AC-DC DIODE BRIDGE RECTIFIER

BY

IDONOR CHIDINMA EZEKIEL

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Supervised by Prof Heng-ming Tai and Prof Kaveh Ashenayi

1.0 ABSTRACT

This project explores the design, simulation, and analysis of an AC-DC diode bridge rectifier, a fundamental component in power electronics. The project evaluates the effects of capacitors and inductors on rectifier performance, focusing on voltage regulation, current waveform distortion, and harmonic content. Systematic simulations evaluate multiple circuit configurations, including a basic diode bridge rectifier, a rectifier with capacitive filtering, and one incorporating both inductors and capacitors. Furthermore, the analysis examines performance by tracking voltage and current waveforms, while Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) analysis accurately quantifies harmonic distortion. In addition, the results indicate that capacitors effectively reduce output voltage ripple but contribute to increased inrush currents. Meanwhile, inductors improve current waveform smoothness by mitigating high-frequency harmonics. The findings emphasize the critical role of passive components in optimizing rectifier efficiency and signal quality. This study provides insights into the trade-offs between ripple reduction and harmonic distortion control in AC-DC conversion applications.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

AC-DC rectification is a crucial process in power electronics, facilitating the conversion of alternating current (AC) into direct current (DC) for various industrial and consumer applications. Many electrical devices, including computers, telecommunications equipment, battery chargers, LED lighting systems, and motor drives, require a stable DC power supply to operate efficiently. Since the electricity supplied by power grids is typically in AC form, converting it into DC is essential for the functionality of these devices. The diode bridge rectifier is one of the most widely used rectification circuits due to its simple design, efficiency, and reliability. It consists of four diodes arranged in a bridge configuration to rectify both halves of the AC waveform, producing a pulsating DC output. However, this unfiltered output contains significant ripple, which can adversely affect electronic components and lead to inefficient performance.

To mitigate ripple voltage and improve power quality, passive components such as capacitors and inductors are integrated into the circuit. Capacitors help in smoothing the rectified output voltage by storing and releasing charge, whereas inductors reduce current fluctuations and filter out high-frequency harmonics. The effectiveness of these components in improving rectifier performance depends on their values and placement within the circuit. Understanding the behavior of these passive elements is essential for optimizing rectifier design in applications where stable DC voltage and minimal harmonic distortion are required.

Furthermore, this study investigates the impact of capacitors and inductors on the performance of a diode bridge rectifier. Simulation-based experiments thoroughly evaluated voltage ripple, current waveforms, and harmonic distortion levels. By performing Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) analysis, the study quantifies the harmonic content of the rectifier output under different configurations. The findings provide critical insights into designing efficient rectifiers with improved power quality, making them suitable for a wide range of industrial, commercial, and residential applications. The study of AC-DC diode bridge rectifiers is essential for electrical engineers and designers, as it enables the development of efficient power conversion systems, reduces electromagnetic interference, and enhances the overall performance of electronic circuits and power supplies.

2.1 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Unfiltered rectifiers cause voltage ripple and harmonic distortions, reducing power quality and efficiency. Adding capacitors and inductors, helps mitigate these issues, but their impact requires careful assessment. This study seeks to analyze the impact of capacitors and inductors on rectifier performance through simulation-based experiments. By comparing different circuit configurations and performing Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) analysis on current waveforms, the research aims to quantify harmonic distortion levels and assess the effectiveness of passive filtering components. The findings will provide valuable insights into optimizing AC-DC conversion for various power electronic applications, ensuring improved power quality and system efficiency.

2.2 OBJECTIVE

The primary objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the impact of capacitors on the voltage ripple and output stability in a diode bridge rectifier circuit.
2. To examine the combined effects of inductors and capacitors on the output voltage and current harmonics.
3. To conduct FFT analysis on input and output current waveforms to quantify harmonic distortion levels.
4. To compare the performance of different rectifier configurations, including those with and without filtering components.
5. To assess the trade-offs between reduced voltage ripple and increased inrush currents due to capacitive filtering.
6. To evaluate the effectiveness of inductors in improving current waveform smoothness and minimizing high-frequency distortions.
7. To provide insights into the design considerations for optimizing AC-DC conversion in practical power electronic applications.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The approach involves designing different rectifier circuits, including a basic diode bridge and versions with capacitive and inductive filtering. Simulations utilize Simscape, with sensors strategically placed to measure input and output voltage and current. Capacitor values (ranging from 0µF to 940µF) and inductor values (20µH and 100µH) vary systematically to evaluate their impact on rectifier performance. Data analysis examines voltage ripple, current waveforms, and harmonic distortion. Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) is employed to analyze the frequency components of the signals and identify key spectral characteristics. The process includes creating the circuit diagram, performing rectification analysis, and setting up the simulation. The analysis then evaluates the effect of capacitors on performance, followed by an assessment of the impact of inductors.

3.1 CIRCUIT DESIGN

The study involves two primary circuit configurations:

1. A standard AC-DC diode bridge rectifier without additional filtering components. The pictorial representation is shown in figure 3.1.1.
2. A modified rectifier that integrates both capacitors and inductors is designed to analyze their combined effects on circuit performance. The complete circuit diagram is shown in Figure 3.1.2.

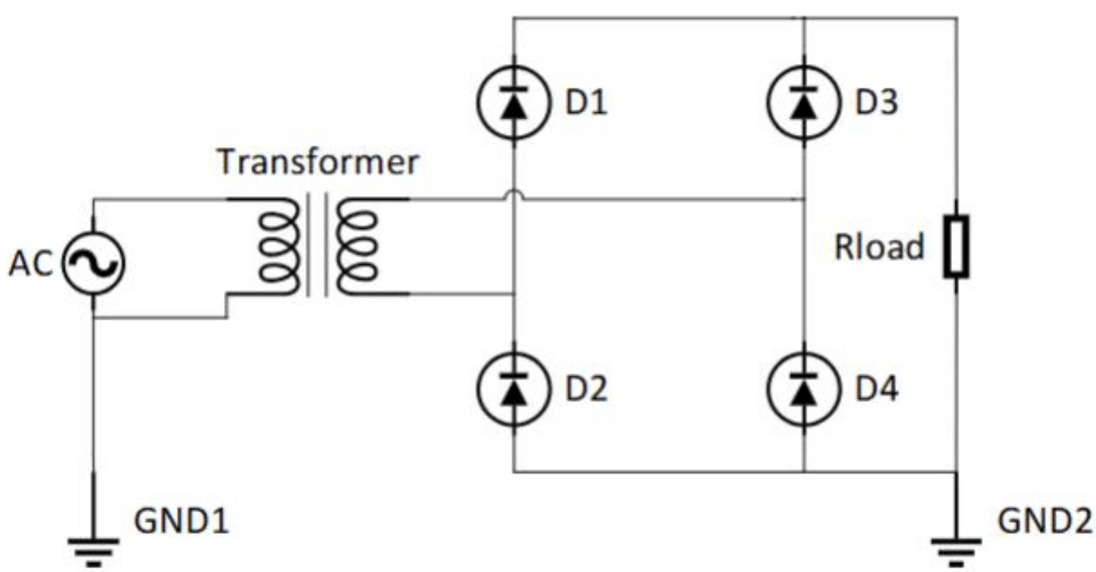

Figure 3.1.1: No Capacitor and Inductor AC-DC Schematic

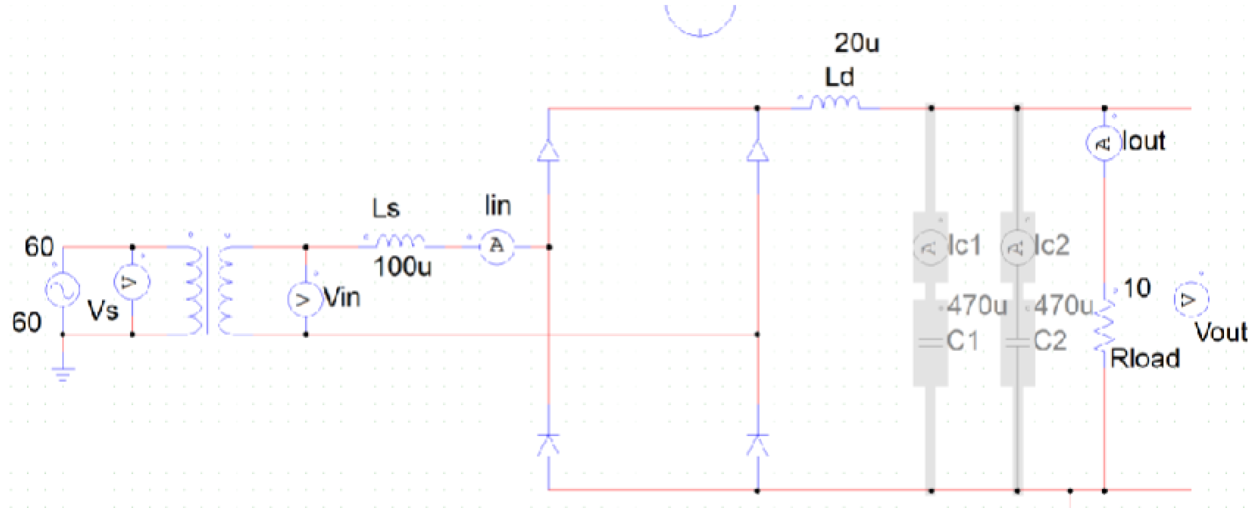

Figure 3.1.2: Capacitor and Inductor AC-DC Schematic

3.2 RECTIFICATION ANALYSIS

Rectification is the process of turning an alternating current waveform into a direct current waveform, i.e., creating a new signal that has only a single polarity. In this respect, it's reminiscent of the common definition of the word, for example, where "to rectify the situation" means "to set something straight". Before continuing, remember that a DC voltage or current does not have to exhibit a constant value (like a battery). All it means is that the polarity of the signal never changes. To clearly differentiate between a steady DC voltage and one that fluctuates in amplitude, the latter is often called pulsating DC. Rectification plays a vital role in modern electronic circuits, ensuring that devices receive the stable DC power they need to function properly. Most electronic systems, from televisions to computers, rely on a fixed, unchanging DC voltage to operate their internal components. However, the power supplied to homes and businesses is typically in AC form, making AC-to-DC conversion essential. This is where the unique properties of diodes come into play. By allowing current to flow in only one direction, diodes create the necessary asymmetry to convert AC into DC, forming the backbone of rectifier circuits.

3.3 SIMULATION SETUP

- Simulating the circuit in Simscape, a powerful power electronics-modeling tool, enables detailed waveform analysis.
- Strategically placing sensors ensures accurate measurement of input voltage, output voltage, input current, and output current.
- Adjusting the AC input voltage with a variac transformer helps achieve a stable 60V output after rectification.
- Testing capacitor values from zero to 940µF allows for a thorough evaluation of voltage ripple suppression.

- Integrating 20µH and 100µH inductors into the circuit enhances current waveform quality and reduces fluctuations.
- Performing FFT analysis quantifies harmonic distortion for each test case, enabling a comprehensive comparison of circuit performance.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF INDUCTOR AND CAPACITOR ON RECTIFIER PERFORMANCE

Analyzing Figure 3.4.1, the input current (Iin) with a 940µF capacitor, 100µH series inductor (Ls), and 20µH load inductor (Ld) shows a fundamental frequency of 8.4Hz and a high total harmonic distortion (THD) of 74%. This indicates significant harmonic content and waveform distortion, likely due to the interaction between the capacitor and inductor, which causes resonance effects and increased current fluctuations.

In Figure 3.4.2, the output current (Iout) under the same conditions has a much lower fundamental frequency of 1.01Hz and a reduced THD of 27.6%, demonstrating that the inductors smooth out the current waveform by filtering higher-order harmonics. The THD reduction from 74% to 27.6% confirms the positive impact of inductors on harmonic mitigation.

To further improve performance, increasing the inductance (e.g., using a higher-value series inductor) could further smooth the current waveform and reduce THD. Additionally, active power factor correction (PFC) circuits or LC filters could enhance output stability and suppress remaining harmonics.

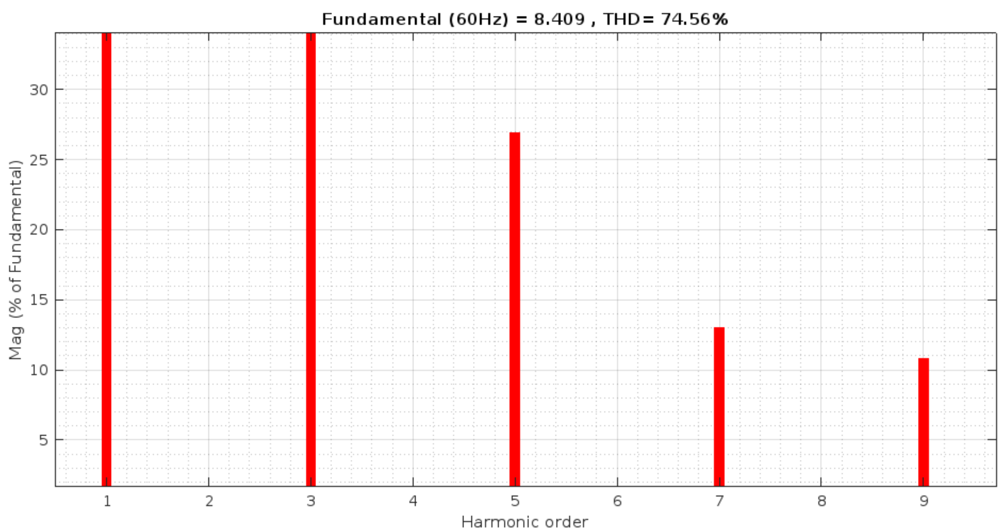

Figure 3.4.1: Input current Iin with capacitor 940uF, inductor Ls 100uH, and Ld 20uH

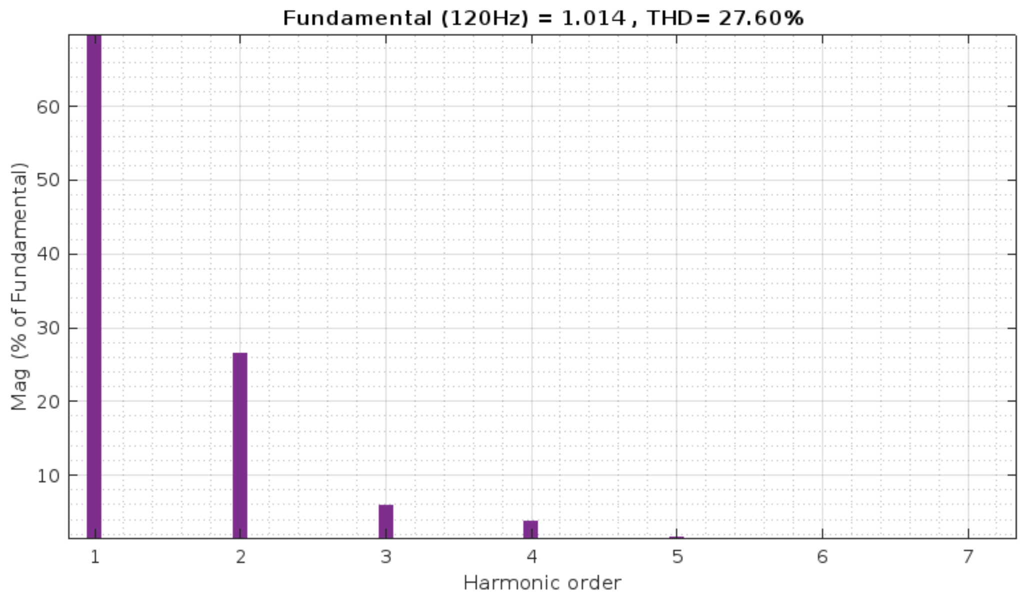

Figure 3.4.2: Output current Iin with capacitor 940uF, inductor Ls 100uH, and Ld 20uH

3.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RECTIFIER PERFORMANCE WITH AND WITHOUT PASSIVE COMPONENTS

Without any inductors or capacitors, the input current (Iin) has a low THD of 1.24% and a fundamental frequency of 5.5Hz, while the output current, (Iout) has a THD of 22.61% and a fundamental frequency of 2.40Hz. The relatively low input THD suggests that the circuit initially experiences minimal harmonic distortion, but the lack of filtering components results in a high output THD, leading to significant ripple and waveform irregularities.

When a 940µF capacitor, 100µH series inductor (Ls), and 20µH load inductor (Ld) are added, the input THD drastically increases to 74%, with the fundamental frequency rising to 8.4Hz. Meanwhile, the output THD decreases to 27.6%, and the fundamental frequency drops to 1.01Hz. This suggests that while inductors and capacitors effectively smooth the output current and reduce harmonic distortion, they introduce resonance effects that increase input current distortion.

Comparing both cases, the output THD improvement from 22.61% to 27.6% is marginal, indicating that inductors help but are insufficient alone. For further refinement, implementing tuned LC filters or active power factor correction can effectively reduce input THD while preserving output waveform stability.

4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 EFFECTS OF CAPACITOR

4.1.1 RECORD DATA FOR THE FFT ANALYSIS OF CURRENT HARMONICS

Harmonic Order	Case 0 (Iin)	Case 0 (Iout)	Case 2 (Iin)	Case 2 (Iout)
Hth	No Capacitors		940uF Capacitance	
1st	5.507	2.402	8.402	0.987
3rd	0.048	0.203	5.321	0.048
5th	0.029	0.072	1.812	0.014
7th	0.021	0.037	1.032	0.006
9th	0.015	0.021	0.787	0.0003
THD (%)	1.24	22.61	69.855	25.142

4.1.2 RECORD OF SIMULATION WAVEFORMS

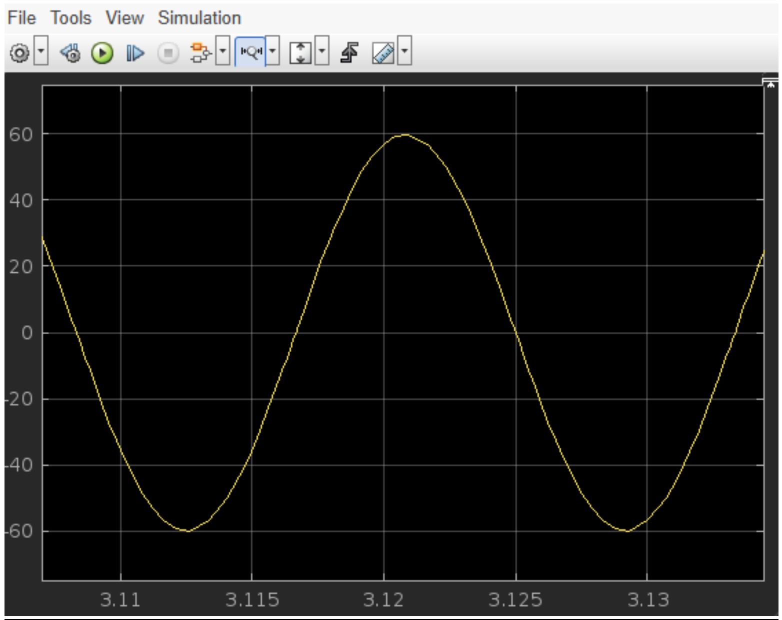

Figure 4.1.1: Simulation schematic for Input Voltage (Vin) without capacitor and inductor

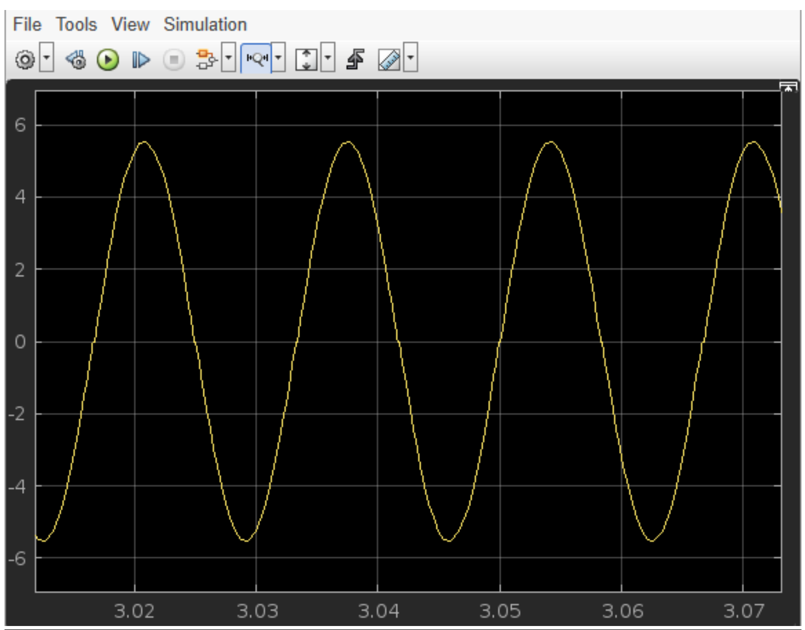

Figure 4.1.2: Simulation schematic for Input Current (Iin) without capacitor and inductor

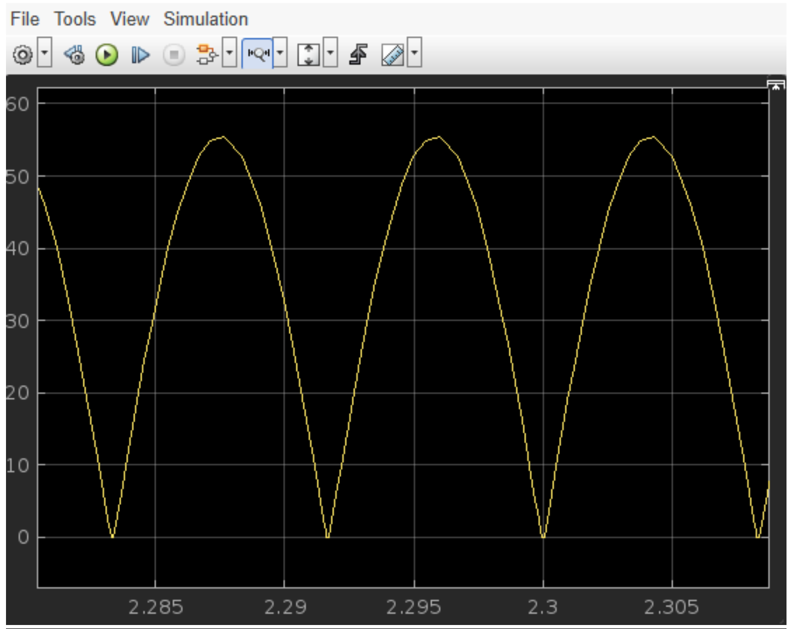

Figure 4.1.3: Simulation schematic for Output Voltage (Vout) without capacitor and inductor

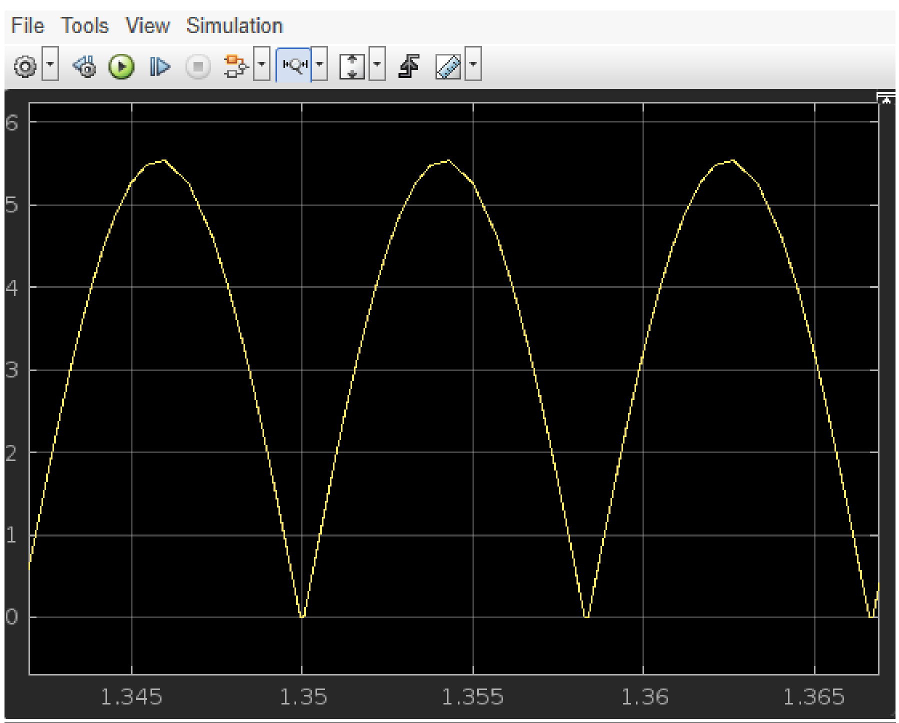

Figure 4.1.4: Simulation schematic for Output current (Iout) without capacitor and inductor

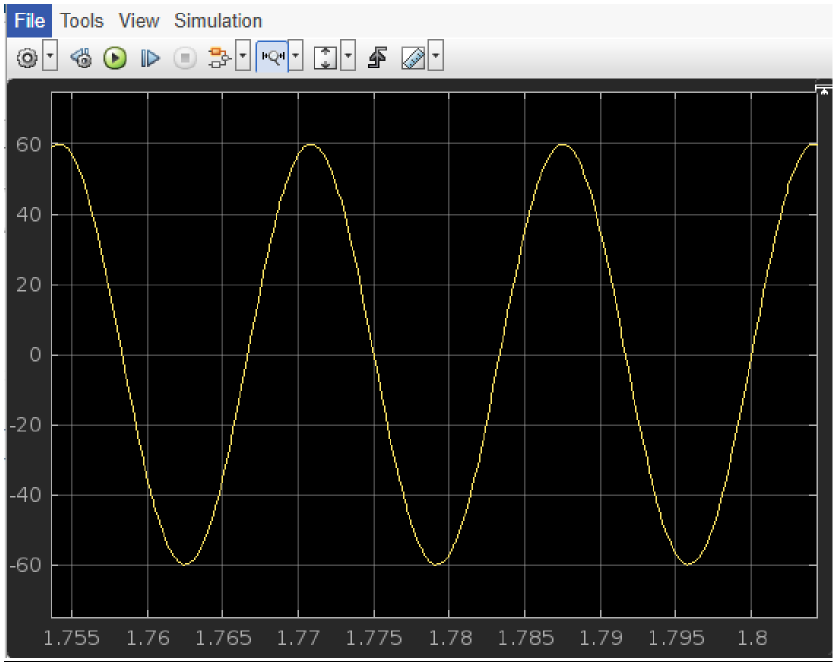

Figure 4.1.5: Simulation schematic for Input Voltage (Vin)
With capacitor (940uF)

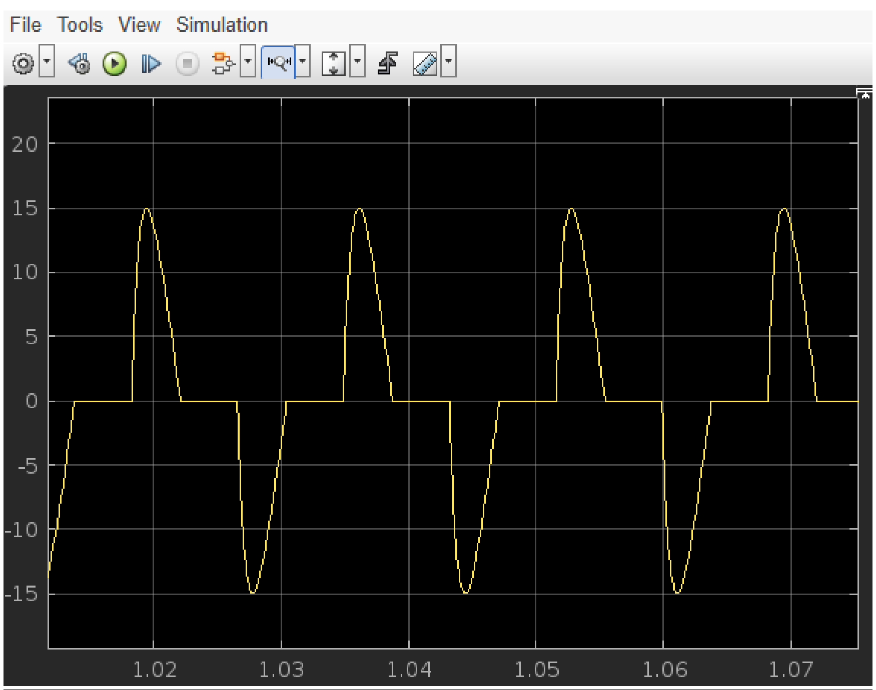

Figure 4.1.6: Simulation schematic for Input current (Iin)
With capacitor (940uF)

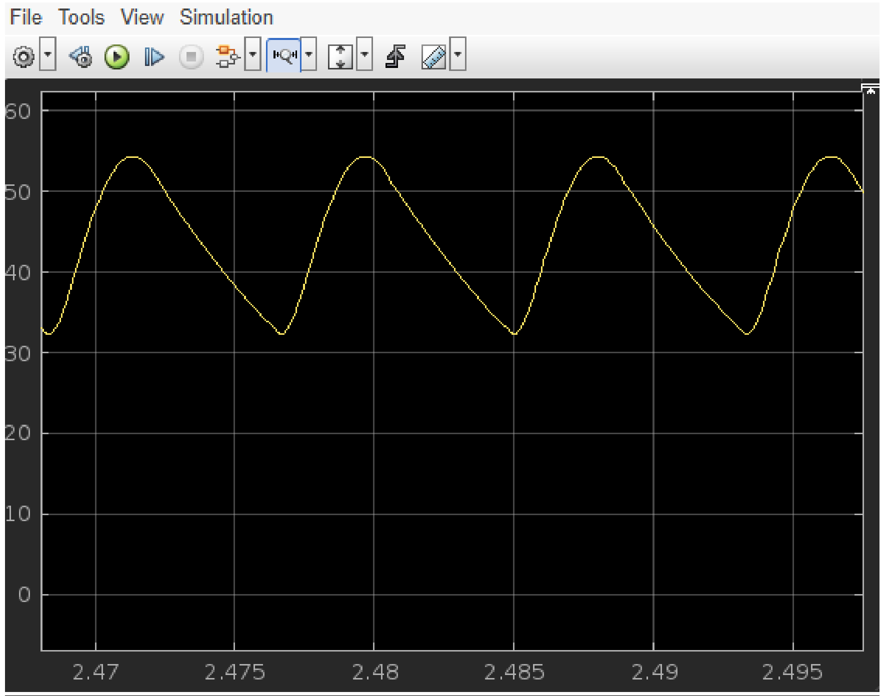

Figure 4.1.7: Simulation schematic for output voltage (Vout)
With capacitor (940uF)

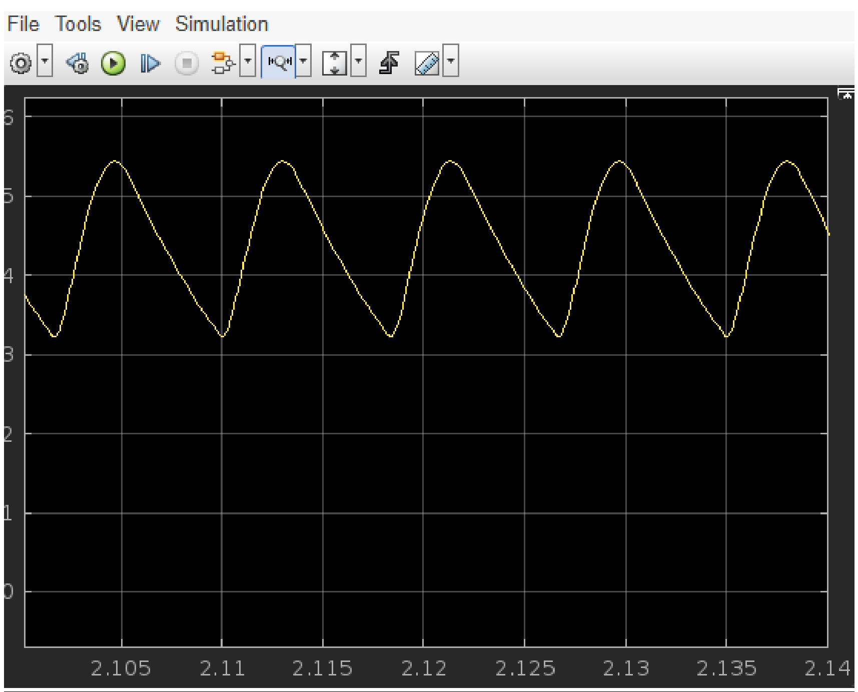

Figure 4.1.8: Simulation schematic for output current (Iout)
With capacitor (940uF)

4.2 EFFECTS OF INDUCTOR AND CAPACITOR

4.2.1 RECORD DATA FOR THE FFT ANALYSIS OF CURRENT HARMONICS

Harmonic Order	Case 0 (Iin)	Case 0 (Iout)	Case 2 (Iin)	Case 2 (Iout)
Hth	(NO CAPACITOR, LD 20uH, LS 100uH)		(CAPACITOR 940uF, LD 20uH, LS 100uH)	
1st	5.515	2.387	8.408	1.014
3rd	0.048	0.2149	3.446	0.061
5th	0.0303	0.0716	2.271	0.017
7th	0.0215	0.0478	1.0932	0.006
9th	0.011	0.02388	0.924	0.003
THD (%)	1.23	22.84	74.56	27.60

4.2.2 RECORD OF SIMULATION WAVEFORMS

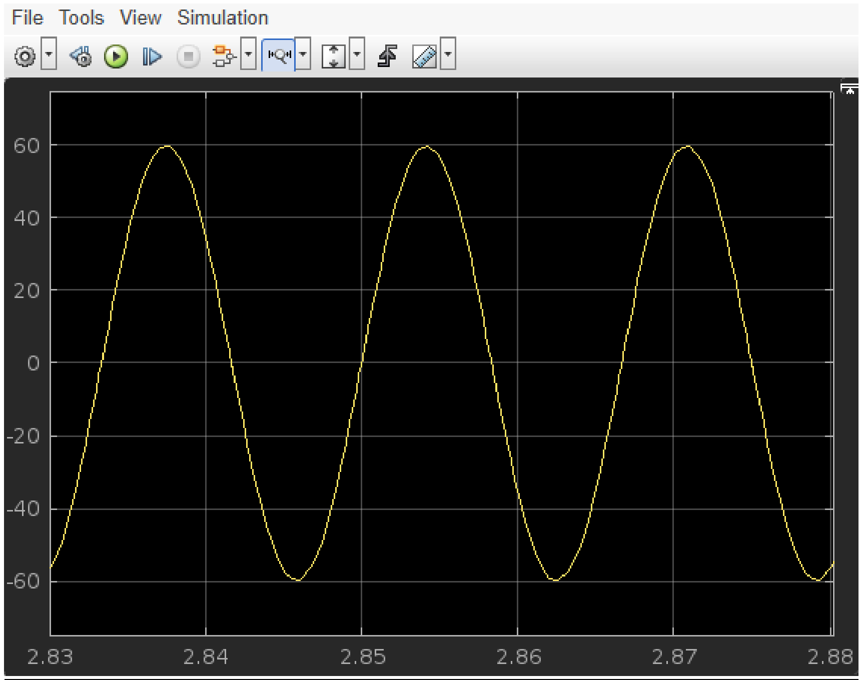

Figure 4.2.1: Simulation schematic for Input Voltage (Vin)
With inductor Ld 20uH, Ls 100uH and No capacitor

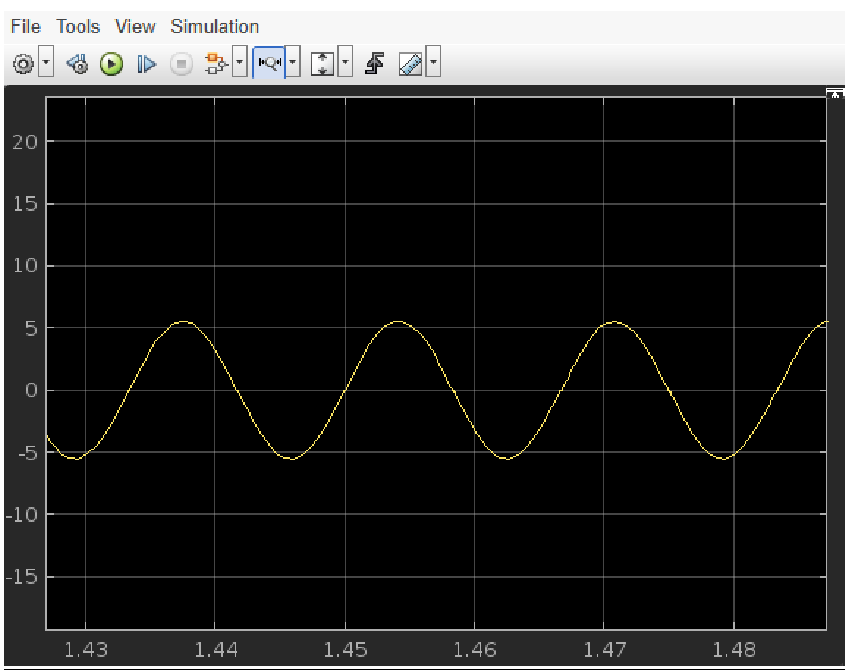

Figure 4.2.2: Simulation schematic for Input current (Iin)
With inductor Ld 20uH, Ls 100uH and No capacitor

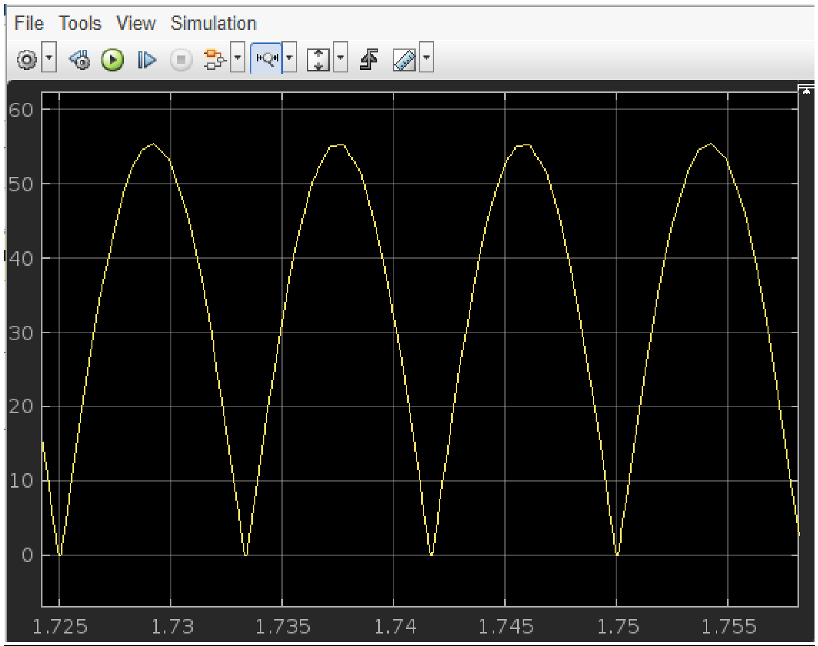

Figure 4.2.3: Simulation schematic for Output Voltage (Vout)
With inductor Ld 20uH, Ls 100uH and No capacitor

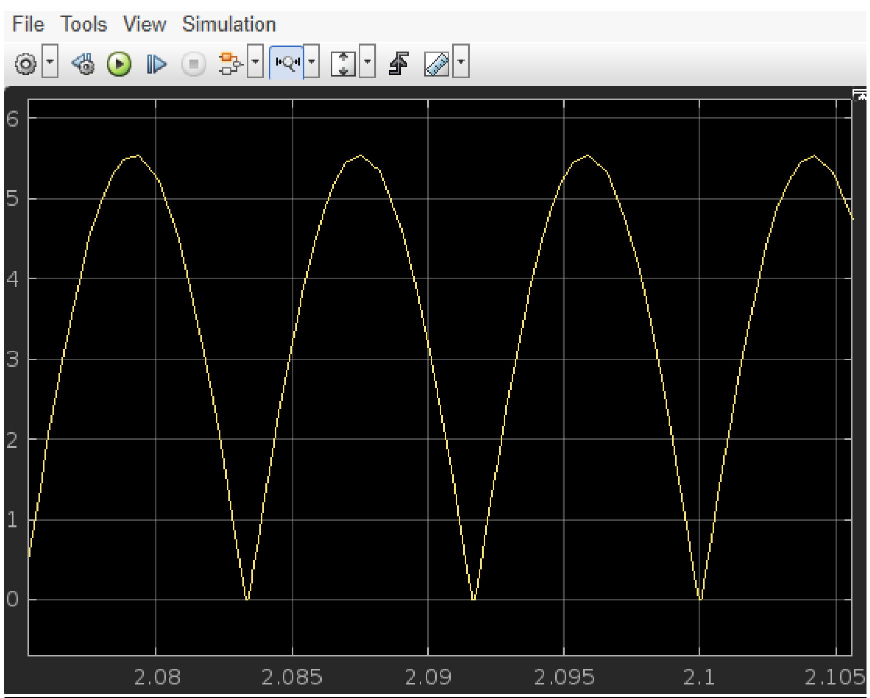

Figure 4.2.4: Simulation schematic for Output current (Iout)
With inductor Ld 20uH, Ls 100uH and No capacitor

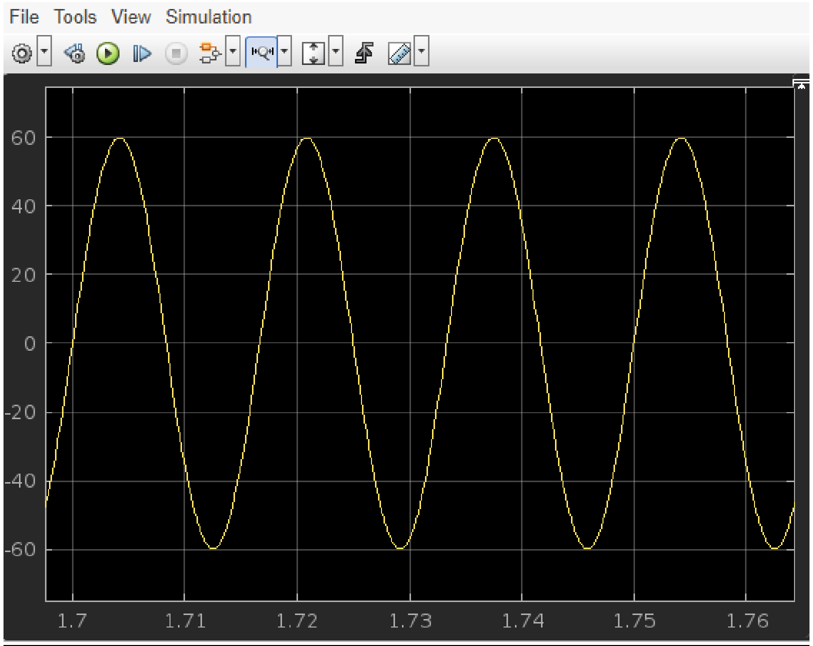

Figure 4.2.5: Simulation schematic for Input Voltage (Vin)
With inductor Ld 20uH, Ls 100uH and capacitor 940uF

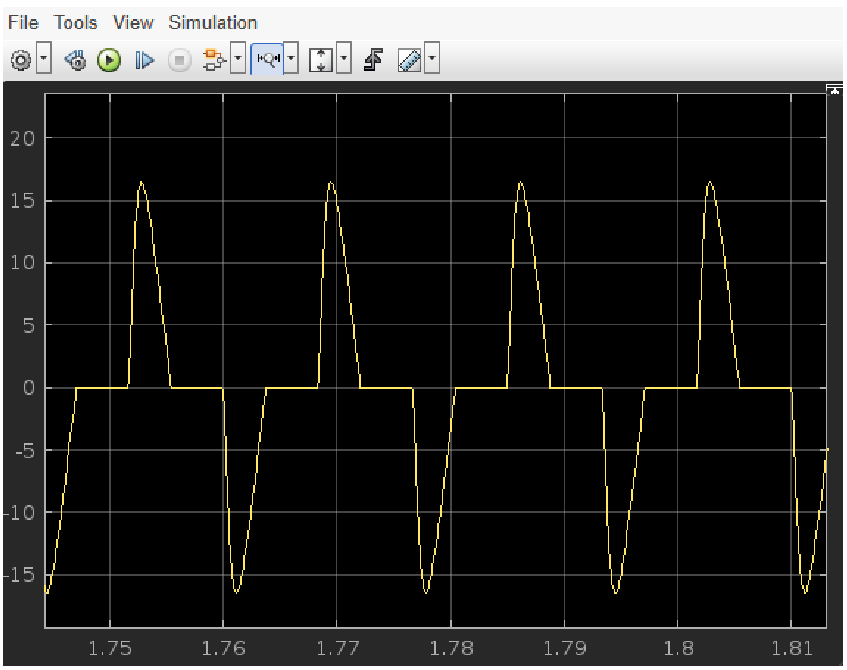

Figure 4.2.6: Simulation schematic for Input current (Iin)
With inductor Ld 20uH, Ls 100uH and capacitor 940uF

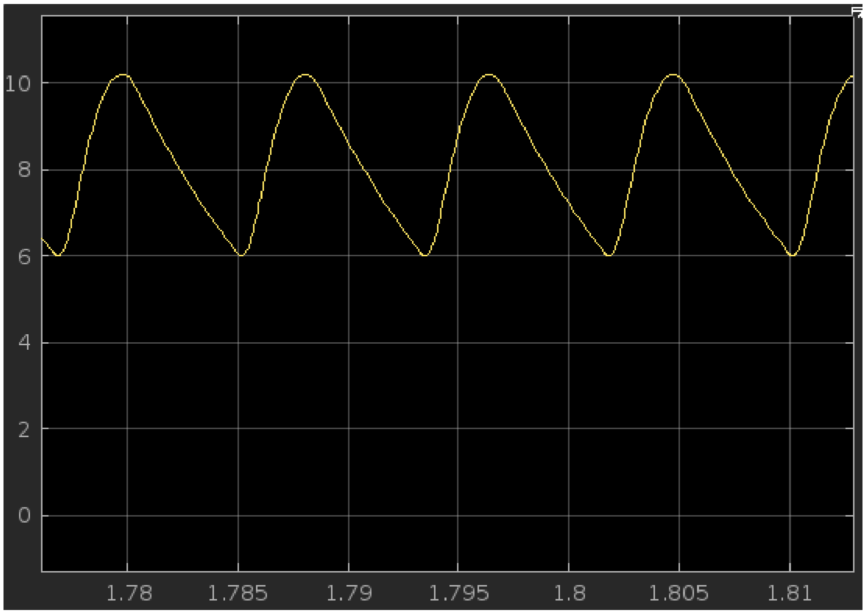

Figure 4.2.7: Simulation schematic for Output voltage (Vout) with inductor Ld 20uH, Ls 100uH and capacitor 940uF

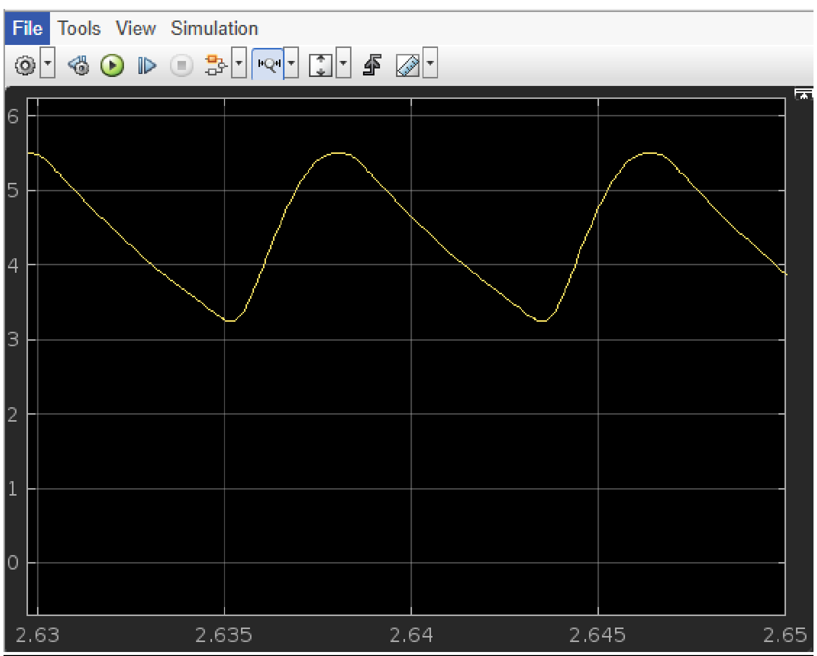

Figure 4.2.8: Simulation schematic for Output current (Iout) with inductor Ld 20uH, Ls 100uH and capacitor 940uF

5.0 CONCLUSION

The results of this study highlight the significance of capacitive and inductive components in enhancing the performance of an AC-DC diode bridge rectifier. Capacitors play a crucial role in reducing output voltage ripple, thereby improving DC voltage stability. However, the introduction of large capacitances leads to higher inrush currents, which can affect circuit longevity and component reliability. Inductors, on the other hand, contribute to improved current waveform quality by filtering high-frequency harmonics and reducing total harmonic distortion (THD). The FFT analysis confirms that the combination of capacitors and inductors achieves an optimal balance between voltage regulation and harmonic suppression. The study further demonstrates that while capacitive filtering alone reduces voltage fluctuations, its effect on harmonic distortion is limited. The addition of inductors significantly smooths the current waveform, leading to a substantial reduction in THD. These findings provide valuable insights for designing rectifier circuits that prioritize both power quality and efficiency. Future work could involve experimental validation of these simulation results and exploring active filtering techniques for further harmonic mitigation.

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6. REFERENCES

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