

Towards SC-enabled high density highly
miniaturized power LED drivers: A model-centric
optimization framework

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Part I

Towards Highly Miniaturized LED Power Systems

Chapter 1

LEDification: Transition towards LED lighting

The light bulb is one of the most relevant inventions from our past history. Electrical lighting was definitely a revolution in the early 19th century society; for the first time in history people had a clear, reliable and safe source of artificial light was embedded in a single device easy to distribute and control. The apparition of the electrical light bulb was also, without doubt, the trigger for the commercialization of electric power and the deployment of the first power distribution networks [24]. The impact was to such a degree that it settled two capital sectors of the present industry, the lighting and the electric power distribution, with world recognized companies such as Philips, General Electric and Osram. Actually, both sectors have been so close related that often we use the word *light* when we actually mean *electricity*. In short, a single invention changed our society forever, bringing light and electricity to our homes.



Figure 1.1: Philips advertisement from 1900 comparing what was before - *Vroege*r, an oil lamp- and now - *Today*, the incandescent light bulb [1].

From the initial invention of the first incandescent light bulb onwards, to most people bulbs have simply been a commodity device to generate light which have not arose any sense of innovation. Despite the impression of simplicity that the lights can produce, important research has continuously been done to improve the most important characteristic of the incandescent light bulb, the efficacy. Incandescent light bulbs are extremely inefficient at generating light, with a luminous efficacy between $12.6lm/W$ for a tungsten incandescent bulb, and up to $24lm/W$ for a quartz halogen lamp (see Table 1.1). In a more comprehensive way, we can say that in general incandescent lights convert just at most 5% of the supplied energy in light and at least 95% in heat. Knowing that lighting represents 17% of world energy consumption, we can account that 15% of the world's consumed power is transformed to heat and only 1.7% is transformed real light ¹. Although generating heat is not intrinsically negative, specially for spaces that have to be heated, the propose of a light is to illuminate the space in the most efficient meaner; that is why there is a motivation and necessity to improve the efficacy/efficiency of light bulbs.

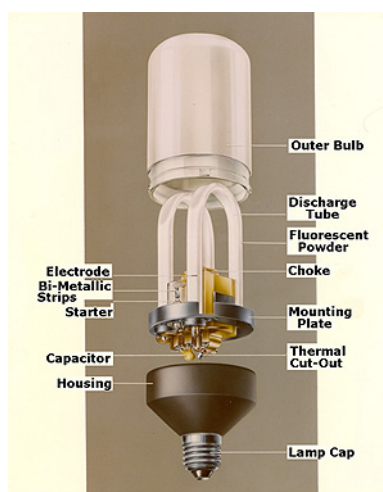


Figure 1.2: Exploded view of Philips SL the first compact fluorescent lamp launched to the market [1]

Gas-discharge lamps were one of the first alternatives for incandescent lamps that proved a better efficacy, with the fluorescent tub the most popular in this family. The low pressure mercury-vapor gas-discharge lamp, commonly called *fluorescent*, was considered an innovation in the lighting industry [15]. Initially the tubes where mainly used for the interior lighting of industrial buildings, offices, schools and similar [7, 23], and after, in the late 1980's, started populating households with the appearance of the *compact fluorescent lamps*² (CFLs) [7],

¹Estimated values for the year 2008

²Screw-in version of a fluorescent tube. Now a days you can find a CFL replacement for almost the majority of sockets in the market.

being currently the market standard for energy efficient light bulbs [10]; as shown in Figure 1.2. Fluorescent lamps are indeed a big improvement in efficacy with respect to the incandescent lamps. The luminous efficacy ranges between 52-100 lm/W depending on the *Color Rendering Index* (CRI), converting about 22% of the input power to visible light. More details of other gas-discharge bulbs are presented in Table 1.1. Notwithstanding the better efficiency of the CFLs, due to the following reasons they have not yet fully replaced the inefficient incandescent ones [10]:

- Standard CFLs are not *dimmable*. *Dimmable* CFLs are more expensive, their behavior is not standardized among manufacturers, producing mismatches in the light output between lamps, what does not satisfy consumer's desires.
- CFLs have a slow warm-up time³. Not being suitable for places where lights are turned on for short times.
- CFLs have unappealing form and look. Some can not fit in existing fixtures that mount incandescent lamps. The *pig tail* appearance is not attractive when bulbs are exposed.
- The low price of the incandescent light bulb compared to a CFL is more attractive for the consumer. Although CFLs save more money due to power savings, the end consumers are still repelled by the retail price of the lamps.

Therefore, in 2012 it was estimated that in residential environments more than 50% of the installed light bulbs were still incandescent [21]. Thus a need for a another lighting technology capable of replacing the old inefficient incandescent lamps.

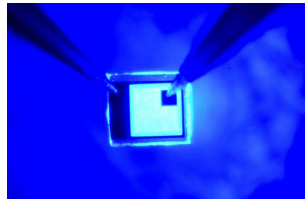


Figure 1.3: Bare die of a working blue LED .

It was not till 1994, with the invention of the high-efficiency blue *light-emitting diode* (LED) (Fig. 1.3) by Sush Nakamura's [18]. Actually, Nakamura's work was initially triggered by Isamu Akasaki and Hiroshi Amano [5] demonstrating that was possible to generate blue light from semiconductor materials; blue light was fundamental to generate withe light for LED lamps [20].

³Gas-discharge lamps have to be warm in order to volatilise and mix chemical elements that compose the gas. Depending on the chemical elements this process can take from a minute up to ten minutes.

They were awarded with the 2014 Nobel prize in physics [4]; their inventions were revolutionary and are already transforming the future of artificial lighting, thus settling the base of a new player in the lighting industry, the *Solid State Lighting* (SSL) technology.

The advantages of SSL are:

Efficiency The light generation inside a LED is the direct mechanism of hole-electron recombination. The supplied energy is better used compared to an incandescent lamp. The power consumption can be up to an order of magnitude lower than an incandescent light.

Size LEDs are tiny and flat devices, which can be considered as 2-D elements, and do not need any vacuum chamber to work. They are much more flexible in the assembly process and can easily replace the old glass-based bulb design.

Color LED light has a very narrow light spectrum that can be used to produce colored light directly. Colored lights are becoming more popular in households becoming a decoration piece or mood tweaking device.

Dynamics Compared to any of the traditional sources of light, LEDs have no dynamics. Actually they have, but they are so fast that cannot be tracked by the human eye. They do not have any setting time when turned on, contrary to the CFLs. Their fast dynamics allow to modulate the light and even transmit data without disturbing human beings [16, 26].

Lifetime Solid State devices do not wear out, therefore they can be considered to have an infinite lifetime. In practice LEDs make use of organic phosphores, thus the light quality degrades over used time. The practical life expectancy of the LED is rated from 20.000 - 100.000 hours, 20 to 100 times longer than the life expectancy of the classical light bulbs. In order to take advantage of this long life, the different elements of lighting systems must be properly designed otherwise the lamps can experience a short life [19].

Just looking at the benefits that LEDs offer LED in terms of efficiency, the projected energy savings for 2020 are 297TWh only in USA. The *United States Environmental Protection Agency* [22] published that reducing the household lighting energy consumption by half - easy to achieve by using LED lighting - more than \$13 billion a year in energy costs could be saved, more than 80 million metric CO₂ tones would be avoided each year, and the need for over 30⁴ power plants could be eliminated. The advantages of LED lamps are so relevant that the *United States National Lighting Bureau* [22] forecasts a market penetration growth from 5% in 2015, to 74% in 2020 and reaching 88% in 2030, as shown in the graph of Figure 1.4. Hence in the near future almost all lighting technology will be LED based.

⁴To be further detailed

The transition towards LED based lighting technologies, referred as *LEDification* [9, 12], will come in two waves [17], the first wave will be a replacement period. The main focus will be to bring fast and simple LED technology in form of light to the consumers in order to remove the inefficient old lighting technologies. The second wave will include more intelligence to the light fixtures, transforming the lights from a simple light sources to connected nodes within an infrastructure of interconnected lights, what is already crystalizing with *The Connected Lighting Alliance*. This second phase will be a revolution making the lighting infrastructure a crucial element in the future smart houses and in the internet-of-things era [13]. Therefore LED lighting will bring not only efficient lighting, but also interconnect light fixtures. This is similar to what happened before, in the late 1800s, when a single invention brought simultaneously light and electricity to our homes [24].

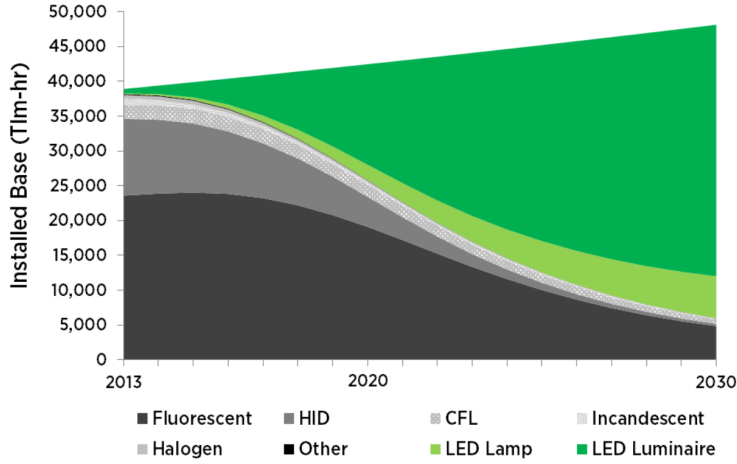


Figure 1.4: U.S. Lighting Service Forecast, 2013 to 2030 [22].

During the last decade, the lighting industry has been in a rush to bring LED light to the market, making *LEDification* a reality. Initially LED lighting was only used for decorative lights and with the advance of the LED technology with higher efficiency devices, they started to be applied in general lighting applications. With the progression of efficiency of the LEDs, in May 2008 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) established the Bright Tomorrow Lighting Prize (L-Prize) [2, 27] competition in order to encourage the industry to spur development of ultra-efficient SSL products awarded with US\$10 million cash prize. In the L-Prize competition the industry was challenged to develop replacement technologies for two most widely used and inefficient bulbs: *A19 60W* incandescent lamps and *PAR38* halogen lamps. On September 2009, Philips Lighting North America became the first to submit LED lamps in the category to replace the standard 60W screw-in lamps, becoming the winner in that category [3, 31]; the other category is still empty. Only three years later, in 2012, Philips had al-

ready covered the whole range of incandescent bulbs up to 100W [17]. Today in 2015, all these replacement lamps are available in almost all of the supermarkets and retail shops, although they are not yet adopted as the preferred solution by consumers. Despite of the advantages of LED lighting, end consumers are still very reluctant to make the change towards SSL products due to their elevated price [11, 29]. Currently a 100W LED replacement costs between \$20 - \$40 compared to less than \$3 for an halogen incandescent.

Actually, the majority of end consumers do not yet understand that even incandescent lamps are cheaper, LED replacements save money over the life time of the product due to energy savings. With the help of Table 1.1 we can easily demonstrate this statement.

The *Lumen cost of owner ship*⁵ for incandescent technologies is below 60 $klm/€$ and for LED technologies is easily above 200 $klm/€$. Translating these figures to total costs⁶, it is estimated that in a productive year (around 2000h), for a 25m² office space⁷, costs of lighting would be above 420€ for incandescent lamps and below 140€ for LED lamps. It is true that linear fluorescent and (High-Intensity Discharge Sodium) (HID-SON) represent the best option regarding costs below 80€, but the projected performance gains in efficacy, color quality and light distribution point that LED technology will be come the best choice [8]. HID-SON lamps are out of discussion since they have a very poor CRI (25) what does not allow to properly recognise colors. Based on the aforementioned facts is predicted that LED is going to be the future lighting technology [22, 28], but still the industry has find the manner to motivate the end consumers to buy LED lamps as their first choice [29].

⁵Lumen cost of owner ship is expressed in $klm/€$ indicating how many lumens you can produce per € during thousand hours. Using this metric the different light technologies can be compared independently of the lamp power consumption.

⁶Lamp amortization are included in the costs

⁷Recommended illumination for productive office spaces is 500 lm/m^2

Table 1.1: Characteristics for different lamp technologies (winter 2015).

	Units	<i>Incandescent</i>	<i>Halogen</i>	<i>Cold-White Fluorescent</i>	<i>Warm-White Fluorescent</i>	<i>Compact Fluorescent</i>	<i>HDI SON</i>	<i>Retrofit LED Budget</i>	<i>Retrofit LED Dimmable</i>	<i>Retrofit LED</i>	<i>Retrofit Tube LED</i>
Power	<i>W</i>	100	53	36	39	11	70	10	13	5	10.5
Flux	<i>lm</i>	1203	845	3100	3100	600	5600	600	1055	350	950
Efficacy	<i>lm/W</i>	14.3	14.42	57.14	57.14	55	80	60	81.15	70	90.5
Color Temperature	<i>K</i>	2700	2800	4000	3000	2700	2000	2700	2700	3000	3000
Color Rendering Index		100	100	85	85	82	25	87	80	80	85
Lifespan	<i>h</i>	1000	2000	20000	24000	15000	28000	2500	25000	15000	50000
Retail price	€	1	3	5.6	4.8	8.78	14.26	4.5	37.1	17	43
Lumen cost of ownership	<i>klmh/€</i>	48	59	348	324	186	324	233	229	182	281
Cost of ownership	€/kh	25	14.2	8.9	9.6	3.2	17.3	2.6	4.6	3.3	3.4
Cost for a 20m ² office	€/kh	260	210	36	39	67	39	54	55	69	43



Figure 1.5: 900 lumens LED light bulb.

Different factors can help the adoption of LED as the preferred lighting solution for consumers [29]. On the one hand, it is reducing the end product price; on the other hand, bringing more value than traditional lighting sources. Indeed, as previously mentioned, LED light bulbs already bring more value compared to the old light bulbs. They are much more efficient, almost one order of magnitude lower in power consumption, and have a longer lifetime, easily twenty times more operating hours. However, that is not yet well explained to be a valuable argument for the end consumers. New *Smart* bulbs concepts are starting to populate the market, such as LIFX, Philips Hue and Easybulb, offering color tuning, light output dimming, remote control and other wireless services. This position SSL in line with the current trend of the *internet-of-things*(IoT) [6, 25, 30], for the specific lighting case: The *internet-of-lights* [13, 14]. Moreover, LED lighting is also growing the luminaries industry, bringing more and more popular products where the light fixture directly incorporate LEDs without offering alternative technologies. These products benefit from design advantages that the small form factors of the LEDs allows. As a matter of fact the *U.S Department of Energy* (U.S.DoE) estimates that LED luminaries will be the big player in the lighting market (Figure 1.4).

In general three main factors are identified to influence the market penetration of SSL:

- End lamp/luminaire price
- Intelligence: Interactivity, connectivity and controllability
- Light fixture size: Luminaire design, shape and application

It is necessary to describe the different elements in an LED lamp in order to relate this three factors with current LED bulbs and understand the challenges in their development. The system can be grouped in six main elements described below and shown in the Figure 1.7.

LED From its acronym, a *Light-Emitting Diode* is a two-lead semiconductor device that generates light when a current flows through it. Internally

light is produced by the electroluminescence effect, where an electron recombines with an electron-hole releasing energy in form of photons. The color of the light is determined by the energy band gap of the semiconductor. The mounted LEDs in the lamp will determine light color, power, efficiency and load characteristics.

Optics Optical device that mixes and distributes the light from the LED to the illuminated space.

Driver Electronic circuit designed to transform the electrical power of the input source to properly supply the LEDs. LED drivers are considered voltage-to-current ($v - i$) power supplies. Commonly used power supplies are voltage sources and LEDs need to be supplied by current. The must driver control the current through the load, hence the light output, and it is the active part of the system that essentially controls the lamp.

Heat sink Mechanical element that acts as a passive heat exchanger to cool the hot elements inside the lamp by dissipating the heat into the surrounding medium. In the LED bulb the energy that is not transformed to light becomes heat and must be extracted from inside the lamp. The hot spots areas in the lamp are the LEDs chips and some of the driver components.

Body assembly Mechanical element that hold alls the different subsystems in one single device. In many cases this is the heat sink.

Connector Mechanical element that provides connection with the energy source. The most popular one is the Edison connector present in all screw-in lamps. There are many other popular ones, such as GU10, MR16, MR11, coming from the halogen multifaceted reflector bulbs, or the 2-pin connector of the fluorescent tubes.

In many cases, the standardized connectors restrict the mechanical design of the lamp. Their old-fashioned design is not optimal for the new lamps.

With an understanding of the different elements of a LED lamp we can relate them back to the three factors that influence the market penetration previously mentioned. First, the price of the lamps. Figure 1.6a shows the cost breakdown for different lighting applications. The three main elements Driver, LED package and Thermal/Mechanical/Electrical interface⁸ share almost equally the costs of the lamp, and it is predicted to be similar or even a bit better distributed as shown in the forecast of Figure 1.6b. Based on these figures, it is evident that in order to achieve the predicted cost reduction, one half for 2020, actions have to be started at the system level, ensuring an equal research and development effort for all elements in the lamp.

⁸The Thermal/Mechanical/Electrical group comprises the heat sink, socket connector and *Printed circuit Boards* (PCBs) that interconnect and mount the input socket, LEDs and driver.

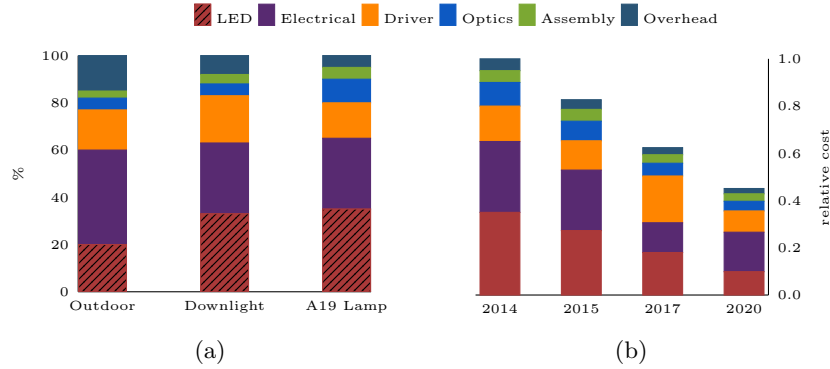


Figure 1.6: *Left*-Comparison of cost breakdown for different lighting applications; *right* - Cost breakdown projection for a typical A19 replacement lamp
Source: DOE SSL Roundtable and Workshop attendees

The LEDs or LED package⁹ are in continuous evolution in order to fit the requirements of the luminaire manufacturers and driver requirements in terms of price, efficacy and package. Innovations are on the market with three available technologies based on current capability of the dies: low, mid and high power range. The different offer in chip packages brings more flexibility at the system level in terms of optical design, luminaire light projection, color, and driver design. However full potential of the reduced profile of the LED has not yet been explored in regard to the luminaire design. Further research at the die level will improve the reliability of manufacturing process, and the efficiency needed to reduce the costs of the lamps. It is, however, in the better use of the small size of the LED what will provide more value for the future lamp designs and competitions like *Next Generation Luminaires* (<http://www.ngldc.org/>) challenge the industry to innovate in that field.

The Mechanical/Thermal/Electrical group - comprising heat sink, socket connector, PCBs and *Electromagnetic Interference* (EMI) filters - still plays a dominant role in the design of the lamp. The heat sink and the connector are in many cases the body of the lamp where the heat sink and assemblies form the entire lamp. Traditional sockets, which are not design friendly, are currently kept in order to provide a fast transition for the current first wave of the *LEDification*, the replacement period. Replacement lamps are also known as *retrofit*¹⁰ lamps. The current offer of *retrofitted* LED bulbs proves the successes achieved in that area. Nowadays is already possible to find a replacement lamp for almost all old lamps. However *retrofitted* lamps will have only an small market share as predicted in the lighting forecast of Figure 1.4. That is why

⁹Electronic part composed by an assembly of LEDs connected in series or parallel and mounted on a single substrate

¹⁰Adding the new LED technology to the older light bulb systems. In that way the end user can directly replace an old lamp or tube by a LED one without needing to make any change in the current installation.

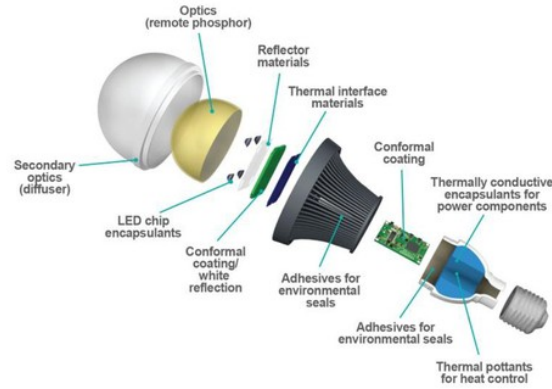


Figure 1.7: Exploded vision of an LED light bulb.

innovations in the Mechanical/Thermal/Electrical group will be necessary for the coming light fixtures, to evolve and reinvent the future LED luminaries, where the small size, the low profile and the colored light of the LEDs will play an relevant role.

The driver is, with no doubt, the most *special* component of the entire lamp. It is referred to as *special* because it is the only element of the lamp that plays a role in each of the three factors of influence for market penetration: Intelligence, Design and Costs. First, the driver is the only element that brings active functionality to the lamp, hence the only one that can incorporate the control and interactivity to the system. Second, its volume and its location influence the design of the lamp. The closer the driver to the LEDs is, the better the controllability and the intelligence of the system becomes. Finally, the manufacturing costs, what up-to-now has been the main research interest for LED drivers.

For the past years cost down reduction has enabled to bring the prices for simple *retrofitted* lamps down to competitive levels. However the chosen circuit architectures for low cost drivers are very cost sensitive towards more intelligent drivers, as it can be seen with the different prices for the *dimmmable*, *non-dimmmable* and *smart* lamps of Table 1.1. That is why a different approach in the driver architectures must be taken in order to respond to the challenges for the future intelligent and connected LED lamps. In other words, the driver architecture that will provide power management, intelligence and connectivity together, assembled in a reduced volume, and at low cost will be, with no discussion, the key element to carry the future of LED lighting technology.

The current driver architectures are based on discrete implementations. In such an approach driver circuits are composed by different discrete components all assembled on a single *printed-circuit-board* (PCB), which enables a fast development and cheap costs, because the mounted parts are general propose components sold by millions; however this approach has several limitations. First the performance of old and cheap components limits the volume reduction of

the required passive components in the drivers filters and magnetics. Second, as the circuit increases in complexity, the *bill of materials* (BOM) and therefore the costs increases, also the costs, therefore reducing the possibilities to offer more functionality in the driver circuit, such as connectivity and controllability at reduced costs. In resume, fulfilling the driver requirements for the second generation of LED lamps will be very challenging using discrete driver architectures.

The approach to meet the requirements for the future lamps will probably rely on an integrated driver solution; meaning by integrated an *application-specific integrated circuit* or ASIC. This approach from the perspective of the integrated power supplies brings the focus of the research to drivers where the power converter can be partially or fully integrated in a single package. There are two approaches of integrated power converters: *Power System on Chip* (PSoC) or *Power System in Package* (PSiP). The first integrates all required power components, active and passive, on a single die. The second assembles all the components within the same package, keeping the appearance of an unique *Integrated Circuit* (IC), see Figure 1.8. The advantages of having an integrated power management unit align with the necessities of the LED drivers, therefore the trend of the drivers will be going towards having *Power LED Drivers in Package* (PLDiP).

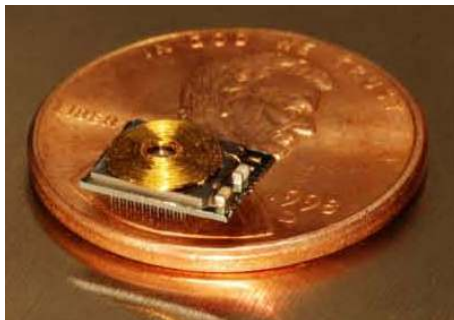


Figure 1.8: Power System in a Package buck converter.

Besides the size reduction that an integrated driver would offer, such an approach would also bring other benefits in terms of control and connectivity. The power management unit and driver control unit could be integrated together, providing the necessary intelligence for light control and the connectivity optimized for the requirements of the coming connected lighting industry. *Smart lamps* are a clear example of the requirements of the so called *smart drivers*. The *smart lamps* are wireless connected to a network providing remote control for the light intensity level and color from a web interface, a mobile application or a dedicated remote control. The internal electronics has normally four LED drivers - one per each color channel: red, green, blue and amber - and, at the same time, a wireless interface. The electronic board is populated with discrete power drivers and micro-controller units. A solution capable to integrate all

the functions in a single IC, or few ICs (one per channel), will definitely reduce packaging and assembling costs and still providing the same functionality. At the same time, the expected market volume for SSL technologies will, with no doubt, justify costs of a dedicated ASIC design for LED drivers. All-in-all it has been the goal of this PhD thesis with the goal to explore and identify new architectures suitable for integration that can efficiently power LEDs. The rational to explore the architectures that enable high density highly miniaturized power LED drivers, such as switched capacitor converters, developing a design framework based on a model-centric approach.

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Chapter 2

Introduction

The challenges in powering LED loads are so relevant that have an impact in functionalities and design of the future *Solid-State-Lighting* (SSL) products. So much, that the user adoption of such a beneficial technology by is far slower than comparable disruptive technologies [21]. In a part, that could be attributed due to the difficulties in achieving the high miniaturization and performance necessary in the LED drivers, at low cost, in order to outcompete the cheaper old technologies.

From the power management standpoint power a LED load is a trivial task, however the different requirements of SSL products make the design of them a complex task. Initially the main driving forces in the driver designs where: manufacturing cost, power quality, light quality. Reducing manufacturing costs can enable to decrease the lamp prices to the entry point for the consumers. The drivers have to fulfill with the legislation in terms of power quality not exceeded the minimum *Power Factor* (PF) and *Total Harmonic Distortion* (THD). From the consumer point of view the light quality is measured in terms of: flickering, color consistency and *Color Rendering Index* (CRI), being the flickering a parameter related to the driver design. Flickering must be kept under certain limits to do cause health concerns [24]. Recently two other factors are becoming more relevant in the driver: miniaturization and controllability. The volume of the drivers is currently, in many cases, limited by the old lamp shapes in order to provide retrofit solutions. There are solutions for all incandescent lamps, however there are still challenged for small halogen cases. Anyway the miniaturization requirements of the lamps have been relaxed by redefining the shape and look of the old lamps, the new design take large part of the lamp volume for the heat sink body, what allows a large volume for the driver. Further reduction of the driver will enable higher freedom in the lamp design. The future connected lamps [7] will require control and connectivity, what challenges the driver to provide multiple color channels, current control and power management for added intelligent circuitry such as MCUs and sensors.

The high and diverse level of requirements for the LED drivers has made the design process a complex task, further than just a pure power management

problem. The initial driving forces in driver design, cost, power and light quality, found effective solutions based on discrete components. The new driving forces where miniaturization, controllability and connectivity brings to research in the context of *Power Systems on-Chip/in-Package* (PSoC/PSiP), where miniaturization and integration of functionalities can be easily achieved. This chapter starts with an analysis of the LED characteristics to understand why is a driver necessary. Subsequently, the three different driver technologies are studied: Linear, switched inductor converters and switched capacitor converters. An state-of-the-art for each technology will be provided in order to construct a rational of the technology toward miniaturization. Switched capacitor converters will be thoroughly studied, since constitute the central conversion technology selected for this dissertation.

2.1 The LED load

The LED is just a special diode that emits light as the acronym stands for *Light Emitting Diode*. It is well known that a diode has a very *voltage-current* ($v-i$) curve as shown in Figure 2.1. For voltages below the *forward voltage*, v_f , there is practically no current flow and the LED behaves as an open circuit. The same characteristic applies when reversed bias until the breakdown voltage, v_{break} , is reached. For voltages above v_f the curve becomes very steep and the current increases dramatically with respect to the voltage, thus the LED behaves as a short circuit. The similar behaviour happens when the LED is reverse biased and the voltage is above v_{break} , however in this case there is no light generation. The LED has to be supplied at an specific point P in order to provide a desired light output as shown in Figure 2.1, depending on the bias current light colour and intensity will vary. Due to the steepness in the $v-i$ curve, the practical way to bias a LED is supplying them with a *dc*-current. Since the common used energy sources are voltage supplies, it is necessary to select a circuit that converts the input energy from the voltage source to a constant current.

At first glance, keeping a constant bias current, i_{bias} , through the LED does not seems to be challenging, however the LED's electrical characteristics are not static and have some tolerances. On the one hand, a LED has different sources of deviations that the driver circuit has to deal with them in order to keep them delivering the desired light output. First, v_f has a negative dependence with the temperature, drooping its values as the *pn*-junction temperature increases. Second, the LED has an aging factor which derates the light output over time, and which has to be adjusted by changing the bias point. And last, during production LEDs will vary in colour, flux, and forward voltage; even for products from the same batch. The manufacturers have reduced the tolerances between devices by binning ¹, but after binning, the parts suffer deviations, *e.g.* up to 10% in v_f . Figure 2.1 shows graphically how deviations in v_f produce a displacement in the $v-i$ characteristic, which require to modify the v_{bias} within

¹Quality control performed at LED production line, where each LED is individual tested and sorted in groups (bins) that have the same electrical and lighting characteristics.

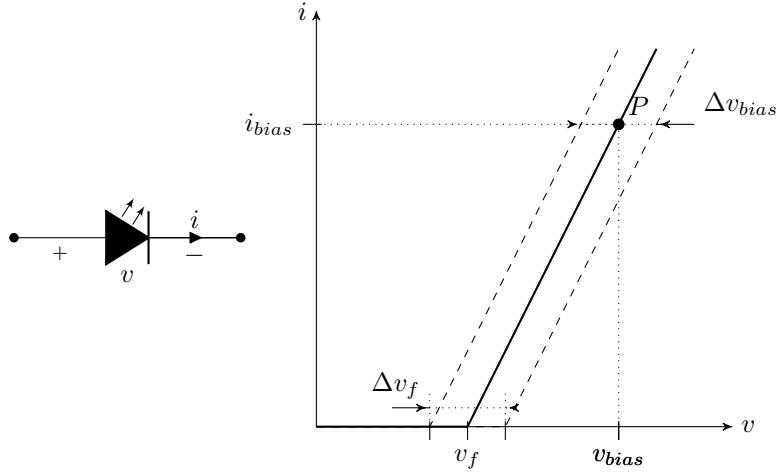


Figure 2.1: Idealized LED voltage-current characteristic, with the *forward voltage* v_f identified and a projection of the *bias point* P

a certain range Δv_{bias} in order to keep i_{bias} constant. On the other hand, the voltage provided by the energy supply has some tolerances. Depending on the nature of the energy supply, *ac* or *dc*, the driver has to provide line regulation, filter high frequency perturbations and accept the voltage tolerances of the source, without affecting the light output. In general, LEDs lamps have to provide a certain desired light output range despite variations in the LED characteristics or the voltage supply, and therefore that control function is what adds complexity to the driver circuit. The three families of LED drivers will be presented in the subsequent sections.

2.2 Linear Regulators

Linear drivers place a shunt element between the source and the load(*i.e* the LED). The shunt element limits the LED current providing the necessary voltage droop between the source and the load. The excess of voltage between the source and the load is dissipated in the series element, literally burned in form of heat; therefore these drivers become very inefficient if the LED voltage is not close to the source. Other limitation is that linear drivers only provide step-down conversion, thus they cannot work when the voltage at the load is higher than the input supply.

The circuit of the Figure 2.2a shows the schematic of a linear driver. The shunt element can be implemented with just a resistor or with an active device. The first will impose a current depending on the input source and the load conditions; the second will provide regulation of the bias point for variations in the source and in the load. Linear drivers are very simple to implement, with

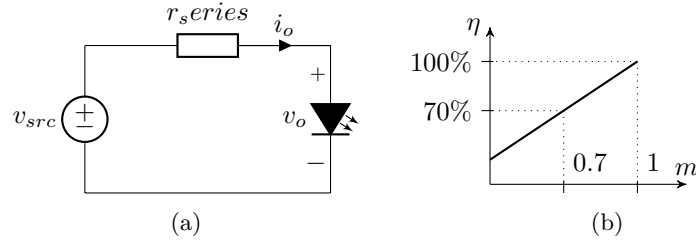


Figure 2.2: Linear driver, *left*- schematic; *right*- conversion ratio vs. efficiency characteristics

very low costs and taking almost no volume, being indeed the perfect solution for integration since they do not make use energy storage components for power processing.

The plotted graph in Figure 2.2b presents the variation of the driver efficiency with respect to the conversion ratio m . Here m is the ratio between the input voltage, v_{src} , and the output voltage, v_o , being defined as

$$m = \frac{v_o}{v_{src}}. \quad (2.1)$$

The efficiency of the driver is the ratio between the input power and the output power

$$\eta = \frac{P_o}{P_i} = \frac{v_o i_o}{v_{src} i_o} = \frac{v_o}{v_{src}}, \quad (2.2)$$

hence for this case the efficiency is indeed equal to the conversion ratio

$$\eta = m. \quad (2.3)$$

Owing to the fact that LED drivers have to be efficient, and assuming that a worst case 80% efficiency can be accepted, linear drivers could only be suitable where the ratio between input voltage and load voltage is higher than 0.8.

2.3 Inductor Based Converters

Inductor Based Converters (IBCs) are *Switched Mode Power Supplies* (SMPS)² that employ magnetic passive elements (i.e. inductors and transformers) to store energy and provide efficient electrical power conversion. Since IBCs are very efficient with respect to voltage-to-current conversion, they are ideal as LED drivers.

The inductor is the main element in these converters and it allows voltage conversion by storing energy in form of magnetic field. In the case of the converter of the figure 2.3a the inductor is charged during

²Electronic power supply that provides efficient electric power conversion by commuting between different circuit configurations (modes).

These converters can provide step-up and step-down conversion for large dynamic ranges while keeping the efficiency very high. On top of their power conversion capabilities, such converters can also provide galvanic isolation, which in many applications is compulsory in order to guarantee the safety of the users against electrical hazards. Such characteristics suggest these drivers as the preferred solution for the LED industry. Figure 2.3a shows one of the most popular implementations for LED drivers: The *buck* converter. Figure 2.3b presents the regulation characteristic of a generic inductor based converter. As shown, the theoretical efficiency of these converters is 100% for all the conversion ratio range. In practice, due to parasitics in switches and inductors, the efficiency drops to a certain value with small fluctuations with respect to the conversion range.

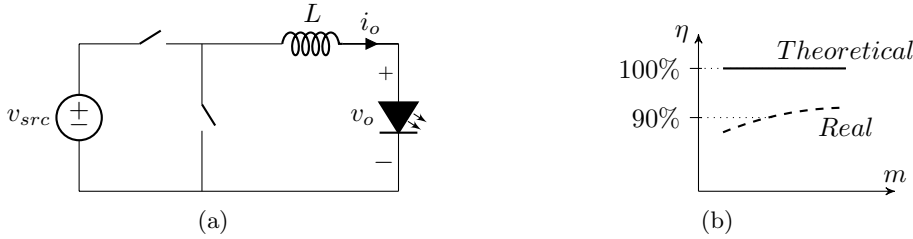


Figure 2.3: Inductor based converter, *left* - buck converter schematic; *right* - conversion ratio *vs.* efficiency curve comparing the *theoretical* and a *practical* limit.

One of the disadvantages of these converters is the magnetic components, and the volume related to them. In practice, inductors dominate the entire volume of the LED drivers as shown in Figure 2.4. Integrated implementations of these converters suffer the challenges of using integrated magnetic components. The present *very-large integration scale* (VLSI) technologies do not yet offer power inductors in the commercial implementations, and other integrated inductors are not yet mature enough for non-research products.

Yet another disadvantage for integration is the voltage stress in the switches of the converter. Switches in inductive converters have to withstand the full operational voltage, which depending on the application range, is from tens to a few hundreds of volts. Using high voltage devices has three main drawbacks: First, the losses in the devices scale quadratically with the voltage stress. Second, bad switching performances, because high voltage devices are less efficient and slower switching. Third, the standard VLSI technologies do not offer these *high voltage* (HV) devices and the VLSI technologies that offer them are less performant and more expensive than the dedicated discrete technologies.

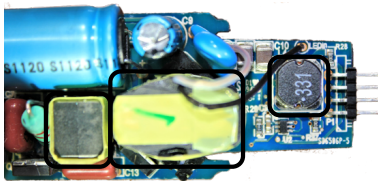


Figure 2.4: Magnetic components marked with a black square in a mains connected LED driver. These components dominate the volume of the converter.

2.4 Capacitor Based Converters

Switched Capacitor Converters (SCCs) are SMPS composed only of switches and capacitors. SCC were initially used for voltage multiplication [3, 4, 22] and more recently in applications that need voltage regulation as well [14]. Compared to inductor based converters, the absence of magnetic elements places them in a good position for high density power systems and integrated solutions, such as Power-System-in-Package (PSiP) or Power-System-on-Chip (PSoC).

SCCs have a fixed ratio of conversion between the input and the output determined by the topology. The output voltage of the converter under no load conditions is defined as the *target voltage* v_t . The converter performs at high efficiency when the load is supplied close to the *target voltage*. Similar to the linear drivers, if the output voltage goes below the *target voltage* the efficiency drops and when the output voltage is above the *target voltage* the converter cannot operate. Figure 2.5a shows a step-down converter with a conversion ratio of one half.

A common practice to extend the regulation margins of these converters is to have topologies with multiple conversion ratios [12, 19]. From Figure 2.5b it can be seen that the efficiency increases as the ration m gets close to the first fixed conversion ratio of the converter m_1 ; right after m_1 the efficiency drops again dramatically and it again linearly increases as it approaches the second fixed conversion ratio of the converter m_2 . Beyond m_2 the converter does not work.

The main advantage of these converters is that they use no inductors, which makes them suitable for integration. Integrated capacitors have a better energy density than integrated inductors. The mechanical structure of the capacitors, a stack of isolator-metal-isolator, is much easier to replicate on a small scale. Yet another advantage of the switch capacitors is that they split the voltage applied to the converter among the different components, thus reducing the voltage stress in the switches and capacitors. Such voltage stress reduction is very interesting from the point of view of integration. First, lower voltage capacitors have better performances: higher energy density, less derating and better chances of integration. Second, lower voltage switches have better switching performances. Finally, low voltage devices take less silicon area and there is more to offer in the standard VLSI technologies, thus reducing the production

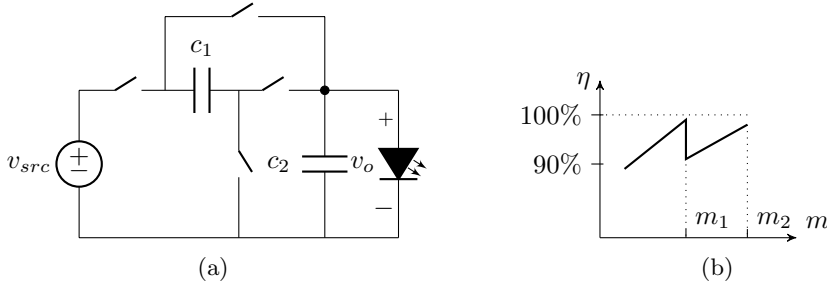


Figure 2.5: Switched capacitor converter, *left* - 2:1 converter schematic; *right* - conversion ratio *vs.* efficiency curve for of a generic multiple conversion ratio stage

costs.

The big disadvantage of these converters is that they can not directly provide the voltage-to-current conversion required for the LEDs to work. Nevertheless they are still used as LED drivers in backlighting applications for battery supplied devices. In such cases, the SCCs steps-up or steps-down the battery voltage and afterwards a linear driver provides current regulation to properly bias the LEDs. Adopting that architecture for general lighting could be a solution, but when voltages and currents are scaled to the values used in these applications the number of necessary conversion steps of the SCC would make it totally infeasible and inefficient.

Based on the previous arguments adopting an SCC architecture for a general solution for LED drivers seems to be, *a priori*, not an evident choice. On the one hand, their limitation in voltage-to-current conversion would directly disqualify switched capacitors. On the other hand, the advantageous characteristics of switched capacitors for integration made these circuits very attractive. Actually, if the initial limitations in voltage-to-current conversion could be overcome, such architecture would be an interesting candidate to explore as a solution for a *Power System on-Chip/in-Package* LED driver. Exploring the possibilities that switched capacitor converters can offer in terms of integrated and miniaturized LED drivers with efficient voltage-to-current conversion was the rational of this dissertation.

2.5 State of the art LED Drivers

Screen backlighting, Automotive and General Lighting are currently the three main areas of application of LEDs. Looking into these three areas of application gives a broad overview about the different driver architectures currently used and the approaches towards integration and miniaturization.

With regard to the miniaturization of power supplies, we can indemnify two clear approaches: *Power System on Chip* (PSoC), and *Power System in Package* (PSiP). The PSoC approach aims for the integration of the all con-

verter in a single monolithic *Integrated Circuit* (IC). In this approach the power management and the control control circuits are integrated in the same semiconductor die along with energy storage components, with poor energy storage that have on-die inductors and capacitors. The PSiP approach aims for the integration all the necessary functionalities in the same IC package including the passives. This second approach allows to use a large variety of technologies enabling multi-die chips and the integration miniaturized discrete passives in the same package. In line with PSiP, it could be considered a third approach with off-package passives, and an IC integrating power management, control and processing. Actually, this solution is widely spread among the current IC manufacturers regarding power management solutions, however the current solutions only provide the integration of the power train and control circuit or just merely the control circuit.

Van Breussegem and Steyaert [18] and Villar-Pique et al. [20] provide a comprehensive overview and analysis over the state-of-art regarding integrated converters, this section provides the overview targeted specific to LED drivers from two points of view application and driver technology.

2.5.1 Commercial LED drivers

Generalist IC manufacturers such as NXP, TI, ST, etc. have a large portfolio of dedicated LED drivers for the three main applications: Backlighting, Automotive and General Lighting. Innovation from the perspective of the IC manufacturers is very limited just providing the two standard integrated circuit solutions with regard to power management for LED drivers: controller or controller and power train. This approach facilitates the driver development by reducing component count and design time, however using this circuits the possibilities to reduce the size of the off-chip passives is very limited, topologies are fixed. Currently there is any commercial IC that solves the challenges of the smart drivers, offering connectivity and power management.

Currently the most innovative approach is taken by the startup *Goovee* that proposes connected lighting platform consisting of two ICs. The control chip integrates a micro-controller unit (MCU) with to implement the communication and sensing, and the power chip with the LED driver that interfaces with the LED; the platform is completed with a cloud service that enables from a web application to have access to the lamp fixture data logs. The technical details of the power chip are not yet available [2].

Backlighting for screens in phones, tablets, laptops and TVs was one of the first commercial application of high brightness LEDs (HB-LEDs). Backlighting applications require multiple LED channels, therefore these drivers are generally implemented with a two stage architecture as shown in Figure 2.6. The first stage - normally implemented with SMPS, inductive or capacitive- boosts the supply voltage above the highest voltage of the LED strings. The different strings are individually driven by a linear driver which enables to adjust and dim the currents for each channel individually [5, 8]. Current commercial solutions integrate power train and power management in a single IC package, using

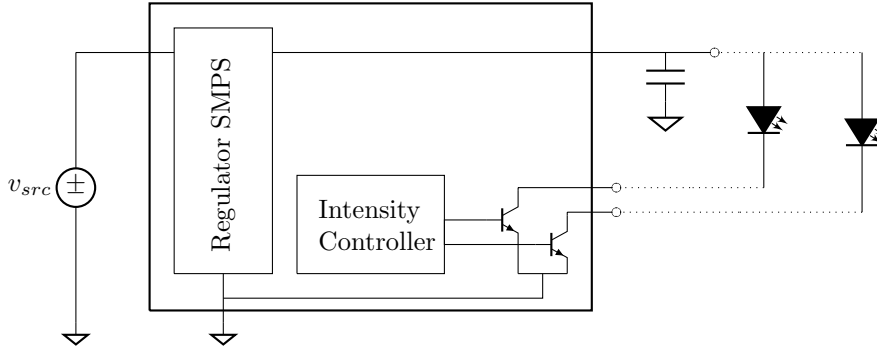


Figure 2.6: Block diagram of the common architecture used in drivers for back-lighting applications.

off-chip passives. Drivers for mobile devices, phones and tablets, accept low voltages between 2.5V to 5V, and implement the SMPS stage with an inductive or a capacitive converter. For bigger screens the drivers accept higher voltages between 5V to 45V, and the SMPS stage is normally implemented with an inductive boost converter. In both cases currents are in the low range between 20mA to 100mA for each string channels, with the exception of the flash light that requires currents burst of up to 1A.

Signaling for the tail lights was the initial application of LEDs in the automotive industry, with the consolidation of the HB-LEDs, LED lighting is currently used also in headlights [6]. Drivers for automotive applications have to deal with a wide range in the input voltage from 6V to 42V between and provide immunity for the transients in the battery line [13, 16]. The currents change depending on the application, for signaling currents are between 20mA to 100mA, and for head lighting around 1A. These drivers are implemented with the popular inductive converters such as Boost, Buck, Buck-Boost or SEPIC. The available commercial products control ICs using off-chip passives and switches for scalable solutions, or power train and control ICs using off-chip passives. A new trend in the automotive lighting field is the matrix LED technology for headlamps [1], where a matrix of individually driven LEDs provide high-precision illumination for the drivers, enabling higher safety during night conduction. Matrix LED headlights represent a new challenge for the LED driver, requiring individual control for each of the LEDs in the matrix. The current used architecture connects a switch in parallel of each individual LED, by closing the switches the LEDs can be short-circuited allowing to turn them off or dimming the light intensity [9].

General lighting is currently the main application of high brightness LEDs and the one with the most variants with respect to the drivers. Drivers for general lighting are supplied from the mains utility (*ac* source) and they require a buffer element in order to provide constant power to the LEDs, which is generally implemented with an electrolytic capacitor. This buffer capacitor is one

main contributors in volume and failures, limiting the lamp design and lifetime. Therefore reducing the volume of the capacitor is one of the important aspects in the miniaturizations of off-line drivers, and it can be done by reducing the operating voltage or the required value enabling to use other technologies with better reliability or energy density such as multi-layer ceramics chip capacitors (MCCC) or thin film plastic capacitors.

Three different architecture approaches are currently implemented in off-line drivers:

Single stage A SMPS, a buck or a fly-back, converts the input rectified mains voltage to a constant current to supply the LEDs. At the same time the driver keeps the power quality within the standards in terms power factor (PF) and total harmonic distortion (THD). This approach has the advantage of a reduced costs since it has a small number of components, just requiring one power transistor and one magnetic component. However it is necessary to use a big buffer capacitor in parallel to the LEDs in order to have a stable output voltage and avoid the flickering from the low frequency rectified mains voltage (100Hz - 120Hz). Currently it is one of the most popular solutions for domestic lighting products for powers up to 70W, and there is a large portfolio of ICs implementing the control or the control and power train, passives have to be used off-chip.

Two stage Rectified mains voltage is first converted to a *dc* bus voltage and stored in to the buffer capacitor with almost unity power factor. A second stage converts the power from the buffer capacitor to the LED strings. In this approach the size of the buffer capacitor can be optimized adjusting the voltage and ripple in the bus voltage, which leads to a smaller value than the single stage approach. As a draw back these architecture are more expensive and require double number of components, switches for two power train and at least two different magnetic components. Two stage drivers are used in professional lighting applications, for powers above 100W, and for domestic application for smart bulbs with color tuning, usually both applications require a drivers with multiple outputs to efficiently supply independent LED strings. There are not dedicated power factor controllers (PFC) ICs for lighting applications, therefore first stages are just designed and mounted with generic power management ICs for PFC. For the second stage, the IC manufacturer offer a portfolio of drivers for the standard inductive converters (back, boost and flyback), with the two common options in power management ICs: controller or integrated controller and power train, passives are mounted off-chip.

Tap linear Rectified mains is directly supplied to the LEDs by means a matrix of switches and linear regulators. The driver is continuously adjusting the LED string configuration in order to minimize the difference between the input voltage and the LED string, hence decreasing the voltage through a linear regulator. Tap linear drivers do not require the use of a buffer capacitor and magnetics, therefore can be fully implemented in

silicon. However, these circuit have a poor light quality in terms of flickering. TI launched in 2014 the first dedicated IC for tab linear drivers the TPS92410, currently there are no other commercial alternatives.

2.5.2 Linear LED Drivers

Linear Drivers are the excellent converters for a full integrated solution with a minimal die area, being possible to practically implement all the converter in silicon with the exception of the output buffer capacitor. Linear drivers are commonly used in *dc-dc* conversion for screen backlighting [8, 11, 17], where different LED strings have to be supplied individually supplied from the same voltage buffer. Each string has a linear driver that permits to individually control and adjust their light level. The common voltage levels is generally supplied from a SMPS pre-regulator that can be adjusted to improve the efficiency of the system.

Regarding general lighting, full integrated implementations were reported for *ac-dc* conversion with the so called *tap*-linear drivers or matrix converters [10, 15, 23]. Tap-linear drivers implement a matrix of linear regulators and switches along with different LED strings. The matrix of switches adjust the voltage of the LED string and the linear regulators the currents in order to follow the input voltages and reduce the drop-out voltage across the linear regulators, achieving good efficiencies above 80% and power factors above 90%. Light quality was not reported with respect to flickering, however it can be anticipated that a low frequency ripple (100-120Hz) will be present since the current and the number of LEDs varies with the mains voltage. Neither dimmability in the drivers were reported. Another requirement of the tab-linear drivers is that led strings are designed with an overhead to cope with the mains line variations($\pm 10\%$), which leads to poor utilization of the LED chips, some can conduct for short or null periods of time, increasing the costs for the LEDs.

2.5.3 Inductor Based LED Drivers

Inductor based converters are, without doubt, most used solution for LED drivers. Inductive converters have an excellent current-to-voltage regulation at high efficiencies, and at the same time can provide galvanic isolation. That is why, the majority of IC manufacturers offer a large portfolio of ICs for LED driving, with two approaches of integration: Control circuit alone, or Control circuit with the power switches. In both cases, buffer capacitors and magnetics have be mounted externally. Different flavors of control circuits can be found, covering the usual architectures (buck, boost or fly-back) and with different control schemes providing Power Factor Correction (PFC) and dimmability. Practically SSL products already in the market have build the electronics around these, circuits.

2.6 Conclusions

The different applications show an increasing interest in using SCC for LED drivers. It is evident that the approach used in portable devices can no be further extended in for high powers and higher voltages. The use of a bear SCC can never satisfy the requirements of LED drivers due to the following facts:

- Only provide voltage-to-voltage conversion
- Fixed conversion ratios
- Regulation is provided by series shunting

These limitations combined with the abrupt characteristics I-V of the LEDs makes barely impossible to provide high efficient solutions with the single use of SCC. The converters would require to have a large number of conversion ratios with a very large granularity to avoid uncontrolled currents flowing through the LEDs.

The research presented in this work aims to explore the possibilities of the SCC for LED drivers and the conducting path is based in the combination of the with inductors. The overall solution improves the power density and reduced form factor of the present solutions.

This thesis is divided in the four main sections that where necessary to build a switched capacitor LED driver. The first section introduces the new LED driver architecture used during the entire thesis, the *Hybrid-Switched Capacitor Converter*, H-SCC from now on. The second part of this book, the core of the PhD. work, presents the methodology to model H-SCC. The methodology extends the previous works in the topic providing an enhanced modeling for the design of SCCs and H-SCCs. The third section is devoted to the practical use of the new methodology, thus for the design phase of a converter. The modeling is used to help in the development facilitating the sizing and optimization of the design variables. The last section presents a discrete implementation of 12W H-SCC LED driver and the design procedure. Although is not a regular practice, experimental work is not only presented in the in the last section. The experimental work has been also used to validate the presented modeling and methodology. The final section is the conclusion of the entire work and the future opportunities that the presented work can offer.

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Chapter 3

Hybrid Switched Capacitor Converter

Driving high power LEDs using a switched capacitor converter challenges the operation of these converters. The SCC provides good performance in voltage-to-voltage conversion, but it can not directly provide regulated current. In low power applications, that is solved by using a linear regulator in series with the LED string, however that is not a valid solution for general lighting where high power and high current are needed. Combining switched capacitors with inductors can provide efficient converters for LED lighting, where the use of inductors provide a tight and efficient regulation, and the use of a switched capacitor allows to reduce the voltage stress in the components, in turn reducing switching losses and the volume of the inductor.

The *hybrid* switched capacitor converter (H-SCC) is a merge of a switched capacitor and an inductive converter, which will be introduced in this chapter. The first section introduces the basic knowledge about switched capacitor converters (SCC) to understand the enhancements, modifications and characteristics of the *hybrid*-SCC. The second section presents the H-SCC topology and operation. The third section introduces LED drivers circuits based on H-SCC, being them the fundamental circuits of this disoperation. Additionally, different driver architectures are described in this section giving a broader perspective of different applications of H-SCC in LED drivers.

3.1 State of the Art

In commercial ICs but also in research the integration and miniaturization characteristics of Switched Capacitor Converters (SCCs) have an application for LED drivers. Commercially there is a large portfolio of available integrated circuits (ICs) (designated as Charge-Pumps (CPs)) for backlighting in portable

devices, *i.e.* *MAX8930*¹, *MCP1252/3*². These circuits can drive White or RGB LEDs from a Lithium-Ion battery by merely adding a few external capacitors, as shown in the block diagram of Figure 3.1. Generally these chips integrate a SCC with different conversion ratios, along with a linear regulator for each channel. Various publications [5, 16, 17] proposed different modifications of the architectures in order to reduce the parasitic losses, bringing the efficiency close to the theoretical limit. The power ratings in these drivers are below 1W at currents below hundred milli-Amperes with efficiencies between 70%-90% depending on the operation point.

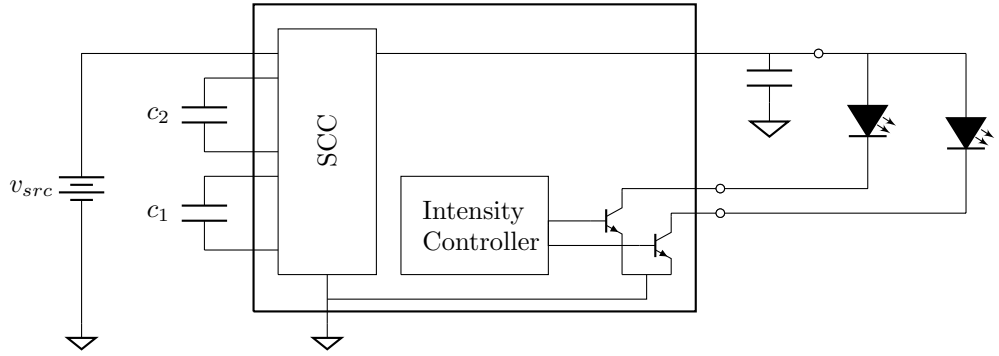


Figure 3.1: Block diagram of the common architecture used in *charge pump* LED drivers for small screens backlighting in portable applications.

With respect to general lighting there are a few research publications that report the use of SCCs. In 2008, Lee et al. [12] presented a step-down converter supplied from rectified $220V_{rms}$ providing 15W with a 95% peak efficiency. The proposed architecture directly supplied the LED string from the capacitors, controlling the output power by changing the switching frequency.

In 2012, Kline et al. [9] proposed a isolated converter that combined a SCC stage with series-LC resonant converter delivering 15.5W with an efficiency of 92%. The SCC stage decreased the rectified mains voltage, reducing the voltage stress in switches, capacitors and the elements of the resonant tank, allowing to diminish the volume of the passive components and the total silicon area. The LED current is regulated by modulating frequency and duty cycle. The architecture was recently implemented in modular silicon dies, that can be stacked in order to adjust to different mains voltages [11].

3.2 Switched Capacitor Converter

SCCs are a family of SMPS circuits that provide power conversion using only switches and capacitors. A SCC has two or more operation modes, referred as

¹Maxim® WLED Charge Pump, RGB, OLED Boost, LDOs with ALC and CAI

²Microchip® Low noise, Positive-Regulated Charge Pump

phases, and each operating mode is associated with a different circuit arrangement of the capacitors. The SCC is sequentially switching between the different modes, providing a voltage conversion between input and output. The circuit in figure 3.2a is a two phase 3:1 Dickson that provides a step down conversion ratio of $\frac{1}{3}$. During the first phase the odd switches are closed, resulting in the circuit of figure 3.2b. During the second phase, the even switches are closed, resulting in the circuit of figure 3.2c.

Dickson and Ladder are the preferred SCC topologies used in this dissertation. Both topologies have been selected since they share a similar characteristics that favour the design of H-SCCs: Equal voltage ripple among all *pwm*-nodes. Despite that in the following examples are based on a Dickson or a Ladder converter, they hold for any other well posed SCC topology [14].

3.2.1 Conversion ratio

The conversion ratio of the converter and the steady state voltages in the capacitors are obtained applying Kirchhoff's voltage law (KVL) for each circuit mode, and combining the different linear independent equations.

KVL equations of the first phase are:

$$\begin{aligned} v_{src} - v_{c_1} - v_{c_2} &= 0, \\ v_{out} - v_{c_2} &= 0, \\ v_{out} - v_{c_3} &= 0. \end{aligned} \tag{3.1}$$

KVL equations of the second phase are:

$$\begin{aligned} v_{c_1} - v_{c_2} - v_{c_3} &= 0, \\ v_{out} - v_{c_3} &= 0. \end{aligned} \tag{3.2}$$

Selecting the linear independent equations from eq.(3.1) and eq.(3.2), a solvable system can be formulated as

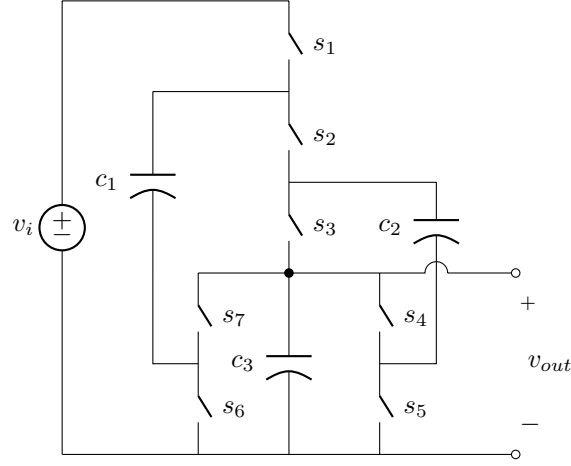
$$\begin{aligned} v_{src} - v_{c_1} - v_{c_2} &= 0, \\ v_{c_1} - v_{c_2} - v_{c_3} &= 0, \\ v_{out} - v_{c_2} &= 0, \\ v_{out} - v_{c_3} &= 0, \end{aligned} \tag{3.3}$$

solving it yields to

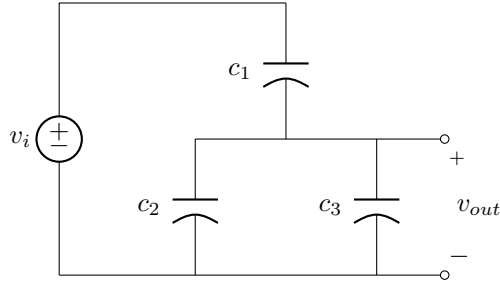
$$\begin{aligned} v_{out} = v_{c_3} = v_{c_2} &= \frac{V_{src}}{3}, \\ v_{c_1} &= \frac{2 \cdot V_{src}}{3}, \end{aligned} \tag{3.4}$$

hence the converter conversion ratio is

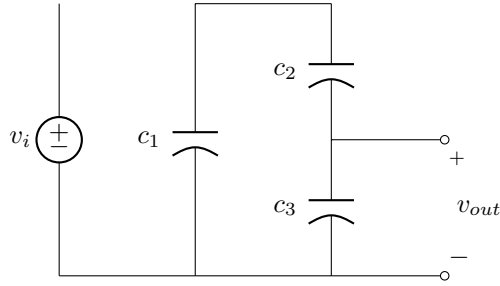
$$m_i = \frac{v_{out}}{v_{src}} = \frac{1}{3}. \tag{3.5}$$



(a) 3:1 Dickson Converter.



(b) First phase, odd switched are closed and even switches are open.



(c) Second phase, even switched are closed and odd switches are open.

Figure 3.2

This result shows that the conversion ratio is defined by the topology of the converter and independent of the switching operating regime. From now on, the conversion ratio defined by the topology will be referred as the *intrinsic*

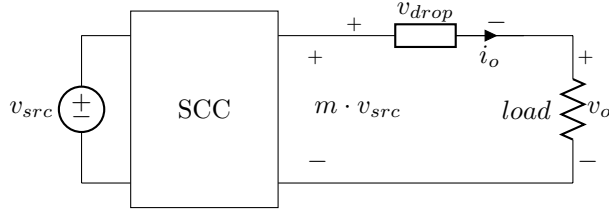


Figure 3.3: Linear regulated switched capacitor

conversion ratio and defined as m_i .

3.2.2 Output voltage regulation

A SCC has a fixed conversion ratio only defined by its topology and not by its operation regime. The conversion ratio of the converter can not be adjusted changing frequency or pulse width as in the case of inductive based converters, therefore the converter can not directly provide voltage regulation.

Indirectly, there is always the possibility to regulate the output voltage by means of a linear regulator, thus the output voltage is adjusted by drooping the excess voltage (v_{drop}) in a series element with the load, as shown in the schematic of figure 3.3. This can be achieved in two ways: Using an external liner regulator connected between the converter output and the load, or what is more common, using or '*misusing*' the behaviour of the SCC in order to provide this linear regulation characteristic [13]. Regulating the load in such a way reduces the efficiency of the converter. Like a linear regulator, the efficiency of the converter can be written as function of v_{src} and v_o as

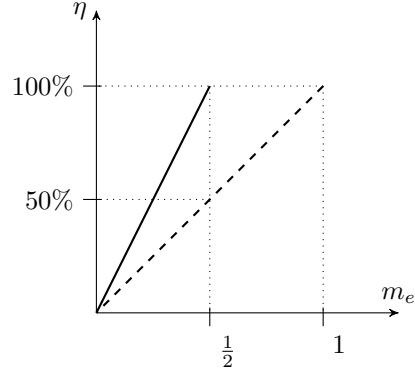
$$\eta = \frac{P_o}{P_i} = \frac{v_o \cdot i_o}{m \cdot v_{src} \cdot i_o} = \frac{v_o}{m \cdot v_{src}}. \quad (3.6)$$

Figure 3.4 plots the theoretical maximum efficiency with respect of the effective conversion ratio of the power converter $m_e = v_o/v_{src}$. Comparing the characteristics of a single linear regulator and a linear regulated 2:1 SCC shows that for conversion ratios below 1/2 the SCC converter has better efficiency, however above 1/2 the SCC is not longer operative.

3.2.3 Multiple conversion ratio converters

Multiple conversion ratio converters enable to extend the regulation margins and increase the conversion efficiency. Figure 3.4 shows the limitations of a 2:1 SCC. First, the converter is only operative for conversion rations below 1/2. Second, as the conversion ratio moves below the intrinsic conversion ratio of the converter (1/2) the efficiency linearly decreases. Other topologies, like the one of figure 3.5a, have multiple conversion ratios - $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{2}{3}$ and 1 - that extend the operation margins and increase the efficiency of the converter as shown in the plot of figure 3.5b. A detailed analysis of this converter is presented in the appendicle X, section B.

Figure 3.4: Maximum theoretical efficiency plotted as function of the conversion ratio: *dashed line* - linear regulator ; *thick line* - 2:1 linear regulated SCC

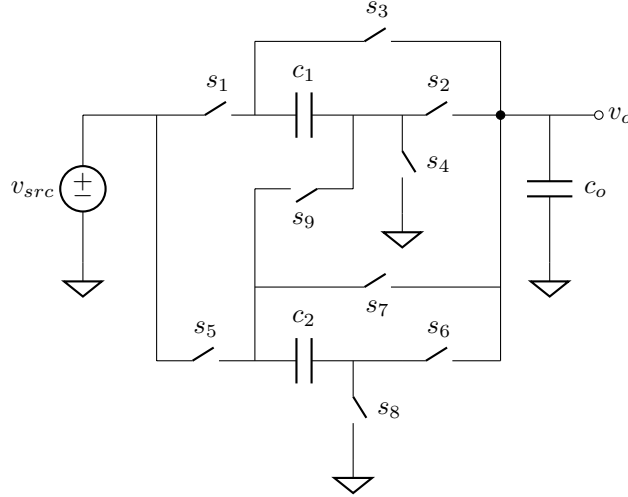


3.2.4 Converter output nodes

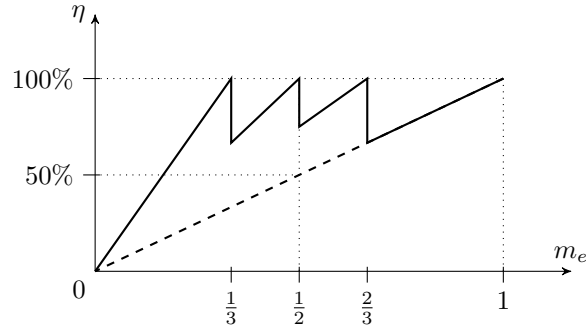
The previous section presented switched capacitor converters with the load connected to a node that provides a fixed conversion ratio. Actually, that is the most common way of employing these converters, however a SCC can supply the load from other nodes. Two types of nodes can be identified in a Switched Capacitor Converter: Fixed voltage *dc*-nodes, node *a* in figure 3.6, and floating voltage *pulse width modulated* nodes (*pwm*-nodes), node *b* in figure 3.6.

Fixed voltage *dc*-nodes are the common output nodes of a SCC. A *dc*-node supplies the load with a fixed conversion ratio defined by the topology, and with a low voltage ripple thanks to the capacitor in parallel with the load. The capacitors that are connected between a *dc*-node and ground are *dc*-capacitors as shown in the Fig. 3.6. A SCC can have one or more *dc*-capacitors, however topologies with a reduced number of these trend to have a better area utilization, since these *dc*-capacitors do not contribute to the charge transportation [14].

Floating *pulse width modulated*-nodes (*pwm*-nodes) have been rarely used as outputs until a couple of recent publications [9, 10] presented the advantages of using them. *pwm*-nodes have been normally considered internal to the converter without any added functionality, but actually the conversion possibilities of SCCs can be further enhanced by using these nodes as outputs. *pwm*-nodes are accessible from the terminals of flying capacitors (c_{fly}), delivering a floating pulse-width-modulated (PWM) voltage with an added *dc* offset of a fraction of the input voltage with respect to ground. The magnitudes are related to the SCC topology. The pulsating voltages can be filtered using an inductive-capacitive filter (*LC*), allowing to supply a *dc* load with the averaged voltage of the node. Furthermore the *pwm* voltage at the node can be controlled by adjusting the duty cycle of the SCC, enhancing the regulation capabilities of these outputs compared to the fixed value of the *dc*-nodes.



(a) Multiple conversion ratio SCC.



(b) Maximum theoretical efficiency plotted as function of the conversion ratio: *dashed line* - Single linear regulator; *thick line* - Linear regulated multiple conversion ratio SCC.

Figure 3.5

3.3 Hybrid-Switched Capacitor Converter

A Hybrid Switched Capacitor Converter (H-SCC) uses a low pass filter to supply a *dc* voltage from a *pwm*-node, as shown in figure 3.7. The low pass filter is composed of an inductor l_o and capacitor c_o , and averages the *pwm*-voltage of the switching node v_x .

Like in the previous circuit, odd switches are closed during one phase (fig-

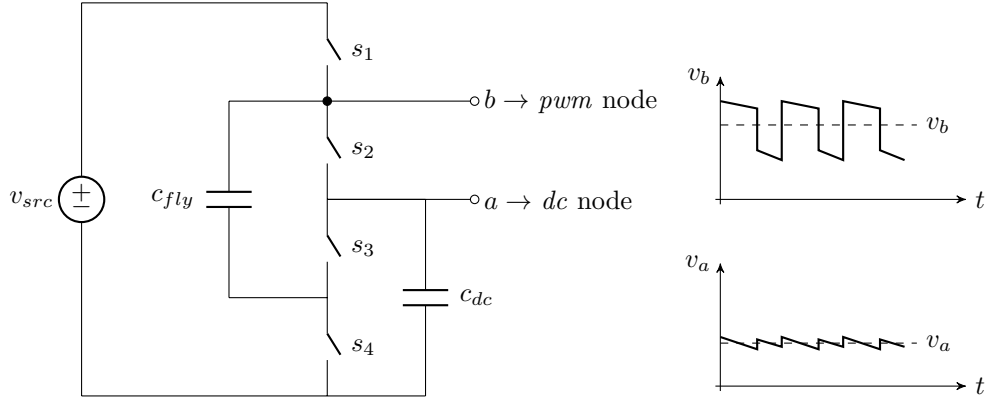


Figure 3.6: Node types in a 2:1 converter: Node a is a dc -node; its voltage, v_a is plotted in the bottom graph. Node b is a pwm -node; its voltage, v_b , is plotted in the top graph.

ure 3.10a) and even switches (figure 3.10b) are closed during the other phase. Switching between the two phases produces a pwm voltage at the switching node v_x as shown in the graph of the figure 3.8. Hence the voltage at the switching node v_x during an entire switching period T_{sw} is

$$v_x(t) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{3}v_{src} & : & 0 < t \leq DT_{sw} \\ \frac{2}{3}v_{src} & : & DT_{sw} < t \leq T_{sw}, \end{cases} \quad (3.7)$$

where D corresponds to the duty cycle of the odd switches. The output filter averages the voltage at the switching node v_x , therefore the mean value at v_{out} can be obtained integrating (3.7) during a switching cycle as,

$$v_{out} = \frac{1}{T} \int_0^T v_x(t) dt \quad (3.8)$$

$$v_{out} = \frac{1}{T} \left(\int_0^{DT} \frac{1}{3}v_{src} dt + \int_{DT}^T \frac{2}{3}v_{src} dt \right) \quad (3.9)$$

$$v_{out} = \frac{2-D}{3}v_{src}, \quad (3.10)$$

thus the converter conversion ratio for the second node (n_2) is

$$m_2 = \frac{v_{out}}{v_{src}} = \frac{2-D}{3}, \quad (3.11)$$

where the subscript in m denotes the node of the converter. The numbering of the nodes is made in the following order top-bottom and left-right, see the circuit

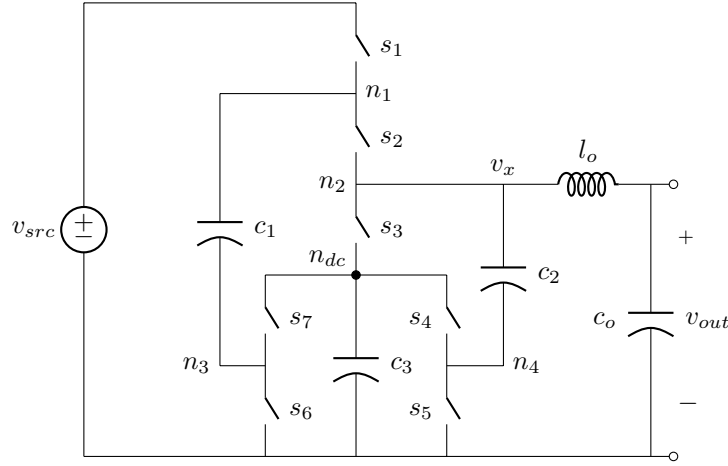


Figure 3.7: H-SCC with a 3:1 Dickson topology with the inductor connected to the second *pwm*-node.

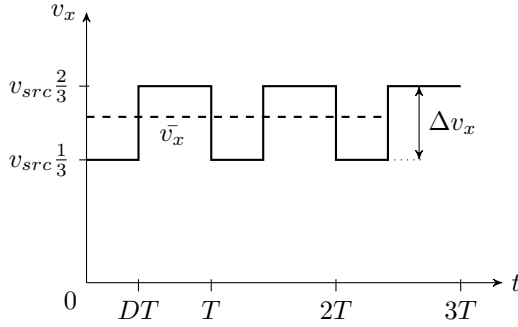


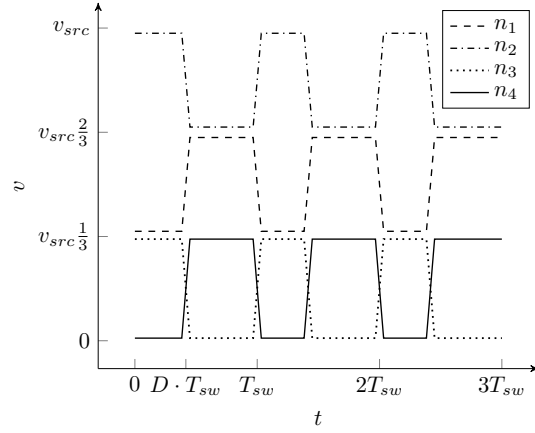
Figure 3.8: Transient voltage at the switching node v_x of the H-SCC in figure 3.7

schematic of figure 3.7. Actually in the 3:1 H-Dickson there is a plurality of *pwm*-nodes. Figure 3.9 plots all the switching voltages available in the converter. The square-wave voltages cover the range from 0 to v_{src} equally divided with an amplitude of $v_{src}/3$. In fact, this equal spacing is one of the singularities of Dickson and Ladder converters with respect to the other topologies, and the reason why these two topologies were selected to implement all the H-SCCs of this dissertation. Having an equal voltage ripple at the different switching nodes, allows to use the same inductance value for each of the different *pwm*-nodes. The amplitude of the voltage in any Dickson and Ladder converter at the switching node is

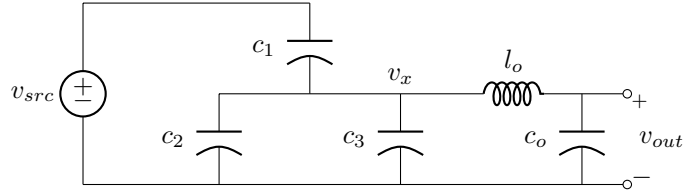
$$\Delta v_x = m_i v_{src}. \quad (3.12)$$

In fact, a H-SCC shares many of the characteristics of a buck converter, the most common LED driver circuit used in *dc-dc* conversion. Adding the output filter to a SCC complements the converter providing tight current regulation, which overcomes the intrinsic limitation of SCC in current regulation. However

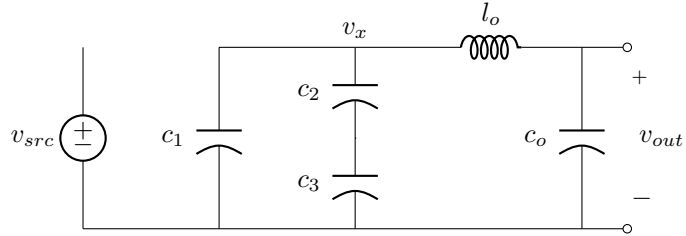
Figure 3.9: Transient voltage at the different *pwm*-nodes of the 3:1 H-Dickson converter of figure 3.7.



it requires magnetic elements, challenging again the integrability of the converter. The following sections introduces the characteristics of this new *hybrid* topology as a LED driver, using the buck converter as a reference.



(a) First phase, odd switches are closed and even switches are open.



(b) Second phase, even switches are closed and odd switches are open.

Figure 3.10: The two switching modes of 3:1 H-Dickson of figure 3.7

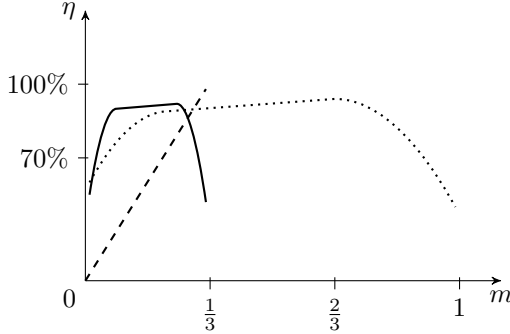


Figure 3.11: Comparison of regulation vs. efficiency characteristics between converters: 3:1 H-Dickson 3rd *pwm*-node (solid line), 3:1 Dickson (dashed line) and buck converter (dotted line).

3.3.1 Output Regulation

In contrast with the classical SCC, the conversion ratio of a H-SCC converter depends on the duty cycle of the converter (D), consequently the conversion ratio can now be adjusted to provide regulation of the load without directly affecting the converter's efficiency.

Figure 3.11 compares the idealized trend curves of the converter efficiency with respect to the conversion ratio for a H-SCC, a SCC and a buck converter. For example a 3:1 Dickson has an intrinsic conversion ratio of $m_i = \frac{1}{3}$ and provides regulation at costs of efficiency (see dashed line). Instead, using the third *pwm*-node (n_3), located at the negative terminal of capacitor c_1 in the schematic of figure 3.7, the converter has an adjustable conversion ratio of

$$m_3 = \frac{D}{3} \quad (3.13)$$

by changing the duty cycle D of the drive signal. In this case, the efficiency vs. regulation curve is flat within the regulation margins and drops for extreme duty cycles by cause of the internal losses of the SCC (see solid line). The details of the loss mechanisms in SCC and H-SCC are covered in chapter X dedicated to modeling. Indeed, the efficiency vs. regulation curve of a H-SCC is similar to the one of a buck converter (dotted line) but with a smaller dynamic range.

Table 3.1: Conversion ratio characteristics at the different nodes of a 3:1 H-Dickson converter

Node		n_1	n_2	n_3	n_4	n_{dc}
Conversion ratio	m_x	$\frac{2+D}{3}$	$\frac{2-D}{3}$	$\frac{D}{3}$	$\frac{1-D}{3}$	$\frac{1}{3}$
Range of conversion		$1 \cdots \frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{2}{3} \cdots \frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{1}{3} \cdots 0$	$\frac{1}{3} \cdots 0$	-
Dynamic conversion range	Δm	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	-

Ideally a buck converter provides a conversion ratio between 0 and 1. Indeed, it is the same case for a H-SCC, however the conversion ratio is segmented in dif-

ferent ranges. Each segment is associated with a different *pwm*-node of the converter, and it has a limited dynamic range of regulation Δm . Table 3.1 presents the conversion characteristics for the different nodes of the 3:1 H-Dickson of figure 3.7. It can be seen that the dynamic range of conversion (Δm) is the same across all the *pwm*-nodes and equal to the intrinsic conversion ratio of the converter m_i . This characteristic is shared between the two topologies used in this dissertation, Dickson and Ladder.

3.3.2 Power Inductor

Like in a buck converter, a H-SCC uses a inductor-capacitor (LC) low pass filter to supply the a *dc* voltage to the load. The use of an inductor challenges again the integrability of the converter, as it was already discussed in the second chapter, nevertheless the added advantages in terms of regulation and efficiency justify its use. At the same time, the inductor benefits from the reduced voltage ripple present in the *pwm*-nodes, relaxing the requirements in terms of inductance and size.

The inductance value of the power inductor in a buck type converter configuration is

$$l_o = \frac{\Delta v_x \cdot DD'}{\Delta i f_{sw}}, \quad (3.14)$$

where Δi is the *peak-to-peak* current amplitude in the inductor, D the duty cycle of the boost high side switch and $D' = (1 - D)$. From eq.(3.14) it can be seen that the size of the power inductor is directly proportional to the amplitude of the square-wave voltage at the switching node (Δv_x), which in a buck converter is equal to the source voltage as shown in the plot from figure 3.12b. Particularizing eq.(3.14) for a buck converter, yields to

$$l_{o,buck} = \frac{v_{src} \cdot DD'}{\Delta i f_{sw}}. \quad (3.15)$$

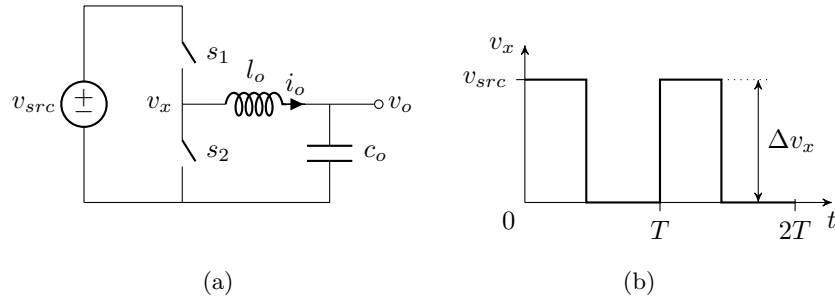


Figure 3.12: Inductor based converter, *left* - synchronous buck converter schematic; *right* - transient voltage at the switching node during two switching periods.

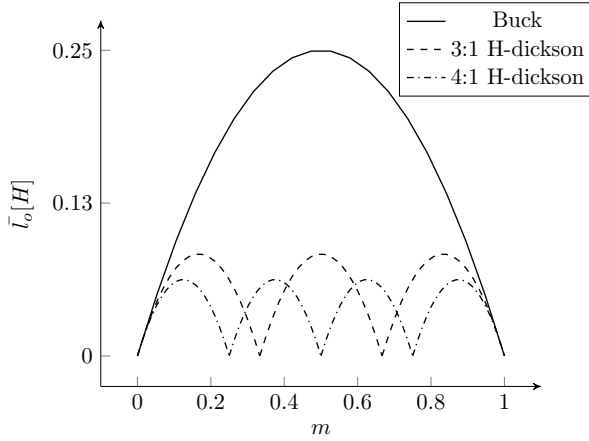


Figure 3.13: Inductance value for Buck, 3:1 H-Dickson and 4:1 H-Dickson converters as function of the conversion ratio; results are normalized for $V_{src} = 1V$, $T_{sw} = 1s$ and $\Delta i = 1A$.

Opposite to the buck converter, in the H-SCC the square-wave voltages are floating with respect the ground (see figure 3.8) and its ripple amplitude Δv_x depends on the converter's topology. In the case of the Dickson and Ladder converters the amplitude of the voltage ripple Δv_x is the same for all of the *pwm*-nodes and equal to

$$\Delta v_x = m_i \cdot v_{src}, \quad (3.16)$$

therefore particularizing eq.(3.14) for a Dickson or a Ladder H-SCC yields to

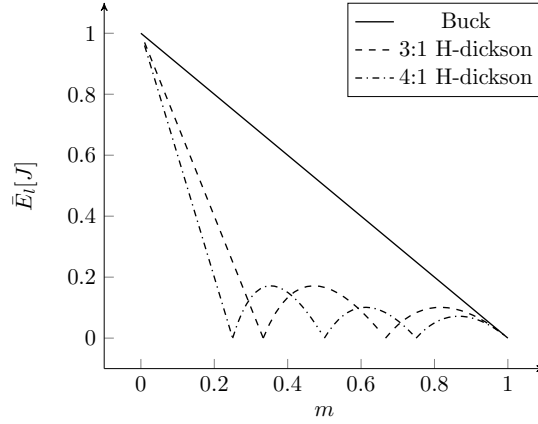
$$l_{o,hsc} = \frac{m_i \cdot v_{src} \cdot DD'}{\Delta i f_{sw}}. \quad (3.17)$$

An important remark is that duty cycle in (3.17) and in (3.15) are not correlated, therefore the two equations can not be directly compared. Figure 3.13 plots the normalized inductor values - $V_{src} = 1V$, $T_{sw} = 1s$ and $\Delta i = 1A$ - for Buck, 3:1 H-Dickson and 4:1 H-Dickson converters. The plot shows the symmetrical curve for the buck converter where the highest inductance value is when the converter operates at a half conversion ratio. In contrast, the curves corresponding to the HSCCs present multiple parabolas, where each of them corresponds to a selected node of the HSCC converter. For instance, looking at the dashed line plotted for the 3:1 H-Dickson converter of figure 3.7, the first parabola spans for a m between 0 and 1/3 corresponds for an inductor connected to $n3$ or $n4$. The second parabola spans for a m between 1/3 and 2/3 corresponds for an inductor is connected to $n2$. The last parabola spans for a m between 2/3 and 1 corresponds when the inductor is connected to $n1$. The reduction in inductance value with respect to the back converter spans out from half conversion ratio to the extremes where the inductance take the same values for all the converters.

The physical size of the inductor is proportional to the peak energy stored in it, and it can be computed from the maximum current through the inductor

$$E_{l,max} = \frac{1}{2} i_{max}^2 l_o. \quad (3.18)$$

Figure 3.14: Peak energy storage for Buck, 3:1 H-Dickson and 4:1 H-Dickson converters as function of the conversion ratio; results are normalized for $P_{out} = 1W$ and $f_{sw} = 1Hz$.



The minimum inductance value is when the converter operates in Boundary Conduction Mode (BCM) since the H-SCC is designed to operate in Continuous Conduction Mode (CCM). When a buck or H-SCC converter operates in BCM the minimum current is equal to zero and the peak current is equal to twice of the output current of the converter. Thus, the maximum inductor current is

$$i_{max} = \Delta i = 2i_{out} \quad (3.19)$$

By substituting (3.19) and (3.15) into (3.18), the inductor peak energy for a buck can be found

$$E_{l,buck} = \frac{i_{out} v_{src} D D'}{f_{sw}}. \quad (3.20)$$

In a buck converter the source voltage can be written as

$$v_{src} = \frac{v_{out}}{D}, \quad (3.21)$$

thus by substituting (3.21) into (3.20), the $E_{l,buck}$ yields to

$$E_{l,buck} = \frac{v_{out}}{D} \frac{i_{out} D D'}{f_{sw}} = \frac{(1-D)}{f_{sw}} P_{out}. \quad (3.22)$$

By substituting (3.19) and (3.17) into (3.18), the inductor peak energy for H-SCC with a Dickson or Ladder stages can be found

$$E_{l,hsc} = \frac{m_i i_{out} v_{src} D D'}{f_{sw}}. \quad (3.23)$$

In the hybrid Dickson and Ladder converters the source voltage is can be written as

$$v_{src} = \frac{v_{out}}{m}, \quad (3.24)$$

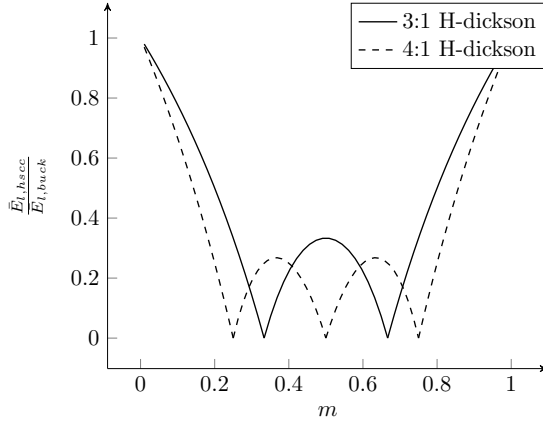


Figure 3.15: Peak energy storage normalized with respect to a buck converter for a 3:1 H-Dickson and a 4:1 H-Dickson converters as function of the conversion ratio.

where m is the conversion ratio of the converter. Thus by substituting (3.24) into (3.23), the resulting expression of the inductor maximum energy yields to

$$E_{l,hsc} = \frac{v_{out}}{m} \frac{m_i i_{out} D D'}{f_{sw}} = \frac{m_i D(1-D)}{m f_{sw}} P_{out}. \quad (3.25)$$

Figure 3.14 plots (3.22) and (3.25), both plots have the same trend of reducing the peak energy as the conversion ratio increases. As in the case of the inductance value (see figure 3.13), the peak energy stored in the inductor is dramatically reduced, hence the volume, in case of using a H-SCC topology. In fact, normalizing the peak energy of the H-SCCs with respect to the buck, as shown in figure 3.15. The plot shows that the reduction in inductance spans from a conversion ratio of a half to the extremes symmetrically, being very effective in most of the conversion ratio range of the converter and decreasing at the two extremes. As the conversion ratio of the SCC increases the reduction in inductance increases and the effective region of reduction spans for a large range of conversion ratio.

3.3.3 Power Switches

The large number of switches used in a H-SCC has different advantages towards miniaturization of the converter. In fact, in a H-SCC the voltage stress applied to the different switches is a fraction of the input voltage, in contrast to the buck converter where each of the switches have to block the full input voltage. Therefore SCCs can be implemented with switches rated at lower voltages than the input voltage. Table 3.2 shows the blocking voltages of the switches of the 3:1 H-Dickson of figure 3.7.

Reducing the voltage stress has several advantages. First, low voltage devices take less silicon area in the standard integration processes. Second, switching performance of these devices is better since they are smaller in area, and with less parasitic capacitances, as a consequence, they can switch faster. Finally, the switching losses of the converter are reduced since they keep a quadratic

Table 3.2: Stress voltages at the switches of the 3:1 H-Dickson of figure 3.7.

Switch #	Stress voltage
$s_1, s_3 \cdots s_7$	$\frac{1}{3}v_{src}$
s_2	$\frac{2}{3}v_{src}$

proportion with blocking voltages of the switches (v_{ds}). The reduction of the switching loss with respect to a buck converter can be easily calculated using the switching loss formula associated to parasitic capacitances [4]:

$$P_{sw} = \frac{1}{2}f_{sw} \cdot c_{ds} \cdot v_{ds}^2. \quad (3.26)$$

In this exercise it has been assumed that c_{ds} is equal for the different switches in both converters, despite the fact that value would be different for each switch in a real implementation. This simplification has been taken in order to show the impact of the voltage reduction to the switching loss.

The blocking voltage of the switch in the buck converter of figure 3.12a is v_{src} , thus replacing it in (3.26), the switching losses are

$$P_{sw,buck} = f_{sw} \cdot c_{ds} \cdot v_{src}^2. \quad (3.27)$$

The blocking voltages of the 3:1 H-Dickson are in table 3.2, thus replacing it in (3.26) the switching losses for that converter are

$$P_{sw,hsc} = \frac{6}{2}f_{sw} \cdot c_{ds} \left(\frac{1}{3}v_{src}\right)^2 + \frac{1}{2}f_{sw} \cdot c_{ds} \left(\frac{2}{3}v_{src}\right)^2, \quad (3.28)$$

rearranging yields to

$$P_{sw,hsc} = \frac{5}{9}f_{sw} \cdot c_{ds} \cdot v_{src}^2. \quad (3.29)$$

Dividing (3.27) and (3.30) yields the switching loss ratio between the two converters:

$$\frac{P_{sw,hsc}}{P_{sw,buck}} = \frac{5}{9}f_{sw} \cdot c_{ds} \cdot v_{src}^2. \quad (3.30)$$

The results for a generalized N :1 Dickson and Ladder converter are in table 3.3, and in figure 3.16 is plotted the switching loss ratio with respect to the buck converter.

Both converters achieve a reduction of the switching losses with respect to the buck converter. In fact the switching loss decrease as N increases, although the number of switches increase as well. Reducing the switching loss enables to operate the converter at higher frequencies, thus with a smaller switching period T_{sw} , which is also effective in the reduction of the power inductor.

There are a couple of considerations regarding these results for a practical implementation of a H-SCC. On the one hand, they are obtained assuming that

Table 3.3: Switch blocking voltage of Dickson and Ladder converters.

Converter	N:1 Dickson $N \geq 3$	N:1 Ladder $N \geq 2$
# Switches	$4 + N$	$2 \cdot N$
v_{ds}	$\frac{v_{src}}{N} \rightarrow 6 \text{ switches}$ $\frac{2v_{src}}{N} \rightarrow (N - 2) \text{ switches}$	$\frac{v_{src}}{N}$
P_{sw}	$\frac{4+N}{8 \cdot N^2} \cdot v_{in}^2 \cdot f_{sw} \cdot c_{ds}$	$\frac{1}{N} \cdot v_{src}^2 \cdot f_{sw} \cdot c_{ds}$
$\frac{P_{sw}}{P_{sw,buck}}$	$\frac{4+N}{8 \cdot N^2}$	$\frac{1}{N}$

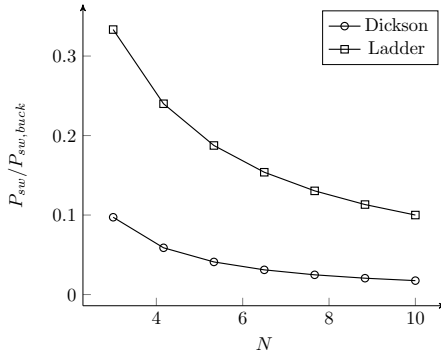


Figure 3.16: Switching loss ratio for Dickson and Ladder converters with respect to buck converter.

c_{ds} is the same for all the switches in both converters. In a practical converter each device has a different c_{ds} value defined by two of the device parameters; c_{ds} is directly proportional to the rated v_{ds} voltage and inversely proportional to the channel resistance r_{on} . Theoretically lower voltage switches have smaller c_{ds} , but the final value will also depends on its r_{on} . On the other hand, H-SCC has a larger number of devices in series in the current path compared to a buck that only has only one switch in the current path in both phases. A proper H-SCC design reduces the number of switches in the high current path, helping to keep the conduction loss low.

3.3.4 Multiple Outputs

The use of the internal nodes of the SCC allows to provide multiple outputs with a single power train. In this case the converter could be simultaneously loaded at the *pwm*-nodes and at the *dc*-node, providing different conversion ratio for each output. The conversion ratio at the *dc*-node (or nodes) is given by the intrinsic conversion ratio of the converter m_i , independent of the variations in the duty cycle of the driving signal, yet the fixed output can be linear regulated to adjust the output voltage. The conversion ratio for the other *pwm*-nodes is function of D and determined in each node by the node conversion ration m_n . In the case of using multiple *pmw*-nodes, all the outputs will depend on

D , hence it will not be possible to have independent regulation for each of the outputs.

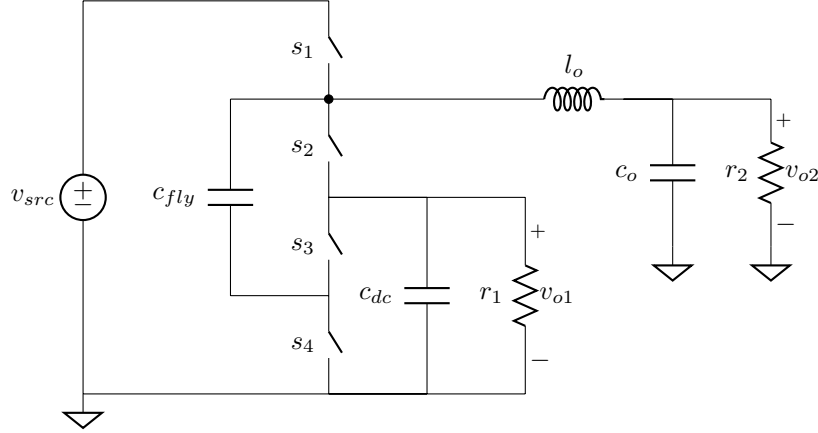


Figure 3.17: 2:1 H-SCC with two outputs; r_1 is supplied by the dc -node and r_2 is supplied by the first pwm -node.

Figure 3.17 shows a converter with two output voltages. r_1 is connected to the dc -node with an output voltage approximated to

$$v_{o1} = \frac{1}{2}v_{src}. \quad (3.31)$$

r_2 is connected to the first pwm -node with an output voltage function of D as

$$v_{o2} = \frac{1+D}{2}v_{src}, \quad (3.32)$$

thus this output can be regulated.

3.4 LED Driver

The buck is one of the most used converter as LED driver in $dc-dc$ applications. The buck converter has an excellent current regulation and a continuous output current thanks to the inductor connected in series with the LEDs as shown in figure 3.18a.

It can be seen in figure 3.18b that the voltage swing at the switching node (v_x) of a buck converter goes from ground to v_{src} providing the full conversion ratio range, between 0 and 1. Actually, this regulation range is often wider than the margins of variation in the LED's forward voltage (marked by the discontinuous lines in figure 3.18b), as previously discussed in section 2.1.

The abrupt $v-i$ characteristics of the LEDs is an advantage for the reduced conversion range of the H-SCC. Opposite to the buck converter, the H-SSCC

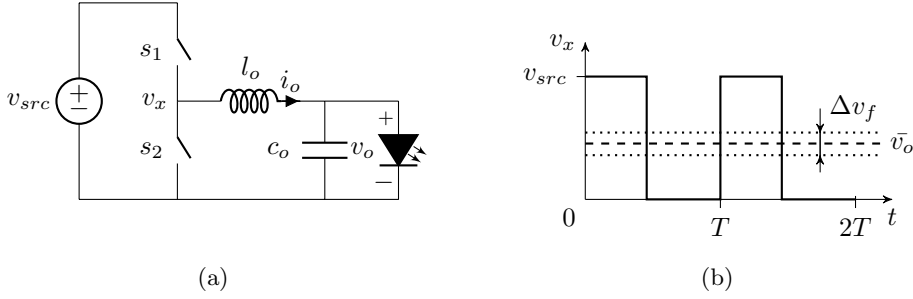


Figure 3.18: *Left* - buck based LED driver schematic; *right* - transient voltage at the switching node(thick line), average output voltage (dashed line), and forward voltage limits (dotted lines).

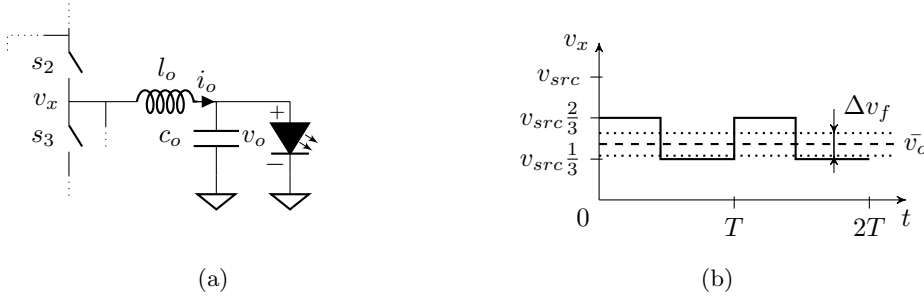


Figure 3.19: *Left* - switching node detail of a 3:1 H-Dickson based LED driver; *right* - transient voltage at the switching node(thick line), average output voltage (dashed line), and forward voltage limits (dotted lines).

has a narrower voltage swing at the switching node. Figure 3.19 shows in a H-SCC the voltage swing can be reduced just to provide the necessary regulation margins for the LED. As described in the previous section 3.3.1, the dynamic conversion range at the outputs depend on the intrinsic conversion ratio (m_i) of the SCC stage, therefore it can be adjusted for the requirements of the load. Additionally, reducing the dynamic conversion range reduced the voltage swing at the inductor, which at the same time, relaxes the requirements of the output inductor (see section 3.3.2).

The following subsections present different LED drivers based on H-SCCs for *dc-dc* and *ac-dc*. Actually, they are also suitable to supply any other type of load, specially when it requires reduced regulation margins, but it will not be covered in this dissertation.

3.4.1 Single-stage *dc-dc* with auxiliary output voltage

Figure 3.20 shows the *dc-dc* LED driver with an auxiliary output voltage [2]. In fact, this architecture has been used in an experimental set-up for this dis-

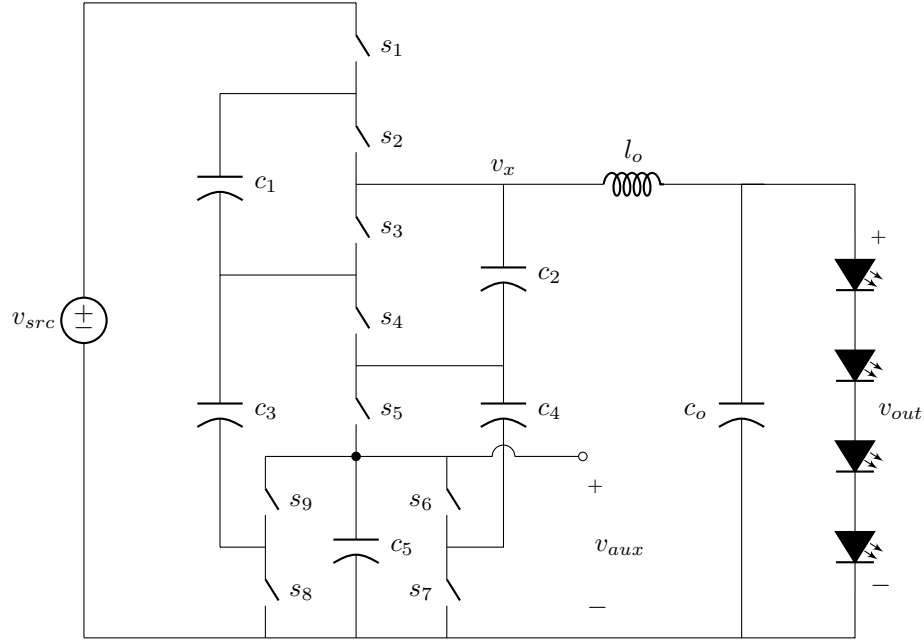


Figure 3.20: 5:1 Dickson LED driver for 24V e-merge track lighting application. The driver has two outputs: A 12V, 12W LED string, and a 4V, 200mW to supply low voltage loads.

servation presented in the last chapter. The converter features two outputs: The main output v_{out} supplies the LED load and normally delivers the largest amount of power of the converter. The output voltage can be controlled using the duty cycle D , thus its value is given by

$$v_{out} = v_{src} \frac{4 - D}{5}. \quad (3.33)$$

The secondary output v_{aux} supplies the low voltage electronics dedicated for the control of the driver, providing functionalities such as connectivity, light control or stand by operation. The secondary output has not direct means of regulation and provides a fix conversion ratio equal to

$$v_{aux} = v_{src} \frac{1}{5}. \quad (3.34)$$

Nevertheless, the voltage at this output can be still controlled by means of a linear regulator.

This architecture has a limited conversion range, between $3/5$ and $4/5$. The conversion ratio can be extended introducing a multiplexer between the different

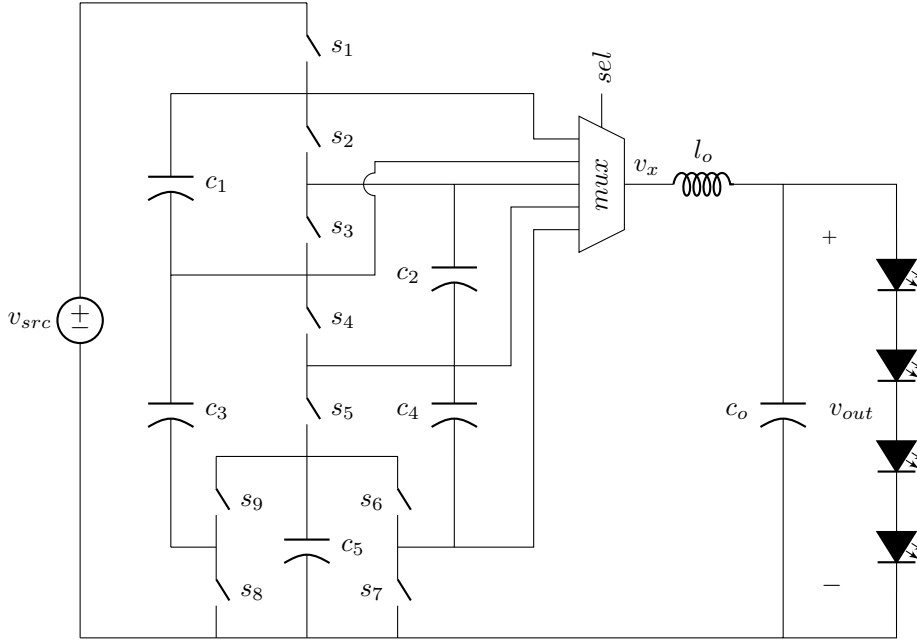


Figure 3.21: 5:1 H-Dickson LED driver with a multiplexer that enables to connect the different switching nodes with the power inductor.

floating *pwm*-nodes and the power inductor [1] as shown in figure 3.21. The multiplexer allows to connect any of available *pwm*-nodes of the converter with the power inductor, in that way the conversion ratio of the converter covers the entire dynamic range of conversion between ground and v_{src} . A detailed description of this architecture can be found in the annex X section Y.

3.4.2 Single-stage *ac-dc*

The H-SCC can be also used in different *ac-dc* applications with few modifications of the original architecture. In *ac-dc* conversion the power converter must be able to convert a substantial range of the mains voltage to keep high power factor (PF) and low total harmonic distortion (THD). One of the most common practices is to use a boost converter to step-up the input voltage above the mains peak voltage, in that way the input voltage is always below the output voltage allowing the converter to operate for the entire range of the input voltage.

A H-SCC converter can also operate as a boost converter just by swapping the input and the output ports, and by adding a multiplexer, the converter

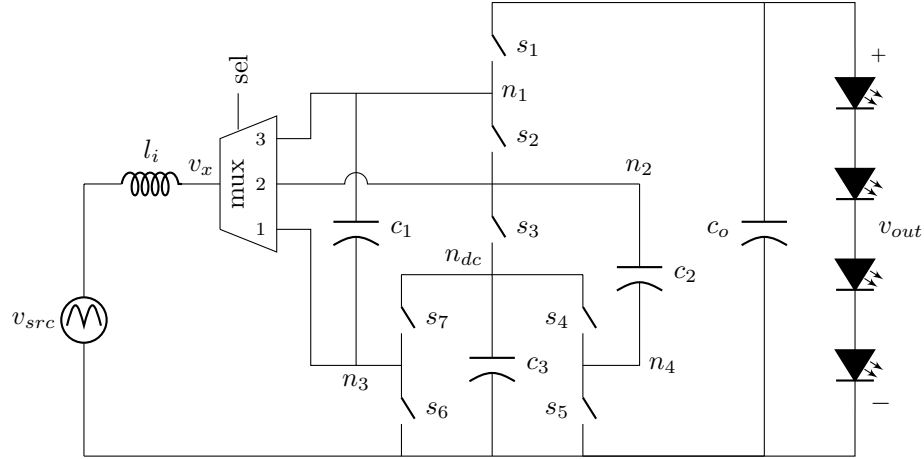


Figure 3.22: H-SCC boost with a 1:3 H-Dickson topology with a multiplexer.

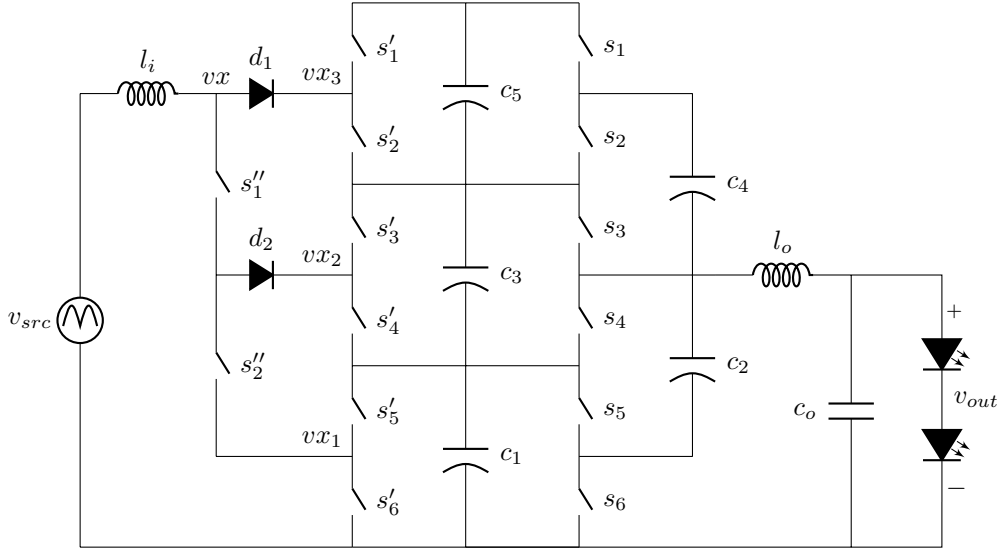
can cover the full range of conversion between 1 to ∞ like a boost converter. Figure 3.22 shows a boost 1:3 H-Dickson converter with a multiplexer.

Table 3.4 presents the conversion ratios associated to each of the nodes. Notice that the conversion ratio for the dc -node (n_{dc}) is not a gain, in reality it is smaller than one, $1/3$ in this case, the same as for the 3:1 H-Dickson. The reason for that is because the voltage at the output (v_{out}) fixes the voltage value at capacitors and pwm -nodes, hence the conversion ratio for dc -node is taken with respect to the output voltage v_{out} and not from the input v_{src} .

Table 3.4: Conversion ratio characteristics at the different nodes of a 1:3 H-Dickson converter.

Node		n_1	n_2	n_3	n_4	n_{dc}^3
Conversion ratio	m_x	$\frac{3}{2+D}$	$\frac{3}{2-D}$	$\frac{3}{D}$	$\frac{3}{1-D}$	$\frac{1}{3}$
Range of conversion		$1 \cdots \frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{3}{2} \cdots 3$	$3 \cdots \infty$	$3 \cdots \infty$	-
Dynamic conversion range	Δm	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	∞	∞	-

This architecture converts rectified mains voltage to a dc voltage and enables current regulation at the load. The circuit operates by sections, in this case 3, in order to cover the full range of the input voltage. Depending on the input

Figure 3.23: Off-line *ac-dc* LED driver using the 3:1 Ladder converter as *dc-link*.

voltage and the bus voltage the multiplexer switch channel accordingly. When the input voltage (v_{src}) is between 0 and $\frac{v_{out}}{3}$, the first channel is selected; when v_{src} is between $\frac{v_{out}}{3}$ and $\frac{2v_{out}}{3}$, the second channel is selected; and when $\frac{2v_{out}}{3}$ and v_{out} , the third channel is selected. The current delivered to the load is regulated using the duty cycle of the SCC stage.

High PF and low THD can be achieved with this topology, but similar to other single-stage PCF converters [6–8, 15] with the storage capacitor connected at the output in parallel to the LEDs, a very large capacitance or a post-regulator is required to guarantee a low voltage ripple at the output.

Further details about the operation of this converter are in annex X, section Y.

3.4.3 Dual-Stage power factor correction

Generally unity power factor LED drivers are implemented in two stages. The input stage is an active PFC converter with near unity PF and low THD, while the second stage is used for *dc-dc* conversion. A similar two stage architecture can be implemented with a single Ladder SCC [3]. The converter is also divided in two stages, which are linked using the *dc*-capacitors of the Ladder converter. The Ladder converter is composed by the stacked switches s and the two legs of capacitors: The odd numbered capacitors form the *dc*-capacitor leg, and the even numbered capacitors form the flying capacitor leg. The inductor l_o is connected to a *pwm*-node adding a *hybrid* output to the Ladder SCC that supplies the LEDs at the output (v_{out}). The load is regulated using the duty cycle of the s switches, like in the previous H-SCC *dc-dc* architectures.

The active power factor correction (PFC) stage is implemented with the *segmented*-boost converter [3] of figure 3.23. The stage is build around the *dc*-capacitor leg of the Ladder converter, and composed by switches s' and s'' , inductor l_i , and diodes d_1 and d_2 . In such two stage approach the bus voltage is equally divided among the *dc*-capacitors.

The voltage available in each of the *dc*-capacitors is used to generate a plurality of floating PWM voltages that can excite the input inductor to operate as a boost converter. Each *dc*-capacitor has a pair of switches in parallel to generate this PWM voltage, thus c_1 has $s'5$ and $s'6$; c_3 has $s'3$ and $s'4$; and c_5 has $s'1$ and $s'2$. The inductor's switching node vx can be connected to any of the floating switching nodes $vx_{1,2,3}$ using the diode-clamped multiplexer formed by switches s'' and diodes d . Further operation details are explained in annex X, section Y.

The different interesting aspects that offer this H-SCC based *ac-dc* converters are:

1. Reduced size at the input inductor since the voltage swing is a fraction of the input voltage.
2. Switches and capacitors are rated at a fraction of the peak input voltage.
3. Only diodes are high voltage (HV) devices blocking at maximum the peak mains voltage. At the same time, they operate at the *ac* source frequency, reducing the switching loss.
4. The voltage at the bus capacitor is reduced, being a fraction of the peak mains voltage, allowing to use low voltage (LV) capacitors that generally feature higher energy densities.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter the hybrid switched capacitor converter (H-SCC) was introduced. First, the main operation and performance characteristics of the SCC were presented, with a special emphasis in the limitations of these converters with respect to load regulation.

Subsequently, the H-SCC was described as a combination of SCC with an inductor. Such *hybrid* combination makes possible to achieve a much better regulation than the pure SCCs. In fact, the regulation enhancements in the H-SCC makes the converter comparable to inductive converters, specially to the buck. For that reason, two idealized metrics were presented in order to compare qualitatively the converters with respect to integration. The metrics showed that using a H-SCC the inductor size and the switching loss can be reduced compared to a buck converter.

Finally, the last section was dedicated to explore the possibilities of the H-SCCs for LED driving. Different driver architectures for both *dc-dc* and *ac-dc* applications were presented, showing that the *hybrid* structure can be used in a broad range of applications, which go beyond LED drivers.

In conclusion, the H-SCC is a new power converter topology composed by a SCC and an inductor. The SCC implements the power train structure where the SCC's conversion ratio adds new variable in the design of the converter. Modifying it allows to adjust the voltages stress at switches, capacitors, and inductors, which favors the integrability of the converter. At the same time inductor extends the regulation margins allowing to be controlled by the duty cycle of the SCC stage.

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Chapter 4

Modeling of Hybrid Switched Capacitor Converters

Switch capacitor converters are circuits composed by a large number of switches and capacitors, and require accurate models to properly design them. SCCs have the peculiarity to be lossy by nature due to the non adiabatic energy transfer between capacitors, phenomenon not present in the inductor based converters. Generally, modeling of SCCs focuses just on the description of the loss mechanisms associated to conduction and capacitor charge transfer, neglecting other sources of loss such as driving and switching loss. These loss mechanisms are proportional to the output current, thus are normally modeled with resistor in the well known output impedance model.

This chapter presents a new methodology to model a SCC when any of the nodes in the converter are loaded. The proposed methodology also include the effects of PWM control, thus accurately predicting the equivalent internal impedance and the converter conversion ratio.

The chapter is divided in two sections, the first section is devoted to the study and model a SCC when loaded from a *pwm*-node, reviewing and extending the charge flow analysis [4, 7] to include two new aspects that arise with the proposed hybrid converter. First, any of the nodes of the converter are considered as possible outputs that can be loaded. Second, the analysis includes the effects of duty cycle (PWM) in any of the operation regimes of the converter, and this alters the conversion ratio and the internal equivalent impedance. The previous models are discussed, and the limiting are factors identifying. Subsequently the charge flow analysis is reformulated using a new approach based on current-loaded outputs that leads a better accuracy and covers the analysis of both SCC and H-SCC. The new model is compared to circuit simulations and experimental data.

The second section is devoted to the study of multiple loaded H-SCC. Based

on the well-known output impedance model, a new circuit representation for converters with multiple current-loaded outputs is presented. The related characterization methodology is developed to determine the parameters of said new model based on the current-loaded analysis presented in the first section. The resulting model is validated against simulation and experimental data.

4.1 Single Output Converters

Switched Capacitor Converters has been always treated as a two-port converter with single input and a single output as shown in Fig.4.1. The input port is connected to a voltage source and the output port feeds the load. The SCC provides between input, v_i , and output, v_o , a voltage conversion, m , that steps up, steps down or/and inverts the polarity of the input voltage. Up to present all the circuit theory devoted SCCs is valid only for the two-port configuration, therefore this section is dedicated to revisit the classical concepts of single output SCC and to introduce new ones that enable to study the H-SCC.

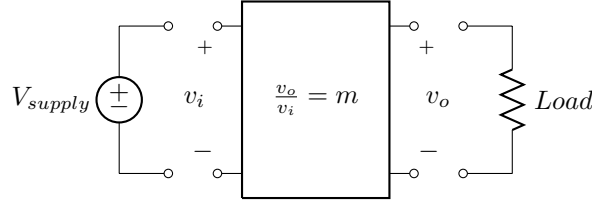


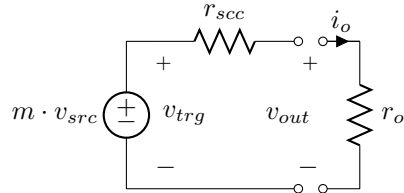
Figure 4.1: General two port configuration of a Switched Capacitor Converter.

4.1.1 The Output Impedance Model

The behavior of SSCs is modeled with the well-known output impedance model [5, 6] that is composed of a controlled voltage source and equivalent resistance r_{scc} , as shown in figure 4.2. The output voltage provided by the converter under no-load conditions is defined as *target voltage* (v_{trg}). It is modeled with the controlled voltage source, being the value of voltage supply v_{src} multiplied by the conversion ratio m , thus

$$v_{trg} = m \cdot v_{src}. \quad (4.1)$$

Figure 4.2: Output impedance model of a switched capacitor converter.



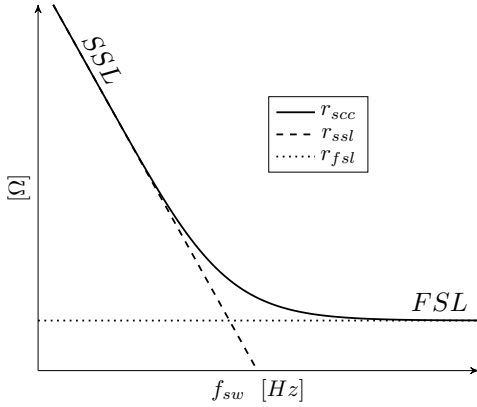


Figure 4.3: SCC Equivalent output resistance r_{scc} as function of the frequency and the two asymptotic limits: *Slow Switching Limit* (SSL) and *Fast Switching Limit* (FSL).

When loaded, the voltage droop across r_{scc} accounts for the loss produced in the converter. In fact, the loss are proportional to the output current i_o , that is why they are represented with a resistor. Hence the output voltage of the converter can be obtained as

$$v_{out} = m \cdot v_{src} - i_o \cdot r_{scc}. \quad (4.2)$$

Up to day, there are two different methodologies to infer the equivalent output resistance r_{scc} , plotted in 4.3. On the one hand, S. Ben-Yaakov [1–3] has claimed a generalized methodology based on the analytical solution of each of the different R-C transient circuits of the converter, reducing all of them to a single transient solution. The methodology achieves a high accuracy, but yields to a set of none linear equations and high complexity for the analysis of advanced architectures.

On the other hand, M. Makowski and D. Maksimovic [4] presented a methodology based on the analysis of the charge flow between capacitors in steady-state. The methodology is simple to apply and yields with a set of linear expressions, being them easy to operate for further analysis of the converters. Based on the charge flow analysis, M. Seeman [7] developed different metrics allowing to compare performances between capacitive and inductive converters.

Although both methodologies are valid in the modeling of SCCs, none of them has been used to model the effects of a loaded *pwm*-node, which is fundamental to study the H-SCC. Nevertheless the charge flow analysis has a more clean and simplified way of describing the loss mechanism, based on the hypothesis that a SCC in steady-state has to have null charge balance in all the capacitors. That is why this methodology has been chosen in to model the H-SCC, although few modeling hypothesis have been reviewed and modified according to the operation of the new *hybrid* switched capacitor converter.

As aforementioned r_{scc} accounts for the loss when the converter is loaded. All losses in the converter are, in fact, dissipated in the resistive elements of the converter: *on*-resistance r_{on} of the switches and equivalent series resistance r_{esr} of the capacitors, thus all losses represented by r_{scc} are conduction losses.

Nevertheless, the origin and magnitude of the losses depends on the operation region of the converter, which is function of the switching frequency as shown in the plot of Figure 4.3.

There are two well-defined operation regimes of the converter: the *Slow Switching Limit* (SSL) and the *Fast Switching Limit* (FSL), and each of the regime defines an asymptotic limit of the r_{sc} curve. In SSL, the converter operates at a switching frequency f_{sw} much lower than the time constant τ of the converter, thereby allowing the full charge and discharge of the capacitors. The losses are then determined by the charge transfer between capacitors, but dissipated in the resistive paths of the converter mainly in switch r_{on} . Therefore reducing the switch resistance will not reduce the losses, instead will produce sharper discharge currents in the switches producing more EMI.

In FSL, the converter operates with a switching frequency much higher than the time constant of the converter, limiting the charge and discharge transient times of the capacitors. Conduction losses due to the parasitic resistive elements (r_{on} , c_{esr}) therefore dominate.

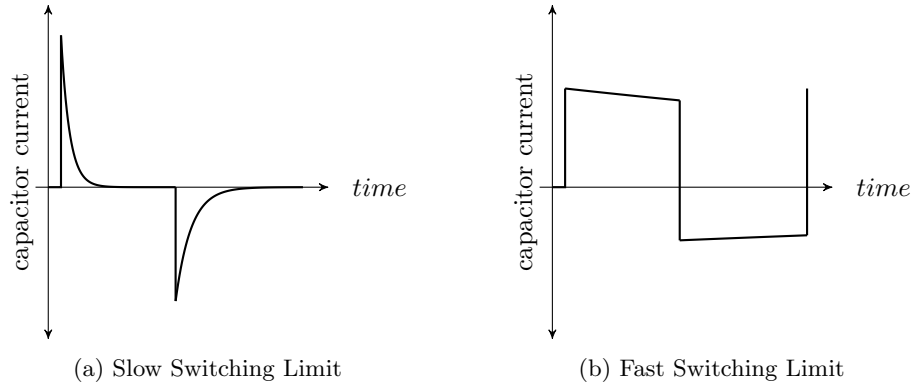


Figure 4.4: Current waveforms through the capacitors in each of the two regimes of operation.

4.1.2 Revising the charge flow analysis

The charge flow analysis method is based on charge conservation in the capacitors during a switching period when the converter is in steady state [4]. Based on the charge flow of the capacitors, the converter is studied in two well-defined operating regimes: the Slow Switching Limit (SSL) and the Fast Switching Limit (FSL). In SSL, the converter operates at a frequency much lower than the time constant of the converter, thereby allowing the full charge and discharge of the capacitors. The losses are then dominated by the charge transfer between capacitors. In FSL, the converter operates with a switching frequency much higher than the time constant of the converter, limiting the charge and discharge transient times of the capacitors. Conduction losses due to the parasitic

resistive elements (r_{on} , c_{esr}) therefore dominate.

4.1.3 Load Model: Voltage Sink versus Current Sink

The charge flow method [4] makes some assumptions in order to model the SCC. First, the load is modeled as an ideal voltage source since it is normally connected to the *dc*-output in parallel with a large capacitor. This ignores the contribution of the output capacitor to the equivalent resistance of the model. Second, the model only considers the *dc*-output as the single load point of the converter, imposing a unique output to the converter. Third, the phase time ratio is not included in the computation of the capacitor charge flow. Consequently, the modulation of the switching period is assumed to have no influence on the amount of charge flowing in the capacitors. These simplifications reduce the usability of the model to the specific application of dc-to-dc conversion, and at the same time limit the flexibility to model different concepts of the SCC, such as the aforementioned hybrid concept. In order to overcome these limitations, the presented methodology makes two different assumptions: First, any of the converter nodes can be loaded. Second, the load is assumed to be a constant current source with a value equal to the average load current.

4.1.4 Re-formulating the charge flow analysis

The SSL impedance encompasses the losses produced in the charge transfer from capacitor to capacitor and from voltage supply to capacitor; therefore, for this analysis none of the parasitic resistances are taken into account. As mentioned before, the classical approach to study SCCs is to assume an infinitely large output capacitance connected to a *dc*-node, an approach that has two limitations:

1. Produces inaccuracies when the output capacitor is comparable in value to the flying capacitors.
2. Cannot be used for a converter with a load connected to one of the internal nodes.

In the original charge flow analysis of the SSL impedance [4], it is assumed that all of the pumped charge to the load is only supplied by a *dc*-capacitor without any *pumping* contribution from the flying capacitors, as shown in figure 4.5. However, for a finite value of the output capacitor, or for converters loaded from an internal node, all of the capacitors contribute to pumping charge to the load [?], as shown in figure 4.6. The original analysis omitted the *pumped* charge contribution of the flying capacitors, thereby overestimating the *redis-tributed* charge, resulting in an overestimation of the SSL impedance.

In order to overcome the restrictions of the original charge flow methodology, the proposed methodology models the load as a current sink instead of a voltage

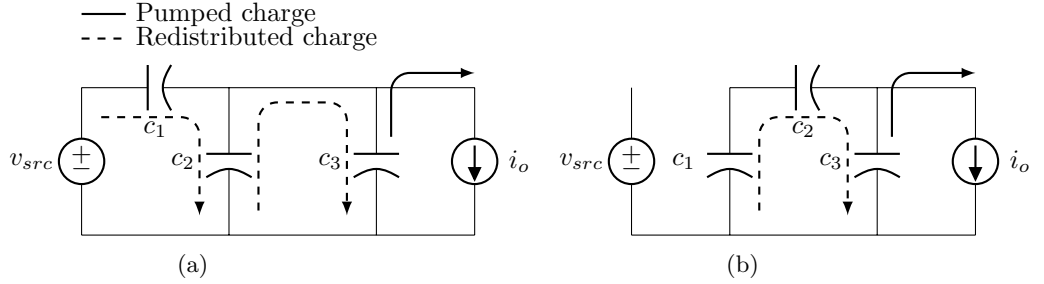


Figure 4.5: Charge flows in a Dickson 3:1 converter when loaded at a *dc*-node with a large capacitor during the two switching phases. The solid line marks the pumped charge to the load and the dashed lines the possible paths of the redistributed charge.

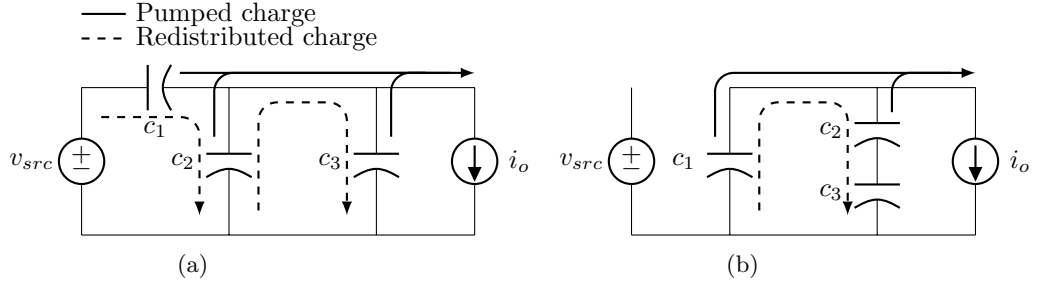


Figure 4.6: Charge flows in a Dickson 3:1 converter when loaded at one of the *pwm*-nodes during the two switching phases. The *solid* lines marks the pumped charge paths to the load and the *dashed* lines the possible paths of the redistributed charge.

sink. This slight modification has a relevant change in the modeling of the converter, adding three important aspects to the modeling:

1. Connect the load to any of the nodes of the converter, since it does not fix any voltage at the connected node.
2. Include the *dc*-capacitors in the analysis, since the voltage across the sink is given by the capacitor and not longer by the previous used voltage sink.
3. Estimate the delivered charge to the load for each of the circuit modes of the converter, since the current sink has a value of the averaged output current.

Slow Switching Limit

A charge multiplier vector \mathbf{a} is obtained for all of the operation modes, also known as phases, of the converter. The charge multiplier vector corresponds

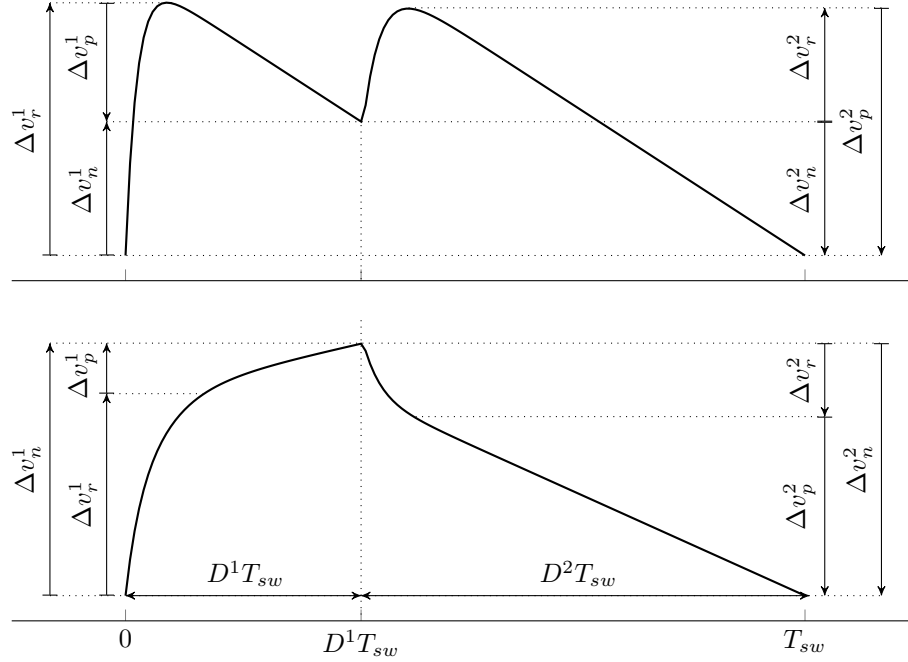


Figure 4.7: The two possible voltage waveforms that show the capacitors in a SCC. Ripples are associated with the charge flow mechanisms: top) unipolar capacitor discharge (DC capacitor); bottom) bipolar capacitor discharge (flying capacitor).

to the charge flowing in every individual capacitor or source, normalized with respect to the total output charge q_{out} , as described in [4, 7]. Owing to the fact that load current i_o is assumed constant, the output charge of the j -phase can be expressed as the ratio of the phase duration D^j to the total switching period T_{sw} , and its contribution to the total output charge q_{out} is

$$q_{out}^j = i_o T_{sw} D^j = D^j q_{out}. \quad (4.3)$$

Each charge flow element $a(D^j)_i^j$ is a function of the phase duration D^j and corresponds to the total net charge circulating in the i -th capacitor c_i during the j -th phase, and can be used to compute the *net* voltage vn variation at the end of the j -th phase period:

$$\Delta vn_i^j = \frac{a_i^j}{c_i} q_{out}. \quad (4.4)$$

The current flowing through the i -th capacitor can be assumed to be constant, since the load has been modeled as a constant current skin. Hence the current in the i -th capacitor will a Due to the approximation of constant load

current, it can be assumed that in the i -th capacitor the charge to the load is pumped by a constant current i_i .

Hence the pumped voltage vp variation during the j -th phase of the total switching period T_{sw} can be simply computed as

$$\Delta vp_i^j = \frac{i_i^j}{c_i} T_{sw} D^j = \frac{a_i^j}{c_i} q_{out}. \quad (4.5)$$

where b_i^j is an equivalent impedance that depends on capacitor values and the circuit configuration during the j -th phase. It is easily derived through basic circuit analysis.

As mentioned before, one part of the delta voltage Δvp_i^j is due to the charge redistribution and the other is due to the charge pumping. Both can be easily identified from the voltage waveforms that are present on the capacitors, shown in Figure 4.7. From the graph, the voltage ripple associated with the redistributed charge Δvr can be defined as

$$\Delta vr_i^j = v_{n_i}^j + v_{p_i}^j. \quad (4.6)$$

The voltage variation due to the charge *redistribution* Δvr is obtained by substituting 4.4 and 4.5 into 4.6, and this yields

$$\Delta vr_i^j = \frac{q_{out}}{c_i} [a_i^j - D^j b_i^j]. \quad (4.7)$$

The energy lost in the i -th capacitor can be calculated from 4.7 as

$$E_i^j = \frac{1}{2} (\Delta vr_i^j)^2 C_i = \frac{1}{2} \frac{q_{out}^2}{c_i^2} [a_i^j - D^j b_i^j]^2 c_i = \frac{1}{2} \frac{q_{out}^2}{c_i} [a_i^j - D^j b_i^j]^2. \quad (4.8)$$

The total power loss in the circuit is the sum of the losses in all of the capacitors during each phase multiplied by the switching frequency f_{sw} . This yields

$$P_{ssl} = \frac{f_{sw} q_{out}^2}{2} \sum_{i=1}^{caps.} \sum_{j=1}^{phases} \frac{1}{c_i} [a_i^j - D^j b_i^j]^2. \quad (4.9)$$

The losses can be expressed as the output SSL impedance by dividing 4.9 by the square of the output current as

$$r_{ssl} = \frac{P_{ssl}}{i_o^2} = \frac{P_{ssl}}{(f_{sw} q_{out})^2} = \frac{1}{2 f_{sw}} \sum_{i=1}^{caps.} \sum_{j=1}^{phases} \frac{1}{c_i} [a_i^j - D^j b_i^j]^2. \quad (4.10)$$

The *target voltage* v_{trg} of the converter is defined as the average output voltage under no load condition, and its relationship with the input voltage v_{src} is equal to the conversion ratio of the converter m used in the model. The conversion ratio of the converter is determined by the converter topology, and it is obtained from

$$m(D^j) = \frac{v_{trg}}{V_{src}} = \sum_{j=1}^{phases} a_{in}^j. \quad (4.11)$$

where a_{in} corresponds to the input voltage source term of the charge vector multiplier \mathbf{a} .

Fast Switching Limit

The fast switching limit (FSL) impedance accounts for losses produced in the parasitic resistive elements in the circuit composed by the *on*-resistance of the switches and the Equivalent Series Resistance (ESR) of the capacitors. Since this operation limit is characterized by a constant current flow in the capacitors, the FSL impedance may be calculated as in [7], except that the charge flow vectors are now functions of the phase ratio durations D^j , as previously mentioned. As outlined in [7], the charge flow through the parasitic element vectors \mathbf{ar} with resistance value r can be derived using the charge flow vectors \mathbf{a} calculated previously. We obtain:

$$r_{fsl} = \sum_{i=1}^{elm. phases} \sum_{j=1} \frac{r_i}{D^j} a_{i,j}^2. \quad (4.12)$$

Equivalent Switched Capacitor Converter Resistance

The best approximation for any arbitrary switching frequency f_{sw} , suggested in [? ?], to obtain the total output impedance is given by

$$r_{scc} \approx \sqrt{r_{ssl}^2 + r_{fsl}^2}. \quad (4.13)$$

4.1.5 Sensitivity of the inductor current ripple

4.2 Multiple Output Converters

4.2.1 The Output Trans-Resistance Model

4.2.2 Obtaining the Trans-Resistance parameters with the charge flow analysis

Chapter 5

Optimization and Design of Hybrid-Switched Capacitor Converters

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Study in the correlation of the design parameters and the Output Impedance

5.3 Encapsulating the Switches and Capacitors area breakdown in an optimization procedure

5.4 Insights towards a complete optimization

Chapter 6

Dynamic Study of Hybrid-Switched Capacitor Converters

6.1 Small Signal Analysis

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