

Unrolled graph neural networks for constrained optimization

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Outline

- ▶ Task: Constrained optimization with **Dual Ascent**(DA)
- ▶ Method: Unroll the dynamics of DA in **two coupled GNNS**
- ▶ Experiment: **Mixed-integer quadratic program**(MIQP)
- ▶ Conclusion: **Learnable unsupervised method**

Constrained optimization

- ▶ Consider a constrained problem that poses the task of minimizing a scalar objective function $f_0 : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ subject to m constraints, formulated as

$$P^*(\mathbf{z}) = \min_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n} f_0(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \quad \text{s.t.} \quad \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) \leq \mathbf{0}, \quad (1)$$

where $\mathbf{f} : \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m$ is a vector-valued function representing the problem constraints, and \mathbf{z} represents a **problem instance**.

- ▶ The Lagrangian function, $\mathcal{L} : \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}_+^m \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ is

$$\mathcal{L}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z}) = f_0(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}) + \boldsymbol{\lambda}^\top \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}; \mathbf{z}), \quad (2)$$

where $\boldsymbol{\lambda}$ contains the dual multipliers.

Dual ascent(DA)

- The dual problem is defined as

$$D^*(\mathbf{z}) = \max_{\boldsymbol{\lambda} \in \mathbb{R}_+^m} \min_{\mathbf{x}} \mathcal{L}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z}), \quad (3)$$

and the duality theory affirms that $D^*(\mathbf{z}) \leq P^*(\mathbf{z})$. Under this assumption, the Lagrangian has a saddle point $(\mathbf{x}^*, \boldsymbol{\lambda}^*)$, with \mathbf{x}^* and $\boldsymbol{\lambda}^*$ optimal for (1) and (3), respectively—**primal** and **dual** domain.

- The dual ascent (DA) algorithm retrieves the dual optimum $\boldsymbol{\lambda}^*$ through the iterations:

$$\mathbf{x}_l^*(\boldsymbol{\lambda}_l) \in \operatorname{argmin}_{\mathbf{x}} \mathcal{L}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}_l; \mathbf{z}), \quad (4)$$

$$\boldsymbol{\lambda}_{l+1} = [\boldsymbol{\lambda}_l + \eta \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_l^*, \mathbf{z})]_+, \quad (5)$$

where η is a step size, and the operator $[\cdot]_+$ denotes a projection onto \mathbb{R}_+^m .

- Lagrangian stationary point is attained by $\mathbf{x}^* \in \mathbf{x}^*(\boldsymbol{\lambda}^*)$.

Unrolled networks for Constrained optimization-Primal

- ▶ The primal network, denoted by $\Phi_P(\cdot, \cdot; \theta_P)$, predicts a K -step trajectory from an initial point $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_0$ towards $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_K \approx \mathbf{x}^*(\lambda)$ across its K unrolled layers— $\{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_0, \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_1, \dots, \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_K\}$.
- ▶ For a given dual multiplier λ and a problem instance \mathbf{z} , the k -th primal layer refines the estimate $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1}$ into

$$\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_k = \Phi_P^k \left(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1}, \lambda, \mathbf{z}; \theta_P^k \right), \quad (6)$$

where θ_P^k contains the parameters of the primal layer.

Unrolled networks for Constrained optimization-Dual

- ▶ The dual network, denoted by $\Phi_D(\cdot; \theta_D, \theta_P)$, has L layers whose outputs constitute a trajectory starting from an initial point λ_0 and ending at an estimate of the optimal multiplier, $\lambda_L \approx \lambda^* - \{\lambda_0, \lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_L\}$
- ▶ The l -th dual layer is defined as

$$\lambda_l = \Phi_D^l \left(\lambda_{l-1}, \Phi_P(\lambda_{l-1}, \mathbf{z}; \theta_P), \mathbf{z}; \theta_D^l \right), \quad (7)$$

where θ_D^l is the learnable parameters, the l -th dual layer queries the primal network for its estimate $\Phi_P(\lambda_{l-1}, \mathbf{z}; \theta_P) \approx \mathbf{x}_{l-1}$.

- ▶ The nonlinearity at the end of each dual layer is chosen as a relu function to ensure that the predicted multipliers are nonnegative.

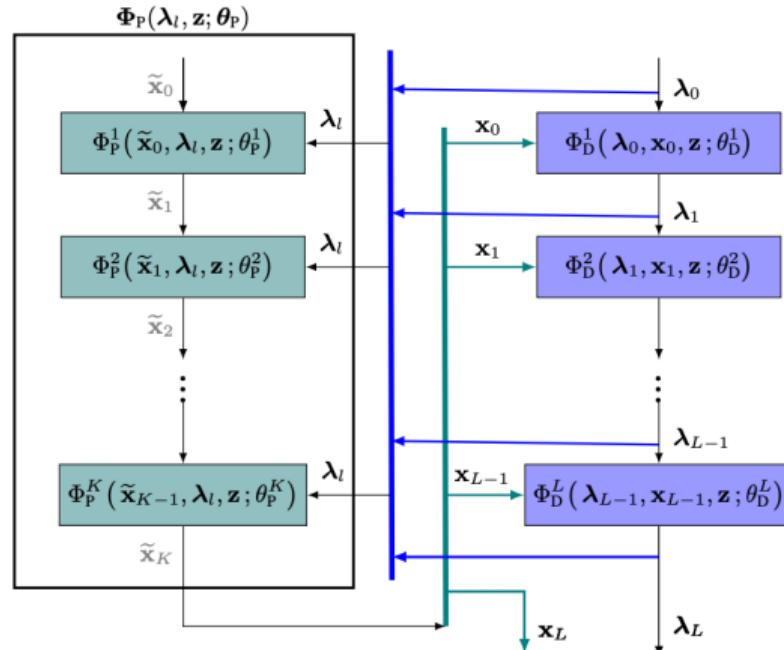
Unrolled networks for Constrained optimization

- ▶ Finally, the solution to (1) is obtained by feeding the final dual estimate, $\lambda_L = \Phi_D(\mathbf{z}; \theta_D, \theta_P^*)$, to the primal network,

$$\mathbf{x}_L = \Phi_P(\Phi_D(\mathbf{z}; \theta_D, \theta_P), \mathbf{z}; \theta_P). \quad (8)$$

The goal is to train **the primal** and **dual** networks such that the output of the primal network satisfies $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_K \approx \mathbf{x}^*(\boldsymbol{\lambda})$ for any $\boldsymbol{\lambda}$, and the output of the dual network satisfies $\boldsymbol{\lambda}_L \approx \boldsymbol{\lambda}^*$ for a family of optimization problems.

Framework



Objective function-Primal-Dual

- The nested training problem is defined as

$$\theta_D^* \in \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta_D} \mathbb{E}_z [\mathcal{L} (\Phi_P(\lambda_L, z; \theta_P^*), \lambda_L; z)] , \quad (9)$$

$$\text{with } \theta_P^* \in \operatorname{argmin}_{\theta_P} \mathbb{E}_{\lambda, z} [\mathcal{L} (\Phi_P(\lambda, z; \theta_P), \lambda; z)] , \quad (10)$$

where $\lambda_L = \Phi_D(z; \theta_D, \theta_P^*)$ is the final output of the dual network.

- This does not guarantee that the intermediate layer trajectories are monotonically descending (primal) or ascending (dual).

Objective function-Primal-descent constraints

- ▶ Primal objective function:

$$\theta_P^* \in \operatorname{argmin}_{\theta_P} \mathbb{E} [\mathcal{L} (\Phi_P(\lambda, z; \theta_P), \lambda; z)] , \quad (11)$$

$$\text{s.t. } \mathbb{E} [\|\nabla_{\mathbf{x}} \mathcal{L}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_k, \lambda; z)\| - \alpha_k \|\nabla_{\mathbf{x}} \mathcal{L}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1}, \lambda; z)\|] \leq 0, \forall k \quad (12)$$

where α_k is a design parameter that controls the descent rate, $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_0$ is initialized randomly.

- ▶ The gradient norm of Lagrangian with respect to \mathbf{X} is forced to decrease (Regularization term).

Primal Networks

Algorithm 1 Primal Network Training

- 1: Inputs: $\theta_P, \theta_D, \mu, \epsilon_P, \eta_P$
- 2: **for** each epoch **do**
- 3: **for** each primal batch **do**
- 4: Sample $\{\mathbf{z}_{(j)}\}_{j=1}^N \sim \mathcal{D}_z$
- 5: Sample $\{\boldsymbol{\lambda}_{(i,j)}\}_{i=1, j=1}^{M, N}$ from the trajectories by θ_D
- 6: Execute the primal network to generate $\{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k,(i,j)}\}_{k,i,j}$
- 7: $\ell(\theta_P) \leftarrow \hat{\mathcal{L}}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_K, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})$
- 8: $\mathcal{C}_k(\theta_P, \mu) \leftarrow \mu_k \left(\|\hat{\nabla} \mathcal{L}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_k, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})\| - \alpha_k \|\hat{\nabla} \mathcal{L}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})\| \right)$
- 9: $\theta_P \leftarrow \theta_P - \epsilon_P \cdot \left(\nabla \ell(\theta_P) + \nabla_{\theta_P} \sum_k \mathcal{C}_k(\theta_P, \mu) \right)$
- 10: $\mu \leftarrow [\mu + \eta_P \cdot \nabla_\mu \mathcal{C}(\theta_P, \mu)]_+$
- 11: **end for**
- 12: **end for**
- 13: **return** θ_P, μ

Objective function-Dual

- Dual objective function:

$$\theta_D^* \in \operatorname{argmax}_{\theta_D} \mathbb{E} [\mathcal{L} (\Phi_P(\lambda_L, \mathbf{z}; \theta_P^*), \lambda_L; \mathbf{z})], \quad (13)$$

$$\text{s.t. } \mathbb{E} [\|\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_l; \mathbf{z})\| - \beta_l \|\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_{l-1}; \mathbf{z})\|] \leq 0, \forall l \quad (14)$$

where β_l is a design parameter, λ_0 is randomly initialized.

- The gradient norm of Lagrangian with respect to λ is forced to decrease (Regularization term).

Dual Networks

Algorithm 2 Dual Network Training

- 1: Inputs: $\boldsymbol{\theta}_P, \boldsymbol{\theta}_D, \boldsymbol{\nu}, \epsilon_D, \eta_D$
- 2: **for** each epoch **do**
- 3: **for** each dual batch **do**
- 4: Sample $\{\mathbf{z}_{(i)}\}_{i=1}^N \sim \mathcal{D}_z$
- 5: Execute the networks to generate $\{(\mathbf{x}_{l,(i)}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}_{l,(i)})\}_{l,i}$
- 6: $\ell(\boldsymbol{\theta}_D) \leftarrow -\hat{\mathcal{L}}(\mathbf{x}_L, \boldsymbol{\lambda}_L; \mathbf{z})$
- 7: $\mathcal{C}(\boldsymbol{\theta}_D, \boldsymbol{\nu}) \leftarrow \sum_l \nu_l \cdot \hat{\mathbb{E}} \left[\|\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_l; \mathbf{z})\| - \beta_l \|\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_{l-1}; \mathbf{z})\| \right]$
- 8: $\boldsymbol{\theta}_D \leftarrow \boldsymbol{\theta}_D - \epsilon_D \cdot \left(\nabla \ell(\boldsymbol{\theta}_D) + \nabla_{\boldsymbol{\theta}_D} \mathcal{C}(\boldsymbol{\theta}_D, \boldsymbol{\nu}) \right)$
- 9: $\boldsymbol{\nu} \leftarrow [\boldsymbol{\nu} + \eta_D \cdot \nabla_{\boldsymbol{\nu}} \mathcal{C}(\boldsymbol{\theta}_D, \boldsymbol{\nu})]_+$
- 10: **end for**
- 11: **end for**
- 12: **return** $\boldsymbol{\theta}_D, \boldsymbol{\nu}$

Objective function

Algorithm 1 Primal Network Training

```
1: Inputs:  $\theta_P, \theta_D, \mu, \epsilon_P, \eta_P$ 
2: for each epoch do
3:   for each primal batch do
4:     Sample  $\{\mathbf{z}_{(j)}\}_{j=1}^N \sim \mathcal{D}_z$ 
5:     Sample  $\{\boldsymbol{\lambda}_{(i,j)}\}_{i=1,j=1}^{M,N}$  from the trajectories by  $\theta_D$ 
6:     Execute the primal network to generate  $\{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k,(i,j)}\}_{k,i,j}$ 
7:      $\ell(\theta_P) \leftarrow \hat{\mathcal{L}}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_K, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})$ 
8:      $C_k(\theta_P, \mu) \leftarrow \mu_k \left( \|\hat{\nabla} \mathcal{L}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_k, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})\| - \alpha_k \|\hat{\nabla} \mathcal{L}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})\| \right)$ 
9:      $\theta_P \leftarrow \theta_P - \epsilon_P \cdot \left( \nabla \ell(\theta_P) + \nabla_{\theta_P} \sum_k C_k(\theta_P, \mu) \right)$ 
10:     $\mu \leftarrow [\mu + \eta_P \cdot \nabla_\mu C(\theta_P, \mu)]_+$ 
11:  end for
12: end for
13: return  $\theta_P, \mu$ 
```

Algorithm 2 Dual Network Training

```
1: Inputs:  $\theta_P, \theta_D, \nu, \epsilon_D, \eta_D$ 
2: for each epoch do
3:   for each dual batch do
4:     Sample  $\{\mathbf{z}_{(i)}\}_{i=1}^N \sim \mathcal{D}_z$ 
5:     Execute the networks to generate  $\{(\mathbf{x}_{l,(i)}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}_{l,(i)})\}_{l,i}$ 
6:      $\ell(\theta_D) \leftarrow -\hat{\mathcal{L}}(\mathbf{x}_L, \boldsymbol{\lambda}_L; \mathbf{z})$ 
7:      $C(\theta_D, \nu) \leftarrow \sum_l \nu_l \cdot \mathbb{E} \left[ \|\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_l; \mathbf{z})\| - \beta_l \|\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_{l-1}; \mathbf{z})\| \right]$ 
8:      $\theta_D \leftarrow \theta_D - \epsilon_D \cdot \left( \nabla \ell(\theta_D) + \nabla_{\theta_D} C(\theta_D, \nu) \right)$ 
9:      $\nu \leftarrow [\nu + \eta_D \cdot \nabla_\nu C(\theta_D, \nu)]_+$ 
10:   end for
11: end for
12: return  $\theta_D, \nu$ 
```

Experiment-numerical results

- Mixed-integer quadratic program(MIQP) with linear inequality constraints can be formulated as:

$$\min_{\mathbf{x}} \quad \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{P} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{q}^\top \mathbf{x} \quad (15)$$

$$\text{s.t.} \quad \bar{\mathbf{A}} \mathbf{x} \leq \bar{\mathbf{b}}, \quad (16)$$

$$x_i \in \{-1, 1\}, \quad \forall i \in \mathcal{I}, \quad (17)$$

where $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, $\mathbf{q} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, $\bar{\mathbf{A}} \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times n}$, $\bar{\mathbf{b}} \in \mathbb{R}^m$, $\mathbf{P} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ is PSD, and \mathcal{I} is a set that contains the indices of the binary variables with cardinality $|\mathcal{I}| = r \leq n$;

Experiment-numerical results

- We consider a convex relaxation of (17) in the form of box constraints, i.e.,
 $-1 \leq x_i \leq 1, \forall i \in \mathcal{I}$. The relaxed MIQP problem:

$$\min_{\mathbf{x}} \quad \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{P} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{q}^\top \mathbf{x} \quad \text{s.t.} \quad \mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} \leq \mathbf{b}, \quad (18)$$

where $\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{(m+2r) \times n}$, $\mathbf{b} \in \mathbb{R}^{m+2r}$, $\mathbf{A} = [\bar{\mathbf{A}}; \mathbf{M}; -\mathbf{M}]$ and $\mathbf{b} = [\bar{\mathbf{b}}; \mathbf{1}_r; \mathbf{1}_r]$.

- $\mathbf{M} \in \{0, 1\}^{r \times n}$ is a selection matrix whose j -th row is the standard basis vector $\mathbf{e}_{i_j}^\top$ for $i_j \in \mathcal{I}$, and $\mathbf{1}_r$ is an r -dimensional all-ones vector.
- The Lagrangian function is defined as

$$\mathcal{L}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}) = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{P} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{q}^\top \mathbf{x} + \boldsymbol{\lambda}^\top (\mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{b}). \quad (19)$$

Graph Neural Networks

- ▶ Graph adjacency:

$$\mathbf{S} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{P} & \mathbf{A}^\top \\ \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{o} \end{bmatrix}. \quad (20)$$

- ▶ The ℓ -th unrolled layer consists of a cascade of T graph convolutional sub-layers. The t -th sub-layer filters:

$$\mathbf{X}_t^{(\ell)} = \varphi \left(\sum_{h=0}^{K_h} \mathbf{S}^h \mathbf{X}_{t-1}^{(\ell)} \Theta_{t,h}^{(\ell)} \right), \quad (21)$$

where $\Theta_{t,h}^{(\ell)} \in \mathbb{R}^{F_{t-1} \times F_t}$ is the set of learnable parameters, K_h represents the filter taps, and φ is a nonlinear activation function.

Primal forward process

- ▶ In the primal network, the input to the k th unrolled layer is

$$\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_0^{(k)} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1} & \mathbf{q} \\ \lambda & \mathbf{b} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (22)$$

where $\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1}$ is the output of the previous unrolled layer, and λ , \mathbf{q} and \mathbf{b} are input data.

- ▶ The output of the unrolled layer is then

$$\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_k = \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1} + \mathbf{M}_P \tilde{\mathbf{X}}_T^{(k)} \mathbf{W}_k + \mathbf{c}_k, \quad (23)$$

where $\tilde{\mathbf{X}}_T^{(k)}$ is the output of the T -th graph sub-layer, and $\mathbf{W}_k \in \mathbb{R}^{F_T}$ and $\mathbf{c}_k \in \mathbb{R}^n$ are the parameters of the readout layer. The selection matrix \mathbf{M}_P extracts the outputs associated with the n variable nodes.

Dual forward process

- The input to each unrolled dual layer is constructed as

$$\mathbf{X}_0^{(l)} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{x}_{l-1} & \mathbf{q} \\ \boldsymbol{\lambda}_{l-1} & \mathbf{b} \end{bmatrix}, \quad (24)$$

where $\boldsymbol{\lambda}_{l-1}$ is the previous dual estimate and \mathbf{x}_{l-1} is the corresponding estimate of the primal network.

- The output of the unrolled layer is expressed as

$$\boldsymbol{\lambda}_l = \varphi_{\text{relu}} \left(\mathbf{y}_{l-1} + \mathbf{M}_D \mathbf{X}_T^{(l)} \mathbf{W}_l + \mathbf{c}_l \right), \quad (25)$$

where \mathbf{M}_D selects the constraint-node values, and $\mathbf{W}_l \in \mathbb{R}^{F_T}$ and $\mathbf{c}_l \in \mathbb{R}^{m+2r}$ are learnable parameters—distinct from those of the primal layers despite the shared notation.

Objective function-Primal

Algorithm 1 Primal Network Training

```

1: Inputs:  $\theta_P, \theta_D, \mu, \epsilon_P, \eta_P$ 
2: for each epoch do
3:   for each primal batch do
4:     Sample  $\{\mathbf{z}_{(j)}\}_{j=1}^N \sim \mathcal{D}_z$ 
5:     Sample  $\{\boldsymbol{\lambda}_{(i,j)}\}_{i=1, j=1}^{M, N}$  from the trajectories by  $\theta_D$ 
6:     Execute the primal network to generate  $\{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k,(i,j)}\}_{k,i,j}$ 
7:      $\ell(\theta_P) \leftarrow \hat{\mathcal{L}}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_K, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})$ 
8:      $\mathcal{C}_k(\theta_P, \mu) \leftarrow \mu_k \left( \|\hat{\nabla} \mathcal{L}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_k, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})\| - \alpha_k \|\hat{\nabla} \mathcal{L}(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{k-1}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}; \mathbf{z})\| \right)$ 
9:      $\theta_P \leftarrow \theta_P - \epsilon_P \cdot \left( \nabla \ell(\theta_P) + \nabla_{\theta_P} \sum_k \mathcal{C}_k(\theta_P, \mu) \right)$ 
10:     $\mu \leftarrow [\mu + \eta_P \cdot \nabla_{\mu} \mathcal{C}(\theta_P, \mu)]_+$ 
11:  end for
12: end for
13: return  $\theta_P, \mu$ 

```

Algorithm 2 Dual Network Training

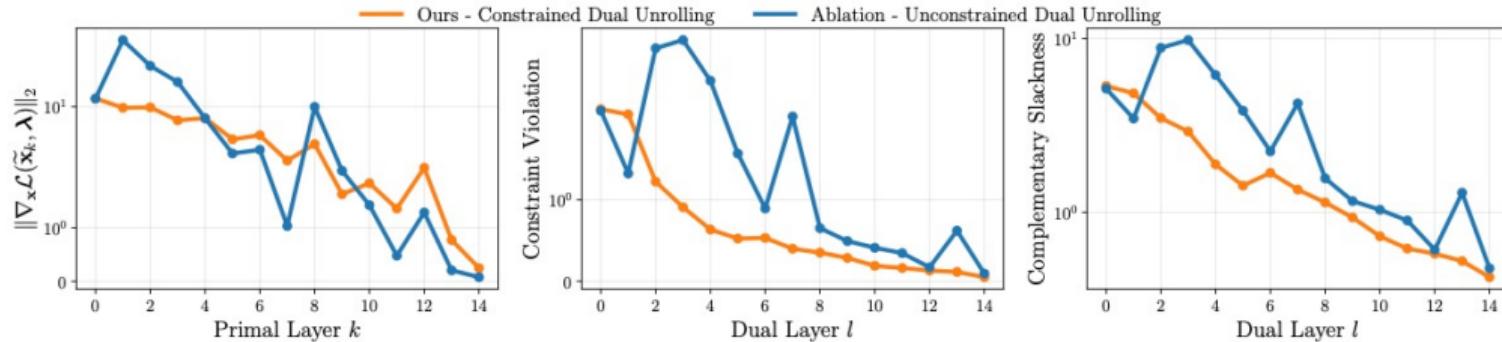
```

1: Inputs:  $\theta_P, \theta_D, \nu, \epsilon_D, \eta_D$ 
2: for each epoch do
3:   for each dual batch do
4:     Sample  $\{\mathbf{z}_{(i)}\}_{i=1}^N \sim \mathcal{D}_z$ 
5:     Execute the networks to generate  $\{(\mathbf{x}_{l,(i)}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}_{l,(i)})\}_{l,i}$ 
6:      $\ell(\theta_D) \leftarrow -\hat{\mathcal{L}}(\mathbf{x}_L, \boldsymbol{\lambda}_L; \mathbf{z})$ 
7:      $\mathcal{C}(\theta_D, \nu) \leftarrow \sum_l \nu_l \cdot \hat{\mathbb{E}} \left[ \|\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_l; \mathbf{z})\| - \beta_l \|\mathbf{f}(\mathbf{x}_{l-1}; \mathbf{z})\| \right]$ 
8:      $\theta_D \leftarrow \theta_D - \epsilon_D \cdot \left( \nabla \ell(\theta_D) + \nabla_{\theta_D} \mathcal{C}(\theta_D, \nu) \right)$ 
9:      $\nu \leftarrow [\nu + \eta_D \cdot \nabla_{\nu} \mathcal{C}(\theta_D, \nu)]_+$ 
10:   end for
11: end for
12: return  $\theta_D, \nu$ 

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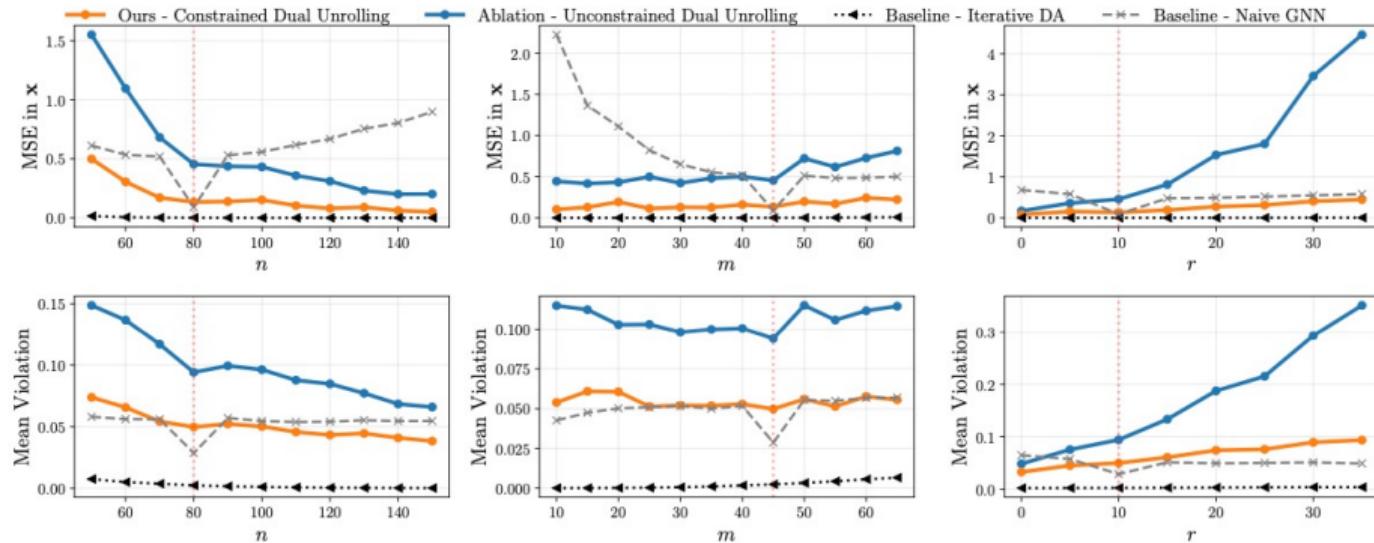
$$\mathcal{L}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\lambda}) = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{x}^\top \mathbf{P} \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{q}^\top \mathbf{x} + \boldsymbol{\lambda}^\top (\mathbf{A} \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{b}). \quad (26)$$

Result



- ▶ Metrics:
 - ▶ Gradient norm of the Lagrangian
 - ▶ Constraint violation
 - ▶ The complementary slackness: $\boldsymbol{\lambda}_L^T f(\mathbf{x}_l)$
- ▶ The constrained model exhibits a consistent decrease in all three metrics across layers.

Result



- ▶ The number of optimization variables n , the number of linear constraints m , the number of integer-valued variables r ; (Varying one problem parameter while keeping the others fixed).
- ▶ The constrained unrolling outperforms the other learning-based methods across all OOD scenarios.

Conclusion

- ▶ Replace the iterative DA with unrolled GNNs framework;
- ▶ Unsupervised learning method;
- ▶ Mixed-integer quadratic program(MIQP), with good generalization ability;