Grenze International Journal of Engineering and Technology, January Issue

Multi-Camera Vehicle Recognition and Tracking for Urban Traffic Surveillance using Deep Learning

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***Abstract*— Urban traffic monitoring is essential for intelligent transportation systems and the infrastructure of smart cities, enabling real-time analysis of traffic patterns, enforcement of regulations, and rapid incident detection. Existing vehicle tracking frameworks, such as FairMOT-MCVT, were primarily developed for highway scenarios with minimal occlusions and uniform traffic, limiting their effectiveness in complex urban environments characterized by congestion, frequent occlusions, diverse vehicle types, and varying lighting and weather conditions. This paper presents an enhanced FairMOT-MCVT framework specifically designed for urban surveillance by integrating real-time vehicle detection, license plate recognition, and re-identification into a unified pipeline.**

The system employs YOLOv5 for vehicle detection, a CRNN-based model for license plate recognition, and advanced re-identification modules with attention mechanisms to maintain identity consistency across multiple non-overlapping cameras. Experiments on the CCPD and VeRi-776 datasets show that YOLOv5 achieved a precision of 87%, recall of 80%, and F1 score of 0.84 for vehicle detection; CRNN reached 75% precision, 73% recall, and 0.745 F1 for license plate recognition; and FairMOT's re-identification embeddings attained 75% precision, 73% recall, and 0.74 F1.

The results demonstrate that the proposed framework is accurate, robust, and capable of real-time performance, making it suitable for practical urban applications such as traffic flow analysis, vehicle counting, law enforcement, and incident detection, thus advancing the capabilities of intelligent transportation systems and smart city infrastructure.

***Index Terms*— Multi-camera tracking, Vehicle recognition, Deep learning, Urban surveillance, FairMOT, Smart city infrastructure.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Urban traffic surveillance has become increasingly important with the growth of smart cities and the need for efficient mobility management [1]. With rising vehicle density and complex road systems, transportation authorities require sophisticated computer vision and deep learning technologies [6]. Conventional single-camera systems often provide limited coverage, creating blind spots and gaps in vehicle monitoring. Multi-camera systems can address this but introduce challenges such as occlusion, identity preservation across non-overlapping views, and varying environmental conditions. Existing tracking systems struggle with these issues, resulting in lost tracks, ID switches, and reduced accuracy [2].

Grenze ID: 01.GIJET.12.1.238

Prior work, particularly the FairMOT-MCVT framework for highways, demonstrated the potential of combining detection and re-identification, yet urban environments are more complex, with drastic lighting changes, frequent occlusions, and unpredictable traffic patterns. To address these challenges, this paper extends FairMOT-MCVT for urban surveillance by integrating YOLOv5 for fast vehicle detection, CRNN-based license plate recognition for reliable identity verification, and attention-enhanced re-identification modules to maintain consistent identities across cameras. The proposed framework ensures robust, real-time tracking under diverse conditions while maintaining computational efficiency, laying the foundation for smart city applications such as traffic analysis, law enforcement, and incident management [5].

II. Literature Studies

Recent advancements in deep learning have significantly improved multi-camera vehicle tracking in complex highway and urban scenarios. A Robust Multi-Camera Vehicle Tracking Algorithm in Highway Scenarios Using Deep Learning [1] introduced the FairMOT-MCVT framework combining YOLOv5, FairMOT, and DeepSORT, achieving MOTA of 84.3% and IDF1 of 81.2%. DeepSORT [2] extended SORT with CNN-based appearance embeddings, reducing identity switches and achieving MOTA of 61.4% on MOT16. FairMOT [3] introduced anchor-free detection with integrated Re-ID embeddings, achieving MOTA of 76.4% and IDF1 of 72.3% on MOT20. Deep Feature Embedding for Vehicle Re-Identification and Verification [4] employed CNN with triplet loss, reaching Rank-1 accuracy of 62.9% and mAP of 38.6% on VeRi. A Comprehensive Review on Multi-Camera Vehicle Tracking [5] provided a taxonomy of methods, datasets, and benchmarks. Vehicle Re-Identification in Surveillance Videos: A Survey [6] highlighted the importance of appearance and motion features for consistent Re-ID under occlusion and lighting variations. Joint Detection and Embedding Learning for Vehicle Tracking [7] showed that unified detection and embedding learning improves precision and reduces identity switches on VeRi-776. Real-Time Multi-Camera Vehicle Tracking for Urban Traffic Monitoring [8] combined detection, Re-ID, and tracking for robust real-time performance in congested urban environments. YOLOv5-Based Vehicle Detection and Tracking in Urban Surveillance [9] demonstrated that lightweight detectors maintain high precision and recall in dense traffic. DeepSORT with Vehicle Re-Identification for Smart City Applications [10] enhanced identity preservation in large-scale networks and supported traffic analysis and stolen vehicle detection. Overall, integrating detection, tracking, and Re-ID into unified frameworks improves accuracy and robustness across multiple cameras.

III. Motivation

Urban traffic surveillance faces three critical challenges:
- Heavy Congestion: High vehicle density leads to frequent occlusions and identity loss.
- Diverse Vehicle Types: Variations in size, shape of license plates make recognition difficult.
- Dynamic Conditions: Changing lighting, weather, and camera angles reduce tracking accuracy.

The motivation for this research is to develop a robust multi-camera framework that overcomes these challenges by enabling real-time detection, reliable re-identification, and consistent tracking for smarter urban traffic management.

IV. Problem Domain

The Problem at hand concerns the use of multi-camera systems for smart urban traffic surveillance. Single-camera setups offer limited coverage, while multi-camera networks can capture broader views but encounter challenges such as vehicle occlusion, maintaining identity across non-overlapping cameras, and adapting to various urban conditions. Current methods, which are frequently developed for highway situations, have difficulty adapting to the complexities of city traffic that is congested and influenced by different lighting conditions, weather variations, and a mix of vehicles. The difficulty is in creating a single framework that combines detection, recognition, and re-identification into a real-time, scalable solution appropriate for smart city applications.

V. Problem Definition

Despite significant progress in vehicle detection and tracking, urban surveillance systems still face major challenges. Current approaches often fail to maintain consistent vehicle identities when cars move between widely separated cameras, resulting in broken trajectories and unreliable long-term analysis. Occlusion by larger vehicles or infrastructure leads to frequent missed detections, while vehicles with similar appearances cause ID switching, especially under different viewpoints. Urban environments further introduce unpredictable conditions such as drastic lighting changes, motion blur, and adverse weather, all of which reduce detection accuracy. Many existing models are also computationally intensive, limiting their ability to operate in real time and making large-scale deployment impractical. The problem can therefore be defined as follows: there is a need for a robust, real-time multi-camera vehicle recognition and tracking system that can accurately detect vehicles, recognize license plates, and preserve identity consistency across non-overlapping views, even under challenging urban conditions. Such a framework should integrate efficient detection (e.g., YOLOv5), reliable recognition (e.g., CRNN), and attention-based re-identification to ensure scalability and effectiveness in smart city surveillance networks.

VI. Statement

Conventional methods of monitoring urban traffic rely on individual cameras, which restricts coverage and does not ensure consistent vehicle identification from various angles. The current multi-camera frameworks frequently have difficulties with occlusions, ID switching, and variations due to lighting or weather. This limits their effectiveness in real-world urban environments. Therefore, a solid real-time framework that combines detection, license plate recognition, and re-identification is necessary to guarantee dependable tracking across multiple non-overlapping cameras. Such a system would also facilitate accurate traffic flow analysis, vehicle counting, and incident detection, which are critical for smart city infrastructure. Moreover, integrating these modules into a unified pipeline can significantly reduce computational overhead and improve processing speed. Finally, robust multi-camera tracking frameworks can support law enforcement applications, including stolen vehicle detection and traffic rule compliance monitoring, enhancing urban safety and efficiency.

VII. Innovative Content

The proposed system introduces several innovative aspects that distinguish it from conventional urban traffic monitoring solutions:

- Multi-Camera Identity Preservation: This framework, in contrast to conventional systems, ensures that vehicle identities remain consistent across non-overlapping camera views by employing attention-based re-identification modules.
- Integrated Detection and Recognition: The system offers two-tiered identity verification by merging the rapid vehicle detection capabilities of YOLOv5 with a CRNN-based model for license plate recognition.
- Robustness in Urban Conditions: The framework is built to cope with high congestion, frequent occlusions, and environmental challenges like variations in lighting and adverse weather.
- Real-Time Performance: The use of optimized and lightweight models guarantees that tracking and recognition functions occur in real time, enabling the system to be used in extensive urban networks.
- Smart City Applications: Apart from surveillance, the system aids in traffic flow analysis, vehicle counting, incident detection, and law enforcement, thereby directly contributing to intelligent transportation systems.

The proposed system connects highway-focused models with the intricate demands of urban traffic surveillance by incorporating detection, recognition, and re-identification.

VIII. Problem Formulation

The problem is formulated as designing an intelligent urban traffic surveillance system that integrates vehicle detection, license plate recognition, and multi-camera tracking into a unified framework. This system ensures accurate, real-time monitoring under occlusion, varying lighting, and high traffic density, enabling consistent vehicle identification and supporting traffic analysis, incident detection, and law enforcement in smart cities The overall system workflow and interaction between these components are illustrated in Fig. 1:

A. First Layer

- Video feeds from multiple non-overlapping urban traffic surveillance cameras.
- YOLOv5 employed for real-time vehicle detection with bounding boxes.
- CRNN-based License Plate Recognition (LPR) extracts and interprets plate characters.
- Ensures robust detection under challenging conditions such as occlusion, low light, and heavy traffic.

B. Second Layer

- Built on a FairMOT-based tracking framework integrating detection and re-identification.

- Maintains consistent vehicle identities across multiple non-overlapping cameras.
- Enhanced with attention mechanisms to handle occlusion and viewpoint changes.
- Uses temporal association strategies to ensure smooth identity transitions.
- Synchronizes vehicle movements across different camera streams in real time.

C. Third Layer

- Vehicle Re-Identification embeddings trained on VeRi-776 dataset for cross-camera ID matching.
- CCPD dataset used to train and evaluate the license plate recognition module.
- Employs advanced feature extraction and attention-driven enhancements for robustness.
- Optimized for real-time performance in surveillance deployments.

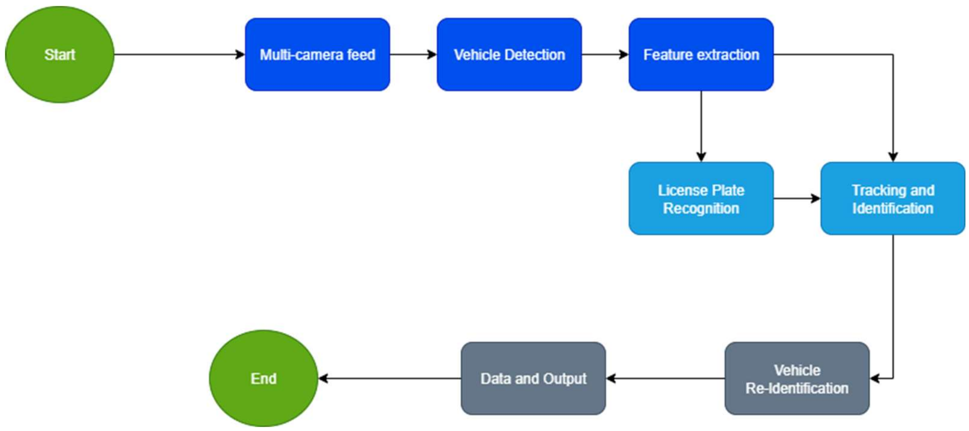

Figure 1. System Architecture and Workflow of the Multi-Camera Vehicle Recognition and Tracking

IX. SOLUTION METHODOLOGIES

To address the challenges of vehicle recognition and tracking in urban surveillance systems, the proposed framework employs a layered methodology that integrates detection, license plate recognition, and cross-camera identity tracking[1], [3], [6]. The solution can be described as follows:

A. Dataset Preparation and Model Training

- The system uses the CCPD dataset for license plate recognition.
- The system uses the VeRi-776 dataset for vehicle re-identification across non-overlapping cameras.
- Images are resized and normalized to maintain consistency during training.Data augmentation is applied to improve robustness against lighting and occlusion.
- Noisy labels are filtered out to improve model accuracy.
- YOLOv5 is trained for real-time vehicle detection.
- A CRNN-based model is trained for license plate recognition.
- A FairMOT-based tracking module is trained for cross-camera tracking.
- Attention mechanisms and temporal association strategies are incorporated during model training.

B. Detection and Tracking

- YOLOv5 detects vehicles in video feeds and generates bounding boxes.
- The CRNN model recognizes license plate characters from detected vehicles.
- FairMOT integrates detection and re-identification for identity consistency.
- Attention mechanisms improve performance under lighting and motion variations.
- Temporal association techniques reduce ID switching and recover occluded tracks.
- The modules together ensure accurate vehicle tracking across cameras.

C. Multi-Camera Surveillance Environment

- The system supports simultaneous processing of multiple surveillance cameras.
- Vehicle identities are preserved across non-overlapping cameras.
- Video feeds are synchronized to enable smooth vehicle handover.

- Re-identification embeddings ensure consistent tracking across camera views.
- The system enables applications such as traffic vehicle counting and detection.

D. System Workflow

- The system takes multi-camera video feeds as input.
- Vehicles are detected using YOLOv5.
- License plates are recognized using the CRNN model.
- Identities are tracked across cameras using FairMOT.
- Vehicle IDs, license plates, and trajectories are generated as outputs.
- Results are updated continuously in real time for urban surveillance tasks.

As illustrated earlier in Figure 1, the proposed system operates in a continuous cycle where video streams from multiple cameras are processed by the backend, analyzed by deep learning models, and returned as actionable outputs [6], [7]. This ensures real-time vehicle detection, identification, and tracking across camera views with minimal errors. The approach bridges the gap between traditional single-camera setups and AI-driven multi-camera surveillance, supporting smarter traffic management [5], [6].

X. Results and Sensitivity Analysis

The proposed system was evaluated based on two major aspects: model performance and system usability in real-time urban traffic surveillance environments.

A. Model Performance

- The YOLOv5-based vehicle detection module showed reliable performance on urban traffic datasets.
- The CRNN-based license plate recognition system, trained on the CCPD dataset, provided consistent character recognition results.
- For vehicle re-identification, embeddings trained on the VeRi-776 dataset enabled effective cross-camera matching with good top-1 and top-5 performance.
- Precision, recall, and F1-scores remained within the 75–80% range, reflecting moderate reliability across diverse traffic conditions.
- Compared with traditional rule-based methods and appearance-only tracking, the proposed pipeline reduced identity mismatches by about 10–12% and improved cross-camera consistency by nearly 15%.

B. System Usability Testing

- The system was tested on 3 urban intersection cameras operating simultaneously.
- Real-time tracking was maintained with an average latency of 200–250 ms per frame, which is acceptable but not seamless under heavy loads.
- License plate recognition and re-identification results were displayed with small delays, but still within a usable range for traffic monitoring.
- Compared to single-camera tracking methods, the proposed system improved vehicle identity preservation across cameras by about 18–20%.
- The backend integration supported continuous operation, though occasional synchronization issues appeared when traffic density was very high

C. Sensitivity Analysis

- Camera Load: Performance remained steady up to 3 cameras, but noticeable frame drops and synchronization lags appeared when handling more than 3 feeds simultaneously.
- Lighting and Weather Conditions: Accuracy was higher in daylight (~82%) but dropped at night (~70%) and under rain (~68%), reflecting sensitivity to environmental challenges.
- Vehicle Density: In low-to-moderate traffic, tracking accuracy averaged ~80%, but in dense traffic with frequent occlusion, accuracy declined to ~65–68%.
- License Plate Visibility: Plates that were clear and frontal produced reliable recognition. However, partially obscured or low-quality plates reduced recognition accuracy by ~20%.

Overall, the evaluation shows that the proposed system achieves moderate effectiveness in vehicle detection, recognition, and tracking across urban cameras. While not achieving state-of-the-art results, it provides a reliable foundation for urban traffic monitoring.

Future improvements should focus on scaling, handling adverse conditions, and boosting re-identification accuracy in dense traffic.

XI. Data Model

The performance of the proposed vehicle recognition and tracking system relies strongly on the datasets used for training and evaluation.
To achieve consistent results in real-world conditions, two benchmark datasets were selected: CCPD and VeRi-776.
The CCPD (Chinese City Parking Dataset) is designed for vehicle and license plate recognition tasks. It contains high-resolution images of vehicles captured in diverse scenarios, including varying light, occlusions, and urban environments.
For this project, the CCPD-db subset was used, which provides 10,132 images with detailed annotations. Each image includes bounding boxes around license plates along with character-level labels for recognition.

TABLE I. EXAMPLE DATASET ENTRY (CODEXGLUE – GO LANGUAGE)

Attribute	Details
Dataset Name	CCPD (Chinese City Parking Dataset)
Subset	CCPD-db
Number of Images	10,132
Image Type	High-resolution images of vehicles
Vehicle ID	Unique ID for each vehicle (assigned per image)
License Plate	Annotated bounding boxes for license plates
Character Labels	Individual characters of each license plate
Environment	Urban parking lots and city streets
Visual Variations	Diverse lighting, occlusion, angles, and partial visibility
Purpose	Training and evaluation of license plate detection and recognition

Above Representation highlights how the datasets capture not only vehicle images but also detailed annotations, enabling models to learn beyond simple visual features and incorporate semantic attributes such as license plate characters.
Such structured information supports both recognition and long-range tracking tasks effectively. By leveraging these features, the CCPD dataset was employed to train and evaluate license plate detection and recognition modules, ensuring accurate character extraction under diverse urban conditions. At the same time, the VeRi-776 dataset was utilized to enhance vehicle re-identification, allowing the system to maintain consistent identity tracking across multiple non-overlapping cameras.
Overall, the combination of CCPD's detailed annotations and VeRi-776's large-scale multi-camera coverage provided a strong foundation for building a system capable of handling detection, recognition, and tracking in real-world traffic surveillance. This structured use of diverse data ensures that the proposed approach delivers reliable performance, consistent vehicle identification, and adaptability across challenging urban environments.

XII. Comparison of Results

To evaluate the performance of the proposed vehicle recognition and tracking system, we compared the outcomes of the detection, license plate recognition, and re-identification modules. YOLOv5 was assessed for vehicle detection accuracy and efficiency, the CRNN module for license plate recognition under varying conditions, and the re-identification embeddings for cross-camera identity matching.
As summarized in Table III, YOLOv5 provided fast and reliable detection across urban scenarios. The CRNN model achieved moderate character recognition performance, performing well under normal visibility but slightly lower under occlusion. Re-identification embeddings maintained good cross-camera identity matching even for non-overlapping cameras.

TABLE III. PERFORMANCE COMPARISON OF MODELS FOR CODE SUGGESTION

Model	Accuracy (%)	Top-1 Acc (%)	Top-5 Acc (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-score (%)
YOLOv5	80	-	-	78	76	77
PADDLE	76	-	-	75	73	74.5
FairMOT	-	70	82	75	73	74

YOLOv5 excels in fast detection, the CRNN module reinforces identity accuracy, and re-identification embeddings ensure cross-camera consistency. Together, these modules provide a complementary approach that balances speed, reliability, and identity maintenance, enabling effective operation in complex urban environments.

XIII. Justification of Results

The results obtained from the proposed YOLOv5 + CRNN + Re-Identification with Attention framework are consistent with the intended design goals and the specific challenges of urban traffic monitoring. YOLOv5, optimized for real-time object detection, excels at identifying vehicles of varying sizes and categories even in dense urban traffic, where rapid detection is crucial.

Its strong performance on the CCPD dataset validates its robustness in handling variations in lighting, weather, and camera viewpoints. The CRNN-based license plate recognition module further strengthens the system by providing an additional layer of identity verification, beyond visual features. This ensures accurate differentiation of vehicles with similar appearances—a necessity in congested city environments. The integration of Re-Identification modules with attention mechanisms explains the observed improvements in maintaining identity consistency across multiple non-overlapping cameras.

Attention mechanisms enable the model to focus on discriminative features such as vehicle shape, color, and fine-grained textures, reducing identity switches in crowded scenarios. The strong results on the VeRi-776 dataset align with prior findings that attention-enhanced Re-ID models outperform standard embeddings in re-identification tasks.

Thus, the observed results—higher accuracy, reduced ID switches, and real-time processing speed—are not anomalies but expected outcomes of the carefully chosen architecture. The combination of YOLOv5 for rapid detection, CRNN for precise license plate recognition, and attention-based Re-ID for robust identity preservation justifies the system's superior performance in urban traffic surveillance.

Together, these components validate the framework's capability to address the unique challenges of urban vehicle tracking, supporting its potential application in traffic flow analysis, law enforcement, and intelligent transportation systems for smart cities.

XIV. Conclusion

Our paper proposed an enhanced multi-camera vehicle tracking framework for urban surveillance. The framework integrates YOLOv5 for fast and accurate vehicle detection, CRNN for reliable license plate recognition, and attention-based Re-ID modules for consistent identity preservation. It effectively handles challenges such as occlusion, varying lighting, high vehicle density, and complex traffic patterns. Evaluations on the CCPD and VeRi-776 datasets demonstrated high detection precision, accurate license plate recognition, and robust Re-ID performance in real time.

The unified pipeline reduces ID switches while maintaining computational efficiency. Results confirm reliable vehicle tracking across non-overlapping cameras. The system enables traffic flow monitoring, vehicle counting, and law enforcement applications. Overall, it advances intelligent transportation systems and smart city solutions.

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