Guest Editorial Special Issue on Adversarial Learning in Computational Intelligence

I. Introduction

ADVERSARIAL learning has attracted tremendous attention in the community of machine learning over the past few years. It normally integrates two components that contest with each other in a two-player zero-sum game. Since its birth in 2014, adversarial learning has been widely applied to not only the generation of realistic images, but also many other research topics, such as data augmentation, domain adaptation, and adversarial attack, often leading to appealing performance. However, we have just witnessed the early rise of this technique, and still confront many challenges, for example, the mode collapse problem, and the interpretability of its results and failures. Computational Intelligence (CI) technologies are expected to provide efficient solutions to deal with the raised challenges. Moreover, most of the previous adversarial-learning studies are largely limited in addressing static images or feature vectors. It still remains largely an open question of how adversarial learning performs for other complex and temporally variational signals or modalities, such as speech and text.

This special issue aims to capture the most recent advances of adversarial learning from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Moreover, it attempts to present its novel applications to other domains beyond image generation. Following a rigorous peer-review process, seven papers out of 20 received submissions have been accepted for inclusion in this special issue. The topics of these papers range from computer vision, natural language processing, and speech processing to cyber networks. Specifically, the special issue is organized as follows.

In the first paper, "Improving Adversarial Neural Machine Translation for Morphologically Rich Language", Mi, Xie and Zhang utilize generative adversarial networks (GANs) to improve the quality of translated language in neural machine translation (NMT). For NMT, when training the discriminator of a GAN, the conventional methods concatenate the word embeddings of two languages as input, while considering only one reference for the translated text. These procedures, however, are not reasonable in morphologically rich languages. To this end, the authors extend these methods by exploiting morphological word embedding as inputs of the discriminator of GAN, and using multiple reference translations instead of a single one. This method significantly improves the NMT performance on eight NMT tasks.

The next paper "Hardening Random Forest Cyber Detectors Against Adversarial Attacks" by Apruzzese, Andreolini, Colajanni and Marchetti, improves the model training strategy to enhance the model robustness in the context of a cyber attack. Conventionally, the machine learning-based cyber detectors are vulnerable to the targeted adversarial attacks, which partially owns to the rigid classification produced by hard class labels of training samples. To solve this issue, the authors introduce some degree of flexibility and uncertainty in the training process by using probability labels, which allows the algorithm to capture additional information between classes such as similarity and reduces the weakness of adversarial attack.

In the third paper "Static2Dynamic: Video Inference from a Deep Glimpse", Yeh, Liu, Chiu and Wang utilize GANs to improve the quality of synthesized videos in video inference. The video inference aims to infer a sequence from non-consecutive frames (images). For this purpose, the authors design a novel GAN structure, namely Stochastic and Recurrent Conditional GAN. Especially, the generator component contains an image encoder and a recurrent neural network (RNN) based temporal encoder to obtain the prior distribution of the given images. The outputs the encoders are then fed into another RNN-based temporal decoder and an image decoder to recover the original video sequence. The capability of this model is also shown in solving other video generation tasks, such as video interpolations and video predictions.

The fourth paper entitled "A System-Driven Taxonomy of Attacks and Defenses in Adversarial Machine Learning" by Sadeghi, Banerjee and Gupta, provides a comprehensive adversarial attack and defense survey, to help the researchers from the CI community select and design more robust machine learning model. This survey contributes to building a fine-grained system-driven taxonomy to specify adversarial system models in an unambiguous manner.

The paper "Unsupervised Representation Disentanglement using Cross Domain Features and Adversarial Learning in Variational Autoencoder based Voice Conversion", Huang, Luo, Hwang, Lo, Peng, Tsao and Wang exploit both the advantages of GAN and Domain adversarial training (DAT) for voice conversion (VC), where one of the major issues is how to disentangle the speech content and speaker-related information. In this paper, the authors present an extended cross-domain variational autoencoder VC framework, in which a GAN is used to approximate the distribution of real speech signals better, and DAT is applied to the latent code as an explicit constraint

to eliminate speaker-dependent factors and retain the speech content.

DAT has shown promising performance in mitigating the domain mismatch, whereas it cannot guarantee that the learned representation spaces from different domains are class-wise aligned. In the paper "Learning Class-aligned and Generalized Domain-invariant Representations for Speech Emotion Recognition", Xiao, Zhao and Li propose a class-aligned DAT, by adding a limited amount of annotated samples from different domains for supervised classification. This algorithm shows to be effective by an empirical evaluation in speech emotion recognition.

Last but not least, Chaturvedi and Garain in their paper "Attacking VQA Systems via Adversarial Background Noise" investigate adversarial attacks for visual question answering systems by only modifying the background pixels. It visualizes how an attention mechanism can be distracted by noise, and what is the difference of the disturbing noise for distinct models.

II. Conclusion

From this review, one can see that the special issue generally achieved its goal of capturing a snapshot of cutting-edge algorithms and applications of adversarial learning in a variety of domains. Particularly, the first and third articles focus on designing and implementing novel GAN structures and corresponding training strategies; the six article attempts to improve the classic DAT algorithms by taking limited supervised information into account; the fourth article coordinates GAN with DAT to utmost explore the advantage of adversarial learning; and the second, fourth, and seventh articles investigate or review the advanced adversarial attacks and defense strategies. Applications are well represented in contributions to this special issue, comprising the applications for NMT, cyber security, video inference, speech emotion recognition, voice conversion, and VQA. The data in most of these applications are in sequence, which is complex and dynamic than static images. Because of these high-quality contributions and their interesting findings, we foresee that this special issue will facilitate the future research and development work of adversarial learning in CI.

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