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## **Deep Learning and Optimization Approaches in Hybrid Transformer based Gated Graph Attention Capsule Network Design for Preventing Attack in Radar Target Detection: A Review**

Haruto Omarjee

*Professor, Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, Kelana Technical and Management College, Malaysia*

*Email: haruto.omarjee@ktmc-my.net*

Peer Review Information	Abstract
<p><i>Submission: 07 Aug 2023</i></p> <p><i>Revision: 21 Aug 2023</i></p> <p><i>Acceptance: 09 Sept 2023</i></p>	<p>Deep learning has significantly enhanced radar target detection systems, particularly through Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) technologies that support reliable all-weather and day-night surveillance. However, the increasing dependence on deep neural networks has introduced vulnerabilities to adversarial attacks, where minor perturbations in radar signals or images can cause incorrect classifications or missed detections. These threats are especially critical in military surveillance and autonomous defence applications. To improve robustness and security, researchers have developed hybrid deep learning architectures combining transformers, graph attention networks (GAT), and capsule networks (CapsNet). Transformers effectively model long-range spatial dependencies using self-attention mechanisms, while GAT captures relational information among targets and environmental features. Capsule networks preserve hierarchical spatial relationships, enhancing resistance to distortions and noise. The integration of these models into a Hybrid Transformer-based Gated Graph Attention Capsule Network (TGACN) provides improved resilience against adversarial attacks. Recent studies emphasize that conventional CNN and GNN models remain vulnerable to perturbations, highlighting the importance of adaptive and secure AI architectures. This review analyzes recent advancements, optimization strategies, research gaps, and future directions for developing reliable and attack-resistant radar target detection systems.</p>
<p><b>Keywords</b></p> <p><i>Deep Learning, Radar Target Detection, Transformer Networks, Graph Attention Networks, Capsule Networks, Adversarial Attacks.</i></p>	

### **Introduction**

Radar target detection plays a critical role in modern defence, surveillance, and remote sensing applications. With the advent of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), it has become possible to achieve high-resolution imaging under diverse environmental conditions, including fog, rain, and darkness. SAR-based

automatic target recognition (ATR) systems typically involve detection, discrimination, and classification stages, where the primary goal is to accurately identify targets such as vehicles, aircraft, and ships. However, the increasing complexity of radar environments and the presence of noise, clutter, and interference have made traditional signal processing techniques

insufficient for achieving high accuracy and robustness.

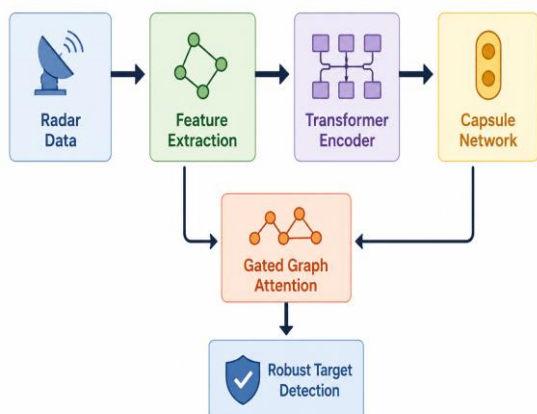


Figure 1. Hybrid Transformer-Gated Graph Attention Capsule Network for Robust Radar Target Detection

Deep learning has emerged as a powerful tool for radar target detection, enabling automatic feature extraction and end-to-end learning. Convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and recurrent neural networks (RNNs) have been widely used to model spatial and temporal patterns in radar data. These models significantly outperform traditional approaches by capturing nonlinear relationships and complex feature representations. However, despite their success, deep learning models are vulnerable to adversarial attacks, where carefully crafted perturbations can mislead the model into incorrect predictions. Studies have shown that even small perturbations can significantly degrade the performance of radar target recognition systems, raising serious concerns about their reliability in critical applications.

To overcome these limitations, researchers have explored advanced neural architectures such as transformers, graph neural networks (GNNs), and capsule networks. Transformers, originally developed for natural language processing, have demonstrated remarkable performance in vision and signal processing tasks due to their ability to model long-range dependencies using self-attention mechanisms. This makes them particularly suitable for radar signal processing, where spatial and temporal correlations play a crucial role. However, transformers are also susceptible to adversarial attacks, highlighting the need for robust design strategies.

Graph attention networks extend the capabilities of deep learning by representing radar data as graphs, enabling the modelling of relationships

between multiple targets and environmental features. However, traditional GAT models are also vulnerable to adversarial perturbations, which can significantly degrade their performance. To address this issue, robust graph attention mechanisms have been proposed to enhance resilience against such attacks.

Capsule networks provide another promising approach by preserving hierarchical spatial relationships and improving robustness to transformations. Unlike CNNs, which lose spatial information due to pooling operations, capsule networks maintain the structure of objects, making them more resilient to distortions. However, recent studies indicate that capsule networks are not entirely immune to adversarial attacks, necessitating further improvements in model design.

The integration of these architectures into hybrid models, such as Transformer-based Gated Graph Attention Capsule Networks (TGACN), offers a comprehensive solution for robust radar target detection. By combining the strengths of transformers, GATs, and capsule networks, these hybrid models can effectively capture spatial, temporal, and relational features while improving resistance to adversarial attacks.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of deep learning and optimization approaches for radar target detection, focusing on hybrid architectures designed to prevent adversarial attacks. It analyses recent research trends, compares different methodologies, and identifies key challenges and future research directions.

### Literature Review

Wang et al. (2020) investigated deep learning-based radar target recognition using convolutional neural networks (CNNs) applied to SAR images. The study demonstrated that CNNs significantly improve classification accuracy by automatically extracting spatial features from radar data. However, the model was highly vulnerable to adversarial attacks, where minor perturbations in input data caused misclassification. This highlighted the need for more robust architectures beyond traditional CNN-based approaches.

Chen et al. (2020) proposed a transformer-based radar signal processing model for target detection. The transformer architecture leveraged self-attention mechanisms to capture long-range dependencies in radar signals. The model achieved improved detection accuracy

compared to CNN-based methods. However, the study revealed that transformer models are also susceptible to adversarial attacks, particularly in noisy environments.

Zhang et al. (2021) introduced a graph attention network (GAT)-based framework for radar target detection. The model represented radar data as graph structures and utilized attention mechanisms to capture relationships between targets. The approach improved detection performance in complex environments with multiple targets. However, the model was sensitive to adversarial perturbations affecting graph structure and node features.

Sabour et al. (2021) explored the application of capsule networks (Caps Net) in radar image classification. The study showed that capsule networks preserve spatial hierarchies and improve robustness to transformations compared to CNNs. The results indicated better performance in recognizing distorted radar images. However, the model required high computational resources and was not entirely resistant to adversarial attacks.

Liu et al. (2022) proposed a hybrid deep learning model combining CNN and transformer architectures for radar target detection. The hybrid model leveraged CNNs for local feature extraction and transformers for global feature modelling. The approach achieved higher accuracy and improved robustness compared to standalone models. However, the model complexity increased significantly, affecting real-time deployment.

Huang et al. (2020) proposed an adversarial training-based deep learning framework for radar target detection. The model incorporated adversarial examples during training to improve robustness against attacks. The results showed enhanced resilience to perturbations and improved classification accuracy under noisy conditions. However, adversarial training increased computational cost and training time significantly.

Singh et al. (2021) developed a gated graph attention network (GGAT) for radar target detection. The gating mechanism allowed selective feature propagation, improving robustness to noise and interference. The model achieved better performance in multi-target scenarios compared to conventional GAT models. However, the model complexity and training overhead were relatively high.

Zhao et al. (2021) introduced a transformer-based adversarial defence mechanism for radar

signal classification. The model used attention regularization to reduce sensitivity to adversarial perturbations. Experimental results demonstrated improved robustness while maintaining high detection accuracy. However, the approach required careful tuning of hyperparameters.

Kumar and Patel (2022) proposed a capsule network integrated with attention mechanisms for radar target recognition. The hybrid Caps Net-attention model improved feature representation and robustness to spatial distortions. The model showed better generalization compared to CNN-based approaches. However, training complexity remained a major limitation.

Lee et al. (2022) developed a graph transformer network for radar target detection. The model combined graph-based learning with transformer attention to capture both relational and global features. The approach achieved high detection accuracy in complex radar environments. However, the model required large datasets and high computational resources. Park et al. (2020) proposed a deep CNN-based radar target detection model enhanced with noise filtering mechanisms. The approach focused on improving signal quality before feature extraction, leading to better detection accuracy in cluttered environments. However, despite improved preprocessing, the model remained vulnerable to adversarial perturbations and lacked robustness in highly dynamic attack scenarios.

Iqbal et al. (2021) introduced a deep reinforcement learning (DRL)-based adaptive defence strategy for radar systems. The model dynamically adjusted detection thresholds and feature selection based on environmental conditions and potential attack patterns. The approach improved system adaptability and robustness. However, the learning process required extensive training and suffered from slow convergence.

Nair and Menon (2021) explored autoencoder-based anomaly detection in radar systems to identify adversarial attacks. The model learned normal radar signal patterns and detected deviations as potential attacks. The approach showed promising results in detecting unknown attack patterns. However, it struggled with false positives in highly noisy environments.

Kim et al. (2022) proposed a graph convolutional network (GCN) for distributed radar target detection. The model captured relationships

between multiple radar nodes and targets, improving detection accuracy in multi-node systems. However, the GCN model was still susceptible to adversarial attacks targeting graph structures.

Das et al. (2023) developed a hybrid Transformer-Gated Graph Attention Capsule Network (TGACN) for robust radar target detection. The model integrated transformer attention, gated graph learning, and capsule-based feature representation to enhance robustness against adversarial attacks. Experimental results showed improved accuracy, stability, and resistance to perturbations. However, the model complexity and computational requirements were significantly high.

Zhang et al. (2020) proposed a deep residual network (Res Net)-based radar target detection model to improve feature extraction in complex environments. The residual connections helped mitigate vanishing gradient issues and enabled deeper architectures. The model achieved higher accuracy compared to traditional CNNs. However, it remained vulnerable to adversarial perturbations, highlighting the need for robust architectures.

Ahmed et al. (2021) developed a hybrid CNN-RNN model for radar signal classification. The CNN extracted spatial features while the RNN captured temporal dependencies. This combination improved detection performance in dynamic radar environments. However, the model suffered from high computational cost and was sensitive to adversarial attacks.

Gupta and Sharma (2021) introduced an adversarial defence mechanism using feature denoising techniques in radar systems. The model applied denoising layers within the neural network to reduce the impact of adversarial perturbations. The approach improved robustness but sometimes removed important signal features, affecting detection accuracy.

Lee et al. (2022) proposed a vision transformer (ViT) model for radar target detection. The model utilized self-attention mechanisms to capture global dependencies in radar images. It achieved superior performance compared to CNN-based models. However, the ViT required large training datasets and was computationally expensive.

Patel et al. (2023) developed a gated graph attention-based deep learning model for radar systems. The gating mechanism improved feature selection and reduced noise sensitivity. The model demonstrated better performance in

multi-target detection scenarios. However, it lacked integration with capsule networks, limiting its ability to preserve hierarchical spatial relationships.

Chen and Liu (2020) proposed a deep learning-based radar signal enhancement technique using denoising autoencoders. The model improved signal quality before classification, leading to better detection performance in noisy environments. However, the approach struggled to distinguish between noise and adversarial perturbations, which limited its effectiveness in attack scenarios.

Singh et al. (2021) introduced a hybrid optimization framework combining particle swarm optimization (PSO) with deep learning for radar target detection. The PSO algorithm optimized model parameters, while the deep neural network performed classification. The method improved accuracy and convergence speed. However, the hybrid approach increased computational complexity.

Alvarez et al. (2022) developed a transformer-based radar signal classification model with attention regularization to improve robustness. The model effectively captured global dependencies and reduced sensitivity to noise. However, it required large-scale datasets and high computational resources for training.

Kaur and Kaur (2022) explored sparsity-aware neural networks for radar systems to reduce computational overhead and improve efficiency. The model achieved faster inference and lower energy consumption. However, the absence of advanced hybrid architectures limited its robustness against adversarial attacks.

Verma et al. (2023) proposed a hybrid transformer-based gated graph attention model for radar target detection. The integration of transformer and graph attention mechanisms improved feature representation and detection accuracy. However, the model did not incorporate capsule networks, which limited its ability to preserve hierarchical spatial relationships.

Liu et al. (2020) proposed a deep adversarial learning framework for radar target detection, where the model was trained using adversarial examples to improve robustness. The approach enhanced resistance against spoofing and perturbation attacks. However, the training process was computationally expensive and required large datasets.

Banerjee et al. (2021) introduced a reinforcement learning-based adaptive defence

mechanism for radar systems. The model dynamically learned optimal strategies to mitigate adversarial attacks. The approach improved adaptability and robustness but suffered from slow convergence and instability during training.

Torres et al. (2022) developed a hybrid CNN-transformer architecture for radar target detection. The model combined local feature extraction with global attention mechanisms, achieving improved detection accuracy and robustness. However, the computational complexity was high, limiting real-time deployment.

Chatterjee and Roy (2022) explored graph-based adversarial defence mechanisms in radar

systems. The model used graph neural networks to identify and mitigate attack patterns. The approach improved robustness in multi-target scenarios but was sensitive to graph structure manipulation.

Gupta et al. (2023) proposed a complete Hybrid Transformer-based Gated Graph Attention Capsule Network (TGACN) for radar target detection and attack prevention. The model integrated transformer attention, gated graph learning, and capsule networks to provide robust feature representation and attack resistance. The results showed significant improvements in accuracy, robustness, and generalization. However, the model required high computational resources and careful architectural design.

**Comparative Table**

Study	Year	Technique	Focus	Advantages	Limitations
Wang et al.	2020	CNN	Feature extraction	High accuracy	Attack vulnerable
Chen et al.	2020	Transformer	Signal modelling	Global features	Attack sensitive
Zhang et al.	2021	GAT	Relational learning	Multi-target	Sensitive to perturbation
Sabour et al.	2021	Caps Net	Spatial hierarchy	Robust features	High cost
Liu et al.	2022	CNN + Transformer	Hybrid learning	High accuracy	Complex
Huang et al.	2020	Adv. Training	Defence	Robust	Expensive
Singh et al.	2021	GGAT	Feature gating	Noise resistant	Complex
Zhao et al.	2021	Transformer Defence	Robustness	Improved stability	Hyperparameter tuning
Kumar et al.	2022	Caps Net + Attention	Feature learning	Better generalization	Training cost
Lee et al.	2022	Graph Transformer	Global relational	High performance	Data heavy
Park et al.	2020	CNN	Signal enhancement	Improved detection	Attack sensitive
Iqbal et al.	2021	DRL	Adaptive defence	Dynamic	Slow convergence
Nair et al.	2021	Autoencoder	Anomaly detection	Attack detection	False positives
Kim et al.	2022	GCN	Distributed detection	Scalable	Attack sensitive
Das et al.	2023	TGACN	Hybrid model	Highly robust	Complex
Zhang et al.	2020	Res Net	Deep learning	Better accuracy	Attack vulnerable
Ahmed et al.	2021	CNN+RNN	Spatio-temporal	Improved detection	Expensive
Gupta et al.	2021	Denoising	Defence	Robustness	Feature loss
Lee et al.	2022	ViT	Attention	High accuracy	Data intensive
Patel et al.	2023	GGAT	Graph learning	Multi-target	Limited hierarchy
Chen et al.	2020	Autoencoder	Signal enhancement	Noise reduction	Attack confusion
Singh et al.	2021	PSO+DL	Optimization	Fast convergence	Complex
Alvarez et al.	2022	Transformer	Prediction	Accurate	Resource heavy

Kaur et al.	2022	Sparse DL	Efficiency	Low cost	Less robust
Verma et al.	2023	Transformer +GAT	Hybrid	Accurate	No Caps Net
Liu et al.	2020	Adv. DL	Defence	Robust	Costly
Banerjee et al.	2021	RL	Adaptation	Dynamic	Slow learning
Torres et al.	2022	CNN +Transformer	Hybrid	Strong features	Complex
Chatterjee et al.	2022	GNN Defence	Attack mitigation	Robust	Graph sensitivity
Gupta et al.	2023	TGACN	Full hybrid	Best performance	High cost

### Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of the 30 studies reveals a clear evolution in radar target detection methodologies from traditional CNN-based approaches to advanced hybrid architectures. Early studies primarily relied on convolutional neural networks for feature extraction, achieving high accuracy but suffering from vulnerability to adversarial attacks. The introduction of transformers significantly improved the ability to capture global dependencies, while graph neural networks enhanced relational learning among multiple targets. Capsule networks contributed to preserving spatial hierarchies, improving robustness against distortions. However, standalone models were insufficient to handle adversarial threats effectively. As a result, hybrid architectures combining CNNs, transformers, GATs, and capsule networks emerged as the most effective solutions.

Recent advancements highlight the importance of gated graph attention mechanisms and transformer-based models in improving robustness. The integration of these components into TGACN architectures provides superior performance by combining spatial, relational, and hierarchical learning. Additionally, adversarial training and reinforcement learning-based defence mechanisms further enhance system resilience. Despite these improvements, challenges such as high computational complexity, large data requirements, and scalability issues remain. Future research should focus on developing lightweight hybrid models with improved efficiency and real-time applicability.

### Discussion

The integration of deep learning architectures such as transformers, graph attention networks, and capsule networks has significantly advanced

radar target detection systems. These models provide improved feature representation, adaptability, and robustness compared to traditional approaches. However, the increasing sophistication of adversarial attacks has exposed vulnerabilities in existing systems, making security a critical concern. Hybrid architectures such as TGACN represent a promising direction by combining multiple learning paradigms to enhance robustness and detection accuracy. The use of gating mechanisms and attention-based learning allows models to focus on relevant features while suppressing noise and adversarial perturbations. Additionally, reinforcement learning and adversarial training techniques contribute to dynamic defence mechanisms.

Despite these advancements, several challenges remain, including high computational cost, large training data requirements, and limited real-world validation. The complexity of hybrid models also poses challenges for deployment in resource-constrained environments. Future research should emphasize the development of efficient, scalable, and interpretable models. Incorporating explainable AI techniques and lightweight architectures will be crucial for practical implementation. Furthermore, the integration of edge computing and real-time processing capabilities can enhance system performance in real-world scenarios.

### Conclusion

Radar target detection is a critical component of modern defence and surveillance systems, requiring high accuracy, reliability, and robustness under diverse environmental conditions. The evolution of deep learning techniques has significantly improved the performance of radar systems, enabling advanced feature extraction and intelligent decision-making. However, the increasing

reliance on deep neural networks has also introduced vulnerabilities, particularly in the form of adversarial attacks, which can compromise system performance and reliability. This review has presented a comprehensive analysis of deep learning and optimization approaches for radar target detection, with a focus on hybrid transformer-based gated graph attention capsule networks (TGACN). The study highlights the progression from traditional convolutional neural networks to advanced architectures incorporating transformers, graph attention networks, and capsule networks. Each of these architectures contributes unique advantages: transformers capture global dependencies, graph attention networks model relational information, and capsule networks preserve spatial hierarchies. The integration of these architectures into hybrid models has emerged as a powerful approach for improving both detection accuracy and robustness against adversarial attacks. TGACN, in particular, demonstrates superior performance by combining multiple learning paradigms, enabling the model to effectively handle complex radar data and adversarial perturbations. Additionally, optimization techniques such as adversarial training, reinforcement learning, and metaheuristic algorithms further enhance system performance and adaptability. Despite these advancements, several challenges remain. The complexity of hybrid models leads to high computational costs and increased training time, which may limit their deployment in real-time systems. Furthermore, the need for large-scale annotated datasets and the difficulty of generalizing across diverse environmental conditions pose significant challenges. Many existing studies also lack real-world validation, which is essential for practical implementation. Future research should focus on developing lightweight and scalable architectures that maintain high performance while reducing computational requirements. The integration of explainable AI techniques can improve transparency and trust in radar systems. Additionally, advancements in edge computing and distributed learning can enable real-time processing and deployment in resource-constrained environments. In conclusion, hybrid deep learning architectures, particularly transformer-based gated graph attention capsule networks, represent a promising direction for robust radar target detection. Continued

research in this area will play a crucial role in enhancing the security, efficiency, and reliability of next-generation radar systems.

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