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Engineering
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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Optimal design of water supply networks using a tabu search algorithm

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Keywords: Water supply network design; Tabu search; Metaheuristic; Optimization

1 Introduction

A water supply network is the infrastructure responsible for bringing drinking water to consumers. Currently, population is growing, specifically in urban areas. This causes new challenges regarding the construction and enlargement of this utility. The design and building of extensions of such water supply networks is a hard and expensive task. Therefore, an efficient planification may result in substantial cost reduction and increase in safety.

2 Objectives

The purpose of this study is the optimal design of water supply networks solving a model in which the demand of a set of consumer points must be covered with specific conditions of pressure and flow. The traditional model, which does not include penalty terms, is chosen and some requirements as minimum pressure in nodes are included as constraints. The final objective of this selected model is to find the optimal diameters of each network pipe that minimize the total costs.

The intrinsic characteristics of the hydraulic systems and the discrete nature of some of their variables make this problem a non-linear mixed integer problem.

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3 Methods

Metaheuristics are the most suited methodologies to solve this kind of complex problems. A tabu search algorithm, firstly introduced by (Glover, 1986), is designed and is implemented in the well-known Alperovits network (Alperovits and Shamir, 1977). The main characteristic that differences it from other metaheuristics is the use of short-term memory.

This specific problem requires two different evaluation functions. The first one performs the hydraulic simulation of the network and the second one evaluates the total cost of hydraulically valid solutions. The algorithm works with solutions in the form of lists where each element represents the diameter assigned to each arc. The neighbourhood structure is built through the decrease of one diameter unit to the next one in the commercial catalogue. It also includes an aspiration criterion and a hydraulic-non-valid solution detector.

4 Results

To simulate the network and to analyse if hydraulic requirements are reached, the WNTR library (Klise *et al.*, 2017) was employed. The use of this library has made possible to explore different solutions iteratively in short times.

The best attained solution for the Alperovits network has a cost of 420,000 m.u.. Despite being an optimized solution, it does not reach the results obtained using other metaheuristics. Genetic algorithms (Savic and Wlaters, 1997) seem to be more suited, but they need much greater computing times.

5 Conclusion

Comparing tabu search to the genetic approaches, it can be concluded that this metaheuristic seems to be less appropriate to solve the Alperovits network, although results are clearly in line. Future works may include the resolution of larger and more realistic networks in order to demonstrate the good performance of the designed methodology in these cases.

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