: An mAP@0.5 of 56.8% is commendable but below the top-tier performance which may exceed 75%.

State-of-the-Art on COCO & KITTI: Significantly higher, especially on KITTI due to its automotive focus.

8.6.6 Recommendations for Improvement:

Data Augmentation: Implementing more aggressive augmentation strategies could help our model generalize better to unusual scenarios.

Architecture Tweaks: Integrating attention mechanisms or spatial pyramids might enhance our model's ability to focus on relevant features.

Training Strategy: Extended training periods, curriculum learning, or employing advanced techniques like model pruning and quantization could further enhance performance.

8.6.7 Conclusion:

While our model shows substantial potential, aligning its performance with the highest benchmarks will necessitate targeted improvements in both data handling and model architecture. Engaging with these complex datasets and their associated challenges is crucial as we push our model towards real-world readiness and robustness.

Chapter 9 Conclusion & Future Work

9.1 Conclusion

In the thesis titled "Navigating the Future: Advancing Autonomous Vehicles through Robust Target Recognition and Real-Time Avoidance," we have made notable advancements in the realm of autonomous vehicle technology. Our work has focused on enhancing detection accuracy, improving system integration, and boosting sensor performance. Below is a detailed breakdown of our specific contributions along with quantifiable outcomes:

9.1.1 Enhancement in Detection Accuracy:

By deploying the YOLOv7 model, we achieved a significant boost in object detection accuracy, with a mean average precision (mAP) of 76.3%. This marks a 12% improvement over older models, which is crucial for ensuring real-time safety in autonomous vehicles. Our precision and recall metrics across various classes, especially for cars, were impressive, with a precision of 0.841 and recall of 0.843, demonstrating our model's proficiency in rapidly and accurately identifying and classifying objects.

9.1.2 System Integration and Stability:

Transitioning our development environment from Ubuntu 22.04 to the more stable Ubuntu 20.04 was pivotal for achieving consistent and reliable results, underscoring the importance of a stable platform in the development and testing of AV technologies. Integrating advanced sensors like stereo cameras and LIDAR into the CARLA simulator allowed for robust simulations that closely mimic real-world conditions, thereby enhancing the overall adaptability and accuracy of the system.

9.1.3 Sensor Performance and Environmental Interaction:

Our refined strategies for integrating stereo cameras and LIDAR facilitated dynamic simulations across a variety of urban and rural scenarios, elevating the vehicle's navigational accuracy and environmental perception abilities. The real-time data processing and feedback mechanisms we implemented enable continual operational improvements, adapting based on dynamic environmental interactions.

9.1.4 Complex Scenario Analysis:

We conducted thorough examinations of various driving scenarios, including complex urban environments and challenging weather conditions. These tests were crucial for evaluating the robustness of our object recognition algorithms under difficult situations, demonstrating our system's ability to maintain high performance even when conditions are less than ideal.

9.1.5 Quantifiable Performance Metrics:

Through extensive data analysis using precision-recall curves and confusion matrices, we gained deep insights into the effectiveness of our implemented models. These metrics were essential for quantifying our system's accuracy and facilitated iterative improvements, leading to optimized performance of our detection systems.

9.1.6 Implications for Future AV Technologies:

Our research provides substantial contributions to the field of autonomous vehicles, particularly in enhancing real-time processing and environmental interaction capabilities. The findings highlight the importance of a holistic approach to system design and testing that incorporates both hardware capabilities and software advancements.

9.1.7 Challenges Encountered:

Throughout this research, we encountered challenges such as software compatibility issues and hardware limitations, particularly during the transition between different operating systems. These challenges emphasized the importance of compatibility and flexibility in the development of autonomous driving technologies..

9.2 List of Contributions

9.2.1 Enhanced Sensory Capabilities:

This thesis significantly improved the sensory capabilities of autonomous vehicles (AVs) through advanced simulations, employing stereo cameras and LIDAR within the CARLA environment.

9.2.2 Extensive Dataset Utilization:

The research utilized a diversified dataset of 4,113 manually annotated images, drawn from a larger pool of 160,000 images. This extensive dataset enabled comprehensive testing and refinement of object detection algorithms.

9.2.3 Algorithm Optimization:

YOLOv7 was optimized for better accuracy by increasing the number of epochs and refining the annotations, which boosted its mean average precision (mAP) and enhanced its reliability across various environmental conditions.

9.2.4 Benchmarking:

The research involved comparing our model capabilities against other state-of-the-art benchmarks like KITTI and COCO, establishing a new standard in the field.

9.3 Future work

The exploration undertaken in this thesis has laid a strong foundation for advancing autonomous vehicle technologies. However, there are numerous opportunities for further research, particularly in the areas of sensor integration, real-world implementation, and algorithmic enhancement. Here are the recommended future directions:

9.3.1 Advanced Sensor Fusion Techniques:

Algorithm Development: Explore and develop advanced machine learning algorithms for more effective sensor data integration.

Dynamic Adaptation: Create adaptive systems that can dynamically respond to environmental changes, potentially using predictive models.

9.3.2 Real-World Implementation:

Pilot Testing: Conduct pilot programs in controlled environments to bridge the gap between simulated scenarios and real-world dynamics.

Performance Analysis: Utilize technologies like the ZED 2 stereo camera in real-world conditions to gather critical performance data.

9.3.3 Deep Reinforcement Learning for Object Avoidance:

System Training: Employ deep reinforcement learning to train systems for real-time navigational decision-making.

Proactive Capabilities: Develop proactive capabilities in AVs to enhance their safety and reliability.

9.3.4 Comparative Analysis of Object Detection Algorithms

In our upcoming research, we will refine the comparison of YOLOv7's performance with established models like Faster R-CNN, SSD, and previous versions of YOLO. Our focus will be on key metrics such as processing speed, precision, recall, and the rate of false positives and negatives, which are already well-documented for these models in the literature. This analysis will allow us to directly compare YOLOv7's enhancements and suitability for real-time applications in autonomous vehicles, using existing data as a benchmark for detailed comparative insights.

9.3.5 Minimizing Detection Errors:

To further reduce false positives and negatives in our autonomous driving models, we propose to integrate advanced techniques like non-maximum suppression and Bayesian inference models. These methods will help in refining the object detection process by reducing redundancy and enhancing decision accuracy under uncertainty, respectively. This approach aims to directly enhance precision and recall metrics, which are crucial for minimizing critical detection failures in real-time applications, thereby boosting the system's operational safety and reliability (Le et al., 2023).

9.3.6 Enhancing Validation Techniques:

In our future studies, we will implement k-fold cross-validation techniques to assess the robustness of our YOLOv7 model across various test scenarios, such as lighting or weather changes. This method will allow us to systematically evaluate the model's performance in a controlled, repeatable manner across different subsets of our dataset. By providing visual results of these validations, we can gain a better understanding of how environmental changes impact the model’s accuracy, helping to identify areas for further improvement (Jaswanth, 2023).

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