

THREE-DIMENSIONAL GEOMECHANICAL MODELING OF FAULT AND
FRACTURE STABILITY ANALYSIS IN NATURALLY FRACTURED
CARBONATE RESERVOIR

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UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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CARBONATE RESERVOIR

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ABSTRACT

Fault and fracture stability/reactivation, reservoir compaction, and associated surface subsidence are observed in many oil and gas fields worldwide. A better understanding of the geomechanical parameters of reservoir formation and neighbouring lithology is therefore becoming highly important within the oil carbonate field development. Pore pressure, effective stresses, and geological structures as well as their evolution during an oil field life have a considerable impact on wellbore instability and fault and fracture behaviour. The main aim of this study is to determine the causes of faults and fractures instability in a natural fracture reservoir by using integrated wellbore stability (1D) analysis to 3D geomechanical study. In this research, different approaches were used to perform the 3D geomechanical model through integrated analysis of the drilling events, log and rock mechanics data. By 3D finite element, the principal stresses were calculated in two steps. Firstly, the gravity (overburden and underburden) and pore pressure were applied; the second step was involving the sideburden. This study indicates a 3D geomechanical modelling of the oil field as a gentle anticline in the Middle East area. Wellbore stability model (or 1D Geomechanical modelling) contains various stresses, pore pressure, and rock mechanics properties for offset wells were simulated by integrating a wide variety of good data from the field. These calibrated 1D geomechanical outputs were applied to model 3D geomechanical models and were further utilized for fracture and fault reactivation modelling. A 3D reservoir geomechanical modelling (or couple geomechanical modelling) was improved to utilize the geological static and reservoir dynamic models to estimate the changes in reservoir pore pressure and principle stresses in magnitude and orientation. Based on 3D geomechanical modelling, vertical and horizontal stresses have been evaluated for all faults and fractures. The tendency of the fault and fracture reactivation was determined in terms of minimum and maximum horizontal stresses. The simulation result indicated that the change of reservoir pressure during the initial phase of production since 1992 to 2054 has a significant impact on principal stresses in the field. On the other hand, the 3D map of minimum and maximum horizontal stresses on both sides of the main faults explain that faults are most stable compared to fractures in cap rock and reservoir sections. While high porous and permeable reservoir formation and impermeable cap rock (the combination of anhydrite, salt and shale) are experiencing normal to strike-slip stress fault regime, the strain and stress fluctuation due to oil production in more than 60 years' simulation does not have a destructive impact (or activation) on different faults. But fracture behaviour changes from 2017 to 2054 due to pore pressure changes, the fracture instability in different directions was considerable and it must be considered in production optimization.

ABSTRAK

Kestabilan/ pengaktifan semua sesar dan retakan, pemadatan reservoir dan embalsan permukaan berkaitan diteliti berlaku di kebanyakan medan minyak dan gas di serata dunia. Pemahaman yang baik tentang parameter- parameter geomekanik formasi reservoir dan litologi berhampiran menjadi sangat penting bagi pembangunan medan minyak karbonat. Tekanan liang, tegasan berkesan, dan struktur geologi disamping evolusinya ketika hayat medan minyak mempunyai kesan yang agak besar terhadap ketidakstabilan lubang telaga dan tingkah laku sesar dan retakan. Matlamat utama kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan penyebab-penyebab ketidakstabilan sesar dan retakan di dalam sebuah reservoir berretakan semulajadi dengan menggunakan analisis bersepadu kestabilan lubang telaga secara satu dimensi (1D) hingga ke kajian geomekanik tiga dimensi 3D. Dalam kajian ini, pendekatan yang berbeza telah digunakan untuk melakukan pemodelan geomekanik 3D menerusi analisis bersepadu terhadap maklumat penggerudian, data log dan data mekanik batuan. Dengan menggunakan unsur terhingga 3D, tegasan utama dihitung menerusi dua langkah. Pertama, graviti (beban atas dan beban bawah) dan tekanan liang yang dikenakan; langkah kedua melibatkan beban sisi. Kajian ini menunjukkan pemodelan geomekanik 3D bagi medan minyak sebagai antiklin landai di kawasan Timur Tengah. Model kestabilan lubang telaga (atau pemodelan geomekanik 1D) yang mengandungi pelbagai tegasan, tekanan liang dan sifat mekanik batuan daripada telaga ofset telah diselaku menenasi penyepaduan pelbagai jenis data telaga dari medan. Output geomekanik 1D tertentukur telah diaplikasikan terhadap model geomekanik 3D dan kemudiannya digunakan untuk pemodelan pengaktifan semula sesar dan retakan. Pemodelan geomekanik reservoir 3D (atau pemodelan gandingan geomekanik) ditambah baik menggunakan model statik geologi dan model dinamik reservoir untuk menganggar perubahan tekanan liang reservoir dan perubahan tegasan utamanya dalam bentuk magnitud dan halaan. Berdasarkan kepada pemodelan geomekanik 3D, tegasan tegak dan tegasan mendatar telah dinilai untuk kesemua sesar dan retakan. Kecenderungan untuk pengaktifan semula sesar dan retakan telah ditentukan berdasar kepada tegasan mendatar minimum dan juga maksimum. Keputusan penyelakuan menunjukkan bahawa perubahan tekanan reservoir ketika fasa awal pengeluaran sejak tahun 1992 hingga ke 2054 memberikan kesan yang ketara terhadap tegasan-tegasan utama medan. Sebaliknya, peta 3D bagi tegasan mendatar minimum dan tegasan mendatar maksimum retakan pada kedua-dua sisi sesar utama menunjukkan bahawa sesar adalah paling stabil berbanding retakan pada bahagian batuan tukup dan reservoir. Sementara itu, reservoir berliang dan boleh telap dan batuan tukup tak boleh telap (gabungan anhidrit, garam, dan syal) mengalami regim bertegasan normal hingga ke bertegasan jurus gelineir. Berdasarkan turun naiknya terikan dan tegasan berikutan pengeluaran minyak melebihi 60 tahun, hasil penyelakuan menunjukkan bahawa tiada kesan pemusnah (atau pengaktifan) terhadap sesar yang berbeza. Walaubagaimanapun, perubahan tingkahlaku retakan dari 2017 hingga ke 2054 disebabkan perubahan tekanan liang, ketidakstabilan retakan pada arah berbeza didapati ketara, dengan kesan itu mesti diambil kira dalam pengoptimumkan pengeluaran.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

API	-	American Petroleum Institute
BBL	-	Barrel
BEM	-	Boundary Element Method
BOE	-	Barrel Oil Equivalent
BIL	-	Borehole Image Log
Cali	-	Caliper
CCF	-	Continuous Conductive Fractures
CCS	-	Confined Compressive Strength
CGR	-	Compensated Gamma Ray
Co	-	Cohesion Factor
CSM	-	Colorado School of Mines
DA	-	Alpha Oil Field
Dc	-	Dc-exponent
DDR	-	Directional Drilling Rate
DEM	-	Distinct Element Method
DSI	-	Dipole Shear Sonic
DT	-	Compressional
1D	-	One Dimensional
3D	-	Three Dimensional
3D	-	Four-Dimensional
EIA	-	Energy Information Agency
EOR	-	Enhanced Oil Recovery
FEM	-	Finite Element Math
FIT	-	Formation Integrity Tests
FMI	-	Full bore Formation Micro imager
G&G	-	Geology & Geophysics
GR	-	Gamma Ray
GWL	-	Graphic Well Log
ISIP	-	Instantaneous Shut In Pressure
LOT	-	Leak of Test

MD	-	Measure Depth
MEM	-	Mechanical Earth Model
NPHI	-	Neutron Porosity
NW-SE	-	North West-South East
OIIP	-	Oil Initially-in-place
OWC	-	Oil Water Contact
Pp	-	Pore Pressure
PRV	-	Produced Reservoir Volume
RCP	-	Reservoir Characterization Project
RHOB	-	Bulk Density
ROP	-	Rate of Penetration
RPM	-	Rotary Per Minutes
RQI	-	Rock Quality Index
QRA	-	Quantitative Risk Analysis
SG	-	Specific Gravity
Sh	-	Minimum Horizontal Stress
SH	-	Maximum Horizontal Stress
SRV	-	Stimulated Reservoir Volume
STC	-	Slowness-Time Coherence
Sv	-	Vertical Stress
TVD	-	True Vertical Depth
TL	-	Time-Lapse
TVD	-	True Vertical Depth
UCS	-	Unconfined Compressive Strength
WOB	-	Weight On Bit
WBS	-	Wellbore Stability Analysis
XLOT	-	Extended Leak Off Test

LIST OF SYMBOLS

σ	-	Stress
σ_V	-	Maximum Principal Stress
σ_H	-	Maximum Horizontal Stress
σ_h	-	Minimum Horizontal Stress
E	-	Young's Modulus
v	-	Grid Voltage
ρ	-	Bulk Density
V	-	Compressional Velocity
V_s	-	Shear Velocity
Z_p	-	Compressional Impedance
Z_s	-	Shear Impedance
σ_T	-	Tensile Strength
σ'	-	Hoop Stress
P_p	-	Pore Pressure
P_w	-	Wellbore Pressure
g	-	Gravitational Constant
Φ_b	-	Breakout Width, Degree

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Background

Due to the field 3D geomechanical analysis serves as a complexity for declining budget and increasing efficiency over the life of a field, the information contained in a geomechanical model makes it possible to assess exploration risk associated with fault-seal breach caused by fault slip. Also, natural fault/fractures have a dramatic impact on carbonate reservoirs in terms of oil recovery. A 3D geomechanical model also makes it possible to design completions to avoid or manage production and to extend the productive life of wells. Also, the effects of reservoir depletion and injection can be predicted to enable optimal exploitation that avoids excessive reservoir damage, casing collapse, and hazards related to leakage of produced or injected fluids and finally fracture and fault stability.

Modeling natural fractures/faults, their characterization, and the effect of injection/production have become one of the important subjects in oil and gas field management. This issue is critical in carbonate reservoirs with a wide variety of natural fractures and faults. The complexity of fluid behavior in carbonate porous media and their characteristic parameters (such as location, pattern, direction, azimuth, magnitude, length, and aperture by core data and special log; image log and shear sonic logs) must be estimated at beginning and during of field development. However, none of these parameters are well constrained by available static and dynamic data (for example different kinds of log data, geophysical data, and reservoir data). This study concentrates on a specific parameter: fracture/fault characterization, its integration with prediction, and injection into the geomechanical analysis workflow.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 1D Geomechanical study

Wellbore instability problems bring significant cost increases to drilling operations. These problems can occur in a variety of forms including stuck pipe, loss circulation, hole enlargement, unintentionally induced tensile fractures, or difficult directional control incidents. In severe conditions, wellbore instability can increase non-productive time and create simultaneous occurrences of multiple instability incidents, which potentially can lead to losing the well if they are not handled with proper mitigation.

Angelier, J., 1979, and Aadnoy and Chenevert (1987) indicated that wellbore instability is a function of imbalance in the required wellbore pressure applied and the fluid pressure in the formation, in addition to chemical interactions between the formation and the drilling or completion fluids, and interactions between these fluids and native formation fluid. Deviation and azimuth of the well also influence the wellbore stability as the stress distribution around the wellbore is dependent on the orientation of the wellbore, concerning the in-situ stresses and the hoop stresses introduced through drilling the wellbore.

Bradley (1979), and Cheatham (1984) showed that for avoiding wellbore instability problems in drilling, a proper well design needs to be developed for the formations to be drilled and completed for production, which requires an understanding of the in-situ stress state, pore pressure, and geomechanical properties of the reservoir formation. Matthewsh (1967), Eaton (1969), and Wilson and Willis (1986) proved that wellbore stability analysis is required to predict the mud weight window for new wells. Wellbore stability analysis has been previously presented in many publications.

Geomechanical analyzing and gathering essential info is a fundamental section in oil and gas field management. The entire life cycle oil and gas field development from exploration to abandonment, drilling to production, and gas injection benefits from a 1D Mechanical Earth Model (MEM) to 3D geomechanical analysis (Zoback and Moos, 1992; Bradley, 1979; Zoback et al., 2001, Zoback, 2002). The 3D Geomechanical modeling integrates open hole log data, lab tests, leak-off tests (LOT) and daily drilling data to obtain the stress characterization such as magnitudes and direction together with specific rock strength properties. This vital concept of the stress situation and characterization of different carbonate properties (limestone and dolomite) is required for selecting the best operational parameters during drilling and oil and gas production and injection.

In well planning, the 1D MEM is used to implement the well design for choosing the best well trajectory. Mud type and weight as well as the casing scheme can be selected due to the result of Mechanical Earth Model (Hamid and Zillur, 2015). Geomechanical analyses can minimize cost and risk while maximizing drilling efficiency.

1.2.2 3D Geomechanical study

Geomechanics could be addressed and understood in all oil and gas field disciplines. These 3D models prepare the benefit for well in designing and oil and gas reservoir management especially in carbonate reservoir with different kinds of ambiguities; natural fracture, giant thrust faults. In the life cycle of the field, oil production or gas injection make considerable changes in the maximum and minimum horizontal stresses which must be analysed geomechanical modeling and define the impact of these phenomena in fluid behavior.

Koupriantchik, et al. (2007) showed that 3D geomechanical modeling has become a popular and effective way to address those challenges, particularly at the reservoir scale but also at the well scale. Improvements in seismic quality, logging

data, and numerical techniques mean that we have enough information to predict stresses accurately in areas away from those previously drilled.

An elegant way of performing a spatially correct depth stretch is using structural or stratigraphic grids (called structural grids hereafter). Available to many geological subsurface modeling software packages, structural grids are essentially deformable grids, capable to be aligned to reference surfaces. The alignment to key reference horizons can be proportional allowing the grid to swell or shrink according to the distance between two reference surfaces. On the other hand, the alignment can be parallel to one key surface allowing truncation by another to form e.g. an erosional surface. The concept of structural grids aims to replicate the stratigraphic layering.

Using only a few key horizon surfaces and integrating formation markers, the structural grids can, therefore, define the full structural framework, capable to receive spatially continuous properties, including those necessary for wellbore stability analyses. Rather than extracting a multitude of zonation markers for a 1D depth stretch, the entire geomechanical model is built in 3D using such a structural grid. Most techniques for this operation are well known to geologists and reservoir engineers who build stratigraphic models and use geostatistical techniques populating them in 3D with properties such as rock type, permeability, and porosity (Deutsch, 2002; Yarus, 2002).

The geomechanical model for the Valhall field, as described in by Kristiansen et al. (2010), was built to reduce the risks that are associated with the drilling of the edge zones. The model showed that the greatest number of non-standard problems associated with stress is localized in the area near the fault. The 3D Geomechanical model used to determine the trajectory of the well, which minimizes the risks of the instability of the borehole, which significantly reduces the drilling uncertainty.

Optimization of the well trajectory and well design to avoid drilling risks during well site construction is another main of 3D geomechanics output which is important in check and control the oil and gas field study (Ovcharenko and Lukin, 2016). Optimization of hydraulic fractures in carbonate reservoirs and the processes of hydrocarbons production are other serious issues that can be considered by geomechanical study. Challenging geological conditions, the complex geological structure of sediments, which is common for fields development to date, leading to the need to build complex 3D geological and geomechanical together.

Most of the field-scale method is to integrate the 1D MEM in a geology framework and make a 3D geomechanical grid from a static model throughout the field. This new model is the only representative of a related time and reservoir pressure condition that is the condition at the time which information was acquired from the wells. So, such models might not be appropriate to study the instabilities and risks associated with reservoir depletion, e.g. fault movement and casing collapse due to compaction and subsidence. The changes in the in situ stresses concerning reservoir depletion can be estimated by providing and running a Visage model in Petrel software which is coupled to the dynamic model by Eclipse software (Younessi et al., 2013).

1.2.3 Estimation of the Rock Mechanical Properties of the Fault

Estimating the rock mechanical properties of the faults is always challenging in geoscience because the direct measurement of these properties is not practical (Bayerlee, 1975). Ideally, core samples should be taken from the faulting zone and be tested for rock mechanical properties but that requires a precise sampling at the location where the well hits the fault, which in many cases is impractical. In some cases, by knowing the constituent materials of the fillings of the fault, reasonable estimations of the mechanical properties of the fault can be made. There are also indirect methods of estimating the rock mechanical properties of a fault, which can help narrow down the values to an acceptable range of uncertainty. Experimental

studies on different types of rocks have been conducted, taking into account both natural and man-made fractures/faults.

1.3 Problem Statement

In oil field development, proper well planning and safe drilling operation is very important in oil and gas field development. To identify the causes of instability problems encountered in this field, a problem diagnostic procedure must be performed, which includes studying the well plans, drilling programs, daily drilling reports, and various logs for all well. Wellbore stability issues can be caused by a combination of many factors, which can be classified into controllable and uncontrollable in origin (Chatterjee,2018).

Modeling and characterization of natural fractures by geomechanics concept (1D to 3D) and stress pattern issue has recently become a high priority issue. However, in the previous method the effect of stress or strain (by dispersion analysis) never has been involved in fracture analysis, and most of the time the full field study in the carbonate reservoir suffered about this topic.

Based on a conventional full-field study, all Geoscience team never cares about the effect of fault/fracture stability analysis during oil/gas production and injection. Sometimes if the effect of the stress on the fracture/fault is ignored, the static and dynamic model will not be reliable especially in naturally fractured carbonate reservoirs with high heterogeneity. By involving the geomechanical aspect of fault/fracture stability, it can be controlled over the development process taking into account the changes in rock stress state and changes on growth hydraulic fractures and the processes of hydrocarbons production. Understanding this leads to the fact that mixing of 3D geological and geomechanical modeling based on fault/fracture tectonics becomes an integral part of the construction of static and dynamic field models (Aguilera, 2018).

Usually in conventional structural 3D modeling fault is very concerning as having an impact as a barrier or conductive in compartmentalization issue. So because of the lack of geomechanical concept, the activation of the fault during the oil or gas production never taking care of studies. However, in general, most of the geoscientist never does the comprehensive study on fault and fracture characterization and because of the complicity of this kind of feature try to determine by geophysics or well testing. Sealing or extending the capacity of the fault itself is a very modern study that can categorize in 3D Geomechanical study. One of the main output of the 3D geomechanical modelling is different horizontal and vertical stress direction and measurements which are essential in fracture and fault behaviour analysis. By investigation on stresses variation around fault and fracture due to production, it is possible to anticipate fracture and fault stability.

As mentioned in some paragraphs in this chapter, in previous researches about fault and fracture role in oil and gas full-field studies, the relationship between production and its reaction on fault and fracture was mostly ignored and this issue could be high risk in oil and gas fields developments. Currently, in this study, the effect of hydrocarbon production on fault and fracture stability and its reaction as the main purpose were studied and recommend as a new workflow in oil and gas field study (Full Field Study or Master Development Plan) to avoid spending unnecessary budgets and time.

1.4 Objectives

The main objective of this research study is to determine the causes of instability problems from drilling operation to a fault and fracture in a natural fracture reservoir by using an integrated wellbore stability analysis (1D Geomechanical study) and 3D Geomechanical study. The specific objectives of this study include:

- i. To employ a 1D geomechanical modelling or 1D MEM and making a wellbore-stability model incorporating the effects of Geomechanical properties to reduce

the uncertainties in drilling operation. 1D MEM models were used for making 3D geomechanical model.

- ii. To model natural fractures and faults by using the concept of Geomechanics (1D to 3D) and stress pattern analysis in carbonate reservoir
- iii. To analyse the fault and fracture stability analysis during oil production and injection in natural factorized carbonate reservoir with high heterogeneity
- iv. To characterize the fault in a structural study by the concept of stress and strain relationship and capacity of reactivation of the faults in a complex carbonate reservoir.

By carrying out this study it is hoped that to have a better understanding in geomechanical characteristic such as integrity stress analysis (direction and magnitude of stresses and its reaction by production/injection) of the field, which can be utilized for future developments in the field as well as improving oil and gas production, reducing the cost and time of drilling operation, minimizing the reservoir damage and finally improving reservoir management practically.

1.5 Scope

The goal of this work is to build 3D geomechanical modeling on fault/fracture stability analysis in a complex carbonate reservoir. To achieve these objectives, four tasks have been defined. The first task is building 1D geomechanical wellbore stability analysis. To do this task need to collect all necessary well and log data. Estimation shear sonic logs, mechanical parameters, and safe mud window are the main outputs in this step. In this phase, it needs to do formation evaluation regarding Lithology, effective porosity, and water saturation estimation. The second task is developing and validation of 3D geomechanical modeling. The generation of a 3D static model including the initial pore pressure model is necessary to input data that must be done by Petrel software. All 1D geomechanical results must be distributed in a static model. Mechanical parameter propagation is the final output in the second step. The third task is fracture analysis with the concept of stress and strain relationship developing by image log and other available data. Processing and interpretation of a different kind of

image log (FMI, XRMI) and shear dipole sonic (DSI) for extracting the fracture and faults parameters are the important activity in this step. Fracture study by image log is a vital procedure that must be considered in the third step. Another task is verifying improved models for building the fault and fracture stability analysis. The Mohr's circle of stresses is the final output which considers the fault reactivation in the reservoir and cap rock.

Obviously, because of the wide range of reservoir geomechanical subjects, it is impossible to cover all aspects of this issue. For example, processing and interpretation of seismic analysis, dynamic modeling, compaction study are the topic which were not be comprised in this study. One of the important phases of this project is gathering information on the field that has been located in Middle East area. To fulfil the objectives of this research, the field in the middle east was selected.

1.6 Significance of Study

The Alpha field includes a wide variety of structural and geological complexity, such as different kinds of fractures (major, medium, minor, and hairline open fracture) and giant thrust fault. So any changes in stress and strain due to oil production or injection cause serious impact on fracture or fault behavior. This revolution could be constructive (increasing fracture aperture or length) or destructive (because of reducing fracture quality). However, monitoring the reaction of faults and fractures reaction due to gas production and injection is so important for field development. In the general field study, the effect of different depletion, and injection scenarios on stress distribution mostly is ignored and the impact of this stress turbulence on structural features is not considered. One of the different aspects of this study besides general procedures such as petrophysical study and making a static model is to include all geomechanical procedures from 1D to 3D geomechanics and finally focus on faults reactivation in the reservoir.

It tried to integrate all general approaches with the geomechanical study as a new method to optimize reservoir management.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Indexed Journal

1. Abdollahian, Amirhossein, **Mehdi Tadayoni**, and Radzuan Bin Junin. "A new approach to reduce uncertainty in reservoir characterization using saturation height modeling, Mesaverde tight gas sandstones, western US basins." *Journal of Petroleum Exploration and Production Technology* 9.3 (2019): 1953-1961. **(Indexed by SCOPUS)**
2. **Mehdi Tadayoni**, Mahmoudreza Khalilbeyg, and Radzuan Bin Junin. "A new approach to heterogeneity analysis in a highly complex carbonate reservoir by using borehole image and conventional log data." *Journal of Petroleum Exploration and Production Technology* (2020): 1-17. **(Indexed by SCOPUS).**

Indexed Conference Proceeding

1. **Mehdi Tadayoni**, Mahmoudreza Khalilbeyg, Reza Shahalipour and Radzuan Bin Junin. "Risk zonation and hazard assessment base on reservoir compaction designation in a heterogeneous carbonate reservoir" 82nd EAGE Annual Conference & Exhibition 2020: 1-10. Accepted **(Indexed by SCOPUS).**