

Determining the Maximum Allowable Current of an RBS using a Directed Graph Model and Greedy Algorithm

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Abstract

Reconfigurable battery systems (RBSs) provide a promising alternative to traditional battery systems due to their flexible and dynamically changeable topological structures that can be adapted to different battery charging and discharging strategies. A critical system parameter known as the maximum allowable current (MAC) is pivotal to RBS operation. This parameter is instrumental in maintaining the current of each individual battery within a safe range and serves as a guiding indicator for the system's reconfiguration, ensuring its safety and reliability. In this paper, a method is proposed for calculating the MAC of an arbitrary RBS using a greedy algorithm in conjunction with a directed graph model of the RBS. Using the shortest path (SP) of the battery, the greedy algorithm transforms the exhaustion of the switch states in the brute-force algorithm or variable search without utilizing structures in the heuristic algorithms (simulated annealing and genetic algorithms) in the combination of the shortest paths. This significantly enhances the efficiency with which the MAC is determined. The directed graph model, based on an equivalent circuit, provides a specific method for calculating the MAC of a given structure. The proposed method is validated using two previously published RBS structures and an additional one with a more complex structure. The results are the same as those from the brute-force algorithm, but the proposed method significantly improves the computational efficiency, being theoretically $N_s 2^{N_s - N_b} \log_{10} N_b$ times faster than the brute-force algorithm for an RBS with N_b batteries and N_s switches. Another advantage of the proposed method is its ability to calculate the MAC of RBSs with arbitrary structures and variable batteries, even in scenarios with random isolated batteries.

1 Introduction

Battery energy storage systems (BESSs) are widely utilized in various applications [1], such as wind power plants [2] and space power systems [3, 4], for the purpose of storing and releasing high-quality electrical energy [5]. Typically, a BESS consists of numerous batteries interconnected by series-parallel circuitry to provide the required storage capacity. However, conventional BESSs, in which the batteries are connected in a fixed topology, suffer from a significant weakness in their worst batteries due to the so-called cask effect. Furthermore, if the worst battery fails during operation, it is highly likely to accelerate the degradation of the other batteries, resulting in reliability and safety issues at the system level [6, 7, 8]. These challenges have become major technical obstacles in many engineering projects that demand high reliability, such as the development of next-generation space vehicles [9]. Reconfigurable battery systems (RBSs), which can dynamically switch between different circuit topologies as needed, are expected to be able to address these issues [10]. In a typical RBS, additional switches are introduced between the batteries to form a reconfigurable network, where the circuit's topology can be altered by opening or closing the switches. By opening the switches adjacent to the unhealthy batteries, they can be isolated from the system, ensuring that the system remains in a reliable operational state [11]. Furthermore, an RBS can be reconfigured to adapt to different charging and discharging strategies, thereby enhancing the system's efficiency and prolonging the battery's lifespan [12]. These advantages make RBSs a promising alternative to traditional BESSs.

The early research on RBSs mainly focused on the topological design of their structures, incorporating different levels of flexibility and reconfigurability to meet application requirements. For example, Ci et al. [13] proposed an RBS structure that dynamically adjusts the battery discharge rate to fully exploit the available capacity of each battery. Jan et al. [14, 15] designed structures that reconfigure circuits with variant batteries in series to accommodate the constantly changing voltage requirements during electric vehicle charging. A structure proposed by Visairo and Kumar [16] alters the system's output voltage based on the load conditions, thereby reducing power loss in the voltage regulator during the power supply process and enhancing energy efficiency. Lawson [17] and He et al. [18] also focused on enhancing energy efficiency, and proposed simplified structures that have fewer switches than the design of Visairo and Kumar. Kim et al. [19] improved the ability of an RBS structure to recover from battery failures by introducing multiple ports. These complex structures between batteries and switches provide flexibility to RBSs but also pose challenges in hardware design. During the reconfiguration process, current deviation and fluctuation may occur. Specifically, when the system switches from series to parallel connection, a circulating current between parallel cells can be triggered due to a voltage imbalance [20]. Failure to fully consider this issue during the design of RBSs can result in damage to the batteries, switches, and wires. For example, Engelhardt et al. [21] applied an RBS to a fast-charging scenario with adaptive cell switching to balance cell states while adhering to voltage requests. However, the switching of batteries leads to intolerable current variations. To address this problem, Han et al. [22] derived an analytical expression for the maximum switch current during battery system reconfiguration. This analytical expression aids in the selection of switches and supports general hardware design.

Recently, increasing attention has been paid to the estimation and control of RBS system states,

and several approaches have been proposed to optimize the performance of these systems. State estimation, which is an essential technology in traditional battery management systems, serves as the foundation for system control and holds great potential in the context of RBSs [23]. Couto et al. [24] introduced a partition-based unscented Kalman filter to estimate the state of a large-scale RBS, utilizing an enhanced reduced-order electrochemical model. Kersten et al. [25] utilized the balancing current of neighboring cells in parallel operation to determine the battery impedance, thereby obtaining information about the state of health and power capability of the RBS. Schmid et al. [26] further leveraged the reconfigurable nature of the system to actively diagnose faults, employing an algorithm that changes the system structure to enhance the fault isolability. Another active research area is the development of effective control strategies for RBSs to achieve optimal performance, including improved stability [27] and efficiency [28]. Han et al. [29] proposed a near-fastest battery balancing algorithm to minimize the time required for battery charge equalization. Liu et al. [30] also proposed a scheme for maximizing capacity utilization based on a path planning algorithm, aiming to enhance the battery consistency within the system. To break through the bottleneck of the potential short-circuit paths increasing exponentially with the RBS scale, Chen et al. [31] proposed a systematic approach based on sneak circuit theory. They conducted a comprehensive analysis of all paths between the cathode and anode of each battery in the RBS, identifying paths that consist only of switches as short-circuit paths for pre-checking before system reconfiguration. Artificial intelligence has also appeared in RBS management [32]. The effectiveness of the deep reinforcement learning method has been validated in real-world RBSs [28].

The maximum allowable current (MAC), which is defined as the maximum current allowed within the constraints of a battery cell, is a crucial indicator of RBSs that need to be evaluated during the design and control of the system. The MAC assists designers in assessing whether the RBS meets output current requirements and contributes to the development of appropriate and safe strategies for the battery management system. However, few studies have directly determined the MACs of RBSs, primarily due to the complexity arising from reconfiguration. In the field of computer science, there is a similar problem with scheduling tasks on dynamically reconfigurable hardware with limited resources and task interdependencies. This problem is analogous to the determination of the MAC and a corresponding solution has been proposed [33, 34]. However, dealing with the structural characteristics and circuit equations of RBSs is challenging for this method. From the perspective of RBS structure analysis, the MAC problem can be transformed into a problem of finding the maximum output current among all possible reconfigurations of the RBS. However, this may be an NP-hard problem [35]. Common methods such as brute-force algorithms, simulated annealing (SA) algorithms, and genetic algorithms (GA) have the drawbacks of inefficiency, excessive time consumption, and an inability to guarantee the globally optimal solution.

To solve this issue, this paper proposes an efficient method to evaluate the MACs of RBSs. In this method, a greedy algorithm is designed to efficiently search the possible circuit topologies of RBSs. This algorithm transforms the inefficient search for reconfigurations into a proactive combining of the shortest paths of the batteries. Furthermore, an improved directed graph model is introduced to analyze the current of the RBS, taking into account factors such as the voltage, internal resistance, MAC of the battery, and external load. The main contributions of this study can be summarized as

112 follows:

- 113 • An efficient method is proposed to determine the MACs of RBSs with arbitrary structures,
114 including scenarios with isolated batteries.
- 115 • A greedy algorithm is applied to solve the MAC problem, the computational complexity of
116 which is greatly reduced compared with the brute-force algorithm.
- 117 • An improved directed graph model is introduced to provide a specific method for calculating
118 the MAC of a given structure.

119 The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section II presents the framework and
120 details of the proposed directed graph model and the greedy algorithm. Section III applies the
121 proposed method to determine the MACs of two published RBS structures and a new one with a
122 more complex structure. The calculation results, the computational complexity of the algorithm,
123 and scenarios such as battery random isolation are also discussed. Finally, the concluding remarks
124 are presented in Section IV.

125 2 Methodology

126 The central principle of the proposed method is to connect the batteries in an RBS in parallel to the
127 maximum possible extent, thereby maximizing the output current. To achieve this universally and
128 automatically, the overall process is divided into the four steps shown in Fig. 1. First, a directed
129 graph model is established for the subsequent computations. The model not only contains the
130 connected relationships between batteries and switches but also retains the performance parameters
131 of the batteries. Subsequently, based on the equivalent circuit, the MAC problem is transformed
132 into specific objective functions and constraints. The shortest paths (SPs, where additional batteries
133 and switches on the path are penalized for distance) of the batteries are then obtained using the
134 Dijkstra algorithm to connect the batteries in the RBS in parallel. Finally, a greedy algorithm is
135 used to organize the switches, allowing the batteries to connect via their SPs while satisfying the
136 constraints, resulting in the MAC of the RBS.

137 2.1 Directed graph model

138 He et al. [36] proposed an abstracted directed graph model for an RBS, where the nodes represent the
139 batteries, the edges represent the configuration flexibility, and the weight of each vertex corresponds
140 to the battery voltage (Fig. 2a). The model captures all potential system configurations and offers
141 a direct metric for configuration flexibility, but it does not specify the physical implementation
142 of the connectivity between batteries, meaning that one graph might correspond to multiple RBS
143 structures. We previously proposed a directed graph model that differs significantly from He et al.'s
144 model by using nodes to represent the connections between batteries and switches and directed edges
145 to represent batteries and switches (Fig. 2b), allowing for a one-to-one correspondence between an
146 RBS structure and its directed graph model. This model accurately and comprehensively represents

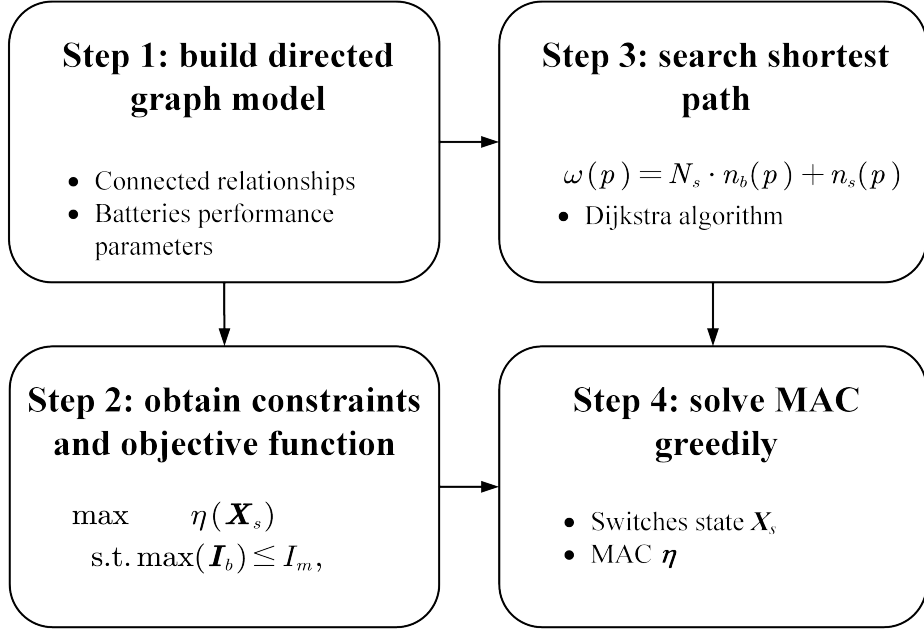


Figure 1: A diagram of the proposed method, which contains four main steps.

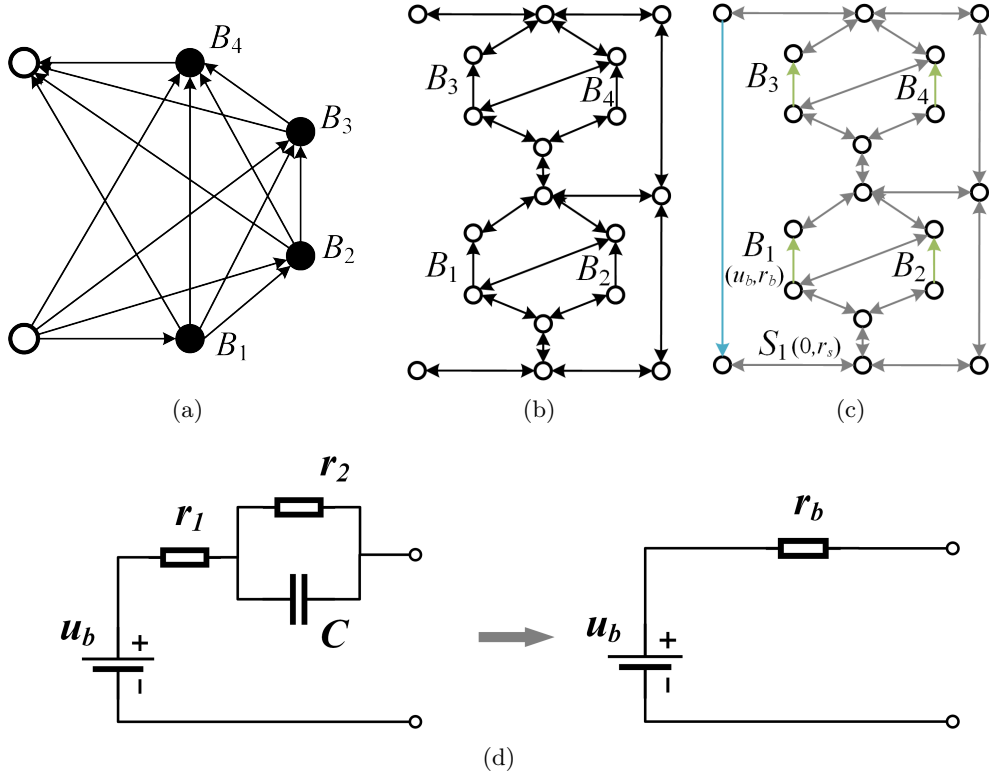


Figure 2: The directed graph models used in (a) the work of He et al. [36], (b) our previous work, and (c) the improved model in this paper. (d) The equivalent circuit of a battery in this method.

the RBS topological structure but cannot be used for quantitative MAC calculations because it does not consider the voltage, internal resistance, or MAC of the battery. To address this issue, we improve our previous model by adding electromotive force and resistance attributes on the edges based on the corresponding equivalent circuits. The model also considers the external load as an equivalent resistance and integrates it into the analysis, making it a complete circuit model for later circuit analysis. Fig. 2c shows the improved directed graph model used in this paper. The following provides a detailed explanation of the method used for equating components in RBSs and constructing the directed graph model.

To use circuit analysis methods to solve the MAC of the RBS, the components in the RBS are equated to ideal circuit elements. For instance, as shown in Fig. 2d, the battery in the RBS is represented as a black-box circuit consisting of two resistors r_1 and r_2 and a capacitor C , in what is known as the Thevenin model [37, 38]. With an emphasis on the stable output of the RBS, the capacitor in the Thevenin model can be considered as an open circuit without affecting the steady-state current. Therefore, battery B_i in the RBS can be simplified as a series connection between a constant voltage source u_i and a resistor r_i . Furthermore, the state of the switch S_j in the RBS is represented by a binary variable x_j , where 0 is ON and 1 is OFF. When the switch is closed, the circuit can be regarded as a resistor with a very small resistance r_j . Finally, the external load is considered as a resistor with resistance R_o .

For a given RBS structure, its directed graph model $G(V, E)$ is constructed as follows:

1. Nodes: The nodes in the directed graph correspond to the connection points of components in the actual RBS. Assuming there are a total of N nodes in the RBS, for the sake of convenience, the anode of the RBS is denoted as v_1 and the cathode as v_N .
2. Edges: The edges in the directed graph correspond to the batteries, switches, and external electrical loads in the actual RBS. Therefore, there are three types of directed edges. For battery B_i , its directed edge e_i is drawn from the cathode to the anode because the battery in operation only allows current to flow in one direction. For switch S_j , since it is allowed to work under bidirectional currents, it is represented by a pair of directed edges with two-way directions. For the external electrical load, because it is connected to the anode and cathode of the RBS, a directed edge from v_N to v_1 is used to represent it. In conclusion, for a given RBS structure with N_b batteries and N_s switches, the number of directed edges is $N_b + 2N_s + 1$, where 1 represents the external electrical load.
3. Attributes of edges: Each edge is assigned two attributes, a voltage difference and a resistance, based on the equivalent method mentioned above. The values for battery B_i , switch S_j , and the external loads correspond to (u_i, r_i) , $(0, r_j)$, and $(0, R_o)$, respectively.

2.2 Constraints and objective function

For a given RBS, determining the MAC involves maximizing the RBS output current while ensuring that all battery currents do not exceed the batteries' MAC. This subsection establishes the constraints and objective function used to determine the MAC through circuit analysis based on the

185 directed graph model provided in the previous section.

186 First, the topology in the directed graph model is represented in the form of a matrix \mathbf{A} , which
 187 is known as the incidence matrix and is defined as follows:

$$a_{kl} = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{edge } l \text{ leaves node } k, \\ -1, & \text{edge } l \text{ enters node } k, \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

188 For a directed graph consisting of N nodes and $N_b + 2N_s + 1$ directed edges, the incidence matrix \mathbf{A}
 189 is an $N \times (N_b + 2N_s + 1)$ matrix. In this matrix, the rows and columns represent the nodes and edges
 190 of the directed graph, respectively. By distinguishing the components in the RBS corresponding to
 191 each column, \mathbf{A} can be rewritten as

$$\mathbf{A} = [\mathbf{A}_b \quad \mathbf{A}_s \quad \mathbf{A}_o], \quad (2)$$

192 where \mathbf{A}_b , \mathbf{A}_s , and \mathbf{A}_o are the submatrices corresponding to the batteries, switches, and external
 193 electrical load, respectively. To reduce the computational complexity, the dimensions of matrix \mathbf{A} are
 194 reduced. Since each directed edge has one node to leave and one to enter, the values in every column
 195 of \mathbf{A} sum to zero. Therefore, removing the last row will not result in a loss of information. Conversely,
 196 since each switch in the RBS is represented by a pair of directed edges with two-way directions, the
 197 two columns corresponding to the switch are mutually opposite. Thus, for the submatrix \mathbf{A}_s , only
 198 one column is retained for each pair of columns representing the same switch. As a result, \mathbf{A} can
 199 be reduced to an $(N - 1) \times (N_b + N_s + 1)$ matrix, denoted $\tilde{\mathbf{A}}$, for further calculation of the current
 200 and voltage. Similar to Eq. (2), $\tilde{\mathbf{A}}$ can be rewritten as

$$\tilde{\mathbf{A}} = [\tilde{\mathbf{A}}_b \quad \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_s \quad \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_o]. \quad (3)$$

201 After obtaining the incidence matrix, the currents of all batteries and output in the RBS are
 202 determined by solving the circuit equations. According to Kirchhoff's laws, we have

$$\begin{cases} \tilde{\mathbf{A}}\mathbf{I} = \mathbf{0}, \\ \mathbf{U} = \tilde{\mathbf{A}}^T \mathbf{U}_n, \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

203 where \mathbf{I} and \mathbf{U} indicate the current and voltage difference arrays of the $N_b + N_s + 1$ edges, respectively,
 204 and \mathbf{U}_n is the voltage array of the $N - 1$ nodes. These directed edges are treated as generalized
 205 branches and expressed in matrix form as follows:

$$\mathbf{I} = \mathbf{Y}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{U} - \mathbf{Y}\mathbf{X}\mathbf{U}_s + \mathbf{I}_s, \quad (5)$$

206 where \mathbf{U}_s and \mathbf{I}_s denote the source voltage and source current of the generalized branches, respec-
 207 tively. Because all batteries have been made equivalent to voltage sources rather than current sources
 208 in the previous subsection, all elements of the array \mathbf{I}_s are zero, whereas the elements of the array

209 \mathbf{U}_s are equal to the first attribute of the corresponding edges in the directed graph. The matrix \mathbf{Y} in
 210 Eq. (5) is the admittance matrix of the circuit and is defined as the inverse of the impedance matrix.
 211 The elements on the diagonal of matrix \mathbf{Y} are equal to the reciprocal of the resistance, which is the
 212 second attribute of the corresponding edges in the directed graph. The off-diagonal elements of \mathbf{Y}
 213 are zero. \mathbf{X} is the state matrix that determines whether the RBS batteries and switches can pass
 214 current. It is defined as

$$\mathbf{X} = \text{diag}(\underbrace{1, 0, \dots, 1}_{N_b \text{ of } 0/1}, \underbrace{1, 0, \dots, 1}_{N_s \text{ of } 0/1}, 1) = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{X}_b & & \\ & \mathbf{X}_s & \\ & & 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad (6)$$

215 where element x_i of matrix \mathbf{X}_b indicates whether battery B_i has been removed from the circuit, with
 216 $x_i = 1$ indicating removal and $x_i = 0$ indicating that battery B_i is still available to supply power.
 217 When all batteries are healthy and capable of providing current to the external load, \mathbf{X}_b is the
 218 identity matrix. The elements x_j of matrix \mathbf{X}_s determine whether switch S_j is closed, with $x_j = 1$
 219 indicating a closed switch and $x_j = 0$ indicating an open switch, consistently with the previous
 220 subsection.

221 Theoretically, the output current I_o and the currents of each battery \mathbf{I}_b in the RBS can be
 222 determined by solving Eqs. (4)–(6) under any given state \mathbf{X} . To further simplify the problem, it
 223 is assumed that all batteries have the same electromotive force and internal resistance, which are
 224 denoted u_b and r_b , respectively. This allows us to derive explicit expressions for I_o and \mathbf{I}_b . After
 225 derivation and simplification, the output current I_o and the currents of each battery \mathbf{I}_b are ultimately
 226 represented as in Eqs. (7) and (8), respectively:

$$I_o = \frac{1}{R_o r_b} \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_o^T \mathbf{Y}_n^{-1}(\mathbf{X}) \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_b \mathbf{U}_b, \quad (7)$$

$$\mathbf{I}_b = \frac{1}{r_b^2} [\tilde{\mathbf{A}}_b^T \mathbf{Y}_n^{-1}(\mathbf{X}) \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_b \mathbf{U}_b - r_b \mathbf{U}_b], \quad (8)$$

228 where \mathbf{U}_b is an $N_b \times 1$ array with all elements equal to u_b , and \mathbf{Y}_n is the equivalent admittance
 229 matrix of the circuit and is defined as

$$\mathbf{Y}_n(\mathbf{X}) = \frac{1}{R_o} \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_o \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_o^T + \frac{1}{r_b} \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_b \mathbf{X}_b \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_b^T + \frac{1}{r_s} \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_s \mathbf{X}_s \tilde{\mathbf{A}}_s^T. \quad (9)$$

230 To characterize the current output capacity of the RBS structure under different switching states,
 231 an indicator η is defined by the ratio of I_o to $\max(\mathbf{I}_b)$:

$$\eta = \frac{I_o}{\max(\mathbf{I}_b)}. \quad (10)$$

232 Finally, the problem of finding the MAC can be formulated as

$$\max \eta(\mathbf{X}_s) \quad (11)$$

$$\text{s.t. } \max(\mathbf{I}_b) \leq I_m, \quad (12)$$

233 where I_m is the MAC of the battery.

234 However, it remains computationally difficult to solve Eq. (11) because of \mathbf{Y}_n^{-1} . Firstly, the in-
 235 troduction of nonlinear terms through \mathbf{Y}_n^{-1} renders many methods in linear optimization unsuitable
 236 for this problem. Secondly, the rank of \mathbf{Y}_n is proportional to the number of batteries and switches,
 237 which can be very large for a large RBS, leading to a significant computational burden. As a result,
 238 intelligent algorithms that rely on evolution by iteration may face efficiency problems when dealing
 239 with a large RBS. To address this issue, the problem should be considered from the perspective
 240 of guiding the RBS to reconstruct as many parallel structures as possible. Consequently, a greedy
 241 algorithm based on the shortest path is proposed. The detailed implementation of this algorithm is
 242 presented in the following two subsections.

243 2.3 Shortest path

244 The path p used in this method is defined as the complete route that passes through one battery
 245 (or a consecutive series of batteries) and closed switches, connecting the anode v_1 to the cathode v_N
 246 of the RBS. By applying a penalty to the series-connected batteries on the path, where additional
 247 batteries imply a greater distance, the algorithm encourages the RBS to form parallel structures to
 248 the maximum extent possible. In addition, to reduce the number of switches controlled during the
 249 reconstruction process, a penalty is also applied to the total number of switches on the path while
 250 ensuring the minimum number of batteries. Therefore, the distance ω of path p is

$$\omega(p) = N_s n_b(p) + n_s(p), \quad (13)$$

251 where N_s is the total number of switches in the system, and $n_b(p)$ and $n_s(p)$ are the number of
 252 batteries and switches along path p , respectively. Moreover, the shortest path SP_i is defined as the
 253 path with the minimum ω for battery B_i :

$$SP_i = \arg \min_{p \in P_i} \omega(p), \quad (14)$$

254 where P_i is the set of all paths from v_1 to v_N that pass through directed edge i .

255 SP_i can be solved using the Dijkstra algorithm. The Dijkstra algorithm is a graph-search method
 256 that finds the shortest path between two given nodes in a weighted graph, efficiently solving the
 257 single-source shortest-path problem. Denoting the cathode and anode of battery B_i as v_i^- and v_i^+
 258 respectively, path p of battery B_i can be divided into three segments: $v_1 \rightarrow v_i^-$, $v_i^+ \rightarrow v_N$, and
 259 $v_i^- \rightarrow v_i^+$. $v_i^- \rightarrow v_i^+$ is the directed edge corresponding to battery B_i . With the Dijkstra algorithm,
 260 the shortest paths for $v_1 \rightarrow v_i^-$ and $v_i^+ \rightarrow v_N$ can be calculated under the weights given in Eq. (13)
 261 and denoted $SP(v_i^- \rightarrow v_i^+)$ and $SP(v_i^+ \rightarrow v_N)$, respectively. Finally, SP_i for battery B_i is formed

by the complete path, which consists of $SP(v_1 \rightarrow v_i^-)$, $v_i^- \rightarrow v_i^+$, and $SP(v_i^+ \rightarrow v_N)$.

2.4 Greedy algorithm

From the perspective of series vs. parallel connections, integrating more batteries into the circuit through their shortest paths (SPs) results in more batteries connected in parallel, thereby increasing the total output current of the RBS. However, conflicts may arise between the SPs of different batteries. For instance, the SPs of two batteries might form a short-circuit RBS structure, which is not allowed. To address this issue, a greedy algorithm incorporates as many SPs as possible while satisfying the reconstruction requirements.

The algorithm (see the pseudocode in Algorithm 1) is illustrated in Fig. 3 and is summarized as follows: First, the SPs are obtained by using Eqs. (13) and (14) in conjunction with the Dijkstra search. Next, the matrix \mathbf{A} is calculated using Eq. (1), and the initial N_{set} is set to N_b . The algorithm uses a dichotomy method to iteratively check until convergence different combinations of c_b batteries from N_b and updates N_{set} . For each combination, the algorithm constructs an effective solution if possible, and calculates the currents I_o and \mathbf{I}_b using Eqs. (7) and (8). If the maximum current \mathbf{I}_b is less than or equal to I_m , η is calculated using Eq. (10), and the maximum η is updated accordingly. Finally, the algorithm outputs the maximum η once N_{set} converges.

3 Case Study

3.1 Structures and details

Currently, there are two types of RBS structures in the existing literature — those of Visairo and Kumar [16] and Lawson [17], both of which have seen real use. The primary goal of Visairo and Kumar’s structure (Fig. 4b) is to dynamically adjust the RBS output power. However, the isolation of unhealthy batteries is not sufficiently addressed in their work. Lawson designed the RBS structure shown in Fig. 4a to isolate batteries. Although this structure easily isolates batteries, it cannot dynamically adjust the output current of the RBS. Based on the structure of Visairo and Kumar and that of Lawson, this paper proposes the structure shown in Fig. 4c. By integrating the Visairo and Kumar RBS structure into the Lawson RBS structure, the proposed structure not only has the flexibility to switch the batteries between series, parallel, and mixed series-parallel modes, but also allows the isolation of highly degraded batteries from the RBS.

In the case study, the following RBS systems are investigated and compared: (a) three different structures (Figs. 4a–4c) with the same four batteries; (b) the same structure as in Fig. 4c with two/four/six batteries; and (c) the four-battery structure in Fig. 4c with random isolated batteries. The greedy algorithm proposed in this work is also compared with the brute-force algorithm, SA, and GA to validate its effectiveness and efficiency. In order to adapt the two heuristic algorithms to the system’s structure and scale, the number of state neighbors of SA and the population size of GA are both set to $N_b \cdot N_s$, which increases with the number of batteries and switches in the system. The parameters of the other algorithms are shown in Tab. 1.

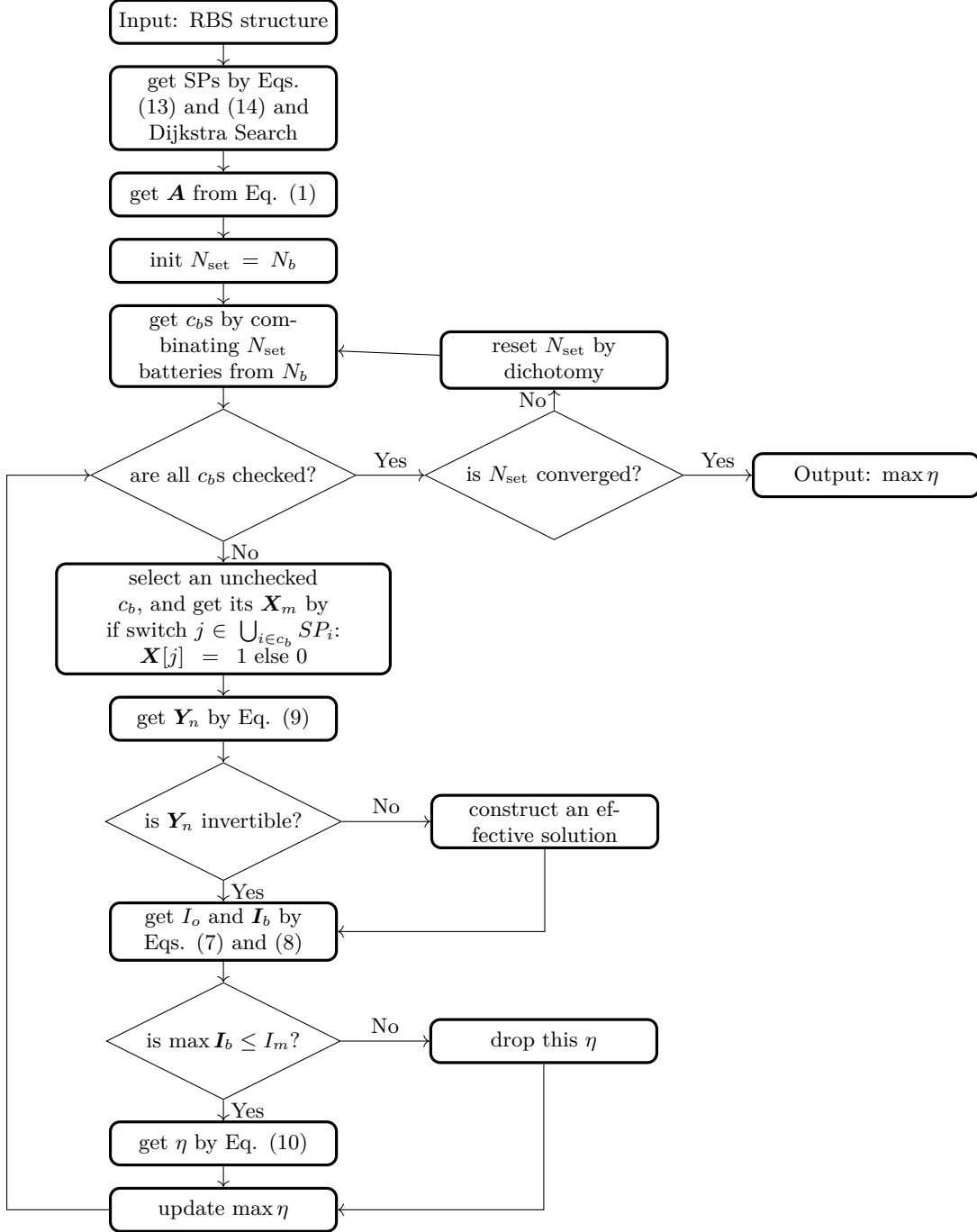


Figure 3: The computational flowchart of the MAC for a given RBS.

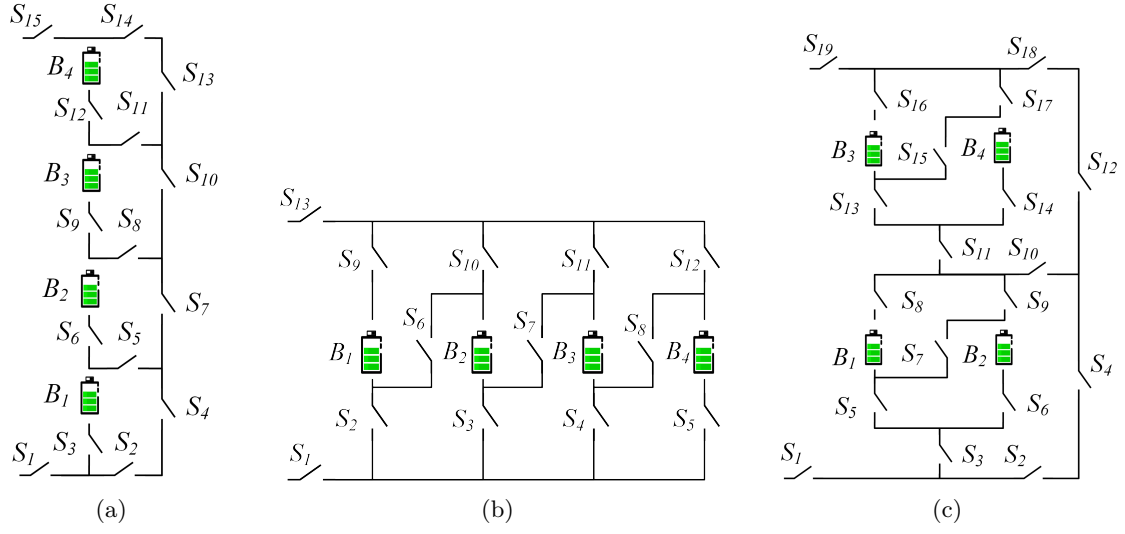


Figure 4: The four-battery RBS structures proposed by (a) Lawson [17], (b) Visairo and Kumar [16], and (c) this paper.

Table 1: The SA and GA algorithm parameters.

Algorithm/parameter	Value
SA/initial temperature	100
SA/final temperature	1
SA/cooling rate	0.95
GA/total generations	100
GA/crossover probability	0.8
GA/mutation probability	0.02

3.2 Result

3.2.1 The shortest path

Using Eq. (13) and the Dijkstra algorithm, the SPs of the four batteries in the RBS structures of Figs. 4a, 4b, and 4c are calculated and highlighted with different colors in Figs. 5a, 5b, and 5c, respectively.

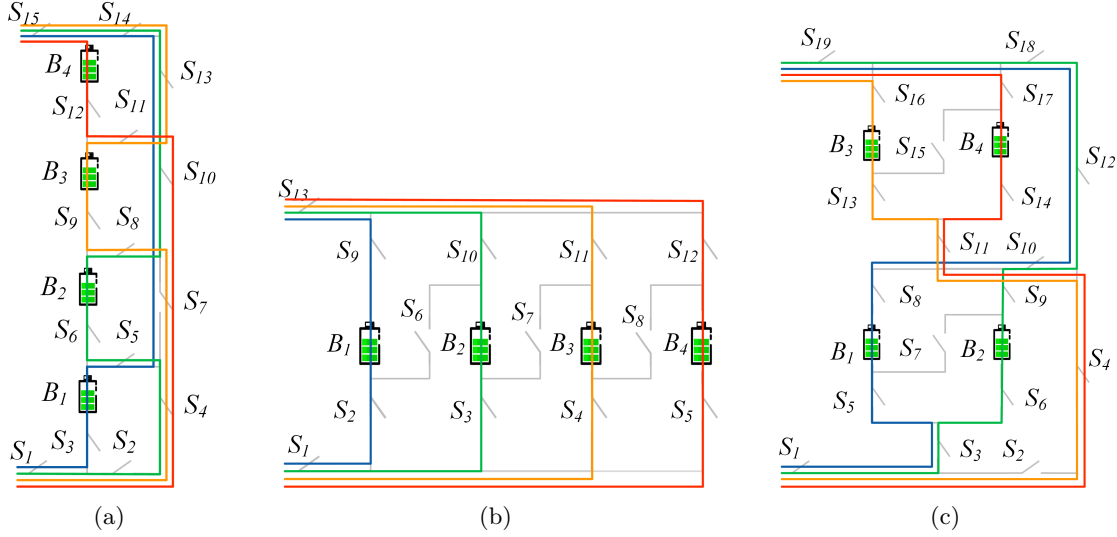


Figure 5: The SPs of the four batteries in the RBS structures of (a) Fig. 4a, (b) Fig. 4b, and (c) Fig. 4c.

3.2.2 Three structures with four batteries

After obtaining the SPs, the MACs of the three RBS structures with four batteries are calculated using the proposed greedy algorithm, and the results are shown in Tabs. 2, 3, and 4, each of which contains the states of the switches, the output current I_o , the battery current I_b , and the ratio η when the system output reaches the MAC. The corresponding switch-control schemes are shown as blue-highlighted electric currents in Figs. 6a, 6b, and 6c, respectively. To verify and compare the proposed greedy algorithm, we also used the brute-force algorithm, which iterates through all possible switch states, and the heuristic algorithms (SA and GA) to calculate the MACs of the same RBSs. The final results of the brute-force algorithm are the same as those of the greedy algorithm and are shown in Tabs. 2, 3, and 4. However, the brute-force algorithm counts all possible switch states, which equates to 2^{15} , 2^{13} , and 2^{19} structures, respectively. The temporal evolutions of the objective values of the two heuristic algorithms during the iteration process are shown in Figs. 7a, 7b, and 7c, respectively, and compared with the proposed greedy algorithm. Compared with the SA and GA, the proposed greedy algorithm identifies the correct results within fewer iteration steps.

Table 2: The calculated MAC of the four-battery RBS structure in Fig. 4a.

Structure	Figure 4a with four batteries and 15 switches
Switch ON	$S_1, S_3, S_5, S_7, S_{10}, S_{13}, S_{14}, S_{15}$
I_o	$u_b / (R_o + r_b)$
I_b	$[u_b / (R_o + r_b), 0, 0, 0]$
$\max \eta$	1

Table 3: The calculated MAC of the four-battery RBS structure in Fig. 4b.

Structure	Figure 4b with four batteries and 13 switches
Switch ON	$S_1, S_2, S_3, S_4, S_5, S_9, S_{10}, S_{11}, S_{12}, S_{13}$
I_o	$4u_b / (4R_o + r_b)$
I_b	$[u_b / (4R_o + r_b), u_b / (4R_o + r_b), u_b / (4R_o + r_b), u_b / (4R_o + r_b)]$
$\max \eta$	4

Table 4: The calculated MAC of the four-battery RBS structure in Fig. 4c.

Structure	Figure 4c with four batteries and 19 switches
Switch ON	$S_1, S_3, S_5, S_6, S_8, S_9, S_{10}, S_{12}, S_{18}, S_{19}$
I_o	$2u_b / (2R_o + r_b)$
I_b	$[u_b / (2R_o + r_b), u_b / (2R_o + r_b), 0, 0]$
$\max \eta$	2

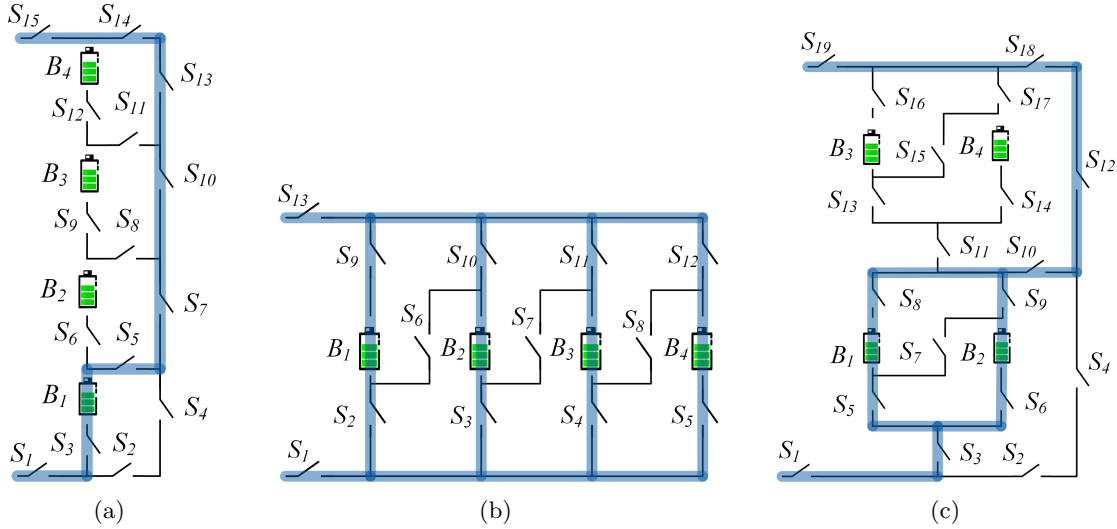


Figure 6: The RBS switch-control schemes with the output reaching the MAC.

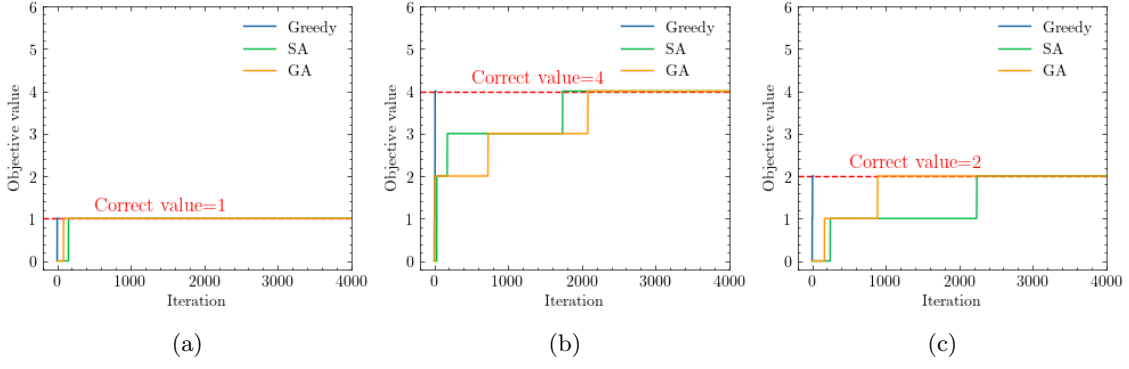


Figure 7: The temporal evolution of the objective values during the iteration process of calculating the RBS structures in (a) Fig. 4a, (b) Fig. 4b, and (c) Fig. 4c

3.2.3 Structures with different numbers of batteries

We next examine the RBS configurations depicted in Fig. 4c, which consist of two, four, and six batteries. The results for the four-battery configuration are presented in Tab. 4 and Figs. 6c and 7c. The structures and final switch-control schemes for the two-battery and six-battery systems are illustrated in Figs. 8a and 8b, respectively. Furthermore, the temporal evolutions of the objective values throughout the iteration process are shown in Figs. 9a and 9b, respectively. The proposed greedy algorithm still converges the fastest and achieves the correct MAC. The SA algorithm fails to obtain the correct MAC within the given number of iteration steps in the case of the six-battery RBS structure.

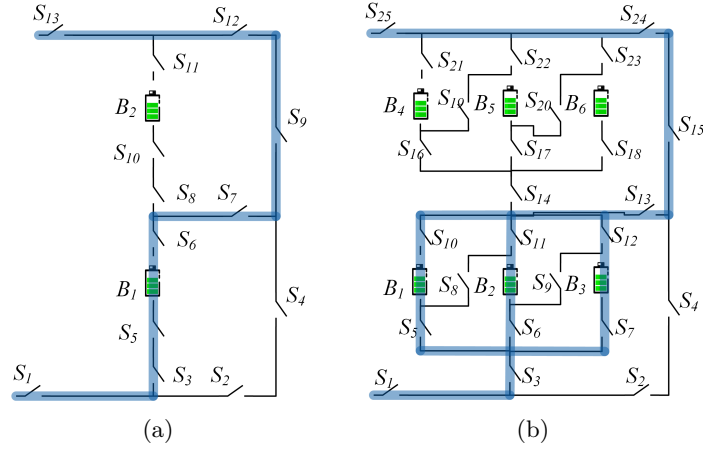


Figure 8: The (a) two-battery and (b) six-battery RBS switch-control schemes with the output reaching the MAC.

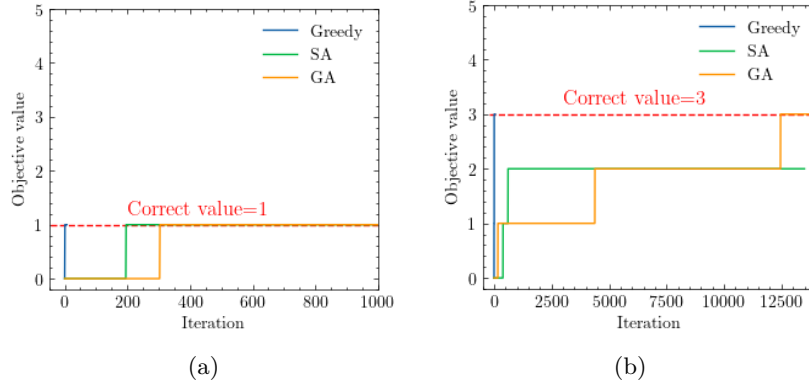


Figure 9: The temporal variation of the objective values during the iteration process of calculating the RBS structures in (a) Fig. 8a and (b) Fig. 8b.

3.2.4 Random isolated batteries

To assess the effectiveness of the proposed algorithm in the case of unhealthy batteries, the RBS with random isolated batteries is also taken into account and computed. In the case of the four-battery RBS structure depicted in Fig. 4c, there are four possible scenarios for isolated batteries: (a) a single unhealthy battery, (b) two unhealthy batteries located in different substructures, (c) two unhealthy batteries located in the same substructure, and (d) three unhealthy batteries. The resulting MAC (η) values for these four scenarios are 2, 2, 1, and 1, respectively. Furthermore, the corresponding switch-control schemes for the four scenarios are illustrated in Figs 10a–10d.

3.3 Discussion

3.3.1 Result validation

The correctness of the outcomes provided by the proposed greedy algorithm will now be discussed from two perspectives: circuit analysis and validation against the brute-force algorithm. The result of the four-battery RBS structure shown in Fig. 4c is determined as an example. When B_1 and B_2 or B_3 and B_4 are connected in parallel, the RBS produces the maximum current, which is $\eta = 2$ (i.e., twice the current output of a single battery in the RBS). Adding more batteries to the main circuit only creates a series structure and does not improve the MAC. Therefore, the switch-control scheme provided in Tab. 4 maximizes the RBS output current. The brute-force method, which examines all possible switch states, yields the same η . This indicates that the proposed greedy algorithm successfully identifies the MAC among all the potential reconfigured structures.

3.3.2 Pros and cons analysis

The proposed greedy algorithm possesses a significant advantage in terms of its effectiveness and efficiency. In this paper, it is compared with the brute-force algorithm, SA, and GA. While the brute-force algorithm ensures the correctness of the results by exploring all possible switch states, it comes at a high computational cost. The SA and GA are commonly used heuristic algorithms

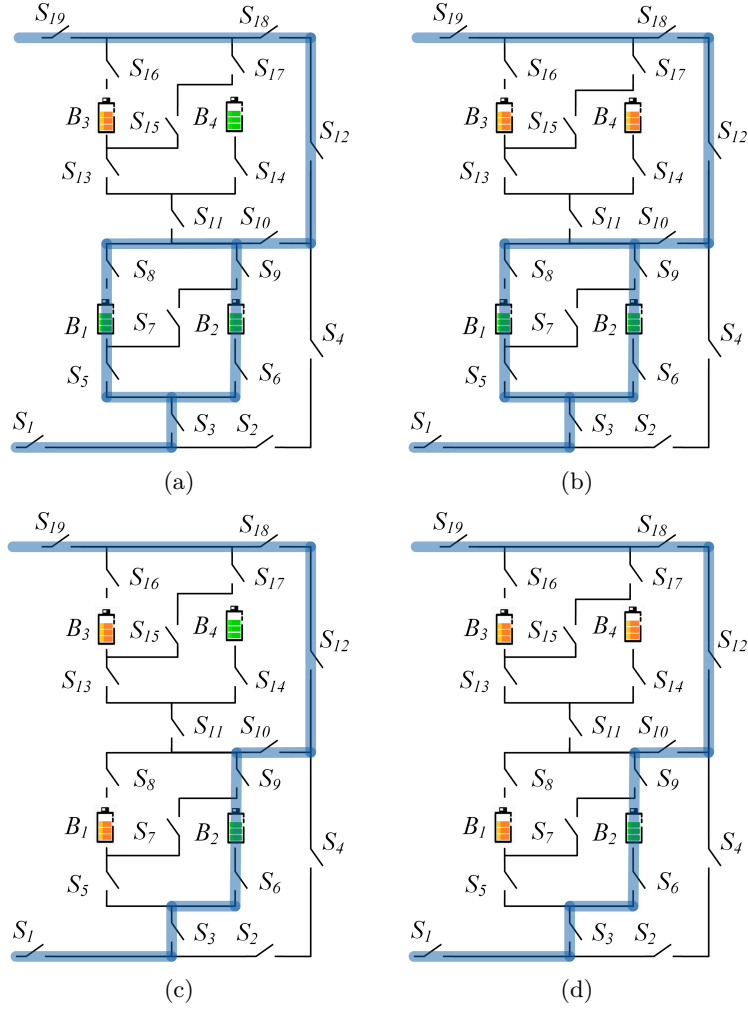


Figure 10: The circuit states of MACs when isolating (a) one, (b) two (in different substructures), (c) two (in the same substructure), and (d) three batteries for the structure in Fig. 4c.

for addressing NP-hard problems. They selectively generate solutions for the switching states to maximize the objective value η . However, neither of these two algorithms can determine whether the current η represents the final MAC or if there are better solutions. Moreover, as depicted in Figs. 7a–7c and Figs. 9a–9b, the SA and GA algorithms require more iterations to converge to the final solution than the proposed greedy algorithm.

To further elaborate on the efficiency of our algorithm, we analyze the time complexity of both the brute-force algorithm and the greedy algorithm. If an RBS has N_b batteries and N_s switches and the corresponding directed graph has N nodes, 2^{N_s} iterations are required to traverse all possible structures. Calculating each reconfigured structure using Eqs. (7)–(10) requires matrix inversion and matrix multiplication, which results in a time complexity of $O(N^3 + 2N^2N_b + N^2N_s + NN_b^2)$. Therefore, the time complexity of the brute-force algorithm is $O((N^3 + 2N^2N_b + N^2N_s + NN_b^2)2^{N_s})$. The greedy algorithm proposed in this paper requires that the SP be found for each battery, which requires N_b iterations. Each SP can be obtained through several applications of Dijkstra’s algorithms. Therefore, the total time complexity for calculating all SPs is $O(N_b(N_b + 2N_s) \log_{10} N)$. According to Appendix 1, the RBS can reconfigure $C_{N_b}^{N_{\text{set}}}$ structures by selecting N_{set} batteries from N_b batteries, which gives $\sum_{N_{\text{set}}=1}^{N_b} C_{N_b}^{N_{\text{set}}} / N_b \approx 2^{N_b} N_b^{-1}$ on average. Thus, with the bisection method, the time complexity of the greedy algorithm is $O((N^3 + 2N^2N_b + N^2N_s + NN_b^2)2^{N_b} N_b^{-1} \log_{10} N_b + N_b(N_b + 2N_s) \log_{10} N)$. For the existing RBS structures in the literature [39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44], the number of batteries N_b , the number of switches N_s , and the number of nodes N are quantitatively related as follows: $N_s \approx (3\text{--}5)N_b$, $N \approx N_s$. After simplifying, the time complexity of the method with the greedy algorithm is $O(2^{N_b} N_s^2 \log_{10} N_b)$, while that of the method with the brute-force algorithm is $O(2^{N_s} N_s^3)$. Therefore, as the RBS grows, especially in terms of the number of switches, the greedy algorithm gains an advantage over the brute-force algorithm. This is confirmed by the number of structures required to determine the MAC in the previous section. Compared with the brute-force algorithm, the method based on the greedy algorithm is 3 000 to 48 000 times more efficient, which is theoretically $N_s 2^{N_s - N_b} \log_{10} N_b$ times according to the above time-complexity analysis. This is the result of two key factors:

- (1) The SPs guide the RBS to reconfigure reasonable structures rather than blindly going through all possible structures. This reduces the complexity from 2^{N_s} to 2^{N_b} , which is the main reason for the improvement in efficiency.
- (2) The bisection method further accelerates this process, reducing the complexity from 2^{N_b} to $2^{N_b} N_b^{-1} \log_{10} N_b$.

Furthermore, this approach can handle RBSs with arbitrary structures, which is another significant advantage. It can even do this when they have different battery variations or even random isolated batteries. Theoretically, each RBS structure can be transformed into a unique directed graph model using the methodology described in Section II, and the MAC can subsequently be calculated using the proposed greedy algorithm. This finding is supported by the findings in the previous subsection.

However, the suggested greedy algorithm still includes exponential terms in its time complexity, indicating that it struggles to perform at scale. Additionally, all batteries are assumed to be identical

for the sake of simplification in the derivation. However, in reality, there may exist a small balancing current that could introduce a minor bias in the MAC due to variations in the open-circuit voltage u_b and the internal resistance r_b . Nevertheless, the proposed greedy algorithm remains a viable choice for RBS design and optimization in the early stage, and the issue of balancing current bias can be addressed by considering the inconsistency between batteries and replacing the internal resistance with impedance when constructing the directed graph model.

3.3.3 Application scenarios

Note that η is used as the objective function instead of I_o in solving for the MAC. This choice makes the resulting MAC more reasonable and applicable to practical scenarios. As shown in Tab. 4, I_o and \mathbf{I}_b are functions of R_o , u_b , and r_b . However, when I_o is used as the objective function, even for the same RBS structure, the MAC solution and corresponding switch states can change due to different external electrical appliances. This increases the difficulty and uncertainty involved in designing the RBS structure. To eliminate this problem, the ratio $\eta = I_o / \max(\mathbf{I}_b)$ is adopted as the objective function in our research. Recall that η reflects only the structure's ability to output current, rather than the actual current output by the battery system. Assuming that the MAC of the batteries in the RBS is I_m , the maximum output current of the RBS structure can be calculated as ηI_m by determining the value of η for the structure.

The method proposed in this paper facilitates the design of RBSs in the following ways. Most of the existing RBS structures [39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44] have simple topological characteristics, so calculating their MACs is relatively straightforward or even intuitive. However, these simple structures do not always fully satisfy the requirements of complex applications, such as dynamically adapting the circuit to variable and random operating conditions or actively equalizing differences between batteries in the RBS. Moreover, isolating the batteries disrupts the original regularity and symmetry of the topology, which complicates the otherwise simple structure, and the maximum output current of the system becomes more challenging to obtain. In contrast, the proposed method calculates the MAC of arbitrary RBS structures, most notably complex and flexible RBS structures.

To illustrate this point, the MACs of the RBS structure in Fig. 4c are calculated after isolating one or more of the batteries, as shown in Figs. 10a–10d. When a single battery is isolated, the RBS is still capable of outputting the maximum current, denoted as $\eta = 2$. When two batteries are isolated, there are two scenarios: one is isolating two batteries within the same substructure (Fig. 10b), resulting in $\eta = 2$; the other is isolating one battery in each of the two substructures (Fig. 10c), resulting in $\eta = 1$. If three batteries are isolated, the RBS can only output the current of a single battery, which is $\eta = 1$. Therefore, the battery management system can adjust the output current and control the RBS to reconfigure the corresponding structure based on the isolated batteries.

4 Conclusion

This paper has proposed a reliable and automated method to efficiently compute the MAC of an RBS. The method is implemented using a greedy algorithm combined with an improved directed

graph model. Not only does the method provide the same global MAC calculation results as the brute-force method, but it also demonstrates superior computational efficiency to both the brute-force algorithm and the heuristic algorithms (SA and GA). Theoretically, for an RBS with N_s switches and N_b batteries, the efficiency of the proposed method is $N_s 2^{N_s - N_b} \log_{10} N_b$ times that of the brute-force method. This is primarily due to the utilization of the batteries' SPs guiding the RBS to reconfigure reasonable structures rather than blindly going through all possible structures. Another advantage of this method is its capability to calculate the MACs of RBSs with arbitrary structures and varying batteries. Even in scenarios with random isolated batteries, the proposed method remains effective. This method can facilitate the full utilization of the RBS's current output potential, guide the design and optimization of the RBS structure, and assist in evaluating the risk of current overload in practical applications.

5 Appendix

Algorithm 1: Obtain the maximum available current (MAC) of a given RBS

Data: Directed graph model $G(V, E)$ of the RBS
Result: $\max \eta$

```

1 for  $i \in E_b$  do
2    $P_i \leftarrow \{path | \text{starts at } v_1 \text{ and ends at } v_n\};$ 
3    $SP_i \leftarrow p_i$  which has the minimum  $\omega(p_i)$  among all  $p_i \in P_i$ .
4 end
5 Get  $\mathbf{A}$  by Eq. 1;
6 while not yet determined  $\max \eta$  do
7    $N_{\text{set}} \leftarrow$  number of selected SPs calculated by dichotomy;
8    $C_b \leftarrow$  set of all combinations of  $N_{\text{set}}$  batteries from  $N_b$ ;
9   for  $c_b \in C_b$  do
10     $\mathbf{x}_s \leftarrow$  list of all switches' states:  $x_s[j] = 1$  if  $j \in \bigcup_{i \in c_b} SP_i$  else 0;
11     $\mathbf{X} \leftarrow \text{diag}[1, 1, \dots, 1, \mathbf{x}_s];$ 
12    get  $\mathbf{Y}_n$  by Eq. 9;
13    if  $\mathbf{Y}_n$  is invertible then
14      | pass
15    else
16      | construct an effective solution
17    end
18    get  $I_o$  by Eq. 7;
19    get  $\mathbf{I}_b$  by Eq. 8;
20    if  $\max(\mathbf{I}_b) \leq I_m$  then
21      |  $\eta \leftarrow I_o / \max(\mathbf{I}_b);$ 
22    else
23      | break
24    end
25  end
26 end

```

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Author Contributions

B. Xu conceived the main idea, formulated the overarching research goals and aims, designed the algorithm, and reviewed and revised the manuscript. G. Hua developed and analyzed the model, implemented the code and supporting algorithms, and wrote the initial draft. C. Qian provided critical review, commentary, and revisions. Q. Xia contributed to shaping the research, analysis, and manuscript. B. Sun conducted the research and investigation process. Y. Ren secured the funding and supervised the project. Z. Wang verified the results and provided necessary resources.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Data Availability

This work does not require any data to be declared or publicly disclosed.

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