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Control of Power Converters in Low-Inertia Power Systems

Florian Dörfler

Automatic Control Laboratory, ETH Zürich

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Marcello Colombino



Ali Tayyebi-Khameneh





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Dominic Groß



Irina Subotic







Further: Gab-Su Seo, Brian Johnson, Mohit Sinha, & Sairaj Dhople

Replacing the power system foundation





fuel & synchronous machines

- not sustainable
- + central & dispatchable generation
- + large rotational inertia as buffer
- + self-synchronize through the grid
- + resilient voltage / frequency control
- slow actuation & control

renewables & power electronics

- + sustainable
- distributed & variable generation
- almost no energy storage
- no inherent self-synchronization
- fragile voltage / frequency control
- + fast/flexible/modular control

What do we see here?



Frequency of West Berlin re-connecting to Europe



before re-connection: islanded operation based on batteries & single boiler *afterwards* connected to European grid based on synchronous generation

The concerns are not hypothetical

issues broadly recognized by TSOs, device manufacturers, academia, agencies, etc.



obstacle to sustainability: power electronics integration Biblis A generator stabilizes the grid as a synchronous condenser

Critically re-visit modeling/analysis/control



a key unresolved challenge: control of power converters in low-inertia grids

 \rightarrow industry & power community willing to explore green-field approach (see MIGRATE) with *advanced control* methods & *theoretical certificates*

Our research agenda

system-level

- low-inertia power system models, stability, & performance metrics
- optimal allocation of virtual inertia & fast-frequency response services



device-level (today)

- decentralized nonlinear power converter control strategies
- experimental **implementation**, cross-validation, & comparison



Exciting research domain bridging communities



Outline

Introduction: Low-Inertia Power Systems

Problem Setup: Modeling and Specifications

State of the Art: Comparison & Critical Evaluation

Dispatchable Virtual Oscillator Control

Experimental Validation

Conclusions

Modeling: signal space in 3-phase AC circuits



assumption: balanced \Rightarrow 2d-coordinates $x(t) = [x_{\alpha}(t) x_{\beta}(t)]$ or $x(t) = A(t)e^{i\delta(t)}$

Modeling: the network



interconnecting lines via II-models & ODEs





salient feature: *local* measurement reveal *global* information



Modeling: the power converter



- ▶ passive *DC port* port (i_{dc}, v_{dc}) for energy balance control
- ightarrow details neglected today: assume v_{dc} to be stiffly regulated
- ► modulation = lossless signal transformer (averaged)
- \rightarrow controlled switching voltage $v_{dc}u$ with $u \in \left[-\frac{1}{2}, +\frac{1}{2}\right] \times \left[-\frac{1}{2}, +\frac{1}{2}\right]$
- ► LC filter to smoothen harmonics with R, G modeling filter/switching losses

well actuated, modular, & fast control system \approx *controllable voltage source*

Control objectives in the stationary frame

1. synchronous frequency:

$$\frac{d}{dt} v_k = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & -\omega_0 \\ \omega_0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} v_k \quad \forall k \in \mathcal{V} \coloneqq \{1, \dots, N\}$$

 $\sim \,$ stabilization at harmonic oscillation with synchronous frequency ω_0

2. voltage amplitude:

 $\|v_k\| = v^* \quad \forall k \in \mathcal{V}$ (for ease of presentation)

 \sim stabilization of voltage **amplitude** $||v_k||$

3. prescribed power flow:

$$v_k^{\top} i_{o,k} = p_k^{\star} , \quad v_k^{\top} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & -1 \\ +1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} i_{o,k} = q_k^{\star} \quad \forall k \in \mathcal{V}$$

 \sim steady-state **active & reactive power** injections $\{p_k^\star, q_k^\star\}$

Main control challenges



f nonlinear objectives (v_k^*, θ_{kj}^*) & stabilization of a *limit cycle*

- *Iocal set-points:* voltage/power (v_k^*, p_k^*, q_k^*) but no relative angles θ_{kj}^*
- *decentralized control:* only local measurements $(v_k, i_{o,k})$ available
- *converter physics not resilient:* no significant storage & state constraints
- *ino time-scale separation* between slow sources & fast network
- + fully controllable voltage sources & stable linear network dynamics

Limitations of grid-following control



- is good for transferring power to a strong grid (what if everyone follows?)
- ► is not good for providing a voltage reference, stabilization, or black start
- ► tomorrow's grid needs *grid-forming control* = *emergence of synchronization*

Naive baseline solution: emulation of virtual inertia



Standard approach to converter control



- 1. acquiring & processing of *AC measurements*
- synthesis of references (voltage/current/power)
 "how would a synchronous generator respond now ?"
- 3. cascaded PI controllers to *track* references
- 4. actuation via modulation
- hidden assumption: DC supply instantaneously provides unlimited power
- $\rightarrow \,$ tight & fast DC-side control

Virtual synchronous machine \equiv flywheel emulation





- reference model: detailed model of synchronous generator + controls
- → most commonly accepted solution in industry (backward compatibility)
- \rightarrow robust implementation requires tricks
- → good nominal performance but poor post-fault behavior → not resilient
- \rightarrow **poor fit**: converter \neq flywheel
 - converter: fast actuation & no significant energy storage
 - machine: slow actuation & significant energy storage
- over-parametrized & ignores limits
- → issues can be partially alleviated via proper nonlinear control [Arghir et al. '17, '19]

Droop as simplest reference model

 frequency control by mimicking p – ω droop property of synchronous machine:

$$\omega - \omega_0 \propto p - p^{\star}$$

• *voltage control* via q - ||v|| droop control:

 $\frac{d}{dt}||v|| = -c_1(||v|| - v^*) - c_2(q - q^*)$



- → direct control of (p, ω) and (q, ||v||)assuming they are independent (approx. true only near steady state)
- → requires tricks in implementation : low-pass filters for dissipation, virtual impedances for saturation, limiters,...
- → performance: good near steady state but narrow region of attraction



Virtual Oscillator Control (VOC)

nonlinear & open limit cycle oscillator as reference model for terminal voltage (1-phase):

 $\ddot{v} + \omega_0^2 v + g(v) = i_o$





- · simplified model amenable to theoretic analysis
- → almost global synchronization & local droop
- in practice proven to be *robust mechanism* with performance superior to droop & others
- → problem: cannot be controlled(?) to meet specifications on amplitude & power injections

[J. Aracil & F. Gordillo, '02], [Torres, Hespanha, Moehlis, '11],[Johnson, Dhople, Krein, '13], [Dhople, Johnson, Dörfler, '14]



Comparison of grid-forming control [Tayyebi et al., '19]



droop control

good performance near steady state
relies on decoupling & small attraction basin



synchronous machine emulation

- + backward compatible in nominal case
- not resilient under large disturbances



virtual oscillator control (VOC)

robust & almost globally synchronization
 cannot meet amplitude/power specifications



today: foundational control approach

[Colombino, Groß, Brouillon, & Dörfler, '17, '18,'19] [Seo, Subotic, Johnson, Colombino, Groß, & Dörfler, '18]

Cartoon summary of today's approach

Conceptually, inverters are oscillators that have to synchronize



Hypothetically, they could sync by communication (not feasible)



Cartoon summary of today's approach

Colorful idea: inverters sync through physics & clever local control





theory: sync of coupled oscillators & nonlinear decentralized control

power systems/electronics experiments @NREL show superior performance

Recall problem setup

1. simplifying assumptions (will be removed later)

$$\underbrace{\frac{i_{o,k}}{\det v_k(t)} = u_k(v_k, i_{o,k})}_{\text{d}t}$$

• converter \approx controllable voltage source

• grid
$$\approx$$
 quasi-static: $\ell \frac{d}{dt}i + ri \approx (j \omega_0 \ell + r)i$

• lines
$$\approx$$
 homogeneous $\kappa = \tan(\ell_{kj}/r_{kj}) \ \forall k, j$

2. fully decentralized control of converter terminal voltage & current

- \checkmark set-points for relative angles $\{\theta_{jk}^{\star}\}$
- f nonlocal measurements v_j
- f grid & load parameters

3. control objective

stabilize desired quasi steady state

(synchronous, 3-phase-balanced, and meet set-points in nominal case)

- ✓ local measurements $(v_k, i_{o,k})$
- \checkmark local set-points $(v_k^\star, p_k^\star, q_k^\star)$



Colorful idea for closed-loop target dynamics





synchronization:

$$e_{\theta,k}(v) = \sum_{j=1}^{n} w_{jk} \left(v_j - R(\theta_{jk}^{\star}) v_k \right)$$

amplitude regulation:

$$e_{\|v\|,k}(v_k) = (v^{\star 2} - \|v_k\|^2) v_k$$

Decentralized implementation of target dynamics

$$e_{\theta,k}(v) = \underbrace{\sum_{j} w_{jk}(v_j - R(\theta_{jk}^*)v_k)}_{\text{need to know } w_{jk}, v_j, v_k \text{ and } \theta_{jk}^*} = \underbrace{\sum_{j} w_{jk}(v_j - v_k)}_{\text{``Laplacian'' feedback}} + \underbrace{\sum_{j} w_{jk}(I - R(\theta_{jk}^*))v_k}_{\text{local feedback: } \mathcal{K}_k(\theta^*)v_k}$$

insight I: non-local measurements from communication through physics

$$\underbrace{i_{o,k}}_{\text{local feedback}} = \underbrace{\sum_{j} y_{jk}(v_j - v_k)}_{\text{distributed feedback with } w_{jk} = y_{kj} = \|y_{kj}\| R(1/\kappa)}$$

insight II: angle set-points & line-parameters from power flow equations

$$p_k^{\star} = v^{\star 2} \sum_j \frac{r_{jk}(1 - \cos(\theta_{jk}^{\star})) - \omega_0 \ell_{jk} \sin(\theta_{jk}^{\star})}{r_{jk}^2 + \omega_0^2 \ell_{jk}^2}}{q_k^{\star} = -v^{\star 2} \sum_j \frac{\omega_0 \ell_{jk}(1 - \cos(\theta_{jk}^{\star})) + r_{jk} \sin(\theta_{jk}^{\star})}{r_{jk}^2 + \omega_0^2 \ell_{jk}^2}} \right\} \Rightarrow \underbrace{\mathcal{K}_k(\theta^{\star})}_{\text{global parameters}} = \frac{1}{v^{\star 2}} R(\kappa) \begin{bmatrix} q_k^{\star} & p_k^{\star} \\ -p_k^{\star} & q_k^{\star} \end{bmatrix}}{\log \log parameters}}$$

Main results

1. desired target dynamics can be realized via *fully decentralized control*:



2. almost global stability result:

If the \dots condition holds, the system is **almost globally asymptotically stable** with respect to a **limit cycle** corresponding to a **pre-specified** solution of the **AC power-flow** equations at a **synchronous** frequency ω_0 .

Main results cont'd

- 3. certifiable, sharp, and intuitive stability conditions :
 - power transfer "small enough" compared to network connectivity
 - amplitude control slower than synchronization control



4. connection to *droop control* revealed in polar coordinates (for inductive grid) :

$$\frac{d}{dt}\theta_{k} = \omega_{0} + c_{1}\left(\frac{p_{k}^{\star}}{v^{\star 2}} - \frac{p_{k}}{\|v_{k}\|^{2}}\right) \underset{\|v_{k}\|\approx 1}{\approx} \omega_{0} + c_{1}\left(p_{k}^{\star} - p_{k}\right) \quad (p - \omega \text{ droop})$$

$$\frac{d}{dt}\|v_{k}\| \underset{\|v_{k}\|\approx 1}{\approx} c_{1}\left(q_{k}^{\star} - q_{k}\right) + c_{2}\left(v^{\star} - \|v_{k}\|\right) \quad (q - \|v\| \text{ droop})$$

Proof sketch for algebraic grid: Lyapunov & center manifold



Lyapunov function:

 $\mathcal{T} \cup \mathbb{O}_{2N}$ is globally attractive $\lim_{t o \infty} \lVert v(t) \rVert_{\mathcal{T} \cup \mathbb{O}_{2N}} = 0$

 $V(v) = \frac{1}{2} \operatorname{dist}(v, S)^2 + \frac{c_2}{v^{\star 2}} \sum_k \left(v^{\star 2} - \|v_k\|^2 \right)^2$

 \mathcal{T} is stable $\|v(t)\|_{\mathcal{T}} \leq \chi(\|v_0\|_{\mathcal{T}})$

 $\begin{aligned} \mathcal{T} \text{ is almost globally attractive} \\ \mathbb{O}_{2N} \text{ exponentially unstable} \\ \implies \mathcal{Z}_{\{\mathbb{O}_{2N}\}} \text{ has measure zero} \\ \forall v_0 \notin \mathcal{Z}_{\{\mathbb{O}_{2N}\}} : \lim_{t \to \infty} \|v(t)\|_{\mathcal{T}} = 0 \end{aligned}$

stability & almost global attractivity \implies almost global asymptotic stability

Case study: IEEE 9 Bus system



t = 0 s: black start of three inverters

- initial state: $||v_k(0)|| \approx 10^{-3}$
- convergence to set-point

t = 5 s: load step-up

- 20% load increase at bus 5
- consistent power sharing

t = 10 s: loss of inverter 1

- the remaining inverters synchronize
- they supply the load sharing power

Simulation of IEEE 9 Bus system



Dropping assumptions: dynamic lines



re-do the math leading to updated condition: amplitude control slower than sync control slower than line dynamics

observations

- inverter control interferes with the line dynamics
- controller needs to be artificially slowed down
- recognized problem

[Vorobev, Huang, Hosaini, & Turitsyn,'17]

"networked control" reason

- communication through currents to infer voltages
- very inductive lines delay the information transfer
- the controller must be slow in very inductive networks

Proof sketch for dynamic grid: perturbation-inspired Lyapunov



Individual Lyapunov functions

- slow system: V(v) for $\frac{d}{dt}v = f_v(v, h(v))$
- ► fast system: W(y) for d/dt y = f_i(v, y + h(v)) where d/dt v = 0 & coordinate y = i - h(v)

Lyapunov function for the full system

•
$$\nu(x) = dW(i - h(v)) + (1 - d)V(v)$$

where $d \in [0,1]$ is free convex coefficient

• $\frac{d}{dt}\nu(x)$ is decaying under stability condition

Almost global asymptotic stability

- $\mathcal{T}' \cup \{\mathbb{O}_n\}$ globally attractive & \mathcal{T}' stable
- $\mathcal{Z}_{\{0_n\}}$ has measure zero

Evaluation of stability conditions



amplitude gain [p.u.]



 $\|v_k\|$ [p.u.]

increase of control gains by factor 10 \Rightarrow oscillations, overshoots, & instability

⇒ conditions are highly accurate

Dropping assumptions: detailed converter model





- *idea:* invert LC filter so that $v \approx v_{dc} u$ ►
- → control: perform robust inversion of LC filter via cascaded PI
- analysis: repeat proof via singular perturbation Lyapunov functions
- \rightarrow almost global stability for sufficient time scale separation (quantifiable)

VOC model < line dynamics < voltage PI < current PI

 \blacktriangleright ... similar steps for control of v_{dc} in a more detailed model

Experimental setup @ NREL







Experimental results



25.0k5/s

tok point-

17 Jul 2018

black start of inverter #1 under 500 W load (making use of almost global stability)

40.0ms



250 W to 750 W load transient with two inverters active



connecting inverter #2 while inverter #1 is regulating the grid under 500 W load



change of setpoint: p^{\star} of inverter #2 updated from 250 W to 500 W

Conclusions

Summary

- · challenges of low-inertia systems
- dispatchable virtual oscillator control
- theoretic analysis & experiments

Ongoing & future work

- theoretical questions: robustness & regulation
- practical issue: compatibility with legacy system
- experimental validations @ ETH, NREL, AIT

Main references (others on website)

D. Groß, M Colombino, J.S. Brouillon, & F. Dörfler. *The effect of transmission-line dynamics on grid-forming dispatchable virtual oscillator control.*

M. Colombino, D. Groß, J.S. Brouillon, & F. Dörfler. *Global phase and magnitude synchronization of coupled oscillators with application to the control of grid-forming power inverters.*





POWER IS NOTHING WITHOUT CONTROL

