

Uncertainty Reduction in Reservoir Characterisation
through Inverse Modelling of Dynamic Data: an
Evolutionary Computation Approach

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Contents

Summary	ix
Thesis declaration	xii
Acknowledgement	xiii
List of publications	xiv
Chapter 1	1
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Statement of the problem	3
1.2. Brief background and research gaps	3
1.3. Objectives	9
1.4. Outline of the methods and contributions	10
1.4.1. Artificial bee colony algorithm	11
1.4.2. Proxy-modelling with evolution-control	12
1.4.3. Image-fusion.....	13
1.4.4. Pareto optimisation.....	14
1.4.5. Fast simulator based on transfer functions	14
Chapter 2.....	17
2. Mathematical preliminaries	17
2.1. Inverse problem theory	17
2.2. History matching in reservoir simulation	19
2.3. Parameterisation.....	20
2.3.1. Reparameterisation.....	21
2.3.1.1. Zonation.....	23
2.3.1.2. Pilot point reparameterisation.....	23
2.3.1.3. Spectral decomposition.....	25
2.4. Objective function formulation	27
2.4.1. Deterministic formulation	27
2.4.2. Probabilistic formulation.....	30
2.4.3. Bayesian framework.....	31
2.4.4. Kalman Filter.....	37
2.5. Optimisation.....	40
2.5.1. Gradient-based optimisation algorithms.....	41
2.5.1.1. Gradient descent method	41
2.5.1.2. Conjugate gradient descent optimisation algorithm.....	42
2.5.1.3. Quasi-Newton.....	44
2.5.1.4. Variable metric methods.....	44
2.5.2. Non-gradient optimisation algorithms.....	46
2.5.2.1. Genetic Algorithm	49
2.5.2.2. Artificial Bee Colony.....	50
2.5.2.3. Multi-objective optimisation	51
2.5.2.4. Comparison of the optimisation algorithms.....	52
2.5.3. Fitness approximation	56
Chapter 3.....	59
3. Literature review	59
3.1. History matching	59
3.2. Parameterisation and reparameterisation.....	60
3.3. Objective function formulation	66
3.3.1. The shape of landscape.....	68
3.3.2. Data assimilation	69
3.4. Optimisation.....	69
3.4.1. Pareto optimisation.....	73
3.4.2. Proxy-modelling.....	75
3.5. Fast simulators	77

3.5.1.	Decline curve analysis.....	78
3.5.2.	Streamline simulation.....	78
3.5.3.	Capacitance resistance method.....	79
Chapter 4	81
4.	Reservoir characterisation using artificial bee colony optimisation.....	81
4.1.	Synthetic reservoir model.....	82
4.2.	Optimisation step for the case study.....	86
4.2.1.	Artificial bee colony algorithm.....	87
4.2.2.1.	Searching behaviour of ABC on the Ackley function.....	89
4.2.2.2.	Searching behaviour of ABC on the Schwefel function.....	90
4.2.3.	History matching using artificial bee colony algorithm.....	92
4.2.4.	Comparison of the artificial bee colony with three optimisation algorithms.....	98
4.3.	Effects of reparameterisation operators on the landscape shape.....	101
4.3.1.	Landscape shape for the zonation operator.....	102
4.3.2.	Landscape shape for the spline operator.....	103
4.3.3.	Landscape shape for the spectral decomposition operator.....	105
4.3.4.	Landscape shape for the pilot point operator.....	106
4.4.	Discussion.....	107
Chapter 5	111
5.	Assessment of different model management techniques in history matching problems.....	111
5.1.	Fitness approximation.....	112
5.2.	Methodology.....	117
5.2.1.	Uncontrolled fitness approximation approach (UFA).....	117
5.2.2.	Fitness approximation with an individual-based evolution-control approach (FAIBEC).....	118
5.2.3.	Fitness approximation with a population-based evolution-control approach (FAPBEC).....	120
5.2.4.	Fitness approximation with an adaptive evolution-control approach (FAAEC).....	121
5.3.	Genetic algorithm.....	125
5.4.	Results.....	131
5.4.1.	Case Study.....	131
5.4.1.1.	History matching using UFA.....	135
5.4.1.2.	History matching using FAIBEC.....	137
5.4.1.3.	History matching using FAPBEC.....	138
5.4.1.4.	History matching using FAAEC.....	140
5.5.	Discussion.....	143
Chapter 6	147
6.	Reservoir modelling using image fusion technique.....	147
6.1.	Image fusion technique.....	148
6.2.	Methodology.....	152
6.3.	Results.....	157
6.3.1.	Synthetic Reservoir Model.....	158
6.3.1.1.	Zonation reparameterisation with LBFGS.....	162
6.3.1.2.	Spectral decomposition of prior covariance matrix reparameterisation with LBFGS.....	163
6.3.1.3.	Pilot point reparameterisation with a genetic algorithm.....	164
6.3.1.4.	Full-parameterisation with LBFGS.....	165
6.3.1.5.	Full-parameterisation with GA.....	166
6.3.1.6.	Full-parameterisation with ABC.....	167
6.3.1.7.	Full-parameterisation with the proposed method.....	168
6.3.1.8.	Comparison.....	170
6.3.2.	PUNQ-S3 Reservoir Model.....	172
6.3.2.1.	Full-parameterisation with LBFGS.....	174
6.3.2.2.	Full parameterisation with the proposed approach.....	174
6.3.2.3.	Comparison.....	175
6.4.	Discussion.....	176
Chapter 7	179
7.	Regularisation in history matching problems using Pareto front and Bayesian framework.....	179

7.1.	Pareto optimisation	182
7.2.	Methodology	185
7.2.1.	The conventional method	186
7.2.2.	The Pareto method.....	186
7.3.	Results.....	192
7.3.1.	Numerical example.....	192
7.3.2.	History matching on PUNQ-S3 model.....	198
7.4.	Discussion	205
Chapter 8.....		207
8.	Application of transfer functions in providing quick estimation of future performance	207
8.1.	Transfer functions	209
8.1.1.	First-order transfer function	210
8.1.2.	Second-order transfer function	210
8.1.3.	Lag transfer function	211
8.2.	Methodology	212
8.2.1.	Water-flooding simulation by transfer function method	212
8.2.1.1.	Fractional flow for water-flooding	216
8.2.2.	Gas-flooding simulation using transfer function method	217
8.2.2.1.	Fraction flow for gas-flooding.....	221
8.3.	Results.....	222
8.3.1.	Water-flooding model verification	222
8.3.1.1.	Case study#1: single injector/single producer	223
8.3.1.2.	Case study#2: 2 injectors/2 producers with anisotropy	225
8.3.1.3.	Case study#3: 9-spot heterogeneous.....	228
8.3.1.4.	Case study#4: heterogeneous with faults.....	230
8.3.2.	Gas-flooding model verification.....	234
8.3.2.1.	Case study#1: immiscible gas-flooding in a homogenous reservoir with one injector and two producers	234
8.3.2.2.	Case#2: immiscible gas-flooding in an anisotropy reservoir with one injector and two producers	236
8.3.2.3.	Case study#3: miscible gas-flooding in a homogenous reservoir with one injector and two producers	237
8.3.2.4.	Case study#4: miscible gas-flooding in a heterogeneous reservoir with one injector and four producers.....	239
8.3.2.5.	Case study#5: immiscible gas-flooding in a heterogeneous reservoir with five injectors and four producers.....	240
8.3.2.6.	Case study#6: immiscible gas flooding in a homogeneous reservoir with two injectors and three producers	243
8.4.	Discussion	245
Chapter 9.....		249
9.	Conclusions and recommendations	249
9.1.	Conclusive remarks.....	249
9.2.	Future works	254
Appendix		257
a.1.	MATLAB Coding	257
a.1.1.	Interface development	258
a.1.1.1.	Coupling of MATLAB with ECLIPSE.....	258
a.1.1.1.1.	ECLIPSE input data generation	258
a.1.1.1.2.	ECLIPSE execution	261
a.1.1.1.3.	Output file extraction	262
a.1.1.2.	Objective function coding.....	263
a.1.1.3.	Reparameterisation coding.....	264
a.1.1.3.1.	Zonation	265
a.1.1.3.2.	Pilot point.....	266
a.1.1.3.3.	Spectral decomposition.....	267

a.1.1.3.4. Bicubic spline.....	267
a.1.2. Optimisation development	268
a.1.2.1. GA with a customised crossover	268
a.1.2.1.1. GA body	269
a.1.2.1.2. Initial population generator.....	270
a.1.2.1.3. Crossover and mutation function.....	270
a.1.2.1.4. Tournament function.....	271
a.1.2.2. EA with the image-fusion technique	272
a.1.2.2.1. Initial population generator.....	273
a.1.2.2.2. Crossover and mutation function.....	276
a.1.2.2.3. Tournament function.....	278
a.1.3. Infill drilling optimisation	278
a.1.3.1. Coding	279
a.1.3.1.1. Interface	279
a.1.3.1.2. Objective function (NPV).....	279
a.1.3.1.3. GA for well placement.....	280
a.1.3.2. Results of Infill drilling	282
a.1.3.2.1. First paper	283
a.1.3.2.2. Second paper.....	295
Bibliography	305

List of figures

Figure 1.1 The effect of reservoir model uncertainties on investment decisions	2
Figure 1.2 History matching schematically.....	2
Figure 1.3 The steps of history matching	3
Figure 1.4 Calibration through an optimisation rule (direct calibration).....	5
Figure 1.5 Calibration through a reparameterisation and an optimisation (indirect calibration)	6
Figure 1.6 The developed framework between MATLAB and ECLIPSE	11
Figure 2.1 Forward problem	19
Figure 2.2 Inverse problem	20
Figure 2.3 Porosity distribution of the reference model for the example	22
Figure 2.4 Reparameterisation using the zonation method	23
Figure 2.5 Reparameterisation using the pilot point method.....	25
Figure 2.6 Reparameterisation using the spectral decomposition method	27
Figure 2.7 The degree of biasness of a coin based on observations (Sivia and Skilling, 2006)	31
Figure 2.8 Prior posterior probability function	35
Figure 2.9 Posterior probability distribution	36
Figure 2.10 Discretisation of variable space (Wikipedia)	41
Figure 2.11 Conjugate gradient descent versus gradient descent method (Wikipedia)	43
Figure 2.12 Local minimum versus global minimum	46
Figure 2.13 2D Schwefel function	53
Figure 2.14 2D Rastrigin function	53
Figure 2.15 2D Griewank function	54
Figure 2.16 2D Sphere function	54
Figure 2.17 2D Ackley function	55
Figure 2.18 A multilayered network with a hidden layer with a number of neurones and a number of inputs and one output (Saemi et al., 2007).....	58
Figure 3.1 Published SPE paper concerning history matching subject (Oliver and Chen 2010).....	60
Figure 3.2 The solid line and dashed line expresses the original fitness function and the approximate function, respectively, and the dots are the available samples (Jin, 2005)	76
Figure 3.3 Latin hypercube sample for a 2D problem (Wikipedia).....	77
Figure 4.1 Oil saturation for the synthetic reservoir model for each layer	83
Figure 4.2 Reference permeability distribution of the synthetic reservoir model	85
Figure 4.3 Workflow of artificial bee colony algorithm	89
Figure 4.4 2D Ackley function	90
Figure 4.5 Searching behaviour of ABC on the Ackley function.....	91
Figure 4.6 2D Schwefel function	91
Figure 4.7 Searching behaviour of ABC on Schwefel function	92
Figure 4.8 Pilot point distribution in polar coordination	93
Figure 4.9 Well oil production rate for all producers, before and after history matching	96
Figure 4.10 The landscape shape for the zonation reparameterisation.....	103
Figure 4.11 The landscape shape for the spline reparameterisation	104
Figure 4.12 The landscape shape for the spectral decomposition reparameterisation	106
Figure 4.13 The landscape shape for the pilot point reparameterisation	107
Figure 5.1 Approximation of the one-dimensional Ackley function via a neural network with 20 samples	114
Figure 5.2 Approximation of the one-dimensional Ackley function via a neural network with 200 samples	114
Figure 5.3 Approximation of the two-dimensional Ackley function via a neural network with 200 samples.....	115
Figure 5.4 Approximation of the two-dimensional Ackley function via a neural network with 20000 samples.....	115
Figure 5.5 Procedure of the adaptive evolution control in each evolution cycle.....	124
Figure 5.6 Comparison of the crossover operators on Ackley function	129
Figure 5.7 Comparison of the crossover operators on Sphere function.....	129
Figure 5.8 Comparison of the crossover operators on Rastrigin function	129
Figure 5.9 Comparison of the crossover operators on Griewank function	130
Figure 5.10 Comparison of the crossover operators on Schwefel function.....	130
Figure 5.11 PUNQ-S3 reservoir model.....	132
Figure 5.12 Neural network performance versus the number of hidden neurones	135
Figure 5.13 History matching using the uncontrolled fitness approximation, seed No.#1	136
Figure 5.14 History matching using the uncontrolled fitness approximation, seed No.#2	136
Figure 5.15 History matching using the uncontrolled fitness approximation, seed No.#3	136
Figure 5.16 History matching using the uncontrolled fitness approximation, seed No.#4	136
Figure 5.17 History matching using the uncontrolled fitness approximation, seed No.#5	137
Figure 5.18 History matching using the FAIBEC seed No.1	137
Figure 5.19 History matching using the FAIBEC seed No.2	137
Figure 5.20 History matching using the FAIBEC seed No.3	138
Figure 5.21 History matching using the FAIBEC seed No.4	138
Figure 5.22 History matching using the FAIBEC seed No.5	138
Figure 5.23 History matching using the FAPBEC seed No.1	139
Figure 5.24 History matching using the FAPBEC seed No.2	139

Figure 5.25 History matching using the FAPBEC seed No.3.....	139
Figure 5.26 History matching using the FAPBEC seed No.4.....	140
Figure 5.27 History matching using the FAPBEC seed No.5.....	140
Figure 5.28 History matching using the FAAEC seed No.1.....	140
Figure 5.29 History matching using the FAAEC seed No.2.....	141
Figure 5.30 History matching using the FAAEC seed No.3.....	141
Figure 5.31 History matching using the FAAEC seed No.4.....	141
Figure 5.32 History matching using the FAAEC seed No.5.....	141
Figure 5.33 Comparison of achieved mismatch after history matching by the uncontrolled and the adaptive approach for well bottomhole pressure of producer#15.....	142
Figure 5.34 Average fitness values for the four fitness approximation approach.....	144
Figure 6.1 Image fusion example (Nikolov et al., 2001).....	153
Figure 6.2 Porosity realisations merging by wavelet image-fusion.....	155
Figure 6.3 A 2-dimensional chromosome.....	157
Figure 6.4 The 2-dimensional chromosome after mutation.....	157
Figure 6.5 Workflow of the developed history match algorithm.....	159
Figure 6.6 The permeability distribution of the reference case and the well locations.....	160
Figure 6.7 The result of zonation reparameterisation with the LBFGS and the reference porosity distribution.....	163
Figure 6.8 The result of the spectral decomposition of prior covariance matrix reparameterisation with the LBFGS, the reference porosity distribution and prior model.....	164
Figure 6.9 The result of the pilot point reparameterisation with the GA and the reference porosity distribution.....	165
Figure 6.10 The result of the full-parameterisation with the LBFGS and the reference porosity distribution.....	166
Figure 6.11 The result of the full-parameterisation with the GA and the reference porosity distribution.....	167
Figure 6.12 The result of the full-parameterisation with the ABC and the reference porosity distribution.....	168
Figure 6.13 The result of the full-parameterisation with the proposed method and the reference porosity distribution.....	169
Figure 6.14 Fitness value at each generation for the 1st case study using the proposed method.....	170
Figure 6.15 Fitness value at achieved models using each of the approaches for the 1st case study.....	170
Figure 6.16 Q value at achieved models using each of the approaches for the 1st case study.....	171
Figure 6.17 P values at achieved models using each of the approaches for the 1st case study.....	172
Figure 6.18 The porosity distribution of the reference case and the well locations (2nd case study).....	173
Figure 6.19 Achieved porosity distribution for each layer of PUNQ-S3 using the LBFGS approach along with the reference porosity distribution.....	174
Figure 6.20 Achieved porosity distribution for each layer of PUNQ-S3 using the proposed approach along with the reference porosity distribution.....	176
Figure 6.21 Field oil production total for 9000 days.....	176
Figure 7.1 Feasible solution and Pareto front for a two-objective problem (Haupt and Haupt, 2004).....	182
Figure 7.2 Feasible region and Pareto front of history matching problems considering prior and likelihood function as two separate objectives.....	188
Figure 7.3 The observed data with and without noise for the numerical example.....	194
Figure 7.4 The cumulative probability distribution achieved by the conventional approach.....	196
Figure 7.5 Pareto front of the numerical example.....	197
Figure 7.6 Pareto front of the numerical example with first trade-off rule.....	197
Figure 7.7 Pareto front of the numerical example with first and second trade-off rule.....	198
Figure 7.8 The cumulative probability distribution achieved by the conventional and the proposed approach.....	198
Figure 7.9 Reference porosity distribution of PUNQ-S3 generated by bicubic spline.....	200
Figure 7.10 Pareto front for PUNQ-S3 reservoir.....	203
Figure 7.11 Pareto front for PUNQ-S3 and the solutions after trade-off.....	204
Figure 7.12 Cumulative probability of average difference of forecasting of two approaches (Monte Carlo and Pareto).....	205
Figure 8.1 Transfer function.....	209
Figure 8.2 Combination of transfer functions.....	212
Figure 8.3 Water-flooding transfer function model.....	214
Figure 8.4 Transfer function approach algorithm for water-flooding.....	217
Figure 8.5 Gas-flooding transfer function model.....	219
Figure 8.6 Oil saturation for case#1.....	223
Figure 8.7 Comparison of transfer function simulator and grid-based simulator for case#1.....	224
Figure 8.8 Oil prediction using Gentil model and TF and its difference from the grid-based simulator for case#1.....	225
Figure 8.9 The well locations and oil saturation for case#2.....	227
Figure 8.10 Comparison of transfer function simulator and grid-based simulation for Prod#2 of case#2.....	228
Figure 8.11 Comparison of transfer function simulator and grid-based simulation for Prod#1 of case#2.....	228
Figure 8.12 Well locations and permeability distribution for case#3.....	229
Figure 8.13 Injection profile for case#3.....	229
Figure 8.14 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulation for Prod#4 in case#3.....	229
Figure 8.15 Permeability distribution and well locations for case#4.....	230
Figure 8.16 Injection profile for injector for case#4.....	231
Figure 8.17 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulator for Prod#1 case#4.....	231
Figure 8.18 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulator for Prod#2 case#4.....	232
Figure 8.19 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulator for Prod#3 case#4.....	232
Figure 8.20 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulator for Prod#4 case#4.....	232
Figure 8.21 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulator for Prod#5 case#4.....	232
Figure 8.22 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulator for Prod#6 case#4.....	233

Figure 8.23 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulator for Prod#7 case#4.....	233
Figure 8.24 Comparison of TF simulator and grid-based simulator for Prod#8 case#4.....	233
Figure 8.25 Well locations and Inter Facial Tension (IFT) for case#1.....	235
Figure 8.26 Comparison between TF and grid-based simulator results for Case#1 for Prod#1 and the injection profile .	236
Figure 8.27 Comparison between TF and grid-based simulator results for Case#2 and the injection profile	237
Figure 8.28 Well locations and IFT distribution for case#3.....	238
Figure 8.29 Comparison of TF simulation and grid-based simulation in Case 3 for Prod#1	238
Figure 8.30 Well locations and x-dir permeability for case 4	239
Figure 8.31 Comparison of TF simulator and Grid-based simulation for case#4.....	240
Figure 8.32 well locations for case 5	241
Figure 8.33 Comparison of transfer function simulation and grid-based simulation for case 5	241
Figure 8.34 Comparison of fractional flow model combined with TF and grid-based simulation for Case 5.....	242
Figure 8.35 Interruption in oil fraction curve in high thickness reservoir	243
Figure 8.36 Well locations for case 6.....	244
Figure 8.37 Comparison of transfer function simulation and grid-based simulation for case 6	244
Figure 8.38 Comparison of fractional flow model combined with TF and grid-based simulation for FF case study.....	245

List of tables

Table 2.1 Hessian matrix estimation using different methods in the variable metric algorithm	45
Table 2.2 Mathematical benchmarking functions	53
Table 2.3 Comparison of three optimisation algorithm for the benchmarking functions.....	55
Table 3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of zonation reparameterisation	61
Table 3.2 Advantages and disadvantages of pilot point reparameterisation	63
Table 3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of spectral decomposition reparameterisation	63
Table 4.1 The synthetic reservoir properties.....	84
Table 4.2 ABC algorithm options.....	94
Table 4.3 The outcomes of history matching via the artificial bee colony algorithm and the reference values.....	97
Table 4.4 The outcomes of history matching via the artificial bee colony algorithm using two other seed numbers.....	97
Table 4.5 The options of the applied optimisation algorithms.....	99
Table 4.6 Results of history matching using different optimisation algorithms (GA, SA, ABC and LM).....	99
Table 4.7 History matching results using the four optimisation algorithms along with the zonation reparameterisation .	102
Table 4.8 History matching results using the four optimisation algorithms along with the spline reparameterisation	104
Table 4.9 History matching results using the four optimisation algorithms along with the spectral decomposition reparameterisation	105
Table 5.1 Benchmarking functions.....	127
Table 5.2 GA options	127
Table 5.3 Achieved fitness values after optimisation using three crossover operators for different functions	128
Table 5.4 Comparison of the achieved slopes of fitness reduction in first 500 generations using different crossover operators	128
Table 5.5 Decision variables and their corresponding domains.....	133
Table 5.6 GA options for carry out history matching	134
Table 5.7 Fitness values for the uncontrolled fitness approximation approach	135
Table 5.8 Fitness values for fitness approximation with the individual-based evolution-control approach.....	138
Table 5.9 Fitness values for fitness approximation with the population-based evolution-control approach.....	139
Table 5.10 Fitness values for fitness approximation with the adaptive evolution-control approach.....	142
Table 6.1 Applied approaches for comparison	158
Table 6.2 GA options	165
Table 6.3 The proposed approach options	169
Table 6.4 The image fusion operator options	169
Table 7.1 The solution of the numerical example for different covariance matrixes	195
Table 7.2 Multi-objective genetic algorithm options	196
Table 7.3 Reference and prior model.....	201
Table 7.4 Single-objective GA options.....	202
Table 7.5 The results of the conventional approach for the PUNQ-S3 model.....	202
Table 7.6 1 st multi-objective genetic algorithm options.....	203
Table 7.7 2 nd multi-objective genetic algorithm options.....	203
Table 8.1 Input functions.....	209
Table 8.2 The property of fluid and rock for case#1.....	224
Table 8.3 The parameters of model for case#1	224
Table 8.4 The parameters of Gentil model for case#1	225
Table 8.5 Fluid and rock properties for case#2.....	227
Table 8.6 Model parameters for case#2.....	227
Table 8.7 Parameters for case#3.....	230
Table 8.8 Fluid and rock properties for case#1.....	235
Table 8.9 The parameter of Case#1	236
Table 8.10 Parameters of Equations for Case#2.....	237
Table 8.11 Parameters of model for Case#3	238
Table 8.12 Fluid and rock properties for case 4.....	239
Table 8.13 Parameters of model for case 4.....	240
Table 8.14 Parameters of model for case 5.....	241
Table 8.15 Fractional flow parameters for case 5	242
Table 8.16 Parameters of model for case 6.....	243
Table 8.17 Fluid and rock properties for case 6.....	244
Table 8.18 FF model parameters for case 6.....	244

Summary

Precise reservoir characterisation is the basis for reliable flow performance predictions and unequivocal decision making concerning field development. History matching is an indispensable phase of reservoir characterisation in which the flow performance history is integrated into the initially constructed reservoir model to reduce uncertainties. It is a computationally intensive nonlinear inverse problem and typically suffers from ill-posedness. Developing an efficient automatic history matching framework is the core goal of almost all studies on this subject.

To overcome some of the existing challenges in history matching, this thesis introduces new techniques which are mostly based on evolutionary computation concepts. In order to examine the techniques, in the beginning, the foundations of an automatic history matching framework are developed in which a reservoir simulator (ECLIPSE) is coupled with a programming language (MATLAB). Then, the introduced methods along with a number of conventional methods are installed on the framework, and they are compared with each other using different case studies.

Thus far, numerous optimisation algorithms have been studied for history matching problems to conduct the calibration step accurately and efficiently. In this thesis, the application of a recent-developed algorithm, artificial bee colony (ABC), is assessed, for the first time. It is compared with three conventional optimisers, Levenberg-Marquette, Genetic Algorithm, and Simulated Annealing, using a synthetic reservoir model. The comparison indicates that ABC can deliver better results and is not concerned with the landscape shape of problem. The most likely reason of its success is having a suitable balance between exploration and exploitation search capability. Of course, similar to all stochastic optimisers, its main drawbacks are computational expenses and being inefficient in high-dimensional problems.

Fitness approximation (proxy-modelling) approaches are common methods for reducing computational costs. All of the applied fitness approximation methods in history-matching problems use a similar approach called uncontrolled fitness approximation. It has been corroborated that the uncontrolled fitness approximation approach may mislead the optimisation direction. To prevent this issue, a new fitness approximation is developed in that a model management (evolution-control) technique is included. The results of the controlled (proposed) approach are compared with the results of conventional one using a case study (PUNQ-S3 model). It is shown that the computation can be reduced up to 75% by the proposed method. The proxy-modelling methods should be applied when the problem is not high-dimensional.

None of the current formats of the applied stochastic optimisers is capable of dealing with high-dimensional problems efficiently, and they should be applied in conjunction with a reparameterisation technique which causes modelling errors. On the other hand, gradient-based optimisers may be trapped into a local minimum, due to the nonlinearity of the problem. In this thesis, an inventive stochastic algorithm is developed for high-dimensional problems based on wavelet image-fusion and evolutionary algorithm concepts. The developed algorithm is compared with six algorithms (genetic algorithm with a pilot point reparameterisation, BFGS with a zonation reparameterisation, BFGS with a spectral decomposition reparameterisation, artificial bee colony, genetic algorithm and BFGS in full-parameterisation) using two different case studies. It is interesting that the best results are obtained by the introduced method.

Besides, it is well-known that achieving high-quality history matched models using any of the methods depends on the reliability of objective function formulation. The most widespread approach of formulation is Bayesian framework. Because of complexities in quantifying measurement, modelling and prior model reliability, the weighting factors in the objective function may have uncertainties. The influence of these uncertainties on the

outcome of history matching is studied in this thesis, and an approach is developed based on Pareto optimisation (multi-objective genetic algorithm) to deal with this issue. The approach is compared with a conventional (random selection) one. The results confirm that a high amount of computation can be saved by the Pareto approach.

In last part of this thesis, a new analytical simulator is developed using the transfer function approach. The developed method does not need the expensive history matching, and it can be used for occasions that a quick forecasting is sought and/or history matching of grid-based reservoir simulation is impractical. In the developed method, it is assumed a reservoir consists of a combination of TFs, and then the order and arrangement of TFs are chosen based on the physical conditions of the reservoir ascertained by examining several cases. The results reveal a good agreement with those obtained from the grid-based simulators.

An additional piece of work is done in this thesis in which the optimal infill drilling plane is estimated for a coal seam gas reservoir (semi-synthetic model constructed based on the Tiffany unit in the San Juan basin) by the use of the developed framework in which the objective function and the decision variables are set to be the net present value, and the location of infill wells, respectively.

Thesis declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution in my name and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Mohammad Sayyafzadeh

3 July 2013

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List of publications

Journals:

- SAYYAFZADEH, M., POURAFSHARY, P., HAGHIGHI, M. & RASHIDI, F. 2011. Application of transfer functions to model water injection in hydrocarbon reservoir. *Journal of Petroleum Science and Engineering*, 78, 139-148.
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به نام خداوند جان و خرد

Dedicated to my mother, *Mahin Ghebt*, who is a constant source of support and encouragement, and to the memory of my father, *Abdolmajid Sayyafzadeh* who passed away just before I embarked on this journey.

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مادرم بلند تکیه گاهم، که دامن پر مهرش یگانه پناهم است و روح پاک پدرم که حاصل داستان خسته اش رمز موفقیتیم شد.