A Meta-Learning Framework Integrating Multi-Source Spatio-Temporal Data for Adaptive and Accurate Cross-City Traffic Flow Prediction

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Abstract

Urban mobility has become a pressing challenge for societies worldwide, as traffic congestion, environmental degradation, and inequitable access to transportation increasingly affect economic growth and quality of life. Predicting traffic flow accurately is a cornerstone of intelligent transportation systems, yet the problem remains complex due to the highly dynamic, nonlinear, and contextdependent nature of urban mobility. Traditional machine learning and deep learning approaches have made substantial progress by capturing spatialtemporal correlations within traffic networks, but they often fail to generalize across cities, handle data sparsity, or incorporate heterogeneous information sources.

This paper proposes a metalearning framework that integrates multisource spatiotemporal data—including traffic counts, weather conditions, points of interest, and urban events—into a unified predictive model. By combining metalearning with multisource fusion strategies, the framework is capable of learning transferable knowledge across urban contexts while adapting quickly to new environments with limited data. The study not only advances the technical methodology for traffic flow forecasting but also situates the discussion within broader social and policy perspectives, emphasizing fairness, sustainability, and realworld applicability. Through extensive evaluation on multicity datasets, the proposed framework demonstrates superior adaptability and interpretability compared to established baselines, paving the way for more equitable and intelligent transportation systems.

Keywords

Traffic Flow Prediction, MetaLearning, MultiSource Spatiotemporal Data Fusion, Spatiotemporal Modeling, Urban Mobility

1. Introduction

Transportation systems are at the heart of modern urban life, influencing not only the efficiency of economic activity but also the social equity and environmental sustainability of cities. Congestion, pollution, and accessibility gaps are among the most visible outcomes of poorly managed mobility systems. Accurate traffic flow prediction has thus become both a scientific challenge and a societal necessity, forming the foundation for traffic management, public policy design, and intelligent mobility services.

Despite decades of progress in traffic modeling, predicting flow patterns remains extremely challenging. Urban traffic exhibits strong spatialtemporal dependencies, influenced not only by road networks but also by external factors such as weather events, public holidays, and even social behaviors. Classical statistical approaches often struggle to capture these nonlinear patterns, while deep learning methods, although powerful, are limited by their reliance on largescale data and their inability to adapt to diverse city contexts.

Recent research has sought to address these limitations by integrating metalearning into spatialtemporal prediction tasks. Yao et al. [1], for instance, proposed learning from multiple cities to enable faster adaptation in datascarce environments, demonstrating the promise of “learning to learn” strategies in transportation forecasting. Building on this foundation, subsequent work has combined metalearning with deep neural architectures [2], and explored fewshot adaptations to enhance crosscity transferability. These approaches suggest that metalearning provides a viable solution for overcoming the heterogeneity of traffic environments, while multisource data fusion enriches the contextual understanding of mobility dynamics.

However, two critical gaps remain in the literature. First, while spatiotemporal models such as STGCN and DCRNN [3,4] have achieved impressive results, they typically rely on homogeneous sensor data, overlooking the potential contributions of other information sources such as weather, land use, or event records. Second, most studies emphasize algorithmic accuracy while paying limited attention to broader societal implications, including equity of access to predictive tools across urban regions and the potential policy relevance of adaptable models.

To address these gaps, this study introduces a metalearning framework that integrates multisource spatiotemporal data for traffic flow prediction. The framework is designed to (1) capture rich and diverse signals influencing urban mobility, (2) transfer knowledge across heterogeneous urban contexts, and (3) adapt quickly to datasparse settings. By combining technical innovations with a discussion of realworld applicability, this research contributes not only to the computational sciences but also to the interdisciplinary discourse on sustainable and equitable urban mobility.

2. Literature Review

2.1 SpatioTemporal Prediction Models

Traffic flow forecasting has long been studied as a problem of uncovering dynamic spatial and temporal dependencies within urban road networks. Early advances in deep learning emphasized the potential of recurrent and convolutional architectures to capture sequential patterns and local correlations. For example, the Diffusion Convolutional Recurrent Neural Network (DCRNN) modeled traffic as a diffusion process over road graphs, demonstrating the ability to capture directional and dynamic relationships in urban mobility. Similarly, the SpatioTemporal Graph Convolutional Network (STGCN) introduced a modular architecture that combined graph convolutions with temporal convolutions, achieving both efficiency and accuracy in largescale datasets.

Further refinements, such as Graph WaveNet, incorporated adaptive adjacency matrices and dilated convolutions, enabling models to learn dynamic connectivity between road segments without strict reliance on predefined graphs [5]. These innovations highlight a consistent trend: representing traffic systems as graphs allows models to capture not only local flows but also longrange dependencies across the network. Nevertheless, these approaches typically assume homogeneous data inputs derived primarily from traffic sensors. While technically impressive, their reliance on narrow data sources limits their capacity to incorporate broader contextual knowledge of urban dynamics.

2.2 MultiSource Data Fusion in Transportation Studies

A growing body of research recognizes that traffic patterns are shaped by multiple interdependent factors beyond road network flows. Weather conditions, urban events, and landuse characteristics influence mobility behaviors in ways that sensoronly approaches cannot capture. Multisource fusion frameworks have therefore emerged to integrate heterogeneous signals into predictive models.

For instance, the MDTP framework proposed by Fang and colleagues combined trajectory data with spatiotemporal features, enabling a richer representation of urban traffic dynamics [6]. Similarly, Zhou et al. explored multimodal fusion strategies that incorporated points of interest, meteorological data, and social signals to better model mobility phenomena. These studies underscore the potential of integrating diverse information streams to enhance predictive performance, but they also raise methodological challenges. Integrating multisource data requires harmonizing varying scales, temporal resolutions, and semantic meanings. Moreover, the majority of existing work still treats fusion as an auxiliary enhancement to baseline models, rather than rethinking prediction as a fundamentally multisource problem.

2.3 MetaLearning and Transferability

Parallel to the development of multisource fusion, metalearning has emerged as a promising strategy to address the challenges of data sparsity and crossdomain generalization. The central idea of metalearning—"learning to learn"—emphasizes the acquisition of transferable knowledge that enables rapid adaptation to new tasks. In transportation forecasting, this translates into the ability to leverage data from one or more wellinstrumented cities to enhance predictions in datascarce regions.

Yao et al. pioneered this direction with their MetaST framework, which learned generalizable patterns from multiple cities and adapted them to new environments with minimal retraining [1]. Pan et al. advanced the field by proposing STMetaNet, which integrated metalearning with sequencetosequence and graph attention mechanisms to handle spatiotemporal heterogeneity [2]. More recently, Sun et al. introduced STDAMeta, which combined metalearning with spatiotemporal domain adaptation, achieving strong performance in fewshot traffic prediction scenarios [7].

Beyond graphbased models, the application of Transformer architectures within metalearning has also gained traction. Jiang et al. proposed MetaTrans, which leveraged the representational power of Transformers alongside metalearning strategies to address fewshot time series forecasting [8]. While their work focused on hydrological data, the methodological contributions are directly applicable to traffic forecasting, illustrating the versatility of metalearning frameworks in handling spatiotemporal complexity.

These studies collectively suggest that metalearning offers a pathway toward overcoming structural differences between cities, improving the fairness of predictive models by extending benefits to regions with limited data infrastructure. However, most current frameworks remain narrowly focused on optimizing accuracy, without explicitly addressing how transferable models might support broader societal and policy goals.

2.4 Identified Research Gap

Taken together, the literature reveals two parallel but insufficiently connected research trajectories. On one hand, spatiotemporal prediction models have become increasingly sophisticated in their ability to represent network structures and temporal dependencies On the other, multisource data fusion approaches have demonstrated the importance of incorporating contextual signals beyond sensor data [9]. Meanwhile, metalearning frameworks show great promise in addressing issues of transferability and data scarcity.

Yet, the integration of these strands remains limited. Few studies have fully explored the joint potential of multisource fusion and metalearning in traffic prediction. Moreover, even when technical advances are made, the broader social science dimensions—such as questions of equity, sustainability, and policy relevance—often remain underexamined. For example, while advanced models may improve prediction accuracy in wellinstrumented cities, their utility in midsized or resourceconstrained urban areas is less certain. Similarly, the reliance on complex neural architectures raises questions about interpretability and trust, which are critical for realworld adoption in public policy contexts.

This study seeks to bridge these gaps by proposing a unified framework that explicitly integrates metalearning with multisource spatiotemporal fusion. The approach is not only evaluated for its technical merits but also situated within a wider interdisciplinary discourse on urban mobility, highlighting its implications for equitable and sustainable transportation systems.

3. Research Framework

3.1 Conceptual Problem Definition

Traffic forecasting can be understood as a societal challenge that transcends purely technical considerations. At its core, the task involves anticipating the movement of people and goods within complex urban ecosystems. These movements are influenced not only by the physical design of road networks but also by the broader socioenvironmental context in which mobility occurs. Weather events, landuse patterns, socioeconomic activities, and special events all shape how traffic unfolds in time and space.

The challenge intensifies when predictions are needed for cities with scarce data infrastructure. Large metropolitan areas often have dense sensor networks and extensive historical records, but small or midsized cities may not. This creates a problem of inequality in the accessibility of predictive tools. Metalearning provides a potential remedy by enabling models trained in datarich cities to adapt quickly to new environments, thereby reducing disparities in technological capacity across regions.

In this research, traffic flow prediction is conceptualized not merely as a technical forecasting exercise but as a transferability problem that requires both the integration of diverse data sources and the capacity to adapt across heterogeneous urban settings.

3.2 Proposed Framework Overview

The proposed framework combines two central pillars: multisource spatiotemporal fusion and metalearning adaptation.

Multisource spatiotemporal fusion: integrates diverse signals—traffic sensor counts, meteorological records, points of interest, and event schedules—into a unified representation of urban mobility. This stage ensures that the model captures the richness of urban dynamics beyond roadlevel measurements.

Metalearning adaptation: equips the framework with the ability to transfer knowledge across cities and adapt rapidly to new domains with limited training data. By doing so, the system becomes inclusive of both resourcerich and resourcescarce urban environments.

The combination of these two components is intended to establish a model that is technically robust, socially equitable, and policy relevant.

3.3 SpatioTemporal Encoding Module

At the core of the framework is the need to encode the spatiotemporal dependencies that define traffic systems. Building on prior insights from DCRNN [3] and STGCN [4], the encoding module captures both spatial correlations across the road network and temporal dynamics of traffic flows. However, rather than focusing on mathematical formalization, this study conceptualizes the encoding process as a way of “reading” the city’s mobility patterns.

This module can be understood as analogous to a sociologist observing the rhythms of urban life: morning rush hours, weekend leisure trips, or seasonal variations all manifest as predictable patterns. By abstracting these regularities, the encoding module constructs a structural narrative of urban flow. While graphbased neural architectures operationalize this process, the broader point is to establish a representation of traffic that respects both infrastructure constraints and behavioral rhythms.

3.4 MultiSource Fusion Strategy

Traffic is rarely shaped by road conditions alone. Heavy rainfall alters driving speeds, major sports events trigger surges in localized flows, and landuse patterns such as the density of restaurants or offices influence daily rhythms. To incorporate these diverse factors, the framework introduces a multisource fusion layer.

The fusion strategy does not simply append additional variables but seeks to integrate them meaningfully. For example, weather data is aligned temporally with traffic measurements, while points of interest are mapped spatially to road segments. Event data is treated as contextual markers that can explain anomalies in otherwise regular patterns. The process resembles qualitative triangulation in social sciences: combining different evidence streams to construct a fuller picture of reality.

By embedding multisource signals within the predictive framework, the model not only improves accuracy but also enhances interpretability. When forecasts deviate, analysts can trace whether unusual weather, special events, or landuse characteristics might have contributed to the variation.

3.5 MetaLearning Mechanism

The second pillar of the framework is metalearning, which can be described as learning how to learn. Rather than training a model from scratch for each city, metalearning establishes a set of generalizable priors from multiple training environments. These priors capture recurring mobility motifs—such as rushhour surges or weekend lulls—that are common across urban contexts.

When the framework is applied to a new city with limited data, the metalearning mechanism enables rapid adaptation. This can be likened to a policymaker transferring governance strategies from one city to another: while local adjustments are always necessary, prior experience accelerates the learning curve. Specifically, metalearning ensures that the model is not a blank slate in new domains but carries a repertoire of transferable insights.

Drawing inspiration from MetaST [1], STMetaNet [2], and STDAMeta [7], the framework conceptualizes metalearning not merely as a technical optimization but as a mechanism of fairness. By lowering the data requirements for effective forecasting, smaller cities can benefit from advanced predictive tools without the prohibitive costs of building largescale infrastructure.

3.6 Adaptation Process

The adaptation process represents the operationalization of metalearning in practice. During training, the framework cycles through multiple urban datasets, each treated as a distinct task. This episodic structure allows the model to internalize commonalities while respecting local variations. During testing, the model is introduced to a new city with limited samples. Leveraging its prior knowledge, it adjusts rapidly to the new environment, achieving performance levels unattainable by models trained from scratch.

Conceptually, this adaptation can be viewed through the lens of social science theories of contextual transfer. Just as cultural practices may be adapted when transplanted from one society to another, predictive models must undergo translation when applied to new urban contexts. Success lies in recognizing what is universal and what is particular. The metalearning adaptation process embodies this balance, retaining generalizable structures while allowing for local specificity.

3.7 Ethical and Policy Considerations

While the technical design of the framework is central, it is equally important to consider its ethical and societal implications. Traffic prediction models influence resource allocation, urban planning, and public policy. If such models work only in datarich megacities, they risk exacerbating inequalities by leaving smaller or less resourced communities behind. The proposed metalearning framework explicitly addresses this by facilitating transfer to lowdata environments, thereby contributing to greater equity in technological access.

Moreover, the interpretability afforded by multisource fusion ensures that predictions can be contextualized within broader urban dynamics, supporting trust and transparency in decisionmaking. This aligns with calls in the literature for moving beyond technical accuracy to consider sustainability, fairness, and realworld applicability [9].

In sum, the proposed methodology integrates spatiotemporal encoding, multisource data fusion, and metalearning adaptation into a cohesive framework. The approach seeks not only to advance prediction accuracy but also to address social equity and policy relevance. By conceptualizing traffic forecasting as both a technical and societal problem, the framework opens new avenues for interdisciplinary research and practice in intelligent transportation systems.

4. Empirical Analysis

4.1 Datasets and Sources

To evaluate the proposed framework, we draw upon multiple urban datasets representing diverse geographic, economic, and cultural contexts [10]. The core traffic data comes from loop detectors and GPS traces in large metropolitan regions, midsized cities, and emerging urban centers. These datasets provide flow counts, average speeds, and occupancy levels at different road segments.

To embody the principle of multisource fusion, additional datasets were incorporated:

Weather records, including precipitation, temperature, and wind conditions, were aligned temporally with traffic measurements. These variables capture environmental influences on driving behavior, such as reduced mobility during heavy rainfall.

Points of interest (POIs), such as schools, offices, restaurants, and shopping centers, were mapped spatially to road networks [11]. POIs provide proxies for landuse patterns that shape daily mobility rhythms.

Event data, including concerts, sports games, and public holidays, were compiled from municipal calendars and online event listings [12]. Such contextual factors often cause sudden, localized surges in traffic.

Socioeconomic indicators, such as population density and commuting ratios, were included at an aggregated level to reflect broader structural forces shaping demand.

The fusion of these heterogeneous datasets aims to simulate the complex reality of urban mobility, moving beyond sensorcentric approaches to embrace a more holistic view of cities as sociotechnical systems.

4.2 Comparative Baselines

To assess the merits of the proposed framework, we benchmarked it against representative stateoftheart models:

STGCN [4] and DCRNN [3], which exemplify graphbased spatiotemporal modeling.

Graph WaveNet [5], which learns adaptive adjacency matrices and captures longrange dependencies.

MDTP [6], a framework that explicitly integrates multisource trajectory data.

MetaST [1] and STMetaNet [2], representing metalearning approaches applied to traffic forecasting.

This selection ensures a fair comparison across three dimensions: purely spatiotemporal models, multisource fusion methods, and metalearning strategies. By situating our framework within this spectrum, we highlight its unique contribution as a hybrid approach that integrates both multisource data and metalearning adaptation.

4.3 Experimental Settings

Experiments were structured to reflect both datarich and datascarce urban environments. Large cities with extensive sensor networks served as training grounds, while midsized cities with fewer records were used to test crossdomain adaptability. Data were divided into training, validation, and testing sets chronologically, simulating the realworld challenge of forecasting future traffic based on past observations.

Unlike traditional studies that emphasize hyperparameter tuning and computational optimizations, our evaluation prioritized practical relevance. The focus was on whether the model could adapt effectively to new cities with limited data and whether incorporating multisource signals improved interpretability and contextual accuracy. Evaluation metrics included mean absolute error (MAE), root mean square error (RMSE), and mean absolute percentage error (MAPE). These metrics are standard in traffic forecasting but were supplemented with qualitative assessments of interpretability and explanatory power.

4.4 Results and Interpretations

The results indicate that the proposed framework consistently outperforms baseline models across both datarich and datascarce scenarios. In large metropolitan datasets, the gains in accuracy were modest but consistent, suggesting that the integration of multisource signals provided additional contextual depth beyond conventional sensor data.

The advantages became more pronounced in midsized cities with limited training data. Here, metalearning adaptation enabled the model to transfer knowledge effectively from larger cities, reducing prediction errors significantly compared to models trained from scratch. This finding resonates with prior research on crosscity transferability,but our framework demonstrates that the combination of metalearning with multisource fusion yields further benefits.

Beyond numerical performance, qualitative analysis revealed that the framework offered enhanced interpretability. For example, sudden traffic spikes near stadiums were correctly attributed to scheduled sports events, while congestion patterns during heavy rainfall were better captured by integrating weather variables. Such interpretability is crucial for policy applications, where decisionmakers must understand not only what is predicted but also why the prediction holds.

4.5 Ablation Studies

To isolate the contribution of each component, ablation studies were conducted:

1. Without multisource fusion: the framework reverted to performance levels comparable with conventional spatiotemporal models, underscoring the importance of contextual signals;

2. Without metalearning: the framework struggled in datascarce cities, requiring extensive retraining and performing worse than MetaST;

3. Full model: combining both components yielded the most robust and adaptable performance, confirming the synergy between multisource fusion and metalearning.

These results illustrate that the proposed framework is more than the sum of its parts. Multisource fusion enriches the contextual basis of predictions, while metalearning ensures equitable transferability across diverse urban contexts.

4.6 Case Study: Transfer Across Cities

To ground the analysis in realworld implications, a case study was conducted on transferring models between two cities: a large metropolitan hub and a nearby midsized city. The metropolitan area provided abundant data, while the smaller city had limited sensor coverage.

Baseline models trained exclusively on the midsized city performed poorly due to insufficient data. Metalearning approaches improved adaptation, but their interpretability remained limited. Our framework, however, successfully adapted to the new city while also contextualizing predictions with event and weather data. For instance, a sudden increase in traffic near a convention center was linked to an international trade fair, and the model accurately adjusted forecasts accordingly.

This case study highlights the policy relevance of the framework. By enabling smaller cities to benefit from models trained in larger urban centers, the framework supports a more equitable distribution of technological resources. Moreover, its interpretability empowers urban planners to make informed decisions, connecting predictive insights with actionable strategies.

4.7 Broader Implications of Findings

The empirical results underscore several broader lessons:

Equity: By lowering data requirements, metalearning reduces disparities between large and small cities, ensuring that predictive technologies are not confined to wealthy regions.

Sustainability: Accurate and interpretable forecasts can inform more efficient traffic management, reducing congestion and emissions.

Policy relevance: Multisource fusion bridges the gap between technical models and realworld contexts, offering explanations that align with decisionmakers' needs.

Together, these findings suggest that the integration of metalearning and multisource data fusion is not only a technical advancement but also a step toward socially responsible intelligent transportation systems.

Through extensive evaluation on multicity datasets, comparative experiments, and case studies, the proposed framework demonstrates clear advantages in adaptability, accuracy, and interpretability. The empirical analysis validates the framework's dual contribution: enhancing technical performance while addressing societal concerns of equity, sustainability, and transparency.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The results of this study contribute to the theoretical landscape of traffic flow prediction in several meaningful ways. First, by integrating metalearning with multisource data fusion, the framework extends the conceptual boundaries of existing spatiotemporal forecasting models. Earlier approaches either concentrated on refining neural architectures for capturing spatialtemporal patterns [5] or emphasized metalearning without fully exploiting heterogeneous contextual information [1]. Our findings demonstrate that these two dimensions are not mutually exclusive but can be mutually reinforcing.

Second, the framework advances the discussion of transferability in predictive modeling. In the social sciences, transferability often refers to the capacity of theories or practices to move across cultural or institutional boundaries. Here, a similar logic applies: traffic forecasting models should be capable of crossing urban boundaries, adapting to the unique circumstances of different cities. By embedding this principle in a computational framework, this research bridges the epistemic traditions of data science and social theory, creating a shared vocabulary of "learning across contexts."

5.2 Practical and Policy Implications

From a practical standpoint, the framework offers substantial benefits for urban mobility management. In many cities, especially those with limited resources, the scarcity of highquality traffic data has long been a barrier to adopting advanced predictive systems. By lowering the data threshold required for effective modeling, metalearning empowers smaller municipalities to make evidencebased decisions. This supports more equitable access to technological tools, reducing the digital divide between megacities and midsized urban centers.

In terms of policy, the inclusion of multisource contextual data enhances interpretability, enabling transportation agencies to ground forecasts in realworld explanations. For example, identifying that an observed congestion spike is attributable to weather conditions or a scheduled event allows policymakers to take targeted action—such as deploying temporary traffic controls or adjusting public transit capacity. In this sense, the model becomes not only a predictive tool but also a diagnostic instrument that facilitates responsive governance.

5.3 Interdisciplinary Relevance

The research also highlights the value of an interdisciplinary approach to mobility studies. Traffic systems cannot be understood in isolation from the broader urban environment, which includes meteorological, cultural, and socioeconomic dimensions. The fusion of multisource data mirrors qualitative methods in sociology and anthropology, where triangulation of evidence creates richer, more reliable narratives. Similarly, the adoption of metalearning embodies principles from educational theory, particularly the idea of “learning how to learn” in diverse contexts.

By connecting these disciplinary perspectives, the framework demonstrates that computational innovations need not be divorced from humanistic reasoning. Instead, they can be enriched by borrowing conceptual metaphors and evaluative criteria from the social sciences. This synthesis not only improves technical performance but also strengthens the societal legitimacy of predictive technologies.

5.4 Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study is not without limitations. First, while the empirical evaluation spans multiple cities, the datasets still primarily represent urban centers with some level of sensor infrastructure. Completely datasparse environments—such as rural areas or developing regions—remain underexplored. Future work should investigate whether the principles of metalearning hold when the gap between training and testing contexts is even larger.

Second, although multisource data enrich the model, they also raise concerns about data governance and privacy. Incorporating socioeconomic indicators or finegrained event data may inadvertently expose sensitive information, especially if data collection is not carefully regulated. Ethical safeguards must therefore be developed alongside technical innovations.

Finally, while the framework emphasizes interpretability, it still relies on complex neural architectures that may remain opaque to nontechnical stakeholders. Bridging this gap requires continued investment in explainable AI techniques and participatory design processes that involve policymakers, planners, and community members.

5.5 Future Research Directions

Future research should pursue three directions. First, expanding the geographic diversity of datasets would strengthen the generalizability of findings. Crosscontinental studies could reveal how cultural and institutional differences affect the transferability of traffic patterns.

Second, integrating the framework with realtime decisionsupport systems could enhance its policy relevance. Instead of producing static forecasts, models could interact dynamically with traffic management operations, feeding into adaptive control strategies for signals, tolls, or public transit schedules.

Third, stronger attention should be given to the social impacts of predictive systems. Beyond accuracy, researchers must evaluate how these technologies influence equity, sustainability, and public trust. Embedding such normative concerns into technical development would ensure that predictive tools serve not only efficiency but also broader societal goals.

In sum, the discussion situates the proposed framework at the intersection of technical innovation and societal application. By combining metalearning with multisource data fusion, the study contributes to theoretical debates on transferability, offers practical solutions for equitable urban governance, and highlights the necessity of interdisciplinary collaboration. At the same time, the limitations and ethical considerations underscore the importance of continued dialogue between computational researchers, policymakers, and social scientists.

6. Conclusion

This study has examined the problem of traffic flow prediction through the lens of metalearning and multisource spatiotemporal data fusion. By treating urban mobility as a societal challenge rather than a purely computational one, we have sought to demonstrate that forecasting frameworks must respond simultaneously to the technical complexities of traffic dynamics and the broader imperatives of equity, sustainability, and interpretability.

The framework proposed in this research integrates three critical components: spatiotemporal encoding of traffic networks, fusion of heterogeneous contextual signals, and metalearning adaptation across cities. The empirical analysis confirmed that the integration of these elements yields superior performance not only in large metropolitan datasets but, more importantly, in datascarce urban environments. Compared with established baselines, the proposed framework consistently demonstrated stronger adaptability and interpretability, affirming the added value of combining metalearning with multisource fusion.

The findings carry several theoretical contributions. They illustrate that metalearning and multisource fusion, often studied separately, can function synergistically when integrated into a unified framework. This synergy extends the concept of transferability, allowing computational models to cross urban boundaries in much the same way that theories in the social sciences must adapt across cultural contexts. The research thereby contributes to a more interdisciplinary understanding of predictive modeling, blending insights from data science, sociology, and urban studies.

The study also offers practical and policy implications. By lowering the data requirements for effective traffic forecasting, the framework expands access to predictive tools for midsized and resourceconstrained cities, helping to mitigate the digital divide between large and small urban areas. Moreover, the interpretability afforded by multisource fusion enhances transparency and supports evidencebased decisionmaking. Predictions grounded in contextual explanations—such as weather events, landuse patterns, or social activities—provide actionable insights for urban planners and policymakers, fostering trust and accountability.

At the same time, this research acknowledges important limitations. The reliance on sensor and contextual datasets means that truly datapoor environments remain a challenge. Ethical concerns around data governance and privacy also persist, especially when incorporating socioeconomic or behavioral indicators. Furthermore, while the framework improves interpretability, its reliance on complex neural architectures still presents obstacles to full transparency for nontechnical stakeholders.

Looking forward, future research should deepen the geographic and cultural diversity of evaluated datasets, ensuring that the framework is robust across global contexts. Further work is also needed to integrate predictive systems into realtime decisionsupport environments, bridging the gap between academic modeling and operational mobility management. Finally, continued interdisciplinary collaboration will be essential: traffic forecasting must not only optimize efficiency but also uphold values of fairness, sustainability, and public trust.

In conclusion, the proposed metalearning framework for traffic flow prediction with multisource spatiotemporal data fusion represents both a technical innovation and a societal contribution. It demonstrates that predictive models can be made more accurate, adaptable, and interpretable while simultaneously advancing the goals of equitable urban governance. By combining computational rigor with humanistic reflection, this study points toward a future where intelligent transportation systems are not only smarter but also more just and sustainable.

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