Symmetry-induced Disentanglement on Graphs

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Abstract

Learning disentangled representations is important for unraveling the underlying complex interactions between latent generative factors. Disentanglement has been formalized using a symmetry-centric notion for unstructured spaces, however, graphs have eluded a similarly rigorous treatment. We fill this gap with a new notion of conditional symmetry based disentanglement, and leverage tools from Lie algebras to encode graph properties into subgroups using suitable adaptations of generative models such as Variational Autoencoders. Unlike existing works on disentanglement, proposed models can learn to segregate the latent space into uncoupled and entangled parts. Experiments on synthetic and real datasets reveal the ability of these models to learn effective disengaged representations, and improve performance on downstream tasks such as few-shot classification and molecular generation.

1 Introduction

Disentanglement represents a fundamental desideratum in Artificial Intelligence, because it captures information about the salient (or explanatory) factors of variation in the data, and it isolates information about each specific factor in only a few dimensions, unraveling the underlying interactions of complex data [2, 54]. Disentangled representations have often been deemed responsible for providing neural models with the ability to improve real-word downstream tasks [2, 53, 17, 54, 32], and have demonstrated empirically the ability to enable critical properties such as sample efficiency [18] and systematic generalization [63, 28, 39].

Higgins et al. [17] have recently presented a symmetry-based definition for disentanglement, which uses tools from group theory to formalize the idea that disentanglement is achieved when the abstract and the vector spaces are equivariant. Such symmetry-based definition presents various advantages: first it aligns with the idea that auxiliary information can be exploited for imposing a structure on the latent space [21, 36], secondly, it has been successfully used as a theoretical framework for recent disentangled Variational Autoencoder (VAE) works [23, 47] [58, 64], finally, differently from other definitions of disentanglement [10, 12, 2] it may enable a fundamental connection with several graph neural network (GNN) approaches that leverage group symmetries [5, 35, 9, 3].

Disentanglement approaches have been initially developed on vision-based datasets [16, 6, 22, 8, 14], however, numerous recent methods have improved GNNs performance using disentanglement [11, 37, 34, 27, 59]. For example, [34] propose to use a convolutional layer to identify the factor responsible for linking a node to its neighbors via a neighborhood routing mechanism, while [59] enable multi-relational disentanglement, by encoding all the possible links between nodes with attention.

While previous work in the GNN domain has demonstrated the advantages of exploiting group symmetries [35, 3], investigating disentanglement from a symmetry group perspective is still an unexplored area in the GNN literature. Furthermore, a rigorous formalization of disentanglement for

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graphs, which aligns the formalism provided by [17] within a GNN architecture is still missing in the contemporary disentangled GNN literature [34, 59, 27].

In this paper, we make several contributions to fill the mentioned gaps in disentangled GNNs.

- We introduce two formal definitions for unconditional and conditional symmetry-based disentanglement on graphs, which provide the tools for encoding graph properties into subgroups by leveraging a Lie algebra parameterization. Our intuition is that each generative factor can correspond to a Lie algebra coordinate element, and control a single graph property (Section 2).
- Based on the proposed Lie group disentanglement framework, we design two disentangled GNN modules (unconditional and conditional) that auto-encode both a graph representation and a Lie group, withing a VAE framework (Section 3).
- We provide the first systematic evaluation on several disentanglement metrics [22, 16, 8, 12, 42], and demonstrate that the proposed models can outperform all contemporary GNN baselines [34, 59], and successfully learn to segregate the latent space into uncoupled and entangled parts (Section 5.1). Finally, we show that our models are able to improve performance on downstream tasks such as few-shot classification, compression (Section 5.2) and molecular graph generation (Section 5.3).

2 Proposed framework

2.1 Symmetry-based disentanglement

We consider the definition for disentangled representations from Higgins et al. [17].

Definition 1 (Symmetry-based disentanglement)**.** Let us consider a generative process $b = W \to O$ mapping a set of world states W into a set of observations (i.e. data) O, and an inference process $h = O \to Z$ mapping the data into the vector space. By composing b and h, we obtain $f = h \circ b$, which is equivalent to $f : W \to Z$. Given group actions on $W \cdot : G \times W \to W$ and on $Z \cdot : G \times Z \to Z$, the function f is defined equivariant between the actions on W and Z if the action commutes with f, which can be expressed as an equivariant map: $g \cdot f(w) = f(g \cdot w), \forall g \in G, \forall w \in W$. Assuming that the symmetry group G can be decomposed into subgroups $G_1 \times \ldots \times G_n$, a vector representation Z is disentangled with respect to the decomposition of G if: (1) there is an action defined on the representation set $\cdot : G \times Z \to Z$, (2) the map $f : W \to Z$ is equivariant between actions on W and Z, (3) there is a decomposition $Z = Z_1 \times Z_2 \ldots \times Z_n$ such that each Z_i is affected only by G_i and fixed for $G_j, j \neq i$.

Following the notation of Definition 1, we propose the notion of conditional disentanglement.

Definition 2 (Conditional symmetry-based disentanglement)**.** We consider: a generative process $b = W \times E \to O$ mapping a set of disentangle-able world states W and non-disentangle states E into a set of observations (i.e. data) O, and an inference process $h = O \to Z$ mapping the data into the vector space. By composing b and h, we obtain $f = b \circ h$, which maps $W \times E$ to Z. Given group actions on $W \cdot : G \times W \to W$ and on $Z \cdot : G \times Z \to Z$, the function f is defined equivariant between the actions on W and Z if the action commutes with f according to the following equivariant map: $g \cdot f(w, e) = f(g \cdot w, e), \forall g \in G, \forall w \in W, \forall e \in E$.

2.2 Lie algebras for graph networks

While previous works explored disentanglement on GNNs [34, 59], they lack formal frameworks for designing disentangled GNNs, which is necessary for aligning with the notions of symmetry groups from Definition 1. In the next two paragraphs, we introduce Lie algebras and leverage them to provide a disentangled GNN architecture.

Lie groups and Lie algebras A Lie group G is a group of symmetries where the symmetries are continuous [49]. A Lie group is associated with a Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$, which is the tangent space to the identity element of G. A Lie algebra is parameterized with a basis $\{\mathbb{A}_i\}_{i=1}^k$, where every element in $\mathfrak{g}$ can be written as $\mathbb{A} = \mathbb{A}_1 t_1 + \ldots + \mathbb{A}_k t_k$, where t_i are the coordinates. Elements of the Lie algebra can be mapped into the Lie group with an exponential function: $\exp : \mathfrak{g} \to G$. In the next paragraph,

we show how we can connect the notion of a Lie group G with the definition of disentanglement in a GNN model, by associating each Lie algebra coordinates t_i element with a generative factor.

GNN architecture We consider an input graph $\mathcal{G} = N \times X$ where N is the number of nodes and X is the number of features, and we consider a Lie group of dimension L associated with k Lie algebra basis elements. First, we compute the graph features $f = \text{Pool}(\text{GCN}(\mathcal{G}))$, where the GCN maps the features to the group size as GCN : $N \times X \to N \times L$ and Pool reduces the number of nodes to N_1 using a certain pooling rate, as Pool : $N \times L \to N_1 \times L$. Next, the second layer of the GCN maps the features f to k features, obtaining a latent code Z of dimension $N_1 \times k$. To enhance disentanglement, Z is then fed into k GCNs, where each GCN is a map $N_1 \times k \to N_1 \times k$, which is subsequently aggregated for each GCN as: $T = \text{agg}(\{\text{GCN}_j(Z) = t_j\}_{j=1}^k)$. The vector T represents the k coordinates of a Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$, which model the generative factors of the dataset. Finally, T is fed into the exponential map, which reconstructs the variable $\hat{Z}$, while imposing a group structure on it, by learning the basis $\mathbb{A} \in \mathfrak{g}$, as $\hat{Z} = \exp \mathbb{A}(T)$ where $\mathbb{A} \in \mathfrak{g}$ and $\mathbb{A}(T) = \sum_{i=1}^k \mathbb{A}_i t_i$. This model is further explained in Section 3.

2.3 Formalizing disentanglement on graphs

Intuitive definition The latent representation $\hat{Z}$ is disentangled with respect to the Lie group G, if a change in the coordinate t_i is associated with a change in $\hat{z}_i$. In other words, disentanglement means that the semantics $(t_1, t_2, \ldots, t_k)$ are equivariant with respect to the properties that are being predicted $(\hat{z}_1, \hat{z}_2, \ldots, \hat{z}_k)$. Next, we provide the formal definitions for unconditional and conditional graph disentanglement, where the former expresses $\hat{Z}$ in function of T without accounting for Z, while the latter expresses $\hat{Z}$ based on T, after fixing an encoding Z.

Definition 3 (Unconditional graph disentanglement)**.** The graph embedding $\hat{Z}$ obtained by $f(\hat{Z}|T)$ is unconditionally disentangled with respect to the Lie group coordinates $T = \{t_j\}_{j=1}^k$ if: (1) there is a group action on $\hat{Z}$: $\cdot : G \times \hat{Z} \to \hat{Z}$, (2) the map $f = \exp \mathbb{A}(T) : T \to \hat{Z}$ is equivariant between actions on T and $\hat{Z}$, (3) there is a decomposition $\hat{Z} = \hat{z}_1 \times \hat{z}_2 \ldots \times \hat{z}_k$, where each coordinate t_i affects only the corresponding component $\hat{z}_i$.

Definition 4 (Conditional graph disentanglement)**.** The graph embedding $\hat{Z}$ obtained by $f(\hat{Z}|T, Z)$ is conditionally disentangled with respect to the Lie group coordinates $T = \{t_j\}_{j=1}^k$ conditioned on Z if (1) there is a group action on $\hat{Z}$: $\cdot : G \times \hat{Z} \to \hat{Z}$, (2) the map $f : \exp \mathbb{A}(T) \times Z \to \hat{Z}$ is equivariant between actions on T and $\hat{Z}$ for any fixed Z, and (3) $\exp \mathbb{A}(T)$ factorizes into the product $\prod_{i=1}^k \exp(t_i \mathbb{A}_i) \times Z$ such that each component $\exp(t_i \mathbb{A}_i) \times Z$ is affected only by the corresponding coordinate t_i for $i \in \{1, 2, \ldots, k\}$.

2.4 Disentanglement constraints

Since a Lie group parameterization is not sufficient for a group to be decomposed into subgroups that are parameterized independently by a single coordinate [64, 58], we provide the necessary constraints for enforcing disentanglement.

Commutative penalty First, disentanglement can be achieved by enforcing a coordinate t_i to be identified by single group $\exp(t_i \mathbb{A}_i)$, representing a single property variation in the data $\hat{z}_i$. Such property is expressed by the equivalence between the exponential map of the sum, and the product over exponential maps, which [64] proved to be achieved when there is commutativity between the Lie algebra basis. Namely, if $\mathbb{A}_i \mathbb{A}_j = \mathbb{A}_j \mathbb{A}_i$ then $\exp \sum_{i=1}^k t_i \mathbb{A}_i = \prod_{i=1}^k \exp t_i \mathbb{A}_i$.

Hessian penalty Furthermore, disentanglement can be strengthened using the hessian penalty [42], which states that the Hessian matrix with respect to a disentangled representation is always zero, since there should be independence between different dimensions. Zhu et al. [64] adapt this penalty in a Lie algebra parameterization setup, as $H_{ij} = \frac{\delta^2 g(T)}{\delta t_i \delta t_j}$ where $g(T) = \exp \sum_{i=1}^k t_i \mathbb{A}_i$, and also show that if $\mathbb{A}_i \mathbb{A}_j = 0, \forall i, j$ then $H_{ij} = 0$.

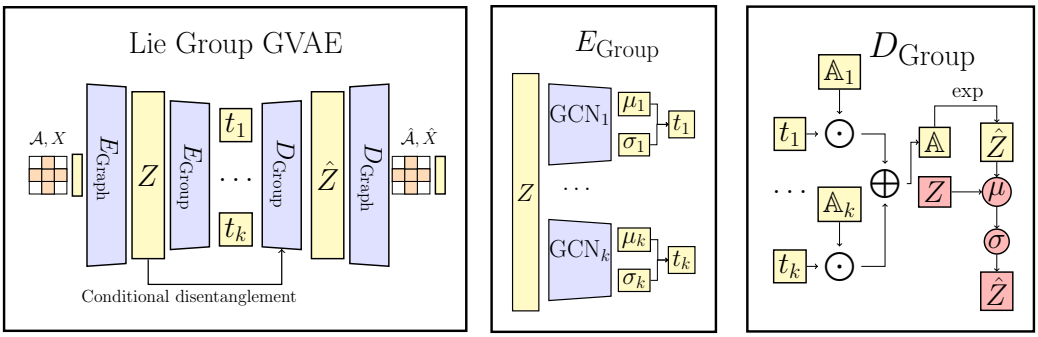

Figure 1: Lie group GVAE architecture and layers. Left panel: Lie group GVAE is composed of 4 blocks: 2 encoders, and 2 decoders for graph and group. Middle: the group encoder obtains the Lie algebra coordinates via k GCNs. Right: The group decoder combines the coordinates with basis elements to reconstruct the graph latent code $\hat{Z}$. In the conditional case (red nodes) we further condition on Z by taking the mean (μ) between Z and $\hat{Z}$ and passing it through an activation function σ (ReLu).

3 Method

We design a Lie group graph VAE framework [24], as depicted in Figure 1, which considers the latent graph encoding variable Z, the graph features X, the symmetry Lie group structure T, and the graph adjacency matrix $\mathcal{A}$. We propose two decoders, the unconditional one reconstructs the properties $\hat{Z}$ given T, while the conditional one reconstructs the properties $\hat{Z}$ given Z and T.

3.1 Probabilistic model

Proposition 1 (Unconditional ELBO)**.** Given two latent variables Z and T, we instantiate the unconditional disentanglement from Definition 3 with a probabilistic model that maximize the log-likelihood of the graph data $\mathcal{G} = (X, \mathcal{A})$, as follows:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{unc}} = \mathbb{E}_{q(Z|\mathcal{G})q(T|Z)} \log p(\mathcal{G}|\hat{Z})p(\hat{Z}|T) - \mathbb{E}_{q(Z|\mathcal{G})}\text{KL}(q(T|Z)||p(T)) - \mathbb{E}_{q(Z|\mathcal{G})} \log q(Z|\mathcal{G}) \quad (1)$$

Proposition 2 (Conditional ELBO)**.** We extend Proposition 1 with a conditional version, corresponding to the conditional disentanglement from Definition 4.

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{cond}} = \mathbb{E}_{q(Z|\mathcal{G})q(T|Z)} \log p(\mathcal{G}|\hat{Z}, Z)p(\hat{Z}|T) - \mathbb{E}_{q(Z|\mathcal{G})}\text{KL}(q(T|Z)||p(T)) - \mathbb{E}_{q(Z|\mathcal{G})} \log q(Z|\mathcal{G}) \quad (2)$$

Propositions 1 and (2) are proved respectively in Appendix B and C.

Equations (1) and (2) are implemented with four modules, namely, two stochastic networks $q(Z|\mathcal{G})$ (E_{graph}), encoding graph $\mathcal{G}$ into vector Z and $q(T|Z)$ (E_{group}), encoding the group structure T given graph encoding Z, and two deterministic networks $p(\hat{Z}|T)$ (D_{group}), decoding $\hat{Z}$ from the group structure T, and $p(\mathcal{G}|\hat{Z})$ (D_{graph}), decoding the graph $\mathcal{G}$ from $\hat{Z}$. Note that the decoder D_{group} is responsible for the group structure injection, because it imposes $p(\hat{Z}|T)$ to be a Lie algebra parameterization. Furthermore, in the conditional ELBO model the D_{group} decoder is given by $p(\mathcal{G}|\hat{Z}, Z)$, where the reconstructed latent code $\hat{Z}$, is conditioned on the fixed latent variable Z.

3.2 Encoders

We first encode the graph representation in the latent space Z, by decomposing the features X and adjacency matrix $\mathcal{A}$ using an inference network E_{graph} $q(Z|X, \mathcal{A})$. We use a single 2-layer GCN, where the first layer reduces the graph features to the symmetry group dimension, and performs a pooling operation to reduce the number of nodes: $\overline{X} = \text{Pool}(\text{GCN}(X, \mathcal{A}))$, while the second layer reduce the number of features to k while computing the matrices $\mu = \text{GCN}_\mu(\overline{X}, \mathcal{A})$, $\log \sigma = \text{GCN}_\sigma(\overline{X}, \mathcal{A})$, which are then combined into a Z with the reparameterization trick, as $q(Z|X, \mathcal{A}) = \mathcal{N}(Z|\mu, \text{diag}(\sigma^2))$.

Secondly, we use E_{group} to map the latent vector Z into a vector T, which represents the k Lie algebra coordinates. Each $\{t_i\}_{i=1}^k$ is the output of a graph convolutional encoder (GCN) over Z. Each GCN consists of two layers, where first one computes $\overline{Z} = \text{GCN}(Z, \mathcal{A})$, while the second one computes the matrices $\mu = \text{GCN}_\mu(\overline{Z}, \mathcal{A})$ and $\log \sigma = \text{GCN}_\sigma(\overline{Z}, \mathcal{A})$, which are then combined to compute t_i with the reparameterization trick.

$$q(T|Z, \mathcal{A}) = \prod_{i=1}^k q(t_i|Z, \mathcal{A}) \quad \text{with} \quad q(t_i|Z, \mathcal{A}) = \mathcal{N}(t_i|\mu_i, \text{diag}(\sigma_i^2)) \tag{3}$$

3.3 Decoders

We first leverage D_{group} for decoding the latent variable $\hat{Z}$ using a Lie group G and a Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$, with a Lie algebra parameterization. Specifically, for each coordinate $t_i \in T$, we learn a Lie algebra basis element $\{\mathbb{A}_i\}_{i=1}^k \in \mathfrak{g}$. The coordinates and basis are then aggregated and fed into an exponential mapping layer, to achieve a group representation, as follows.

$$p(\hat{Z}|T) = g(T) = \exp \mathbb{A}(T) \quad \text{where } \mathbb{A}(T) = \sum_{i=1}^k t_i \mathbb{A}_i \quad \text{for } g \in G,\ \mathbb{A} \in \mathfrak{g} \tag{4}$$

For the conditional version of the ELBO, D_{group} $\hat{Z}$ is computed by combining Z and $\mathbb{A}(T)$, as $p(\hat{Z}|Z, T) = \sigma(\text{agg}[\exp \mathbb{A}(T), Z])$, where $Z = \{z_j\}_{j=1}^k$, agg is the mean, and σ is the ReLU non-linear activation function.

Secondly, we apply D_{graph}, which first maps the latent $\hat{Z}$ into N latent variables using sigmoid functions σ_j, and then aggregates the N latent variables to obtain the full graph representation.

$$p(\mathcal{A}, X|\hat{Z}) = \prod_{j=1}^N \left[p(\mathcal{A}, X|\sigma_j(\hat{Z}))\right] \tag{5}$$

3.4 Training

The proposed unconditional and conditional models are trained by optimizing the loss given by $\beta\mathcal{L} + \lambda h + \gamma c$, where $\mathcal{L}$ is the ELBO, from Equation (1) (unconditional) or (2) (conditional), while h and c are respectively the hessian and commutative penalties, obtained as regularization terms. The parameters are found empirically, and we provide further insights on their effect on the model and its performance by providing an ablation study in the experiments in Section 5.

4 Related work

Symmetry-based disentanglement Initial works on symmetry disentanglement [7, 45] have proposed use reinforcement learning to achieve irreducible representations of group elements through observation of action transitions, while [41] does not require labelled action-transition pairs. In a related line of work, [64] propose to decompose a Lie group in multiple subgroups, and enforce commutativity and independence between subgroups, while [58] impose a cyclic group structure, while encouraging such group to be isomorphic to the ground truth. Other works focus on manifolds properties, for example, [43], propose a nonparametric algorithm that aims to discover a decomposition of a data manifold by investigating its holonomy group, while [13] model disentanglement as a product of the low-dimensional submanifolds underlying the data space. Finally, [56] design a method which iteratively updates a partition, modeled as a symmetry group, until the considered factor is invariant, while [4] uses group representation theory for defining distributed latent operators. Differently, from the reviewed methods, we propose to analyze the graph data modality.

Disentangled GNNs [34] propose a routing mechanism aimed at separating the underlying factors in a graph dataset, while [59] use an attention mechanism for disentangling the representation of GNNs, and provide two evaluation metrics for disentanglement on graphs. In a related line of work, [31] achieve disentanglement by encouraging independence in the latent space, while [1] propose a method for disentangling multi-relational graphs with an application on pedestrian trajectory prediction. Furthermore, [11] propose a generative model for spatio-temporal graphs via disentangled representations, while [27] leverage a contrastive framework for disentangling the latent factors in GNNs. Differently from the mentioned GNNs methods, we provide a formal definition of disentanglement for graphs, and do leverage group structures for modeling.

Graph generative models We also relate to VAEs models on graph data modality, for example [57, 62] propose VAE-based Information Bottleneck methods for improving GNNs performance on classification tasks, by learning minimal sufficient representations. Another line of work aims to generate molecular graphs, by proposing graph-VAE models that are provided with encoder and decoders able to handle graph structures, and to condition molecule generation on specific properties [30, 52]. Similarly, [61] propose a deep autoregressive model that learns to generate graphs by training on a representative set of graphs and decomposes the graph generation process into a sequence of node and edge formations. We differ from these methods as we explicitly investigate the disentanglement capabilities of generative models.

5 Experiments

Section 5.1 evaluates the disentanglement capabilities of the models, Section 5.2 provides a compression and few-shots classification experiment, Section 5.3 assesses the generation capabilities on molecular datasets. [1]

5.1 Disentanglement evaluation

Experimental setup Vision-based disentanglement [16, 22] requires the generative factors to be known, is based on synthetic datasets that have such property. We follow the protocol, and construct two graph datasets based respectively on random graphs, where we can sample a combination of generative factors that are required to synthesize node features and adjacency matrices in each graph. More details on the datasets are in Appendix A. We measure 5 disentanglement metrics from the literature, including βVAE metric [16] (Beta), FactorVAE metric (FVM) [22], Mutual Information Gap (MIG) [8], DCI Disentanglement [12], and Factor Leakage (FL) [41].

Ablation study We start by evaluating the impact of our model components on the disentanglement scores, by maintaining all parameters fixed, except from one that varies. We probe group size, hessian penalty, commutative penalty, subspace size, beta penalty, and model depth. In Figure 2 we report the mean over 10 runs for our unconditional model on the synthetic Watts-Strogatz dataset. We observe that when the group size is increased, there is an improvement in disentanglement across all metrics, and this can be explained by the idea that with a larger group size, the subgroups, represented by the Lie algebra coordinate t_i can control different data variations. The hessian penalty results to be effectively enhancing disentangled representations, while the commutativity penalty is less effective, and we can explain this result, because the former requires the Lie algebra basis elements to have mutual products of zeros while subgroup decomposition only requires their commutators to be zeros, which also confirms the results obtained for image datasets [64].

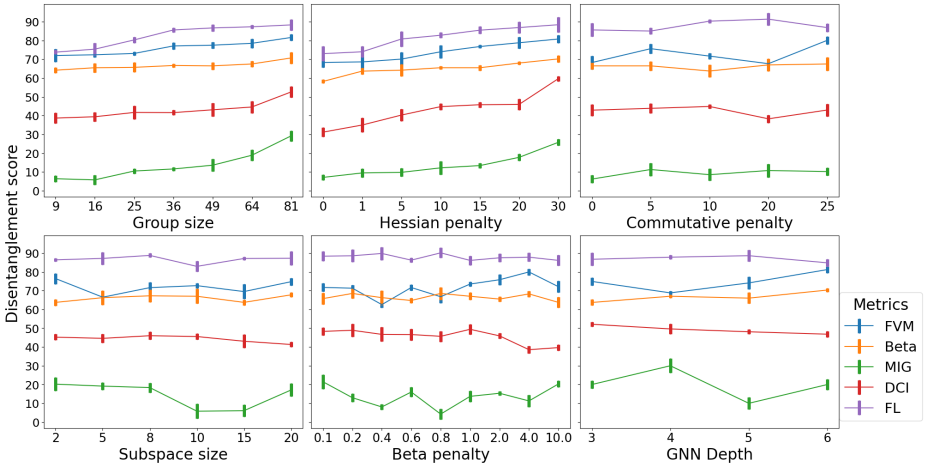

Figure 2: Impact of single model components on disentanglement metrics.

[1] Code is provided as zip file under Apache license. We use 2-4 NVIDIA Tesla V100 GPUs for training.

Table 1: Disentanglement results.

	Watts-Strogatz					Erdos-Renyi				
Model	FVM	Beta	MIG	DCI	FL	FVM	Beta	MIG	DCI	FL
GCN	$69.6_{\pm 0.8}$	$66.5_{\pm 0.7}$	$23.2_{\pm 2.5}$	$43.8_{\pm 1.6}$	$84.1_{\pm 0.5}$	$57.0_{\pm 4.5}$	$61.0_{\pm 1.4}$	$22.5_{\pm 3.3}$	$54.1_{\pm 2.1}$	$71.7_{\pm 2.6}$
GAT	$72.6_{\pm 1.3}$	$66.2_{\pm 3.4}$	$17.4_{\pm 1.0}$	$53.2_{\pm 2.7}$	$79.0_{\pm 1.1}$	$56.0_{\pm 3.2}$	$66.3_{\pm 2.5}$	$31.4_{\pm 1.9}$	$54.0_{\pm 2.9}$	$70.2_{\pm 2.1}$
FAC	$74.2_{\pm 1.3}$	$65.7_{\pm 2.6}$	$26.4_{\pm 2.0}$	$53.4_{\pm 4.0}$	$80.3_{\pm 0.9}$	$67.2_{\pm 1.7}$	$66.3_{\pm 3.3}$	$35.1_{\pm 2.4}$	$53.8_{\pm 1.5}$	$78.1_{\pm 3.0}$
DIS	$73.0_{\pm 3.5}$	$69.3_{\pm 2.1}$	$27.1_{\pm 1.7}$	$52.2_{\pm 3.9}$	$85.2_{\pm 2.0}$	$68.1_{\pm 1.8}$	$64.1_{\pm 0.5}$	$41.3_{\pm 1.4}$	$53.5_{\pm 2.3}$	$72.4_{\pm 2.3}$
UNC	$80.5_{\pm 1.5}$	$71.6_{\pm 4.5}$	$28.5_{\pm 2.8}$	$55.4_{\pm 2.0}$	$91.0_{\pm 2.3}$	$83.0_{\pm 2.9}$	$71.8_{\pm 3.2}$	$\mathbf{53.2}_{\pm 0.8}$	$58.6_{\pm 1.9}$	$87.1_{\pm 4.0}$
CON	$\mathbf{81.9}_{\pm 1.2}$	$\mathbf{74.5}_{\pm 3.2}$	$\mathbf{49.1}_{\pm 3.1}$	$\mathbf{59.7}_{\pm 1.2}$	$\mathbf{92.3}_{\pm 0.9}$	$\mathbf{83.3}_{\pm 0.7}$	$\mathbf{74.1}_{\pm 1.2}$	$52.4_{\pm 3.1}$	$\mathbf{60.5}_{\pm 1.2}$	$\mathbf{89.8}_{\pm 2.3}$

Table 2: Compression and few shot classification results.

	FRANKENSTEIN			COLORS-3			Mutagenicity			NCI1		
Model	MSE	Size	Acc.	MSE	Size	Acc.	MSE	Size	Acc.	MSE	Size	Acc.
MIA	$\mathbf{1.6}_{\pm 0.5}$	4.9M	$65_{\pm 1}$	$\mathbf{1.8}_{\pm 0.2}$	729K	$33_{\pm 2}$	$\mathbf{4.1}_{\pm 0.8}$	753K	$78_{\pm 2}$	$\mathbf{3.2}_{\pm 0.5}$	777K	$61_{\pm 1}$
GCN	$12.6_{\pm 2.5}$	4.2M	$39_{\pm 3}$	$11.2_{\pm 1.1}$	657K	$33_{\pm 2}$	$16.5_{\pm 2.1}$	673K	$72_{\pm 1}$	$7.4_{\pm 1.2}$	697K	$53_{\pm 4}$
GAT	$9.0_{\pm 1.2}$	4.2M	$26_{\pm 2}$	$10.1_{\pm 3.1}$	665K	$30_{\pm 1}$	$11.3_{\pm 2.8}$	681K	$79_{\pm 4}$	$8.1_{\pm 0.3}$	705K	$50_{\pm 2}$
UNC	$4.3_{\pm 1.1}$	**4.1M**	$68_{\pm 2}$	$5.1_{\pm 1.5}$	**625K**	$\mathbf{39}_{\pm 1}$	$4.2_{\pm 0.3}$	**633K**	$81_{\pm 3}$	$3.5_{\pm 0.3}$	**657K**	$63_{\pm 2}$
CON	$2.8_{\pm 0.5}$	**4.1M**	$\mathbf{69}_{\pm 2}$	$1.9_{\pm 0.4}$	**625K**	$38_{\pm 3}$	$3.2_{\pm 1.1}$	**633K**	$\mathbf{84}_{\pm 2}$	$3.9_{\pm 0.9}$	**657K**	$\mathbf{66}_{\pm 2}$

Quantitative disentanglement benchmark We compare our models with several baselines, over 10 random seed runs, where we measure the mean and variance, by training for 200 epochs on the proposed synthetic datasets and measuring the quantitative metrics on 1000 data points. Baselines include GAT [55] and GCN [25] based autoencoders, as well as disentangled graph methods such as FAC [59] and DIS [34]. Our unconditional and conditional Lie group models are named UNC and CON and set with group size of 81 and hessian penalty 40.

In Table 1 we observe that our Lie group models are able to improve on previous baselines on all metrics on the evaluated datasets, and the conditional version achieves the best performance in most cases. The FL and FVM metrics show the highest performance increase. FL is designed to capture the disentanglement on each generative factor, which, in our models is controlled by the group size, while in previous approaches is not considered. FVM is the most used metrics for vision datasets, and provides a more robust assessment than the Beta metric. We note that while previously proposed disentangled approaches DIS and FAC demonstrate higher disentanglement when compared to GCN and GAT, they are outperformed by our methods.

5.2 Compression and few-shots classification

Experimental setup Following the setup from [15], we consider the task of learning a compressed model via multiple pooling operations, and test on few-shots classification capabilities on datasets with multiple classes, including FRANKENSTEIN [40] (2 classes), COLORS-3 [26] (11 classes), Mutagenicity [48] (2 classes), NCI1 [50] (2 c). The baselines include MIA [15], which propose an attention-based pooling for compression, as well as GCN [25], and GAT [55] based autoencoders, equipped with the same pooling layer. All models are set to have a pooling rate of 0.8, and a depth of 3. Our models are set with a group size of 81 and hessian penalty of 20. The task consists in training first without labels to learn the representation, and then using the compressed model as input for training a GCN classifier a labelled subset of the dataset, which involves 100 samples for training and 100 for testing.

Results In Table 2 we report the mean and variance across 10 runs for MSE, the classification accuracy, and the size of the trained model. The results show that CON and UNC outperform the considered baselines in terms of few-shots classification accuracy on all datasets, while achieving a smaller compressed size. We hypothesize that the generalization performance is due to more efficient learning due to disentanglement, in fact disentangled representations have been studied in the context of generalization in previous work [38, 63, 28]. In terms of MSE, our models show a decrease in performance compared to MIA, but improve on GCN and GAT based autoencoders.

Table 3: Random graph generation.

	ZINC				QM9				MOSES			
Model	Val	Res	Uni	Nov	Val	Res	Uni	Nov	Val	Res	Uni	Nov
JT-VAE	**100**	n/a	**100**	**100**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	**100**	n/a	**99.96**	91.43
GCPN	**100**	20	99.97	**100**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
GraphAF	**100**	68	99.1	**100**	**100**	67	94.15	88.83	**100**	71	99.99	**100**
GraphDF	**100**	**89.03**	99.16	**100**	**100**	82.67	**97.62**	**98.1**	**100**	**87.58**	99.55	**100**
UNC	**100**	78.21	99.12	**100**	**100**	75.43	95.22	90.33	**100**	81.62	99.62	**100**
CON	**100**	86.02	99.14	**100**	**100**	**82.92**	96.43	92.28	**100**	84.29	99.79	**100**

Table 4: Property optimization performance.

	Penalized logP			QED		
	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
ZINC	4.52	4.3	4.23	0.948	0.948	0.948
JT-VAE	5.3	4.93	4.49	0.925	0.911	0.910
GCPN	7.98	7.85	7.80	**0.948**	0.947	0.946
GraphAF	12.23	11.29	11.05	**0.948**	**0.948**	0.947
GraphDF	**13.7**	**13.18**	**13.17**	**0.948**	**0.948**	**0.948**
UNC	12.56	12.46	12.03	0.947	**0.948**	0.947
CON	12.89	12.82	12.27	**0.948**	**0.948**	**0.948**

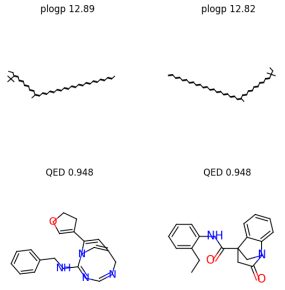

Figure 3: Molecules from CON

5.3 Molecular graph generation

The molecular generation experiment is two-fold, the first part involves learning the distribution of the molecular data while the second one involves fine-tuning the pre-trained model with a Reinforcement Learning (RL) procedure for a downstream generation task. We employ our disentangled models during the training phase, and then follow the RL method from GCPN [60] for fine-tuning tasks, which include random generation, property optimization and constrained optimization. For all tasks, we follow the setups from previous GNN approaches [20, 51, 33] designing our experiments based on TorchDrug[2] and DIG [29]. We set our disentangled models with a group size of 81 and a hessian penalty of 40. In terms of baselines, we include JT-VAE [20], GraphAF [51], GraphDF [33], GCPN [60].

Random generation This task evaluates the quality of randomly generated samples on 4 standard metrics in percentage, including: valid molecules with resampling (Val), valid molecules without resampling (Res), unique molecules (Uni), novel molecules that not appear in the training data (Nov). Following the baselines' setup, we evaluate on ZINC [19], QM9 [46], and MOSES [44]. We train our models for 10 epochs, with a batch size of 32 and the learning rate of 0.001, and compute the metrics over 10K generated molecules. In Table 3 we observe that our CON model achieves the highest score of validity withour resampling on the ZINC dataset, and we note that both UNC and CON are able to improve the performance of GraphAF and GCPN on most metrics, while achieving comparable performance with GraphDF. Since our model is not optimized for molecule generation, the positive results of UNC and CON indicate that disentangled representations may represent way to achieve more expressive generation, and that encouraging the separation of generative factors into different latent codes, may be beneficial for improving the quality of the samples.

Property optimization The goal of the task is to generate novel molecules with high property scores for the penalized logP property, and the quantitative estimation of drug-likeness property (QED). The setup involves pretraining our models for 300 epochs on ZINC random generation, applying the RL fine-tuning procedure from GCPN, and measuring the scores from the top 3 generated molecules. In Table 4 we observe that our models are able to outperform GCPN and GraphAF for both penalized logP and QED, and achieve comparable performance to the more advanced GraphDF. In Figure 3 we

[2]https://torchdrug.ai/ (Apache license)

show the molecules generated using CON. While our model does not outperform GraphDF, this result is important because it demonstrates that the disentangled representations learned from our models can be leveraged to improve the performance of the downstream task.

Constrained Optimization This task aims to modify the input molecular graph for improving its penalized logP score while keeping the similarity between the input and modified molecules higher than the threshold δ. We follow the setup of GraphAF and GraphDF, which select 800 molecules from ZINC with low penalized logP scores as the input molecules to be optimized. We pretrain our model on the random generation task for 300 epochs, and then fine-tune with the RL procedure from GraphAF. We report the mean and standard deviation of the largest property improvement (Imp), and similarities (Sim) between them and their corresponding input molecules, as well as the success rate (Suc). In Table 5 we compare the results for our CON model with GraphAF and GraphDF. We observe that CON is able to outperform GraphAF 3 out of 4 times for improvement values, and achieves comparable results with GraphDF, which we motivate by the fact that GraphDF provides further fine-tuning in order to improve the baseline. In terms of similarity and success rate, our model has comparable results with the baselines.

Table 5: Constrained optimization performance on 800 molecules used in GraphAF.

δ	GraphAF			GraphDF			CON		
	Imp	Sim	Suc	Imp	Sim	Suc	Imp	Sim	Suc
0.0	$13.13_{\pm 6.89}$	$0.29_{\pm 0.15}$	100	$\mathbf{14.15}_{\pm 6.86}$	$0.29_{\pm 0.13}$	100	$13.26_{\pm 3.24}$	$0.28_{\pm 0.21}$	100
0.2	$11.90_{\pm 6.86}$	$0.33_{\pm 0.12}$	100	$\mathbf{12.77}_{\pm 6.59}$	$0.32_{\pm 0.11}$	100	$12.35_{\pm 5.62}$	$0.32_{\pm 0.13}$	100
0.4	$8.21_{\pm 6.51}$	$0.49_{\pm 0.09}$	99.8	$\mathbf{9.19}_{\pm 6.43}$	$0.48_{\pm 0.08}$	99.6	$8.25_{\pm 4.93}$	$0.50_{\pm 0.18}$	98.4
0.6	$\mathbf{4.98}_{\pm 6.49}$	$0.66_{\pm 0.05}$	96.8	$4.51_{\pm 5.80}$	$0.65_{\pm 0.05}$	92.1	$4.67_{\pm 5.39}$	$0.66_{\pm 0.03}$	93.2

6 Conclusion

We formalize the notion of conditional disentanglement on graphs and propose a novel framework for graph disentanglement by leveraging tools from Lie algebras. Based on the new definition of disentanglement, we design a graph VAE based on a Lie group parameterization, and provide a novel ELBO criteria for optimizing conditional disentanglement. Our method achieves superior performance on quantitative disentanglement benchmarks when compared to contemporary disentangled GNNs and other convolutional layers. Finally, we demonstrate strong capabilities on few-shots classification and molecular generation experiments.

Limitations We rely on synthetic dataset for evaluating disentanglement, because current quantitative metrics are based on the ability to sample each factor and combine them into an observation. Since this is and open problem in representation learning [22], future work will investigate how to provide metrics that can evaluate disentanglement on real-word datasets.

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Checklist

1. For all authors...
   (a) Do the main claims made in the abstract and introduction accurately reflect the paper's contributions and scope? [Yes]
   (b) Did you describe the limitations of your work? [Yes] See Section 6
   (c) Did you discuss any potential negative societal impacts of your work? [N/A]
   (d) Have you read the ethics review guidelines and ensured that your paper conforms to them? [Yes]
2. If you are including theoretical results...
   (a) Did you state the full set of assumptions of all theoretical results? [Yes]
   (b) Did you include complete proofs of all theoretical results? [Yes] Provided in Appendix
3. If you ran experiments...
   (a) Did you include the code, data, and instructions needed to reproduce the main experimental results (either in the supplemental material or as a URL)? [Yes] Provided as zip file in the supplemental material
   (b) Did you specify all the training details (e.g., data splits, hyperparameters, how they were chosen)? [Yes] We specify the experimental setups in Section 5
   (c) Did you report error bars (e.g., with respect to the random seed after running experiments multiple times)? [Yes] See beginning of Section 5
   (d) Did you include the total amount of compute and the type of resources used (e.g., type of GPUs, internal cluster, or cloud provider)? [Yes] See beginning of Section 5
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