

Evidential deep neural networks: application in semantic analysis for autonomous vehicles

PhD Thesis Defence, February 10, 2026

Presented by

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Daily driving scene

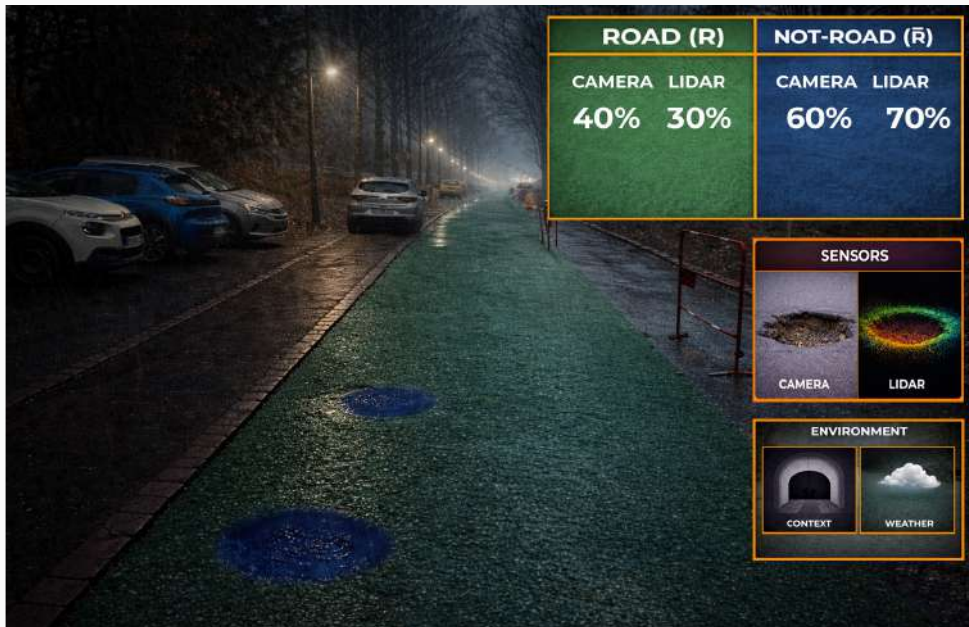


What decision now?





What decision now?



Thesis research project - EviDeep (ANR)



anr®

EviDEEP

Evidential theory

Combining evidence

Ambiguous data

Handling conflict

Jean Dezert (ONERA)

Deep neural networks

Semantic analysis for AVs

Multi-modal features

Probabilistic models

MIAM and MSD (IRIMAS)

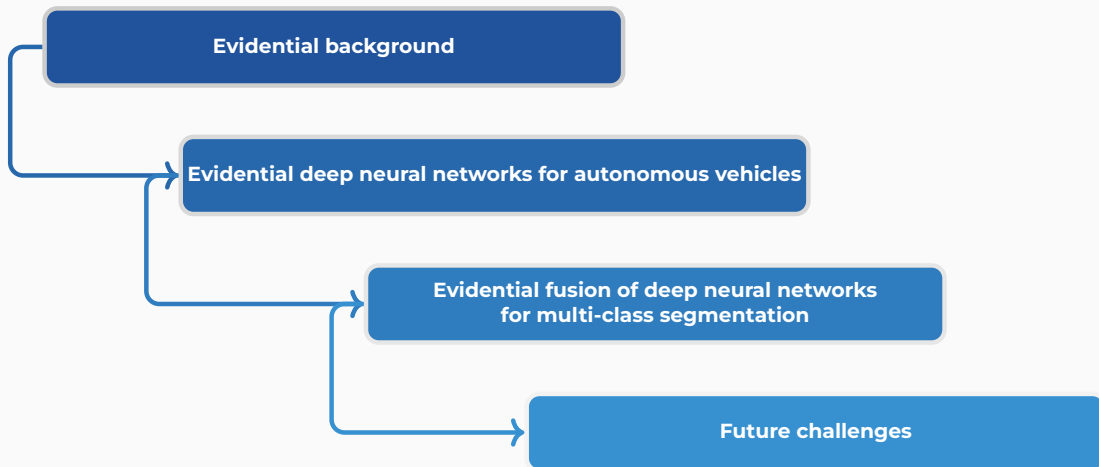


Evidential deep neural networks: application in semantic analysis for AVs



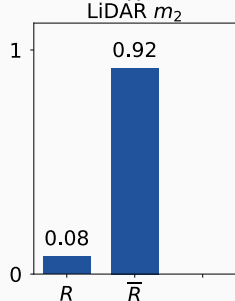
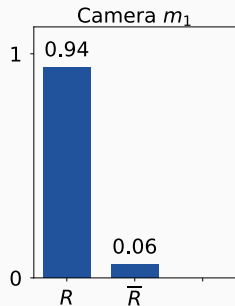


Presentation outline





Combining evidence



FoD (frame of discernment)

$\Theta = \{\theta_1, \dots, \theta_n\}$, mutually exclusive

Example: $\Theta = \{R, \bar{R}\}$ (road / not-road)

m : mass function

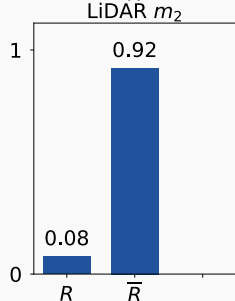
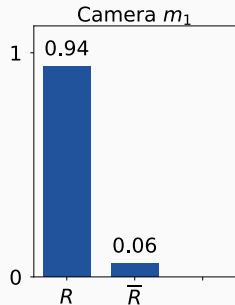
R : Road

\bar{R} : Not-Road

■ evidence (BBA)



Combining evidence



FoD (frame of discernment)

$\Theta = \{\theta_1, \dots, \theta_n\}$, mutually exclusive

Example: $\Theta = \{R, \bar{R}\}$ (road / not-road)

Mass function | evidence

also known as BBA (belief basic assignment)
[Shafer, 1976]

$$\sum_{A \subseteq \Theta} m(A) = 1, \quad A \in \{R, \bar{R}, \Theta\}$$

Example: $m(R), m(\bar{R}), m(\Theta)$

$m(\Theta) = 1 \rightarrow$ **vacuous (total ignorance)**

m : mass function

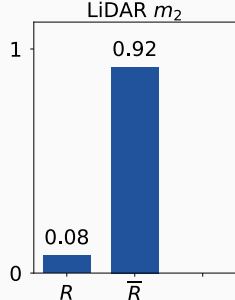
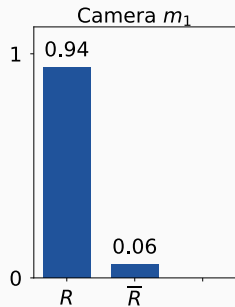
R : Road

\bar{R} : Not-Road

 evidence (BBA)



Combining evidence: belief theory basics



Discounting \rightarrow reliability α [Shafer, 1976]

$$m'(R) = \alpha m(R)$$

$$m'(\bar{R}) = \alpha m(\bar{R})$$

$$m'(\Theta) = 1 - \alpha(1 - m(\Theta))$$

m : mass function

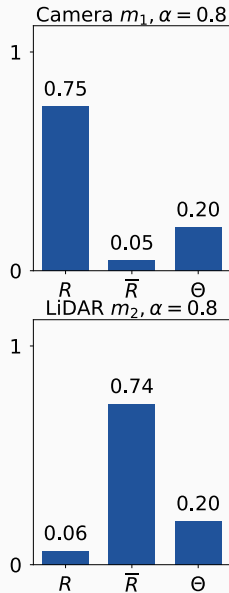
R : Road

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 evidence (BBA)



Combining evidence: belief theory basics



Discounting → reliability α [Shafer, 1976]

$$m'(R) = \alpha m(R)$$

$$m'(\bar{R}) = \alpha m(\bar{R})$$

$$m'(\Theta) = 1 - \alpha(1 - m(\Theta))$$

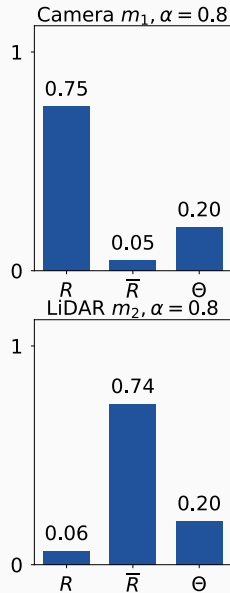
m : mass function
 α : discounting

R : Road
 \bar{R} : Not-Road
 Θ : Ignorance

 evidence (BBA)



Combining evidence: conjunctive rule



Conjunctive rule \rightarrow (keeps K) [Shafer, 1976]

$$m_{\cap}(R) = m_1(R)m_2(R) + m_1(R)m_2(\Theta) + m_1(\Theta)m_2(R)$$

$$m_{\cap}(\bar{R}) = m_1(\bar{R})m_2(\bar{R}) + m_1(\bar{R})m_2(\Theta) + m_1(\Theta)m_2(\bar{R})$$

$$m_{\cap}(\emptyset) = m_1(R)m_2(\bar{R}) + m_1(\bar{R})m_2(R) \quad \textbf{(K)}.$$

m : mass function
 α : discounting

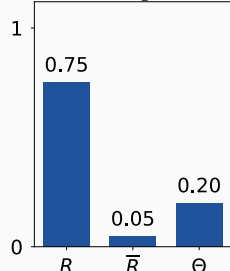
R : Road
 \bar{R} : Not-Road
 Θ : Ignorance

evidence (BBA)

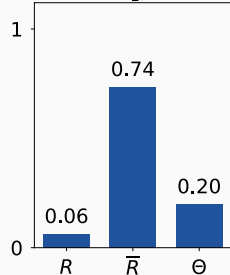


Combining evidence: conjunctive rule

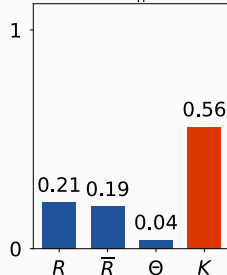
Camera $m_1, \alpha = 0.8$



LiDAR $m_2, \alpha = 0.8$



Conjunctive rule
 m_\cap



m : mass function
 α : discounting

Conjunctive rule \rightarrow (keeps K) [Shafer, 1976]

$$m_\cap(R) = m_1(R)m_2(R) + m_1(R)m_2(\Theta) + m_1(\Theta)m_2(R)$$

$$m_\cap(\bar{R}) = m_1(\bar{R})m_2(\bar{R}) + m_1(\bar{R})m_2(\Theta) + m_1(\Theta)m_2(\bar{R})$$

$$m_\cap(\emptyset) = m_1(R)m_2(\bar{R}) + m_1(\bar{R})m_2(R) \quad \textcolor{red}{(K)}.$$

R : Road

\bar{R} : Not-Road

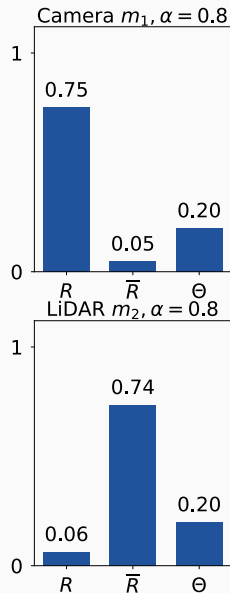
Θ : Ignorance

■ evidence (BBA)

■ conflict K



Combining evidence: DS rule



DS rule → normalize conflict [Shafer, 1976]

$$m_{DS}(A) = \frac{m_{\cap}(A)}{1 - K}, \quad A \in \{R, \bar{R}, \Theta\}.$$

(**conflict** K is removed, remaining masses are renormalized)

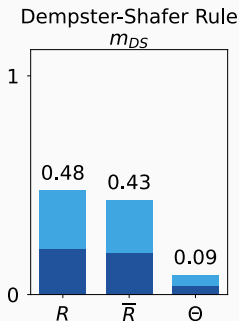
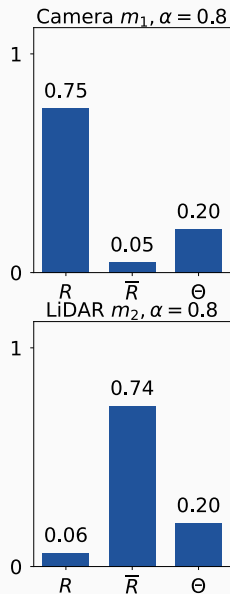
m : mass function
 α : discounting

R : Road
 \bar{R} : Not-Road
 Θ : Ignorance

evidence (BBA)



Combining evidence: DS rule



m : mass function
 α : discounting

DS rule → normalize conflict [Shafer, 1976]

$$m_{DS}(A) = \frac{m_{\cap}(A)}{1 - K}, \quad A \in \{R, \bar{R}, \Theta\}.$$

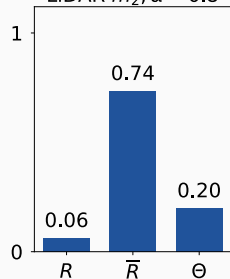
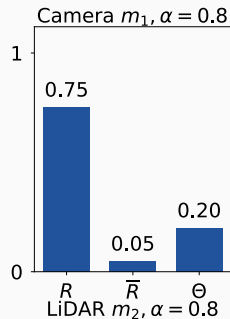
(**conflict** K is removed, remaining masses are renormalized)

R : Road
 \bar{R} : Not-Road
 Θ : Ignorance

■ evidence (BBA)
■ conflict K
■ redistributed/ norm.



Combining evidence: PCR6⁺ rule



m : mass function
 α : discounting

PCR6⁺ → redistributes conflict [T. Dezert et al., 2021]

$$m_{1,2,\dots,S}^{\text{PCR6}^+}(A) = m_{1,2,\dots,S}^{\cap}(A) + \sum_{j \in \{1,\dots,S\} | A \in \mathbf{X}_j \wedge \pi_j(\emptyset)} \left[\left(\kappa_j(A) \sum_{i \in \{1,\dots,S\} | X_{j_i}=A} m_i(X_{j_i}) \right) \cdot \frac{\pi_j(\emptyset)}{\sum_{X \in \mathbf{X}_j} \left(\kappa_j(X) \sum_{i \in \{1,\dots,S\} | X_{j_i}=X} m_i(X_{j_i}) \right)} \right].$$

R : Road

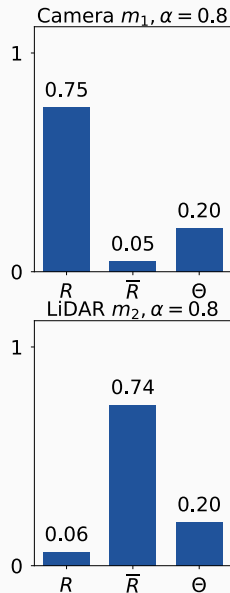
\bar{R} : Not-Road

Θ : Ignorance

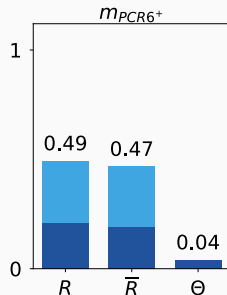
evidence (BBA)



Combining evidence: PCR6⁺ rule



Proportional Conflict
Redistribution Rule



m : mass function
 α : discounting

PCR6⁺ → redistribute conflict [T. Dezert et al., 2021]

$m_{PCR6^+}(A) = m_{\cap}(X) + \Delta_A(K)$, $A \in \{R, \bar{R}, \Theta\}$,
where $\Delta_A(K)$ redistributes conflict proportionally
to supports

$\kappa_j(A)$: proportional weight

$\pi_j(\emptyset)$: partial conflict

\mathbf{x}_j : conflicting elements

R : Road

\bar{R} : Not-Road

Θ : Ignorance

■ evidence (BBA)

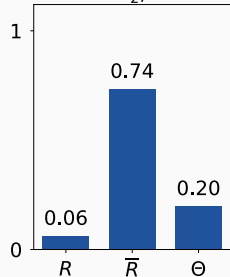
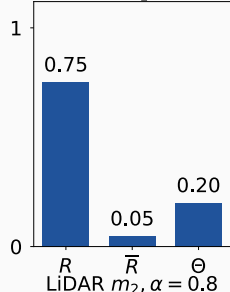
■ conflict K

■ redistributed

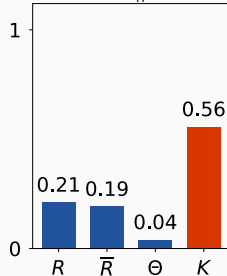


Combining evidence: fusion rules

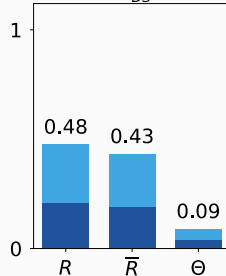
Camera $m_1, \alpha = 0.8$



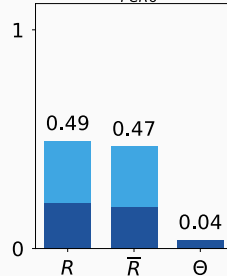
Conjunctive rule
 m_n



Dempster-Shafer Rule
 m_{DS}



Proportional Conflict
Redistribution Rule
 m_{PCR6^+}



m : mass function
 α : discounting

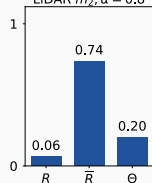
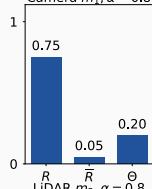
R : Road
 \bar{R} : Not-Road
 Θ : Ignorance

■ evidence (BBA)
■ conflict K
■ redistributed/ norm.

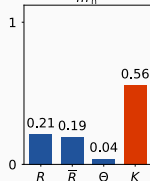


Combining evidence: fusion rules

Camera $m_1, \alpha = 0.8$

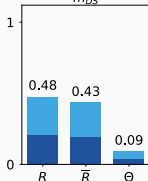


Conjunctive rule
 m_n



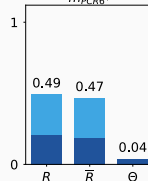
m : mass function
 α : discounting

Dempster-Shafer Rule
 m_{DS}



R : Road
 \bar{R} : Not-Road
 Θ : Ignorance

Proportional Conflict Redistribution Rule
 m_{PCR6+}



■ evidence (BBA)
■ conflict K
■ redistributed/ norm.

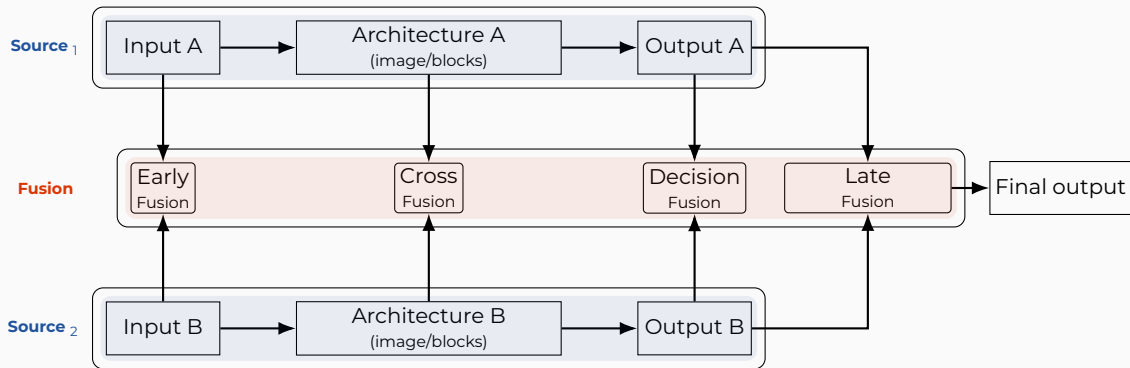
DS rule

- +simple
- +associative
- +neutral to vacuous BBA
- sensitive
- dictatorial
- cancels all K

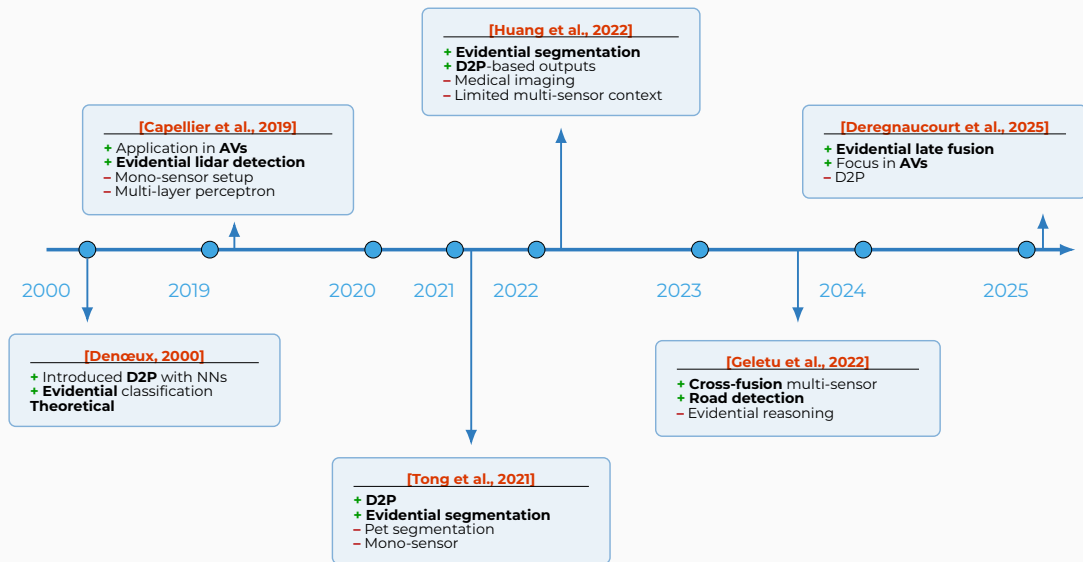
PCR6+

- +proportional redist.
- +robust
- +non-dictatorial
- +neutral to vacuous BBA
- quasi-associative
- complex

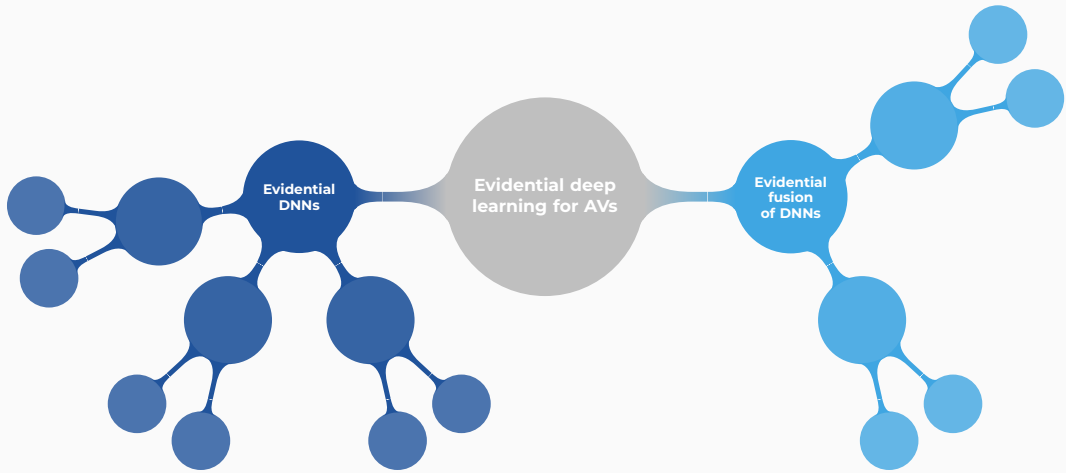
How to plug this evidence combination with deep neural networks?



Existing literature: Evidential deep neural networks



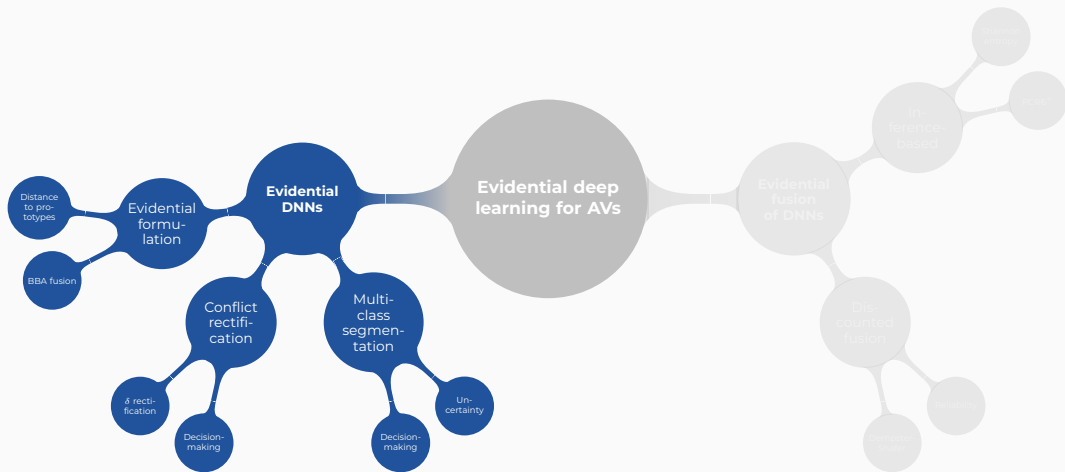
Thesis main research directions



Two research directions

- Evidential deep neural networks for autonomous vehicles**
- Evidential fusion of deep neural networks for multi-class segmentation**

Evidential deep neural networks for autonomous vehicles



First research directions

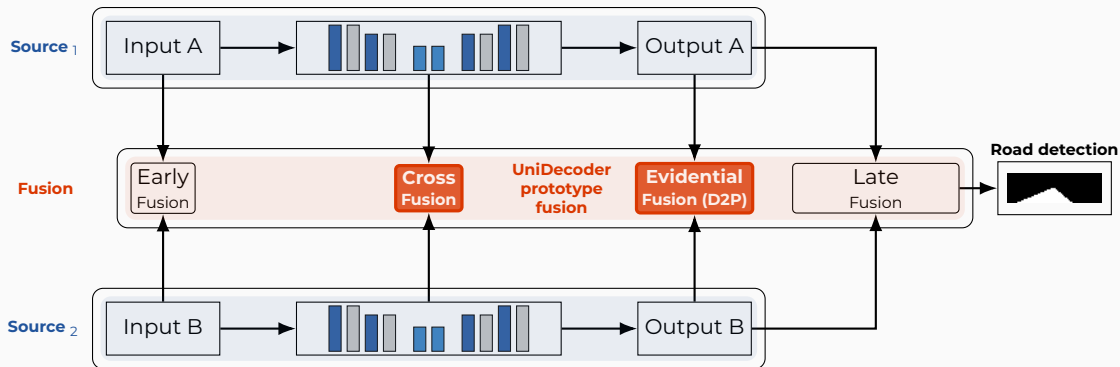
LiDAR-camera fusion based on evidential formalism

Conflict management in distance to prototypes and decision-making

Extension to multi-class segmentation: uncertainty and quality indicators



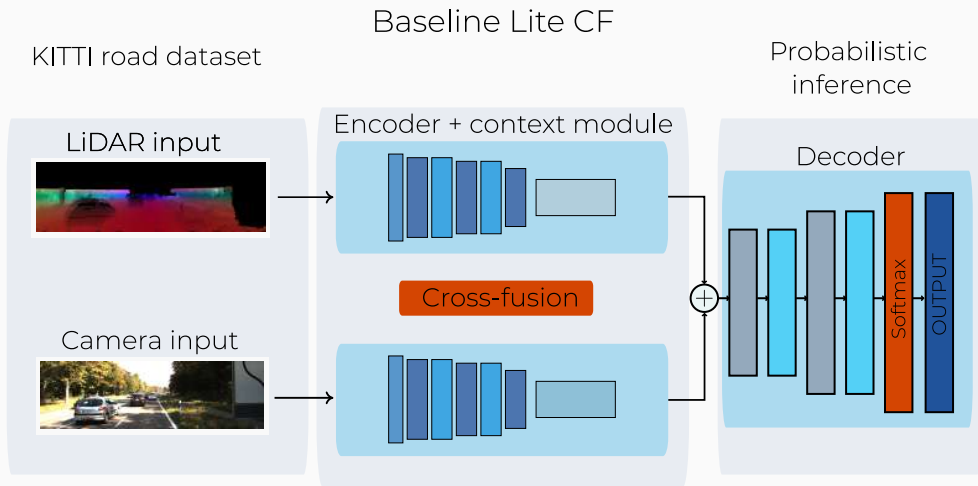
EDNN: where is fusion happening?



Road detection → KITTI road dataset, 2 classes: **Road:** \bar{R} , **Not-Road:** (\bar{R})



Baseline architecture: Lite-CF



Architecture Lite CF with unified decoder [Geletu et al., 2022].



Baseline architecture: Lite-CF

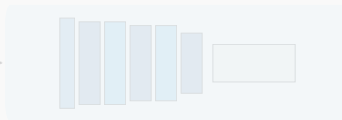
Baseline Lite CF

KITTI road dataset

LiDAR input



Encoder + context module



Camera input

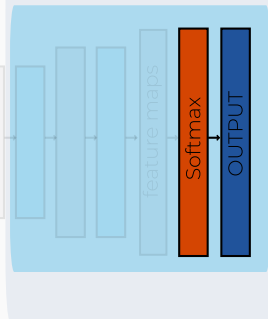


Cross-fusion



Probabilistic inference

Decoder



Architecture Lite CF with unified decoder [Geletu et al., 2022].



Baseline architecture: Lite-CF

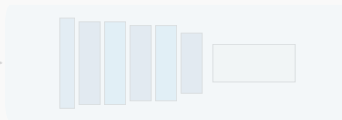
Baseline Lite CF

KITTI road dataset

LiDAR input



Encoder + context module



Camera input

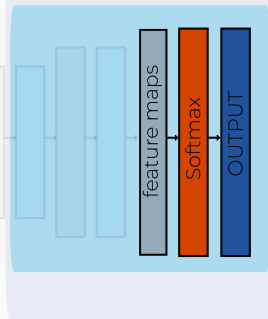


Cross-fusion



Probabilistic inference

Decoder



Architecture Lite CF with unified decoder [Geletu et al., 2022].

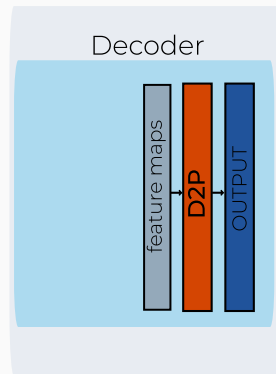


Baseline architecture: Lite-CF

KITTI road dataset

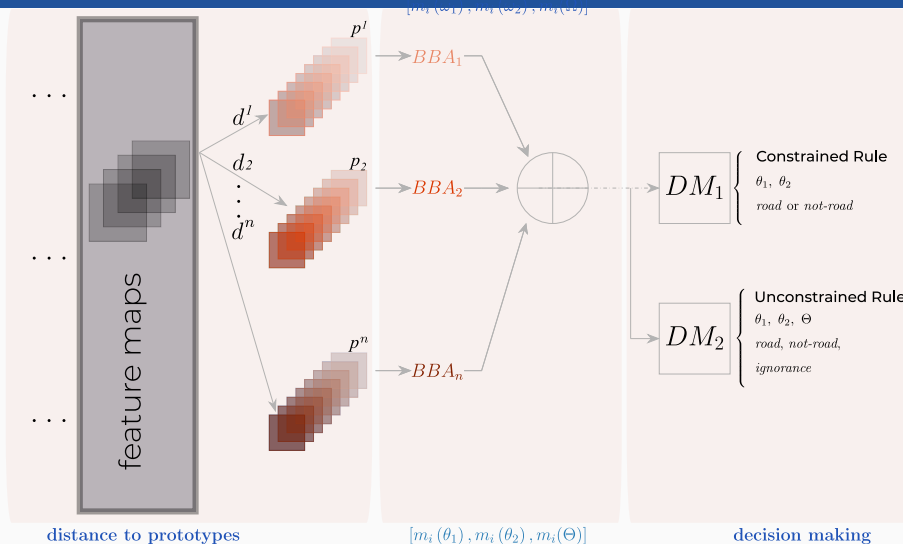
Evidential Lite CF

Evidential
formulation





Evidential formulation: distance to prototypes (D2P)

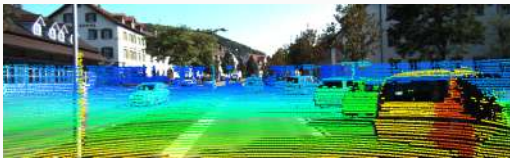


DM₁ (decisions in Θ): $\hat{A} = \arg \max_{A \in \{\theta_1, \theta_2\}} m_{DS}(A) \quad (\theta_1 \text{ or } \theta_2) \rightarrow \text{Lite-CF-Evi1}$

DM₂ (decisions in 2^Θ): $\hat{A} = \arg \min_{A \in \{\theta_1, \theta_2, \Theta\}} d_{(\cdot)}(m_{DS}, m_A) \quad (\text{includes } \Theta) \rightarrow \text{Lite-CF-Evi2}$



Prediction example with evidential formulation



(a) Projection LiDAR



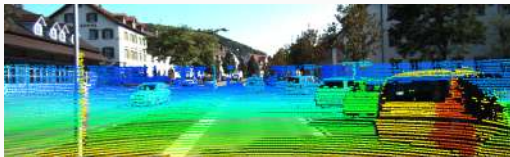
(b) Camera image



(c) Ground truth



Prediction example with evidential formulation



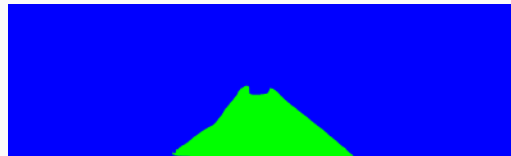
(a) Projection LiDAR



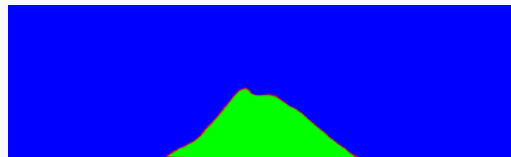
(b) Camera image



(c) Ground truth



(d) Prediction DM_1



(e) Prediction DM_2



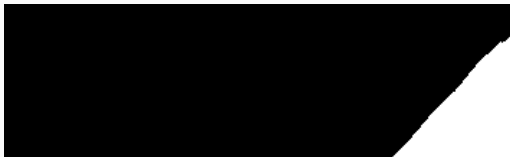
Prediction example with evidential formulation - zoomed detail



(a) Projection LiDAR



(b) Camera image



(c) Ground truth



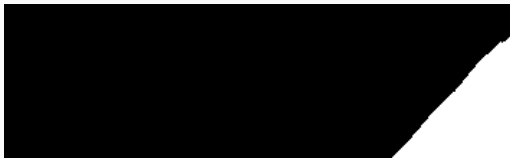
Prediction example with evidential formulation - zoomed detail



(a) Projection LiDAR



(b) Camera image



(c) Ground truth



(d) Prediction DM_1



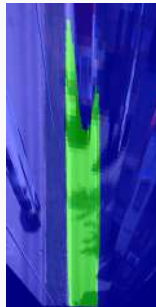
(e) Prediction DM_2



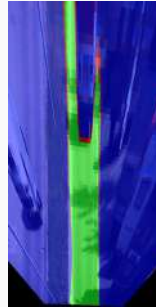
Road detection results



(a) LiDAR and camera perspective view



(b) BEV Probabilistic: Lite-CF Baseline

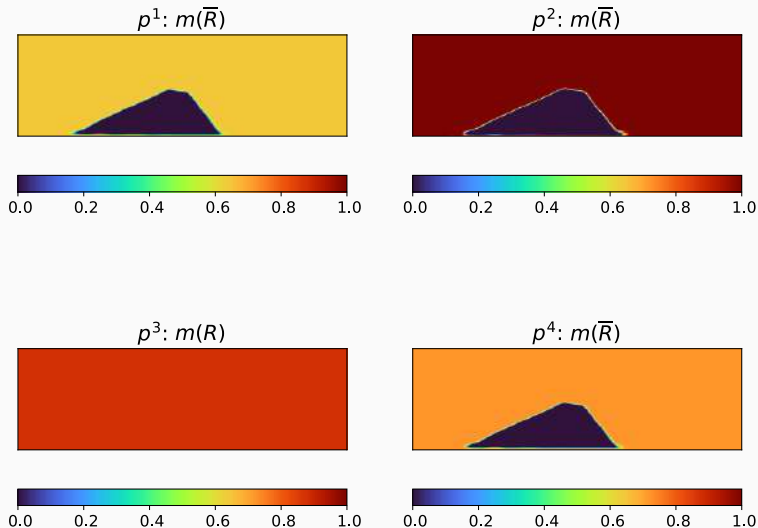


(c) BEV Evidential Baseline DM_2

Model Arch.	# Params	MaxF	PRE	REC	ER	FPS
Baseline	2,737,213	95.50 ± 0.52	95.57 ± 0.69	95.45 ± 0.74	1.61 ± 0.21	35
DM_1	2,737,066	96.91 ± 0.36	96.74 ± 0.56	97.09 ± 0.71	1.11 ± 0.14	33
DM_2	2,737,066	–	–	–	0.81 ± 0.13	29

✓ Proposed **evidential** formulation (DS Rule) **improves MaxF** and **decreases the error rate**.

Conflict management: prototypes visualizations



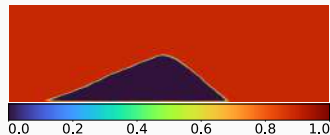
- **Three prototypes with reliable evidence**
→ \bar{R} assigned, where not-road is expected
- **The evidence of p^3 contradicts the others**
→ \bar{R} labelled everywhere.



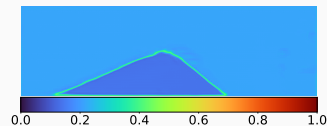
Conflict: before and after rectification



(a) Camera image



(b) Conflict between prototypes



(c) After rectification $\delta = 1$

Pixel	DM ₂ decision (d_{BI})	Conflict K	
		Before rect.	After rect.
1 (Not-road)	Not-road	0.89	0.20
2 (Road)	Road	0	0.17

Step 1: Distance

$$d^i = \|x - p^i\|$$

Step 2: Construct BBAs

$$m^i(\{\theta_j\}) = \alpha^i u_j^i \phi^i(d^i)$$

$$\phi^i(d^i) = \exp(-\gamma^i (d^i)^2), \gamma^i = (\eta^i)^2 + \delta$$

Step 3: BBA Fusion

$$DS: (m_1 \oplus m_2)(A)$$



Conflict rectification: road detection results

Rectification impact (4 prototypes, 10-fold CV)

Metric	MaxF	Precision	Recall	ER (%)
Before ($\delta = 0$)	96.92 \pm 0.40	96.68 \pm 0.46	97.17 \pm 0.67	1.11 \pm 0.16
After ($\delta = 1$)	97.15 \pm 0.32	96.93 \pm 0.21	97.38 \pm 0.62	1.03 \pm 0.14

Conflict rectification with δ :

- improves road detection performance
- less vacuous and less conflicting prototypes \rightarrow more informative
- ignorance representation

Conflict management: decision-making metrics

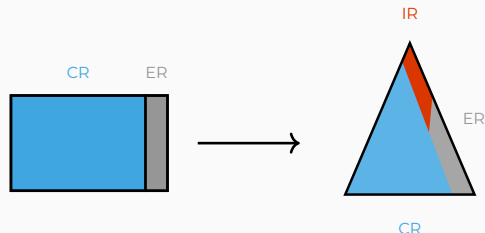


Need to quantify and express the ignorance class.

Extended confusion matrix

DM \ GT	\bar{R}	R	Θ
\bar{R}	TN	FP	IN
R	FN	TP	IP

Illustrative example (CR, ER, IR)



$$CR = \frac{(TP+TN) \times 100}{\text{total}}; \quad ER = \frac{(FP+FN) \times 100}{\text{total}}; \quad IR = \frac{(IP+IN) \times 100}{\text{total}}$$

where $CR + ER + IR = 100\%$

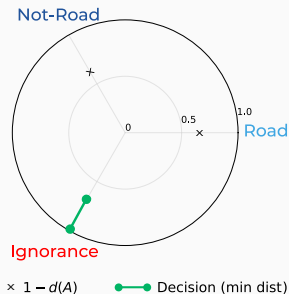


Conflict management: decision-making example

Illustrative example: Road, Not-Road, Ignorance (R, \bar{R}, Θ) $\rightarrow m_{DS} = [0.47, 0.43, 0.09]$

Belief-interval distance [J. Dezert et al., 2016]

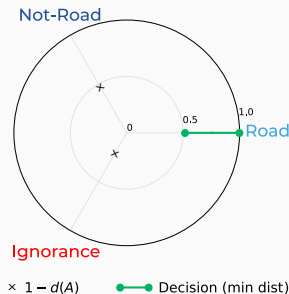
$$d_{BI} = [0.33, 0.37, \mathbf{0.32}]$$



\rightarrow decide **Ignorance**

Jousselme's distance [Jousselme et al., 2001]

$$d_J = [\mathbf{0.48}, 0.52, 0.78]$$



\rightarrow decide **Road**

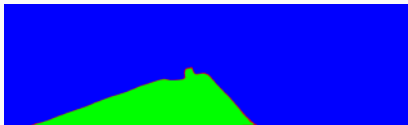
Results with distance based methods



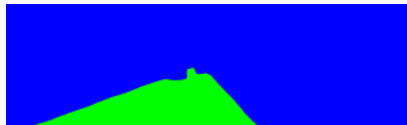
(a) Camera image



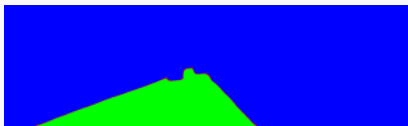
(b) Ground truth mask



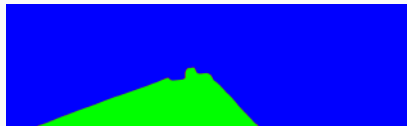
(c) Belief-interval d_{BI} , $\delta = 0$



(d) Jousselme, d_J , $\delta = 0$



(e) Belief-interval, $\delta = 1$



(f) Jousselme, d_J , $\delta = 1$

✓ **Before:** Ignorance at boundaries \Rightarrow **After:** Increased IR, improved alignment

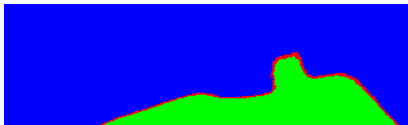
Results with distance based methods - zoomed detail



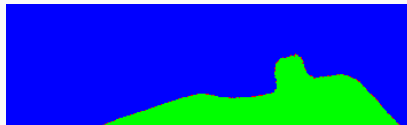
(a) Camera image



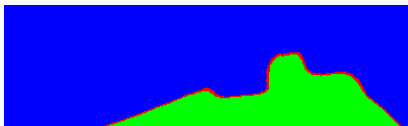
(b) Ground truth mask



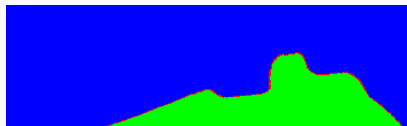
(c) Belief-interval $d_{BI}, \delta = 0$



(d) Jousselme, $d_J, \delta = 0$



(e) Belief-interval, $\delta = 1$

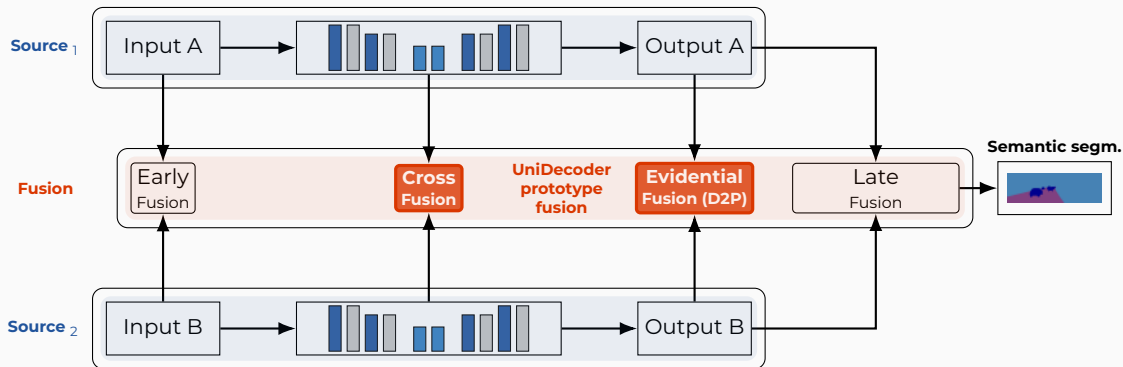


(f) Jousselme, $d_J, \delta = 1$

✓ **Before:** Ignorance at boundaries ⇒ **After:** Increased IR, improved alignment



Extension to multi-class segmentation



Semantic segmentation with 3 classes (scalability), → KITTI semantic:

- (R, V, B) (**R**oad, **V**ehicle, **B**ackground)
- (R, V, B, Θ) - total ignorance
- $(R, V, B, R \cup V, R \cup B, V \cup B)$ - partial ignorance

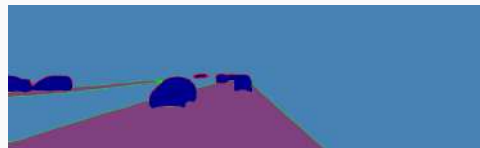
Multi-class segmentation with ignorance - zoomed detail



(a) Ground truth mask



(b) Total ignorance (belief-interval)



(c) Partial ignorance (belief-interval)

Ignorance distribution

Total ignorance: **939 pixels (0.20%)**

Partial ignorance: **3,406 pixels (0.73%)**

Multi-class segmentation with ignorance - zoomed detail



(a) Ground truth mask



(b) Total ignorance (belief-interval)



(c) Partial ignorance (belief-interval)

Ignorance distribution

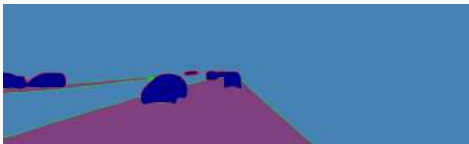
Total ignorance: **939 pixels (0.20%)**

Partial ignorance: **3,406 pixels (0.73%)**

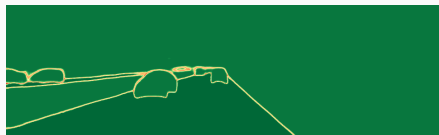
Multi-class segmentation results - quality indicator

IoU metric, probabilistic vs evidential

Model	Mean IoU	Road	Vehicle	Background
Lite-CF (Prob.)	0.9238	0.9271	0.8712	0.9732
Lite-CF-Ev1	0.9271	0.9316	0.8745	0.9751



(a) Prediction with partial ignorance



(b) Quality indicator $q_{(.)}$ per pixel

The **quality indicator** shows that **confidence** in decisions is **weaker at boundaries**



Conclusions on evidential deep neural networks

Evidential deep neural networks for AV: road detection

- **Uncertainty** representation (**D2P**)
- **Improved** road **detection**
- **Reliable prototype evidence** due to conflict management
- Scalable for segmentation tasks, **extension to multi-class**
- **Decision-making** to explicit ignorance handling

D-V. Giurgi et al., Conflict Management in a Distance to Prototype-Based Evidential Neural Network, **IJAR 2025**

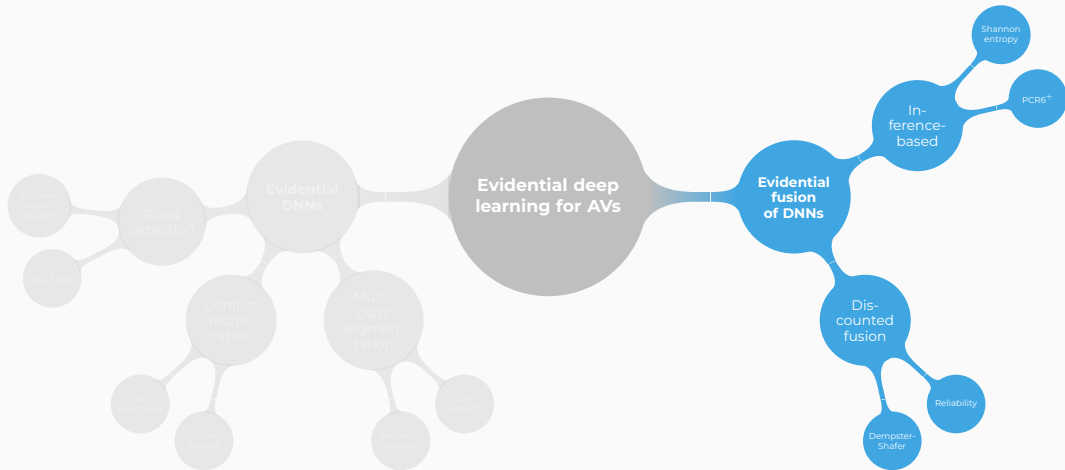
M. N. Geletu*, **D-V. Giurgi*** et al., Conflict Management in a Distance to Prototype-Based Evidential Deep Learning, **BELIEF 2024**

D-V. Giurgi et al., Decision Based on Belief Interval for Multi-class Obstacle Perception of Self-driving Cars, **DSmT, Vol.5, 2023**.

M. N. Geletu*, **D-V. Giurgi***, et al., Evidential Deep-Learning-Based Multi-Modal Environment Perception for IVs, **IV 2023**



Evidential fusion of DNNs for multi-class segmentation



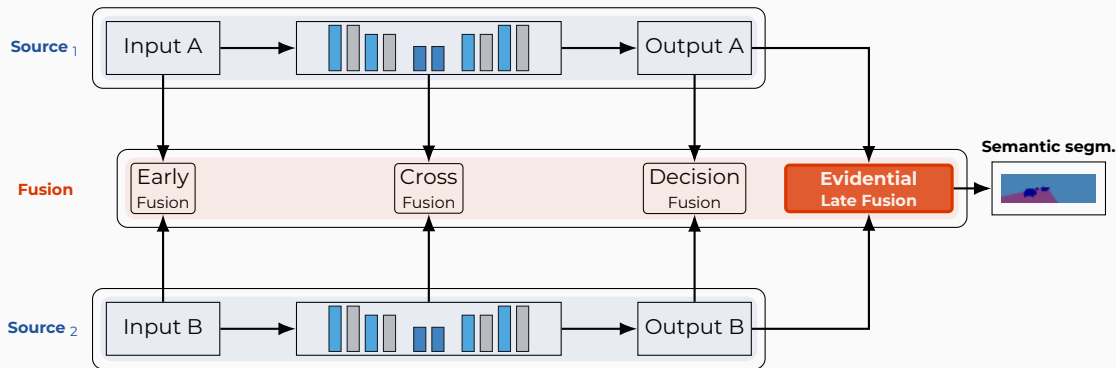
Second main research direction

Inference-based late fusion: PCR6⁺ and Shannon entropy weighting

Evidential late fusion: DS rule and SPOTIS (SPOTIS - table preference ordering towards ideal solution) → reliability discounting



Evidential late fusion of DNNs



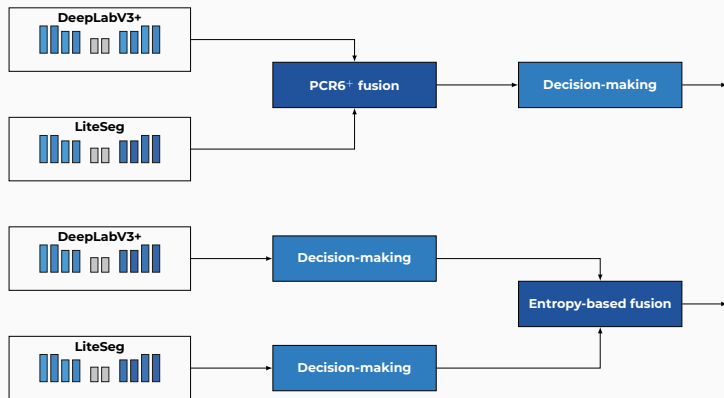
Semantic segmentation:

- Two DNNs: **DeepLabV3+** and **LiteSeg**;
- KITTI semantic, 3 cls.: **Road (R)**, **Vehicle (V)**, **Background (B)**.



Architecture for the two approaches : PCR6⁺ and Shannon entropy

Two evidential late-fusion strategies for DeepLabV3+ and LiteSeg



Motivation:

- PCR6⁺ **redistributes** conflicting evidence proportionally to the sources involved in each conflict;
- Entropy fusion **weights** model outputs according to their uncertainty. [D-V. Giorgi et al., 2024].

Inference-based fusion results: worst case



(a) Camera



(b) Ground truth

Inference-based fusion results: worst case



(a) Camera



(c) LiteSeg



(b) Ground truth



(d) DeepLabV3+



Inference-based fusion results: worst case



(a) Camera



(b) Ground truth



(c) LiteSeg



(d) DeepLabV3+



(e) Shannon fusion



(f) PCR6⁺ fusion

Inference-based fusion results: worst case - zoomed detail



(a) Camera



(b) Ground truth



Inference-based fusion results: worst case - zoomed detail



(a) Camera



(b) Ground truth



(c) LiteSeg



(d) DeepLabV3+



Inference-based fusion results: worst case - zoomed detail



(a) Camera



(b) Ground truth



(c) LiteSeg



(d) DeepLabV3+



(e) Shannon fusion



(f) PCR6+ fusion



Quantitative results

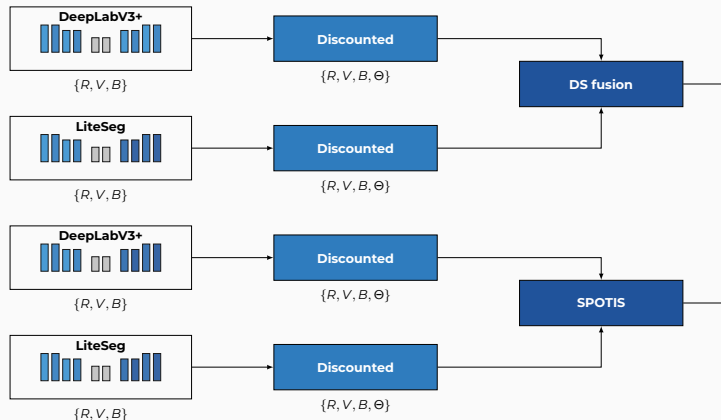
Model	Road	Vehicle	Background	Mean IoU
LiteSeg	0.9547 ± 0.0140	0.9126 ± 0.0227	0.9815 ± 0.0077	0.9496
DeepLabV3+	0.9500 ± 0.0154	0.8959 ± 0.0188	0.9794 ± 0.0085	0.9418
Fusion via Shannon entropy	0.9581 ± 0.0148	0.9136 ± 0.0192	0.9825 ± 0.0081	0.9514
Fusion via PCR6⁺	0.9581 ± 0.0148	0.9138 ± 0.0190	0.9825 ± 0.0080	0.9515

✓ Both PCR6⁺ and Shannon entropy yield a small consistent improvement in the Mean IoU
10-fold cross-validation

Discounting fusion: DS and imprecise SPOTIS

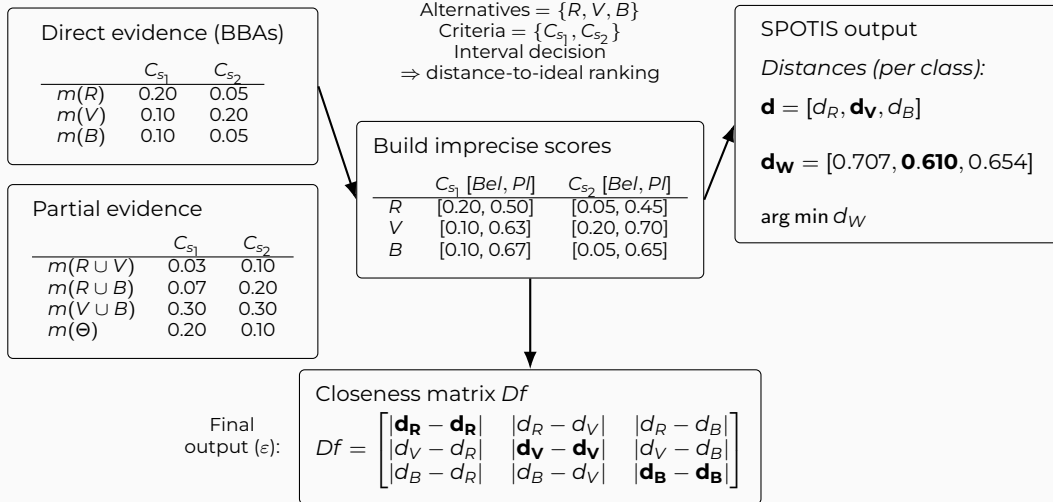


Two evidential late-fusion strategies for DeepLabV3+ and LiteSeg





Imprecise SPOTIS - workflow example



Masses \rightarrow intervals $[Bel, Pl] \rightarrow$ SPOTIS distances \mathbf{d} (one per class), **simple to compute**.



SPOTIS and DS fusion: Fold-10 results

Mean IoU with uncertainty-aware fusion (discounted models)

Model	Road	Vehicle	Background	Mean IoU
LiteSeg	0.9680	0.9343	0.9874	0.9632
DeepLabV3+	0.9696	0.9195	0.9874	0.9589
SPOTIS	0.9728	0.9378	0.9888	0.9665
DS Rule	0.9735	0.9374	0.9890	0.9666

Key idea: DS and SPOTIS fusion → consistent IoU gain over LiteSeg/DeepLabV3+
→ predictions and expressing uncertainty.



Imprecise SPOTIS: visual results

Threshold $\epsilon = 0.05$. Example, if $|d_R - d_V| < \epsilon \rightarrow R \cup V$



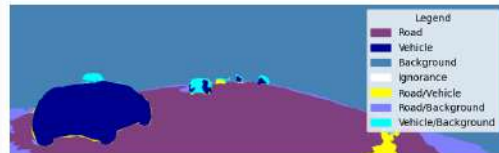
(a) Best case SPOTIS, only singletons



(b) Worst case SPOTIS, only singletons



(c) Best case SPOTIS, all possible solutions



(d) Worst case SPOTIS, all possible solutions



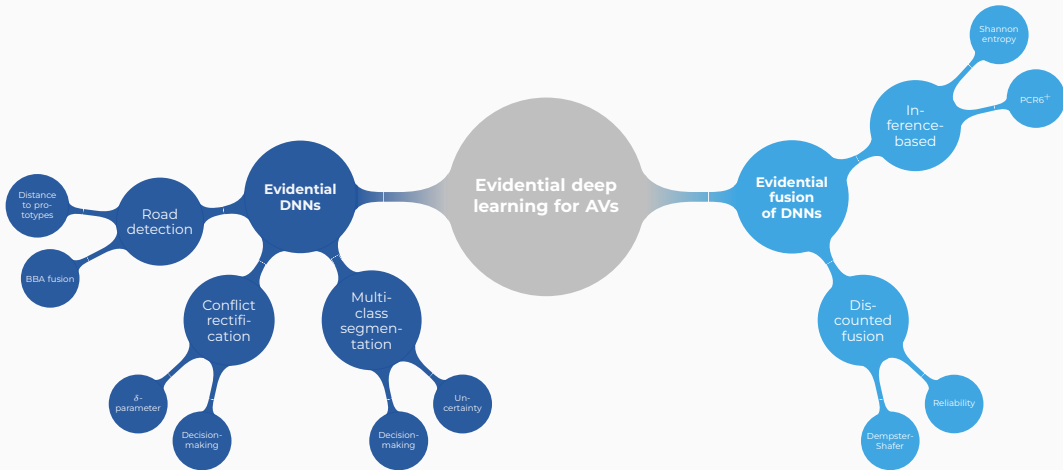
Conclusion on evidential fusion of DNNs

Evidential fusion of deep neural networks for semantic segmentation

- **Late fusion**: DeepLabV3+ and LiteSeg combined via evidential reasoning;
- **Fusion**: Inference-based (Shannon, PCR6+); Discounted fusion (SPOTIS, DS rule);
- **Discounting** information as a reliability factor;
- Fast **computation** alternatives for fusion and decision-making.



General conclusions



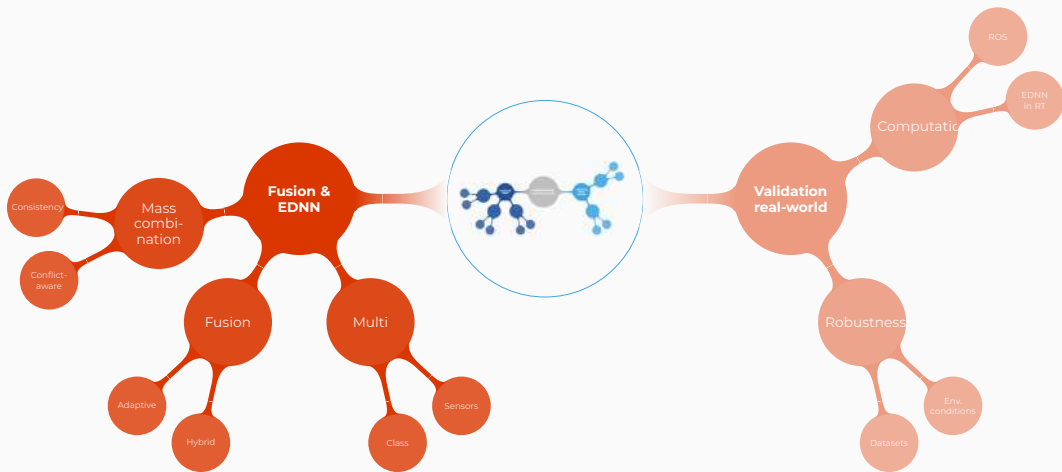
Research directions and their contributions

Evidential deep neural networks for autonomous vehicles

Evidential fusion of deep neural networks for multi-class segmentation



Future challenges



Perspectives

EDNN: BBA (consistency, conflict-aware), fusion (hybrid, adaptive), multi-sensors (radar) or multi-class

Real-time world: computation (EDNN in RT, ROS), robustness (datasets, environmental conditions)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!




Evidential deep neural networks: application in semantic analysis for autonomous vehicles

PhD Thesis Defence, February 10, 2026

Presented by

Dănuț-Vasile GIURGI

Disseminations

-  **1** international journal publication (IJAR)
-  **1** book chapter contribution (DSmT Book Vol. 5, 2023)
-  **8** conferences (**5** international, **3** national)