MRF Compiler: A Comprehensive Framework for Converting Probabilistic Graphical Models to Quantum Circuits

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Abstract

This paper presents the MRF Compiler, a comprehensive framework for converting probabilistic graphical models into Markov Random Fields (MRF) and subsequently into quantum circuit representations. The compiler bridges the gap between classical probabilistic modeling and quantum computing, enabling researchers and practitioners to leverage quantum algorithms for problems originally formulated using graphical models. The system supports both directed and undirected graphical models, performs automatic moralization for directed graphs, identifies maximal cliques, and generates quantum circuits compatible with eight major quantum computing frameworks: Qiskit, Cirq, PennyLane, Q#, AWS Braket, Qulacs, TensorFlow Quantum, and OpenQASM. We describe the complete conversion pipeline, including graph moralization algorithms, clique finding techniques, Ising Hamiltonian encoding, and framework-specific code generation. The compiler is implemented in C++ for high performance and provides a command-line interface for easy integration into existing workflows. We present detailed algorithms, implementation considerations, and examples demonstrating the compiler's capabilities across various use cases.

1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation

Probabilistic graphical models (PGMs) have become fundamental tools in machine learning, computer vision, natural language processing, and statistical inference. These models provide elegant representations of complex probability distributions by encoding conditional independence relationships through graph structures. However, as problem sizes grow and computational requirements increase, classical algorithms for inference and learning in graphical models face scalability challenges.

Quantum computing offers promising alternatives for certain computational tasks, potentially providing exponential speedups for specific problem classes. The ability to represent and manipulate quantum states in superposition, along with quantum entanglement, opens new possibilities for solving optimization and sampling problems that are central to probabilistic inference.

The MRF Compiler addresses the critical need for tools that can automatically translate classical probabilistic models into quantum circuit representations, enabling researchers to:

- Leverage quantum algorithms for inference in graphical models
- Explore quantum-enhanced machine learning approaches
- Bridge classical and quantum computing paradigms
- Generate framework-agnostic quantum circuit descriptions

1.2 Contributions

This paper makes the following contributions:

1. A complete pipeline for converting graphical models to quantum circuits, supporting both directed and undirected graph structures
2. Efficient algorithms for graph moralization and maximal clique identification
3. A systematic approach to encoding MRF potentials as Ising Hamiltonians
4. Framework-specific code generators for eight major quantum computing platforms
5. An open-source implementation in C++ with comprehensive documentation
6. Detailed analysis of the conversion process with examples and complexity considerations

1.3 Paper Organization

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides background on graphical models, MRFs, and quantum computing. Section 3 reviews related work. Section 4 describes the methodology and algorithms. Section 5 presents the system architecture. Section 6 details the implementation. Section 7 provides examples. Section 8 discusses results and evaluation. Section 10 concludes with future directions.

2 Background

2.1 Probabilistic Graphical Models

Probabilistic graphical models provide a framework for representing complex probability distributions using graph structures. A graphical model consists of:

- **Nodes (Vertices)**: Represent random variables
- **Edges**: Represent probabilistic dependencies or interactions
- **Potentials**: Define the strength of interactions between variables

2.1.1 Directed Graphical Models (Bayesian Networks)

A directed graphical model, or Bayesian network, represents a joint probability distribution as:

$$P(X_1, \ldots, X_n) = \prod_{i=1}^{n} P(X_i | \text{Pa}(X_i))$$

where $\text{Pa}(X_i)$ denotes the parents of node X_i in the directed graph.

Directed models are particularly useful for representing causal relationships and are widely used in expert systems, medical diagnosis, and natural language processing.

2.1.2 Undirected Graphical Models (Markov Random Fields)

An undirected graphical model, or Markov Random Field (MRF), represents a joint distribution as:

$$P(X_1, \ldots, X_n) = \frac{1}{Z} \prod_{c \in \mathcal{C}} \phi_c(X_c)$$

where $\mathcal{C}$ is the set of cliques in the graph, ϕ_c are potential functions defined on cliques, and Z is the partition function (normalization constant):

$$Z = \sum_{X_1, \ldots, X_n} \prod_{c \in \mathcal{C}} \phi_c(X_c)$$

MRFs are particularly useful for modeling spatial relationships, image processing, and problems where causal direction is not well-defined.

2.2 Graph Moralization

To convert a directed graphical model to an MRF, we must perform *moralization*. This process:

1. Converts all directed edges to undirected edges
2. Adds edges between all pairs of nodes that share a common child (marrying the parents)

The moralization process ensures that the resulting undirected graph preserves all conditional independence relationships present in the original directed graph.

2.3 Clique Finding

A *clique* in an undirected graph is a subset of nodes where every pair of nodes is connected by an edge. A *maximal clique* is a clique that cannot be extended by adding another node.

Finding maximal cliques is essential for MRF construction, as the potential functions in an MRF are typically defined over cliques. The problem of finding all maximal cliques is NP-complete in general, but efficient algorithms exist for many practical cases.

2.4 Quantum Computing Fundamentals

2.4.1 Quantum Bits (Qubits)

Unlike classical bits that can be in states 0 or 1, a qubit can exist in a superposition:

$$|\psi\rangle = \alpha|0\rangle + \beta|1\rangle$$

where $|\alpha|^2 + |\beta|^2 = 1$.

2.4.2 Quantum Gates

Quantum gates are unitary operations that transform quantum states. Common gates include:

- **Hadamard (H)**: Creates superposition: $H|0\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|0\rangle + |1\rangle)$
- **Pauli-X (X)**: Bit flip: $X|0\rangle = |1\rangle$
- **Pauli-Y (Y)**: Phase and bit flip
- **Pauli-Z (Z)**: Phase flip: $Z|0\rangle = |0\rangle, Z|1\rangle = -|1\rangle$
- **CNOT**: Controlled-NOT gate for entanglement
- **RY(θ)**: Rotation around Y-axis: $RY(\theta) = \cos(\theta/2)I - i\sin(\theta/2)Y$
- **RZ(θ)**: Rotation around Z-axis

2.4.3 Ising Hamiltonian

The Ising model is a mathematical model used in statistical mechanics. In quantum computing, the Ising Hamiltonian is often written as:

$$H = \sum_i h_i \sigma_i^z + \sum_{i<j} J_{ij} \sigma_i^z \sigma_j^z$$

where σ_i^z are Pauli-Z operators, h_i are local fields, and J_{ij} are interaction strengths.

This Hamiltonian form is particularly useful for encoding optimization problems and probabilistic models into quantum circuits.

3 Related Work

Several approaches have been proposed for connecting classical probabilistic models with quantum computing:

Quantum Machine Learning: Various frameworks have been developed for quantum-enhanced machine learning, including Qiskit Machine Learning, PennyLane, and TensorFlow Quantum. However, these typically focus on quantum neural networks rather than converting classical graphical models.

Quantum Optimization: Quantum approximate optimization algorithms (QAOA) and quantum annealing have been used to solve problems that can be encoded as Ising models. Our compiler provides a systematic way to generate such encodings from graphical models.

Graph-to-Quantum Conversions: Some work has explored converting specific graph structures to quantum circuits, but these typically focus on particular problem classes (e.g., MaxCut, graph coloring) rather than general probabilistic models.

MRF Inference on Quantum Hardware: Recent work has explored using quantum computers for MRF inference, but these typically require manual encoding. Our compiler automates this process.

The MRF Compiler distinguishes itself by providing a complete, automated pipeline from arbitrary graphical models to executable quantum circuits across multiple frameworks.

4 Methodology

4.1 Conversion Pipeline Overview

The MRF Compiler implements a multi-stage conversion pipeline:

1. **Graphical Model Parsing**: Read and parse input graphical model specification
2. **Graph Moralization** (if directed): Convert directed graph to undirected MRF
3. **Clique Finding**: Identify maximal cliques in the undirected graph
4. **MRF Construction**: Build MRF structure with clique potentials
5. **Ising Encoding**: Map MRF potentials to Ising Hamiltonian parameters
6. **Quantum Circuit Generation**: Translate Ising Hamiltonian to quantum gates
7. **Framework Export**: Generate framework-specific code

4.2 Graph Moralization Algorithm

For directed graphs, we implement the moralization algorithm as shown in Algorithm 1.

Algorithm 1 Graph Moralization

Require: Directed graph $G = (V, E)$
Ensure: Undirected graph $G' = (V, E')$
$E' \leftarrow \emptyset$
for each edge $(u, v) \in E$ **do**
  Add undirected edge $\{u, v\}$ to E'
end for
for each node $v \in V$ **do**
  $parents \leftarrow \{u : (u, v) \in E\}$
  if $|parents| > 1$ **then**
    for each pair $(p_1, p_2) \in parents \times parents, p_1 \neq p_2$ **do**
      if $\{p_1, p_2\} \notin E'$ **then**
        Add edge $\{p_1, p_2\}$ to E'
      end if
    end for
  end if
end for
return $G' = (V, E')$

The time complexity is $O(|V| \cdot d^2)$ where d is the maximum in-degree, making it efficient for sparse graphs.

4.3 Maximal Clique Finding

We implement a backtracking algorithm to find all maximal cliques, as shown in Algorithm 2.

Algorithm 2 Maximal Clique Finding

Require: Undirected graph $G = (V, E)$
Ensure: Set of maximal cliques $\mathcal{C}$

$\mathcal{C} \leftarrow \emptyset$
$current\_clique \leftarrow \emptyset$
$candidates \leftarrow V$
$excluded \leftarrow \emptyset$
function FindCliques($current\_clique$, $candidates$, $excluded$)
if $candidates = \emptyset$ **and** $excluded = \emptyset$ **then**
  $\mathcal{C} \leftarrow \mathcal{C} \cup \{current\_clique\}$
  return
end if
$v \leftarrow$ choose pivot from $candidates \cup excluded$
$candidates' \leftarrow candidates \setminus \text{neighbors}(v)$
for each $u \in candidates'$ **do**
  $new\_clique \leftarrow current\_clique \cup \{u\}$
  $new\_candidates \leftarrow candidates \cap \text{neighbors}(u)$
  $new\_excluded \leftarrow excluded \cap \text{neighbors}(u)$
  FindCliques(new_clique, $new\_candidates$, $new\_excluded$)
  $candidates \leftarrow candidates \setminus \{u\}$
  $excluded \leftarrow excluded \cup \{u\}$
end for
FindCliques($current\_clique$, $candidates$, $excluded$)
return $\mathcal{C}$

This algorithm uses the Bron-Kerbosch method with pivoting for efficiency. In the worst case, the number of maximal cliques can be exponential, but in practice, many graphs have a polynomial number of cliques.

4.4 Ising Hamiltonian Encoding

To encode an MRF as an Ising Hamiltonian, we map:

- Each node i with potential $\phi_i(x_i)$ to a local field term $h_i \sigma_i^z$
- Each edge/clique (i, j) with potential $\phi_{ij}(x_i, x_j)$ to an interaction term $J_{ij} \sigma_i^z \sigma_j^z$

For binary variables, the mapping is:

$$h_i = \frac{1}{2}[\phi_i(1) - \phi_i(0)]$$

$$J_{ij} = \frac{1}{4}[\phi_{ij}(1,1) - \phi_{ij}(1,0) - \phi_{ij}(0,1) + \phi_{ij}(0,0)]$$

For multi-state variables, we use a one-hot encoding where each state is represented by a separate qubit.

4.5 Quantum Circuit Construction

The quantum circuit is constructed as follows:

1. **Initialization**: Apply Hadamard gates to all qubits to create uniform superposition
2. **Single-qubit rotations**: Apply RY gates based on local field terms h_i
3. **Two-qubit interactions**: For each edge (i, j):
   - Apply CNOT gate with i as control and j as target
   - Apply RZ gate to target qubit with angle based on J_{ij}
   - Apply CNOT gate again to restore
4. **Measurement**: Measure all qubits in computational basis

This construction creates a quantum state whose measurement probabilities correspond to the MRF distribution.

5 Architecture

5.1 System Components

The MRF Compiler consists of the following main components:

5.1.1 Graph Module (`graph.h/cpp`)

The graph module provides:

- `Node` class: Represents a random variable with ID, name, number of states, and potential function
- `Edge` class: Represents dependencies with source, target, direction, and potential table
- `GraphicalModel` class: Container for nodes and edges with adjacency list representation

5.1.2 MRF Module (`mrf.h/cpp`)

The MRF module provides:

- `Clique` class: Represents a maximal clique with node set and potential function
- `MRF` class: Container for nodes and cliques
- Conversion functions: `convertToMRF()`, `moralizeGraph()`, `findMaximalCliques()`

5.1.3 Quantum Circuit Module (`qpu_circuit.h/cpp`)

The quantum circuit module provides:

- Quantum gate representation
- Circuit construction from Ising Hamiltonian
- Circuit optimization and validation

5.1.4 Framework Exporters (`framework_exporters.h/cpp`)

The framework exporters generate code for:

- Qiskit: Python with `QuantumCircuit` objects
- Cirq: Python with `cirq.Circuit` objects
- PennyLane: Python with QNode decorators
- Q#: Q# source files with operations
- AWS Braket: Python with `braket.Circuit` objects
- Qulacs: Python with `qulacs.QuantumCircuit` objects
- TensorFlow Quantum: Tensor representations
- OpenQASM: Standard quantum assembly language

5.2 Data Flow

The data flow through the system is:

`Input File → Parser → GraphicalModel → MRF → QPU Circuit → Framework Exporters → Outp`

6 Implementation

6.1 Input Format

The compiler accepts a simple text-based input format:

```
TYPE undirected
NODE 0 A 2
NODE 1 B 2
NODE 2 C 2
EDGE 0 1
EDGE 1 2
```

This format supports:

- Graph type specification (directed/undirected)
- Node definitions with ID, name, and number of states
- Edge definitions with source and target nodes
- Optional potential function specifications

6.2 Command-Line Interface

The compiler provides a flexible command-line interface:

```
./mrf_compiler [options] [input_file] [output_file]
```

Options include:

- `-f, --framework <name>`: Specify output framework
- `-a, --all`: Export to all supported frameworks
- `-h, --help`: Display help message

6.3 Performance Considerations

The implementation is optimized for:

- **Memory efficiency**: Using adjacency lists for sparse graphs
- **Computation efficiency**: Efficient clique finding with pruning
- **Code generation**: Template-based framework exporters for maintainability

7 Examples

7.1 Simple Chain Graph

Consider a simple three-node chain graph:

```
TYPE undirected
NODE 0 A 2
NODE 1 B 2
NODE 2 C 2
EDGE 0 1
EDGE 1 2
```

This graph has two maximal cliques: $\{A, B\}$ and $\{B, C\}$. The compiler generates a quantum circuit with:

- 3 qubits (one per node)
- Hadamard gates for initialization
- CNOT and RZ gates for each edge

7.2 Directed Graph with Moralization

A directed graph with structure $A \rightarrow B \leftarrow C$ requires moralization, adding an edge between A and C. The resulting MRF has a single maximal clique $\{A, B, C\}$.

7.3 Framework-Specific Output

For the Qiskit framework, the compiler generates:

```
from qiskit import QuantumCircuit

def create_circuit():
    qc = QuantumCircuit(3)
    # Hadamard gates
    qc.h(0)
    qc.h(1)
    qc.h(2)
    # Edge (0,1)
    qc.cx(0, 1)
    qc.rz(0.5, 1)
    qc.cx(0, 1)
    # Edge (1,2)
    qc.cx(1, 2)
    qc.rz(0.5, 2)
    qc.cx(1, 2)
    return qc
```

8 Results and Evaluation

8.1 Correctness

We verified the compiler's correctness through:

- Unit tests for each conversion stage
- Comparison with manually constructed circuits
- Validation against known MRF structures

8.2 Performance

The compiler's performance characteristics:

- **Parsing**: Linear time $O(|V| + |E|)$
- **Moralization**: $O(|V| \cdot d^2)$ where d is max in-degree
- **Clique finding**: Exponential worst-case, but polynomial for many practical graphs
- **Circuit generation**: Linear in number of gates
- **Code generation**: Linear in circuit size

8.3 Supported Graph Sizes

The compiler has been tested with:

- Small graphs: 2-10 nodes (instantaneous)
- Medium graphs: 10-50 nodes (seconds)
- Large graphs: 50-200 nodes (minutes, depending on clique structure)

8.4 Framework Compatibility

All generated code has been verified to:

- Compile/parse correctly in target frameworks
- Execute without errors
- Produce expected quantum states

9 Discussion

9.1 Limitations

Current limitations include:

- Binary and small multi-state variables (extension to larger state spaces requires more qubits)
- Exact clique finding (approximate methods may be needed for very large graphs)
- Fixed encoding scheme (alternative encodings could be explored)

9.2 Future Work

Future directions include:

- Support for continuous variables
- Approximate clique finding for large graphs
- Circuit optimization and compilation
- Integration with quantum simulators and hardware
- Support for additional quantum frameworks
- Graphical user interface
- Automatic potential function learning from data

10 Conclusion

The MRF Compiler provides a comprehensive, automated solution for converting probabilistic graphical models to quantum circuits. By supporting multiple quantum computing frameworks and providing an efficient conversion pipeline, it enables researchers to explore quantum-enhanced approaches to probabilistic inference and machine learning.

The system's modular architecture, efficient algorithms, and extensive framework support make it a valuable tool for the quantum computing and machine learning communities. As quantum hardware continues to mature, tools like the MRF Compiler will play an increasingly important role in bridging classical and quantum computing paradigms.

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