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Lars-Peter Lauen, Ingo Karschin, Jutta Geldermann

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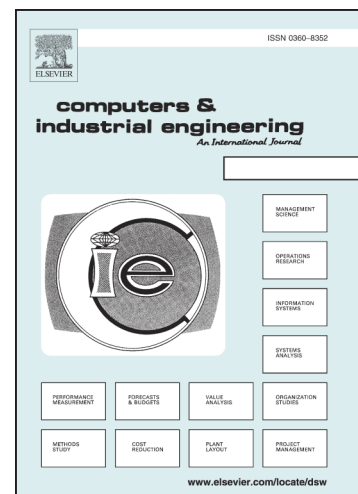
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# Simultaneously optimizing the capacity and configuration of biorefineries

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Lars-Peter Lauen<sup>\*a</sup>, Ingo Karschin<sup>a</sup> and Jutta Geldermann<sup>a</sup>

Address correspondence to: Lars-Peter Lauen, [llauen@gwdg.de](mailto:llauen@gwdg.de)

<sup>a</sup>Chair of Production and Logistics, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, 37073 Göttingen, Germany

## Abstract

Advanced biomass conversion plants can replace fossil resources in the electricity, heat, transportation fuels and chemicals sectors, but they face specific challenges with regard to their economic operation. When choosing a capacity for a biomass conversion plant, economies of scale must be weighed against the transportation costs for the widely-distributed input materials.

Here, we model the problem of determining the optimal capacity for plants with a single product or a fixed set of products using a single optimization variable and two alternative economic objective functions. To identify the factors that most strongly influence economic plant operation, we perform a sensitivity analysis of various model parameters to determine their impact on the optimal solution using the Envelope Theorem. We also present an optimization approach for simultaneously planning the capacity and configuration of multi-product plants. By modeling economies of scale on a process-specific level, our nonlinear optimization approach makes it possible to determine the optimal configurations, and thus ranges of products, for changing plant capacities. An examination of the obtained feasible solutions shows that the optimization problem is neither convex nor concave.

## Keywords

Applied optimization, Nonlinear Programming, Capacity planning, Process Industries

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