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On-line Fault Diagnosis of Produced Water Treatment with Multilevel Flow Modeling

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Abstract: Making sense of alarms can be difficult on oil and gas platforms. Multilevel Flow Modeling provides a structure for modelling plant functionality and inferring causes for alarms and predicting consequences. Currently, Multilevel Flow Modeling has limited application for on-line fault diagnosis. Based on a fault emulated on a pilot plant for offshore produced water treatment, Multilevel Flow Modeling is used for reasoning about causes for triggered alarms. The inferred causes are analysed to investigate the current maturity of Multilevel Flow Modeling for on-line diagnosis.

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Keywords: Plantwide Fault Diagnosis, Multilevel Flow Modeling, Produced Water Treatment

1. INTRODUCTION

Systems for plant wide fault diagnosis of causes and effects are key to improving operator performance. For complex and safety critical systems such as offshore oil and gas production platforms, a faster and better diagnosis of faults can improve the plant safety and productivity. In this work, a Produced Water Treatment (PWT) pilot plant has been modelled with Multilevel Flow Modeling (MFM), and a fault has been emulated on the physical plant. The MFM model has been used for inferring causes to triggered alarms. The validity of the inferred causes is assessed for the emulated fault, and related to what operators experience.

Typical approaches to alarm management seek to filter, group or rank alarms (Wang et al., 2016). Instead of focusing on presenting alarms to an operator, MFM uses causal and graph based models to interpret alarms and infer root causes. An approach similar to MFM, has been used to model plant causality and isolate the root cause of plant wide oscillations. The method establishes a Signed Directed Graph from transfer entropy of process signals, and isolates the cause based on the reachability of control loops in the graph (Hu et al., 2017). Other approaches include alarm logic diagrams for identifying causes (Dubois et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2010), and Bayesian Networks for alarm prioritisation (Zhu et al., 2014). Recent focus has also been on correlation and causality methods for process signals or alarms (Yang et al., 2011, 2013).

MFM is a method for modelling goals and functions of process systems. The method has been widely applied for offline analysis of faults by Akio and Takahisa (2016); Khalil et al. (2016); Xu et al. (2015); Zhao et al. (2015); Wu et al. (2014); Lind and Zhang (2014), as an alternative to e.g. Goal Tree Success Tree or Fault Tree Analysis (Johnson, 2013; Hurdle et al., 2007). Interest in on-line monitoring and diagnostics has increased in numerous industries over the past few years. For this reason, MFM is currently being developed to provide on-line decision support. The method has previously been applied for on-line diagnosis of power plants (Larsson et al., 2007), nuclear power plants (Larsson, 2007) and in the oil industry (Hu et al., 2015).

Currently the MFM methodology is being developed for on-line fault diagnosis for operator decision support in the oil and gas industry. Recent development includes an improved modelling methodology by Lind (2017), cause and consequence reasoning about control actions and response by Zhang and Lind (2017), causality identification from alarms by Kirchübel et al. (2017), and model performance evaluation by Nielsen et al. (2018). Initial results with on-line fault diagnosis are presented here based on the current MFM methodology.

The MFM methodology has been used to model a state of the art PWT pilot plant at Aalborg University in Esbjerg. As this plant is not used for industrial production, standard operation has been defined for the purpose of investigating the MFM methodology. For this reason, operational setpoints and alarm limits have been defined for this particular test.

2. PWT PILOT PLANT

The pilot plant at Aalborg University in Esbjerg is used for PWT. For this test the subsystems shown in the P&ID in Fig. 1 are used: support system, pipeline riser, three-phase separator and hydrocyclone. Only water and air is mixed as inflow, as no oil is used.
The support system supplies compressed air for control valves, and air for the water mixture to emulate well gas. In addition the support system supplies water from a storage tank MT02 with a pump WFO1 controlled at constant power. The water from the storage tank MT02, is recirculated back to the same storage tank MT02. The component, sensor, and valve names are shown in Fig. 1 and in Table 1. The valves CV12, CV13 and CV14 are closed during the test, whereas CV22 is closed until being used for emulating a misdirected flow.

The pipeline riser is used to deliver the mixture of water and air from the ground level in the lab to the separator. The flow control by using lift gas and a choke valve can be applied as in Pedersen et al. (2014b,a, 2017), but is not used in this test.

The three phase separator SEP1 separates the air and water delivered from the pipeline riser. A sufficiently high pressure is required to drive the water out of the separator. The separator pressure PT14 is maintained by the control valve AFM2_M at the air outlet, but also depends on the water level. The oil outlet contains no liquid and is thus closed at CV12. The control of the water level, and the hydrocyclone is in Durdevic et al. (2017) explained as two typical separate control structures for the hydrocyclone HYD1 and the three-phase separator.

The hydrocyclone is commonly used for removing smaller oil droplets from the produced water, and the separation efficiency is based on the Pressure Drop Ratio (PDR) and flow-split as described by Durdevic et al. (2017); Bram et al. (2017). The underflow control valve of the hydrocyclone is used to control the water level of the separator, and the overflow control valve for controlling the PDR. Since oil is not used in the mixture, the quality of the PDR control is of no importance to the test.

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Table 1. Pilot plant sensors and valves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>System</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PT01</td>
<td>Hydrocyclone</td>
<td>HYD1 input pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT02</td>
<td>Hydrocyclone</td>
<td>HYD1 overflow pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT03</td>
<td>Hydrocyclone</td>
<td>HYD1 underflow pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT04</td>
<td>Water support</td>
<td>Water support pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT07</td>
<td>Riser</td>
<td>Riser bottom pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT08</td>
<td>Riser</td>
<td>Riser top pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT10</td>
<td>Riser</td>
<td>Riser pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT11</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Water support pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT12</td>
<td>Air support</td>
<td>Air support pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT14</td>
<td>Separator</td>
<td>SEP1 pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT15</td>
<td>Air support</td>
<td>Buffer tank air pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFM1</td>
<td>Hydrocyclone</td>
<td>HYD1 underflow flow-rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFM2</td>
<td>Hydrocyclone</td>
<td>HYD1 input flow-rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFM4</td>
<td>Water support</td>
<td>Water support flow-rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFM1</td>
<td>Separator</td>
<td>SEPI oil outlet flow-rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFM2</td>
<td>Hydrocyclone</td>
<td>HYD1 overflow flow-rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFM3</td>
<td>Riser</td>
<td>SEPI input mixed flow-rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFM1</td>
<td>Air support</td>
<td>Support air flow-rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFM2</td>
<td>Separator</td>
<td>SEP1 air output flow-rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dPT3</td>
<td>Separator</td>
<td>Oil level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dPT4</td>
<td>Separator</td>
<td>Water level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFM1_M</td>
<td>Air Support</td>
<td>Control air support pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFM2_M</td>
<td>Separator</td>
<td>Control PT14 SEP1 pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV22</td>
<td>Separator</td>
<td>Misdirect water flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV04</td>
<td>Hydrocyclone</td>
<td>Control dPT4 water level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV09</td>
<td>Hydrocyclone</td>
<td>Control PDR from PT01-03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. P&ID of PWT Pilot Plant with the subsystems: Support, Pipeline Riser, Separator and Hydrocyclone.
2.1 Alarms

Alarm limits have been assigned to all sensor signals. The alarm limits for the pressure sensors have been defined based on recommendations from a process expert. For those pressure sensors where the pressure influences the process performance, the limits have been defined as a deviation in percentage of 10 % for low and high, and 20 % for low low and high high. The deviation is from either the control setpoint, or the mean of 20 minutes of normal operation. All alarm limits for flow rate sensors have been defined as a deviation of a percentage from normal operation, similar to how the pressure alarms were defined. The sensor values are sampled with a frequency of 100 Hz which have been averaged to produce a signal of 1 Hz. To avoid frequent changes to alarm states, an alarm state change is acknowledged after 5 consecutive seconds. All alarm state changes which do not comply with this rule are disregarded.

3. MFM Model

For an overview of the MFM methodology refer to the introduction on modelling with MFM by Lind (2011), and to Zhang et al. (2013) for the rules on reasoning about causes and consequences.

The MFM model of the pilot plant shown in Fig. 2 consists of one mass flow structure, and two energy flow structures. Each flow structure contains functions, that represent the plant functionality, and the causal relations between the functions. An energy flow structure represents the conversion of electrical energy into either energy loss or rotational (kinetic energy) in the pump. The mass flow structure represents the flow of the air and water mixture, whereas the energy flow structure of the mixture, represents the energy contained in the air and water. For this reason, flow rate sensors are associated with transport functions and the water level sensor with a storage function in the mass flow structure. The pressure sensors are associated with storage functions in the energy flow structure. The functions associated with sensors are shown as blue in Fig. 2.

The model is a hypergraph of functions and objectives, connected by causal relations. Each function has a state corresponding to alarm states. Initially all states are normal during normal operation, and if an alarm is triggered as high for a pressure sensor, the corresponding storage function in MFM changes state from normal to high. This state is then propagated to adjacent functions dependent on the causal relations, to determine which functions and states could cause this change. The alarm states of all sensor signals low low, low, normal, high or high high are used for reasoning about potential causes.

The reasoning is triggered when an alarm state appears. MFM is then used to identify the possible root causes for all present alarm states. The purpose is thus for MFM to infer causes that are physically valid for those alarms, and in this particular case to infer that the actual root cause, the function representing CV22, has been breached.

4. EMULATED FAULT

The fault emulated on the pilot plant is a misdirected flow from CV22, between the separator and the hydrocyclone. By opening CV22 from 0 to 10 %, water is redirected from the water outlet of the separator directly to the water storage tank MT02, and thus bypasses the hydrocyclone. The first 800 seconds of the experiment is used for pressurising the three-phase separator to reach normal operation. After 900 seconds CV22 is opened by 10 %, and remains open until the system trips after 1198 seconds due to a low low water level. The following is a physical description of the consequences of the misdirected flow.

The pipe of the misdirected flow is of a larger diameter and provides a shorter return with less flow restrictions and therefore less resistance to flow. As a result of this extra pipe in parallel, more water flows out of the separator, and the separator is now in a state with a larger outflow than inflow. Due to this, the level drops steadily as shown for the signal dPT4 in Fig. 3. The control system tries to avoid this by closing CV04, but the leakage is too big; and thus CV04 closes entirely. As CV04 closes, the pressure PT03 increases. This results in the PDR controller slightly closing CV09 on average, leading to an increase of PT02 on average. However CV09, and therefore also PT02 and CFM02 oscillates due to the poorly tuned PDR controller. Closing CV04 leads to a significant decrease in flow through the hydrocyclone, as indicated in Fig. 3 for MFM01 and MFM02. The level controller keeps the control valve CV04 closed as the level stays below the setpoint of 23 cm.

As the separator pressure drops below the setpoint of 7 bars, the pressure controller closes AFM02-M. This can be seen in Fig. 3 where the flow rate of air AFM02 drops to zero.

As the water level drops, the compressed air is allowed to expand and the separator pressure PT14 drops. This drop in separator pressure means that the pump, controlled at constant power, has less resistance. As a result of the separator pressure continuously dropping, the pump can thus deliver a higher inflow rate to the separator, as can be seen for MFM04 and CFM03 on 3. At the same time, the lower separator pressure should also decrease the misdirected flow rate as there is now a lower differential pressure between the separator and the supply tank. However, the level continues to decrease, thus indicating that the misdirected flow is still larger than the inflow to the separator.

The water level continues to decrease whereas the pressure PT14 stabilizes after a while. The level in the separator is decreasing due to a larger outflow than inflow of water. The difference between the inflow and the outflow gives the rate of change of the liquid volume in the separator. As water leaves the separator the air fills out this volume by expanding. An expansion of the air leads to a decrease in pressure, and as the pressure drops; the flow rate of the separator outflow decreases whereas the inlet flow rate of air and water increases. The rate of change in volume is thus smaller, resulting in a smaller air expansion, and thus also a smaller decrease of the separator pressure PT14.
Both the air and water in the support system, and not just the fault is not related to the support system, but rather difficult to draw conclusions from, but could indicate that pressure decreases, so does PT03. The AFM1 alarm can be in the high pressure initially, and now that the separator unless the operator is aware that CV04 is closed, resulting mal. To the operator, the alarm PT03 can be misleading increases to MFM4:High High. The last alarm is triggered shortly after MFM2:Low Low, and the input flow rate to the hydrocyclone becomes clone underflow becomes MFM1:Low Low CFM3:High. Within the next 6 seconds, the flow rate AFM2:Low Low.

In the first period the first alarm is triggered at 902 s. 5.1 Triggered alarms

triggered alarms.

reasoning results, the test has been divided into three time periods. The sensor signals and the triggered alarm states are presented time periods.

Of PT03 is assumed to be high to reduce the number of the time between 924 s and 943 s the normal alarm state shown in Fig. 3. To simplify the presentation of the sensors are associated with the blue functions in Fig. 2, inferred cause may have multiple alarms as evidence. The functions. Every cause is linked to the alarms which shown in Fig. 4. Each cause is linked to the alarms which are used as evidence to infer the specific cause. Every inferred cause from time period three are the states are propagated through the model to adjacent functions in the MFM model, which are associated with the adjacent functions, and is thus not included in the figure. These functions are considered as the causes shown in Fig. 4. Plot of causes inferred by MFM based on triggered alarms as evidence than other causes.

The evidence from AFM1 is not propagated to any adjacent functions, and is thus not included in the figure. However for simplicity it is considered to be high.

Although the alarm PT03 stops at 925 s, and the state becomes normal. The number of causes inferred by MFM in each time period never infer the correct cause from the alarms in this test. To only seeing alarms, where the operator may potentially be up to the operator to investigate. where the water leaves the separator, and it would thus be introduced to the root cause at the beginning of the time period. However no alarms indicate exactly from which the operator would most likely have in the first alarm should merely be a confirmation of the understand-

This makes the system trips. This fault, but has to filter away all other causes, as opposed thus introduced to the root cause at the beginning of the Table 2. It can be seen in Table 2 that the actual root cause is triggered, and the system trips. This

dPT4:Low Low, at 1063 s, 161 s after the first alarm. The current alarms stay triggered until 1198 s, after which

In the third period, the separator water level alarm triggers at 944 s. In addition the alarm state PT03:High supports the air flow rate alarm triggers as AFM1:High.

The underflow pressure SEP1

breached & energy HYD1 transport outlet Pressure SEP1

Low breathing & Energy

Level SEP1

Low

Leak & Energy

Hydrocyclone. If more water enters the separator, but less but only very little water exits through the overflow of the separator, but air is not leaving through the gas outlet, underflow. The controllers indicate, that the separator air and the water cannot leave through the hydrocyclone. If more water enters the three-phase separator at PT14, as it is connected to the outlet pipe decreasing, the inlet flow rate CFM3 stabilizes. As the separator pressure PT14 stops decreasing, the inlet flow rate CFM3 stabilizes. If the separator air flow rate alarm triggers as AFM1:High, support system air flow rate alarm triggers as AFM1:High.
At approximately 1000 s an equilibrium occurs between the expansion of the air, and the added mass of air. The pressure thus levels off even though the water level is still decreasing. As the separator pressure PT14 stops decreasing, the inlet flow rate CFM3 stabilizes.

The pressure at PT01 (the inlet of the hydrocyclone) decreases in the same manner as the pressure in the separator at PT14, as it is connected to the outlet pipe of the separator. The main difference is an offset, due to the difference in hydrostatic pressure, as the flow rate is very low.

5. RESULTS

The sensor signals and the triggered alarm states are shown in Fig. 3. To simplify the presentation of the reasoning results, the test has been divided into three time periods: 908 s - 943 s, 944 s - 1062 s and 1063 s - 1998 s. In the time between 924 s and 943 s the normal alarm state of PT03 is assumed to be high to reduce the number of presented time periods.

In this section the fault will be discussed from the viewpoint of an operator, based on the triggered alarm states, and the inferred causes will be discussed in relation to the triggered alarms.

5.1 Triggered alarms

In the first period the first alarm is triggered at 902 s. The air flow rate out of the separation tank is triggered as AFM1:Low Low. Within the next 6 seconds, the flow rate of the mixed water and air into the separator becomes CFM3:High, the flow rate and pressure at the hydrocyclone underflow becomes MFM1:Low Low and PT03:High, and the input flow rate to the hydrocyclone becomes MFM2:Low Low. The last alarm is triggered shortly after the fault at 908 s. It is the flow rate from the pump, which increases to MFM4:High High. The underflow pressure alarm PT03 stops at 925 s, and the state becomes normal. However for simplicity it is considered to be high.

An operator would see more water entering the three-phase separator, but air is not leaving through the gas outlet, and the water cannot leave through the hydrocyclone underflow. The controllers indicate, that the separator air outlet valve is closed, and that the underflow valve is closed. This means that more water enters the separator, but only very little water exits through the overflow of the hydrocyclone. If more water enters the separator, but less water and air leaves it, either air or water must be leaving the separator, otherwise somewhere downstream.

In the second period, another alarm is triggered. The support system air flow rate alarm triggers as AFM1:High at 944 s. In addition the alarm state PT03:High is now normal. To the operator, the alarm PT03 can be misleading unless the operator is aware that CV04 is closed, resulting in the high pressure initially, and now that the separator pressure decreases, so does PT03. The AFM1 alarm can be difficult to draw conclusions from, but could indicate that the fault is not related to the support system, but rather something downstream, as the flow rate has increased for both the air and water in the support system, and not just the air.

In the third period, the separator water level alarm triggers as dPT4:Low at 1063 s, 161 s after the first alarm. The current alarms stay triggered until 1198 s, after which dPT4:Low Low is triggered, and the system trips. This alarm should merely be a confirmation of the understanding which the operator would most likely have in the first time period. However no alarms indicate exactly from where the water leaves the separator, and it would thus be up to the operator to investigate.

5.2 Inferred causes

The reasoning results are produced by triggering the functions in the MFM model, which are associated with triggered alarm states. Based on a generic set of rules and a rule based reasoning software (Zhang et al., 2013), the states are propagated through the model to adjacent functions. The inferred causes from time period three are shown in Fig. 4. Each cause is linked to the alarms which are used as evidence to infer the specific cause. Every inferred cause may have multiple alarms as evidence. The sensors are associated with the blue functions in Fig. 2, and by triggering these functions as the alarm states, these states are then propagated to the adjacent functions. These functions are considered as the causes shown in Fig. 4. The evidence from AFM1 is not propagated to any adjacent functions, and is thus not included in the figure. It can be seen in Fig. 4 that some alarms produce more causes than other alarms, and that some causes have more alarms as evidence than other causes.

The reasoning results for each time period are shown in Table 2. It can be seen in Table 2 that the actual root cause CV22 is inferred by MFM as a cause in every time period. This leaves the operator with 298 seconds to figure out, exactly which of the reasons is the correct. The operator is thus introduced to the root cause at the beginning of the fault, but has to filter away all other causes, as opposed to only seeing alarms, where the operator may potentially never infer the correct cause from the alarms in this test. The number of causes inferred by MFM in each time period
ranges from 14 to 16. These causes need to be analysed by
an operator by taking the current state of the plant into
consideration. Instead of inferring a cause based on the
alarms, the operator now has to analyse how the causes
inferred by MFM correspond to the symptoms; the current
alarms.

To analyse the many inferred causes, each cause has been
compared to every triggered alarm state by a process
expert. The comparison is shown in Table 2. An operator
would be required to do something similar to identify the
root cause, if presented with nothing else but a list of the
18 different causes. The expert reasons about what the
plant state would be given a specific cause. If the expert
agrees with an alarm state triggered in this test, a ‘+’
has been assigned. If the alarm would not be triggered,
nothing has been assigned, and if the alarm state would
be opposite of the actual state a ‘-’ has been assigned. The
accuracy has been calculated for each cause, based on how
many of the triggered alarms each cause agree with (Baldi
et al., 2000). Only the two classes correct ‘+’ and incorrect
are used, where incorrect corresponds to both normal and
‘-’.

Based on this approach causes can be ranked. This how-
ever requires that corresponding alarm states are defined
for as many causes as possible. Thus either process experts
as in this case, or preferably data from faults are analysed
to define this relationship between causes and alarm states
as in Yang et al. (2011); Hu et al. (2017). This can then
be used to rank causes in on-line diagnosis, or instead to
improve the models in advance.

If only considering the six causes inferred by the reasoning
of MFM, which has an accuracy of 0.75 and higher, only
one cause is not proposed through all three time periods,
and is not proposed in period one. One thing all of these
six causes have in common, is that they are related to the
separator. They indicate that too much water or air exits
the separator, that the valve CV22 at the separator outlet
has been breached or that the pressure or level controller
is failing. The valve CV04 of the level control and the
valve AFM2, the pressure control are both closed as
intended. In addition the alarm state of AFM2 and MFM1
indicate either no or a very low flow rate. Thus, when valve
positions are taken into account causes No. 2 and 5 seem
unlikely and could be disregarded. Cause No. 3 explains
where water exits the separator, but not where, whereas
cause No. 1 explains exactly where. The fourth cause
is air exiting the pressure safety valve. As the pressure
PT14 is not near the pressure limit of the separator, air
leaving through the PSV would be unintended. However
if pressure would decrease because of too much air leaving
the separator, the water level would be increasing, instead
of deceasing.

Two of the causes have an accuracy of 0. As the overflow
of the hydrocyclone has only little influence on the system,
it merely affects the oil and water separation efficiency.
Similarly the air and water separation influences the
quality of the separation process. This corresponds to
either air being part of the water fraction or water being
part of the air fraction. Thus no alarms are expected to be
triggered based on this, and they are only related to the
process quality. The MFM model should thus be changed
to better represent the hydrocyclone.

5.3 Discussion

The number of alarms and causes over time can be seen
in Fig. 5. For each alarm, there are approximately two
inferred causes. This becomes problematic, as the purpose
is to reduce the amount of information presented to
an operator, instead of increasing it. To mitigate this
issue, the model size and complexity can be reduced,
but the amount of different possible causes which can
then be inferred, also reduces. For this reason, an index
indicating the complexity, size and detail of the model,
should be used in combination with a measurement of the
diagnostic performance. In this way the model size is not
simply reduced, just to limit the number of inferred causes
presented to an operator, as the model size also introduces
more different causes. Alternatively, the MFM reasoning
method could be combined with alternative methods such
as Bayesian Networks similar to Khalil et al. (2016) to
rank causes based on probabilities.

As shown in Fig. 5, the number of causes per alarm
decreases significantly in the beginning of the experiment,
as more alarms trigger. This can however also be based on
the reach of each alarm in the MFM model. If a function
can propagate to many other functions, the causes per
alarms will increase. The relationship between the number
of causes and the number of alarms decreases significantly
as more alarms are triggered. A low ratio is beneficial,
but the total amount of causes is high, and methods for
reducing the number should be developed.

There is currently no method for the MFM methodology to
determine how likely one cause is over another. The MFM
model proposes 16 different causes based on 6 alarms in
time period 1, 14 causes based on 6 alarms in period 2 and
15 causes based on 7 alarms in period 3. This shows that
MFM currently requires improvements to either the rea-
soning, the modelling or the alarm thresholds, in order to
bring down the number of inferred causes to a reasonable
level for use in decision support for operators. The authors
suggest the following solutions to reduce the number of causes presented:

(1) A method for validating models according to triggered alarms could improve the cause predictions for on-line fault diagnosis with MFM models. Causal relations of models are thus revised so that inferred causes correspond to the triggered alarms to a higher degree.

(2) A method for cause ranking, filtering, grouping or something similar would be beneficial to automatically falsify or reduce the number of inferred causes.

(3) Alternative methods to traditional alarms for triggering functions in models. E.g. thresholds for MFM models only.

Currently, a causal relation is established between two functions of an MFM model, if one function can influence the other. When modelling, there is no consideration of the magnitude of influence. The validation approach would require that numerous faults are emulated or simulated, so that process experts would not be involved in comparing alarm states to causes, as done in this approach to produce Table 2. Based on the emulated and simulated data, the causal relations in the MFM models should be updated, so that specific causes do not appear for specific alarms. The causal relations would then be established based on whether a change of one function can cause a deviation of another function, significantly large to trigger an alarm or compromise the safety of the plant. However, the MFM model loses its property of generalizing plant behaviour, the more strictly this approach is applied.

6. CONCLUSION

A produced water treatment pilot plant has been modeled with Multilevel Flow Modeling, for the purpose of on-line fault diagnosis for operator decision support. A fault has been emulated on the plant, by opening a closed valve such that the water flow is misdirected. The alarms triggered over time, are used as evidence for defining state changes of MFM functions.

The MFM model represents the system well for this specific fault, as the majority of the inferred causes to some degree comply with the alarms triggered by the fault. The majority of causes have discrepancies with the triggered alarms, except for the actual root cause. Multilevel Flow Modeling is capable of inferring the root cause of the emulated fault. For presentation of the results, they have been divided into three time periods. The root cause is inferred by MFM in all three time periods leaving the operator with a potential of 298 seconds to react.

The MFM model produces approximately two causes per alarm for this fault. The amount of information thus increases compared to only using alarms. For this reason model validation based on emulated or simulated faults is suggested, instead of solely relying on input from process experts. In addition cause filtering, ranking or grouping should be introduced along with an index indicating the model complexity.

REFERENCES


