



Modules for Maturing HVDC Electric Transmission Knowledge

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HVDC-Learn Short Course

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Module 1c: Power Electronics 101

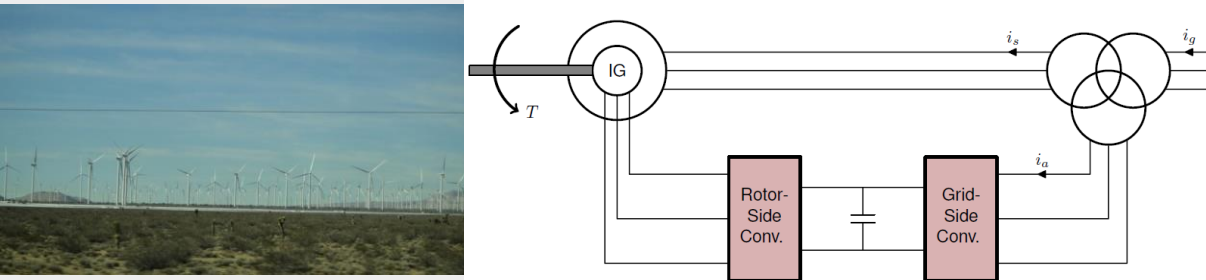
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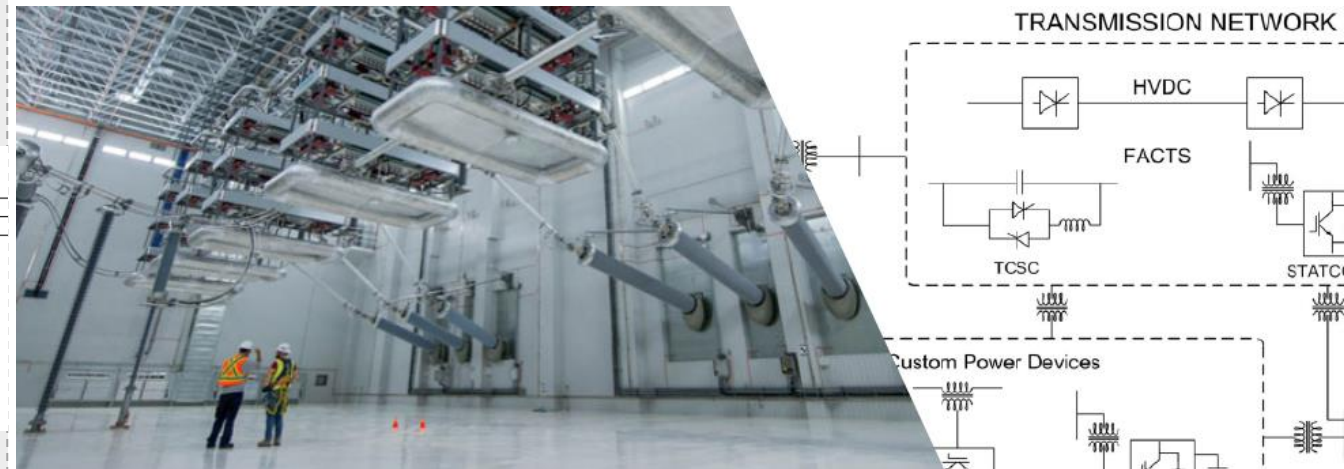
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Power Electronics Interfaces

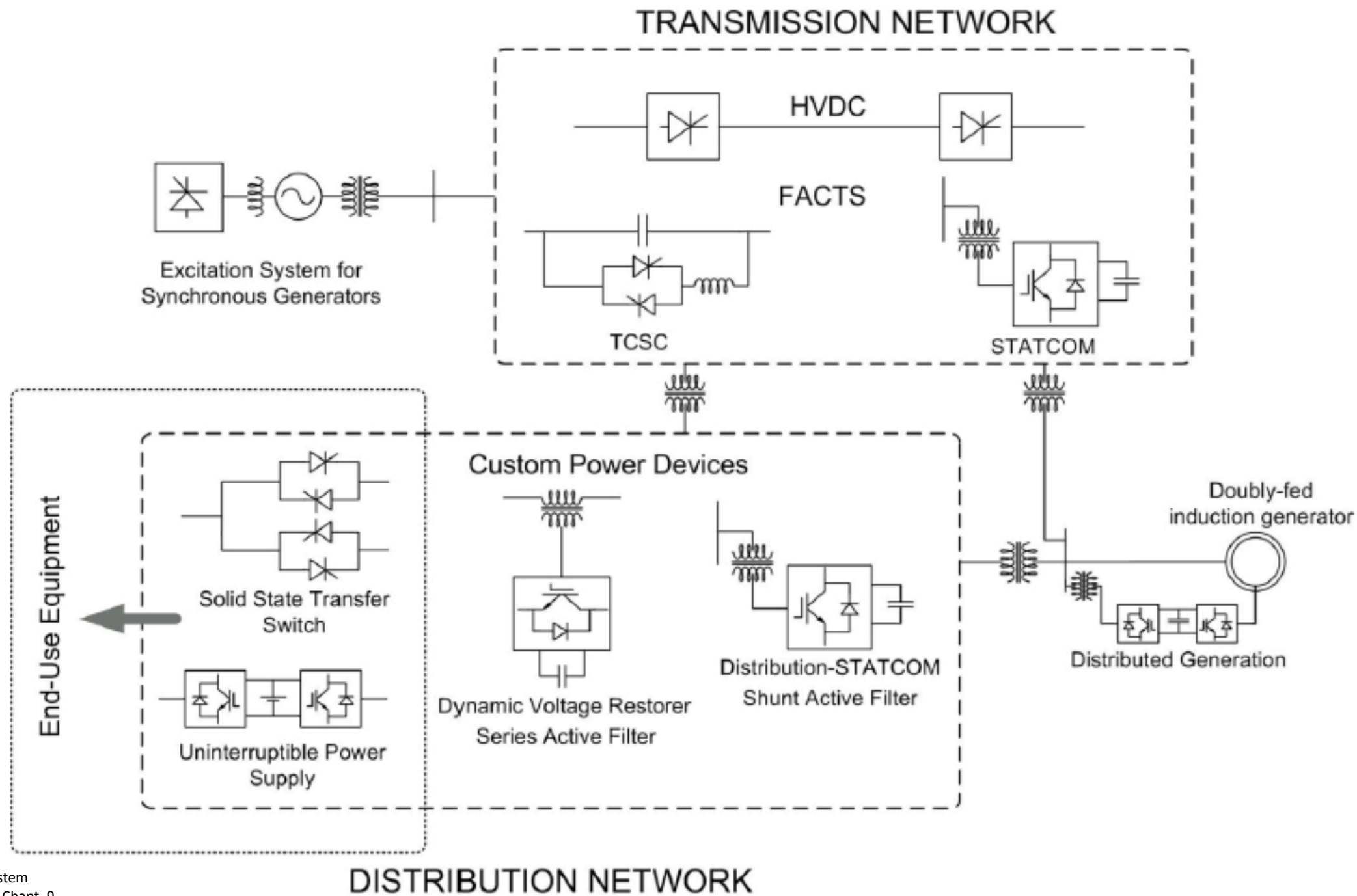
- Most generation forms involve some sort of electronic circuits.
 - Synchronous generators:
Alternator-supplied rectifier excitation systems, e.g., AC1C
Static excitation systems, e.g., ST1C. *
 - Inverter-based resources (IBRs): solar and most wind, EV chargers, BESS.



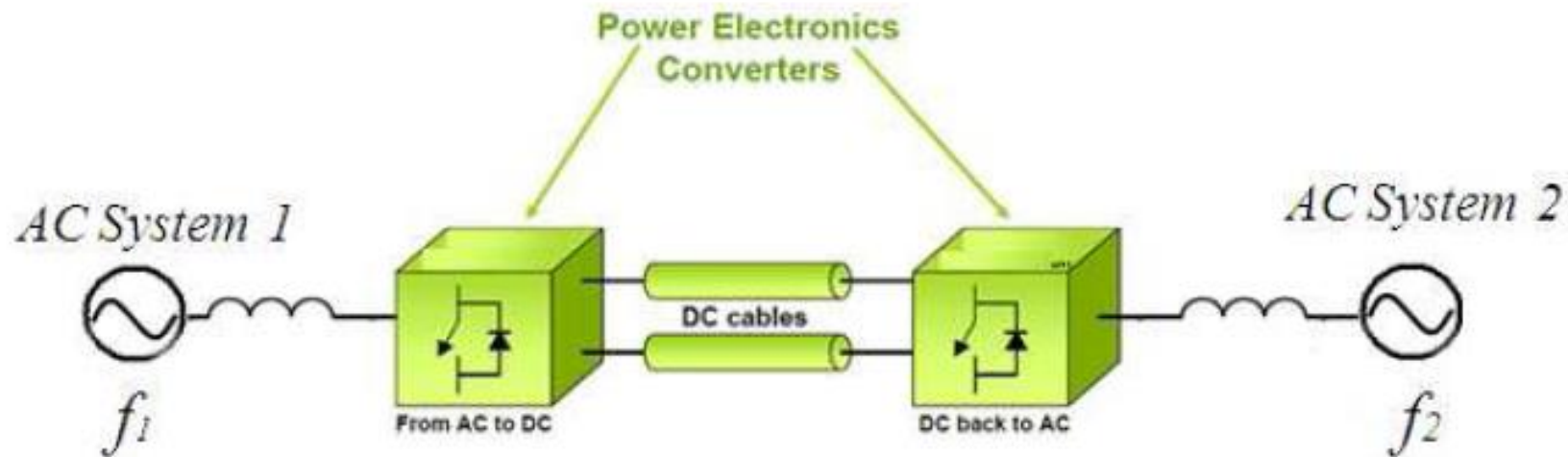
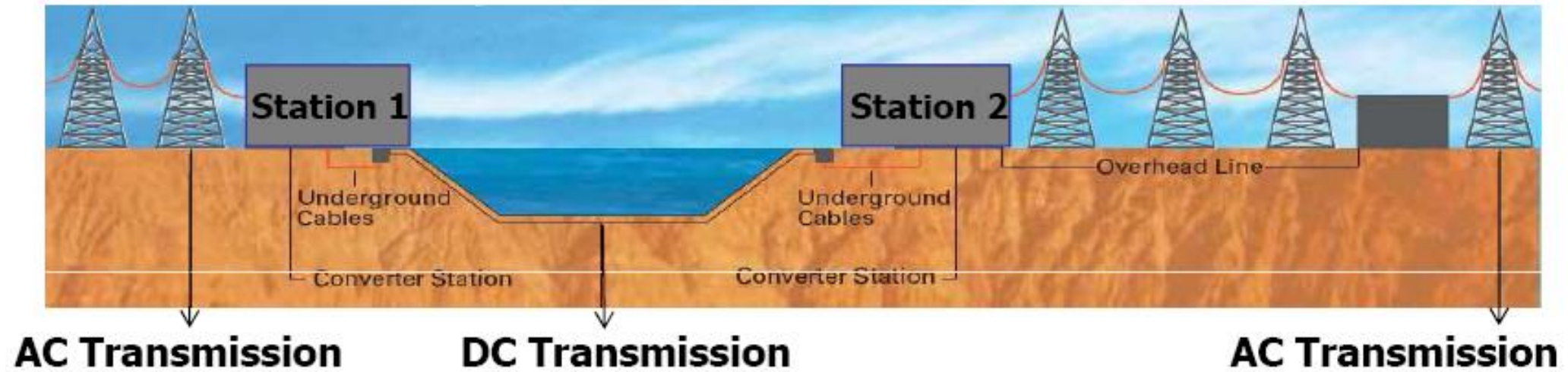
- Power electronics is the heart of many grid-enhancing technologies (GET)
 - FACTS (flexible AC transmission systems)
 - HVDC



- Power electronics discusses how one form of power is converted to another; this could involve changes in voltage magnitude, shape, frequency, and power quality.



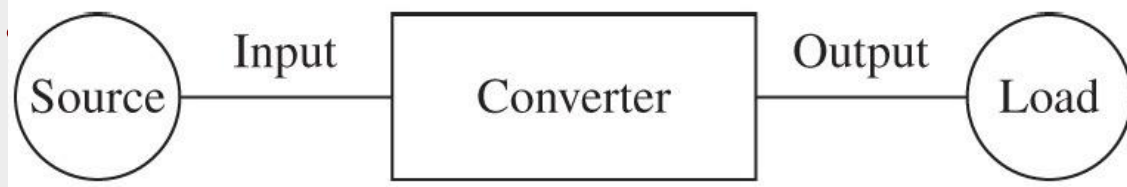
Power Electronics for HVDC Systems



EPRI HVDC-FACTS Conference in 2013



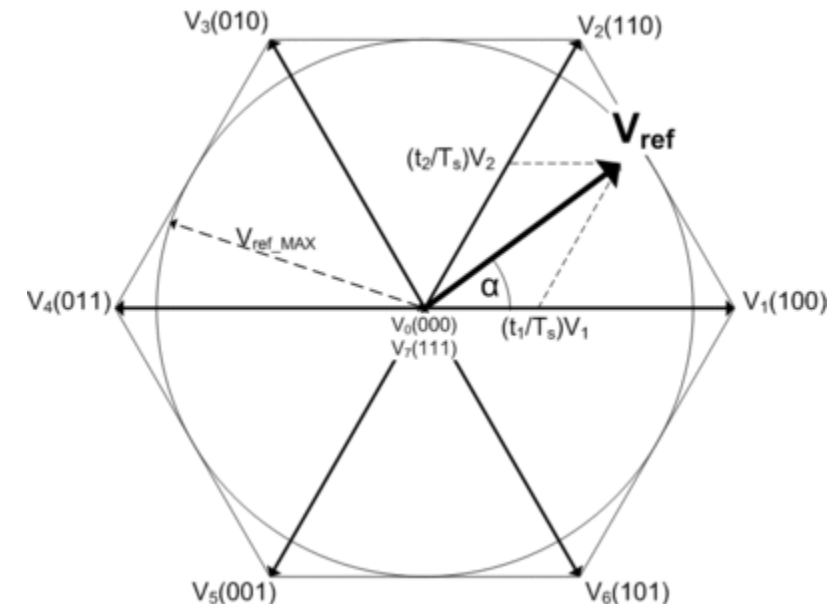
Converters



- DC-DC Conversion
 - Change voltage magnitude
- AC-DC Rectification
 - Produce dc voltage from an ac source
- DC-AC Inversion
 - Produce a sinusoidal voltage with controllable magnitude and frequency
- AC-AC Conversion
 - Change voltage magnitude and frequency
- There are also two main technologies:
 - LCC
 - VSC
 - This module talks about switching power converters, VSC,

Topics

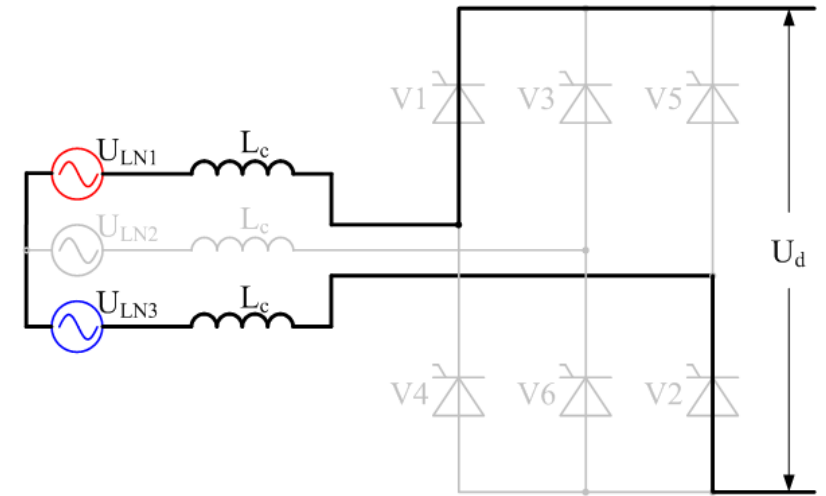
- DC-DC converter basics
- Transitioning to a DC-AC converter
- Modulation methods



Commutation in Converters

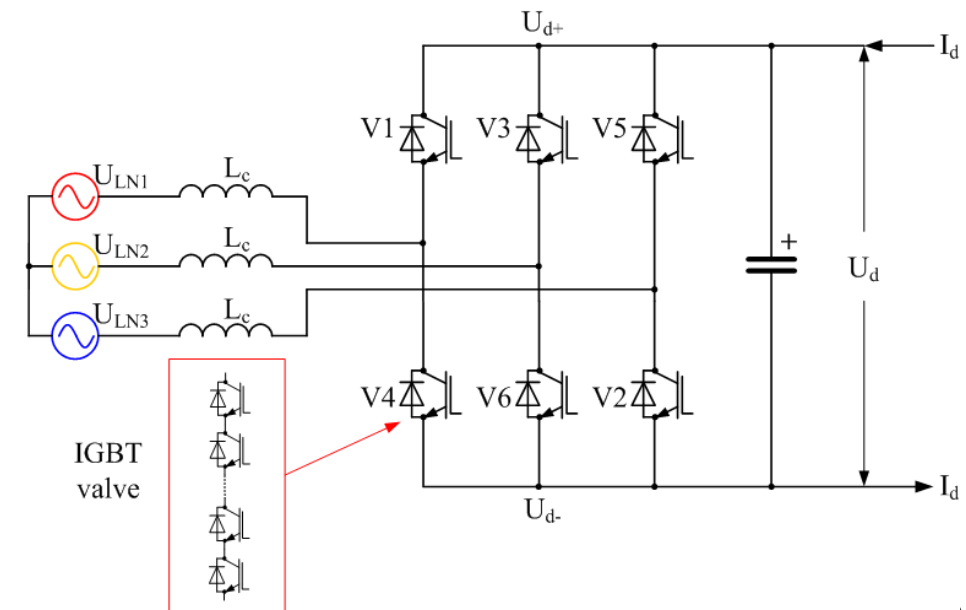
- **Line commutated (naturally commutated)**

- The AC system dictates the process, e.g., thyristors turn off when the current drops to zero and turn on when forward biased and gate signal is present.
- Always consumes reactive power Q .
- Earlier generation of HVDC and FACT, but still an active technology due to higher ratings.



- **Forced commutated (self commutated)**

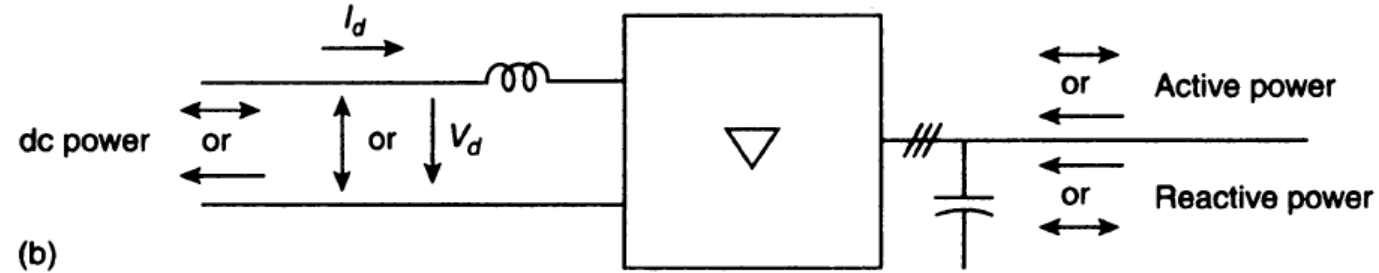
- The gate circuitry determines both turn on and off processes--fully controllable switches
- Can consume or generate reactive power Q .
- This course focuses on forced commutated converters.



Classification of Converters

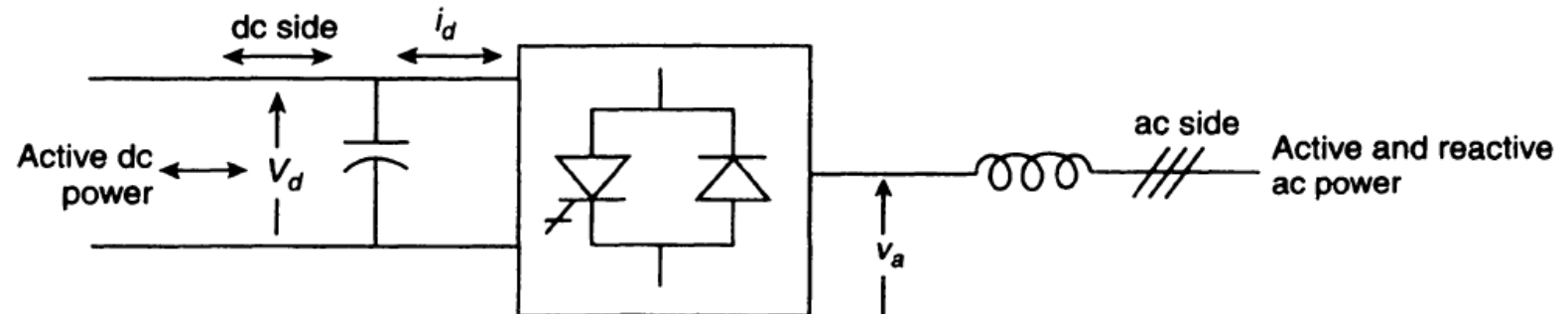
- **Based on DC-Side Source Type**

- Current-Sourced Converter (CSC)

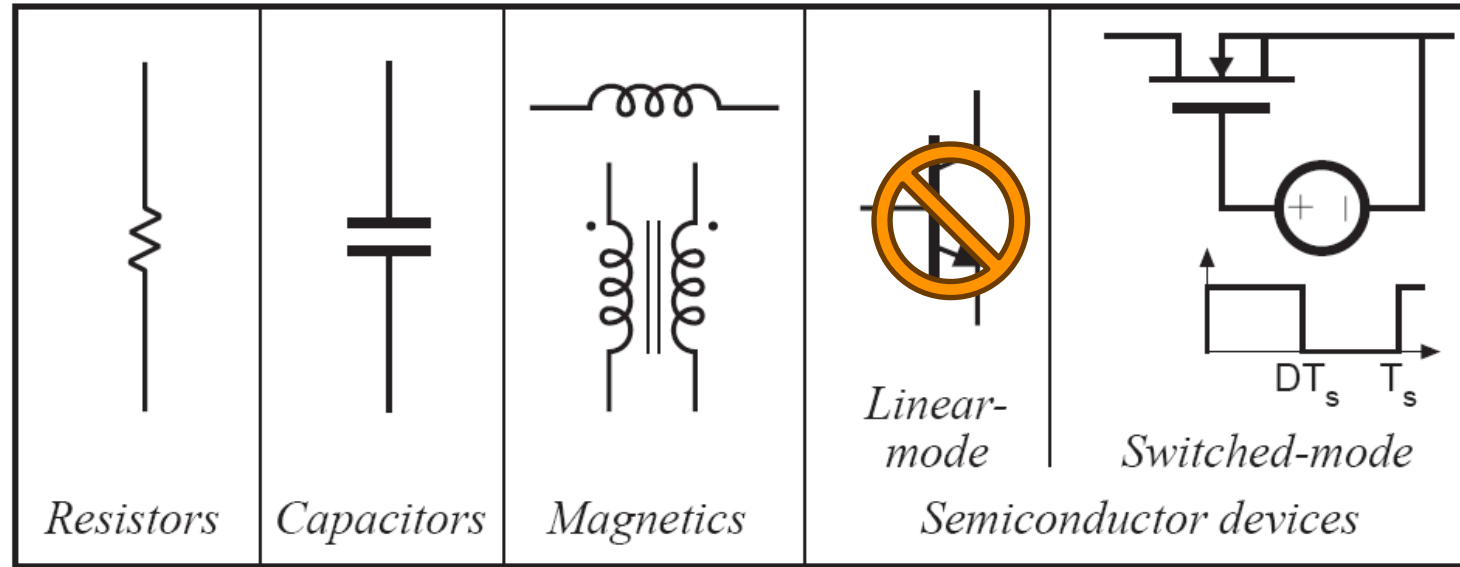


- Voltage-Sourced Converter (VSC)

- (spelling per Dennis Woodford of Electranix)

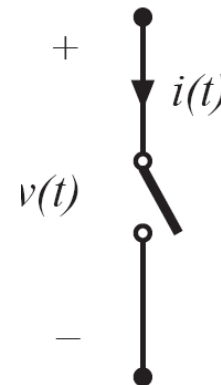


How to Build a Converter? Available Elements



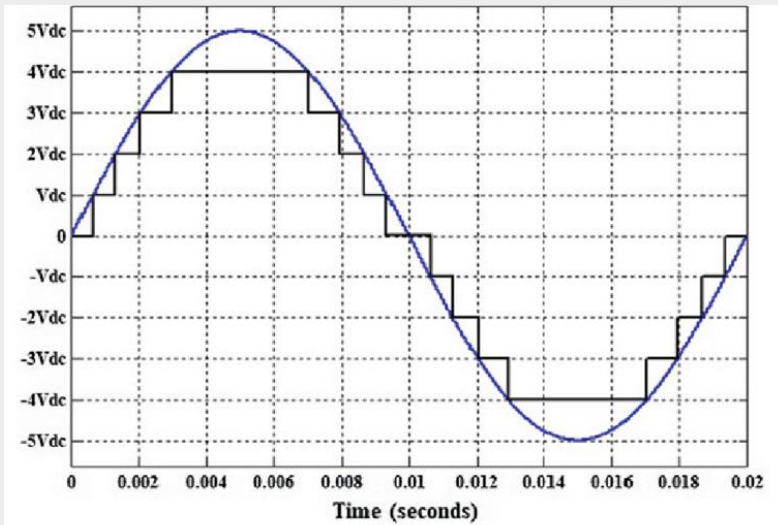
- **Considerations:**

- Efficiency
 - Ideal switch: $p(t) = 0$
- Size and weight
- Power quality

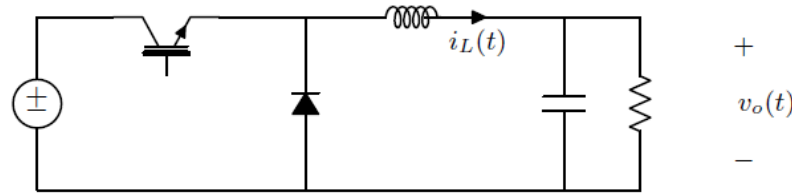


Our Approach to Studying DC-AC Conversion

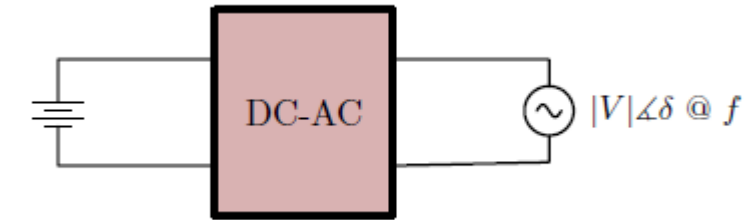
- See a sine wave as a sequence of DC values



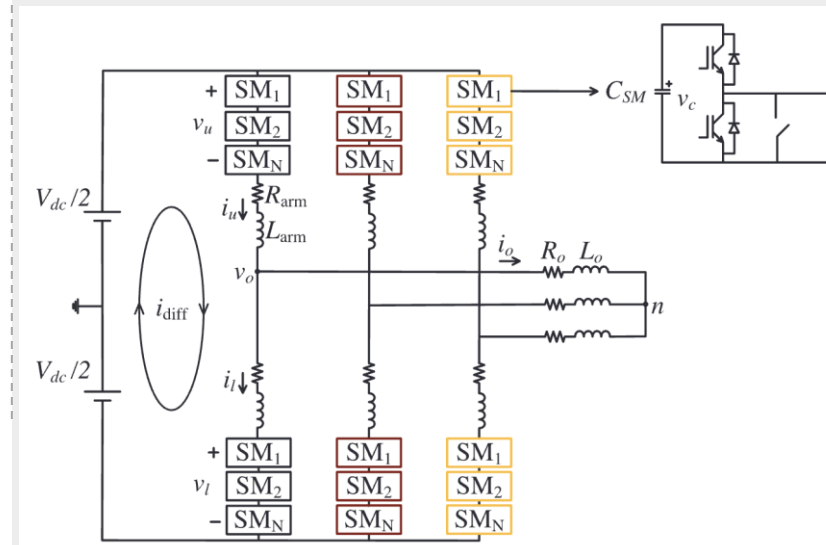
- Learn DC-DC Conversion



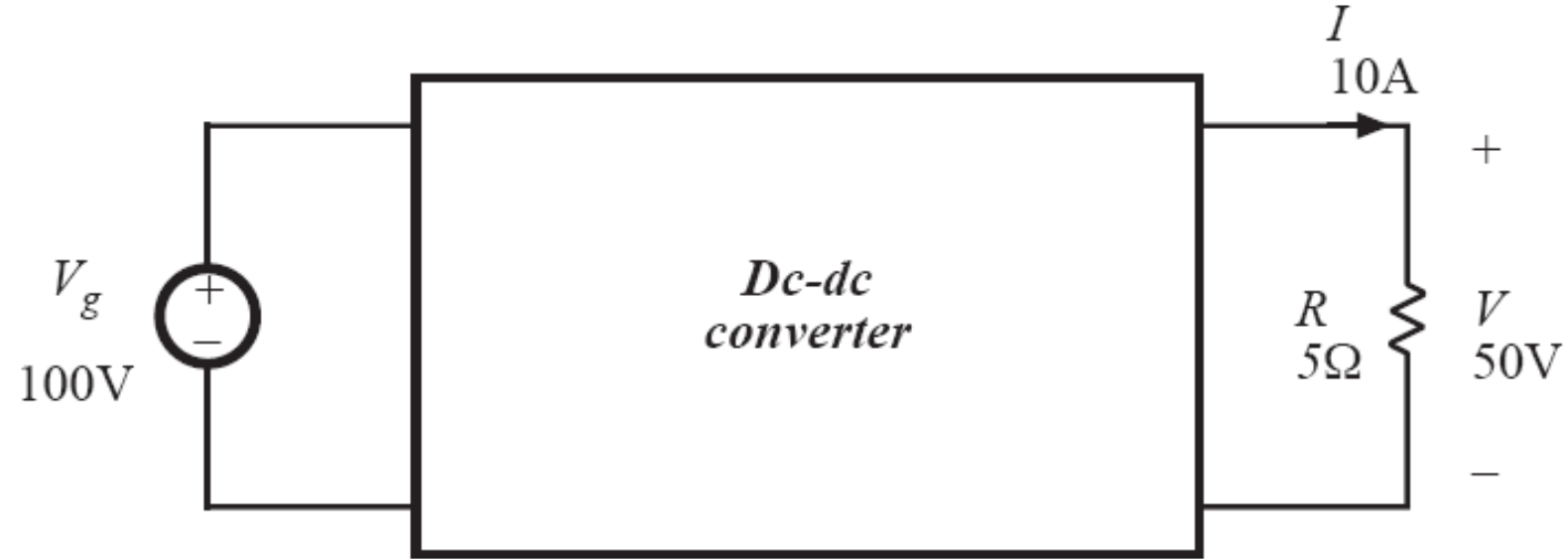
- Extend to DC-(variable dc(t)), i.e., DC-AC conversion.



- The next two modules will discuss VSCs and MMCs in details.



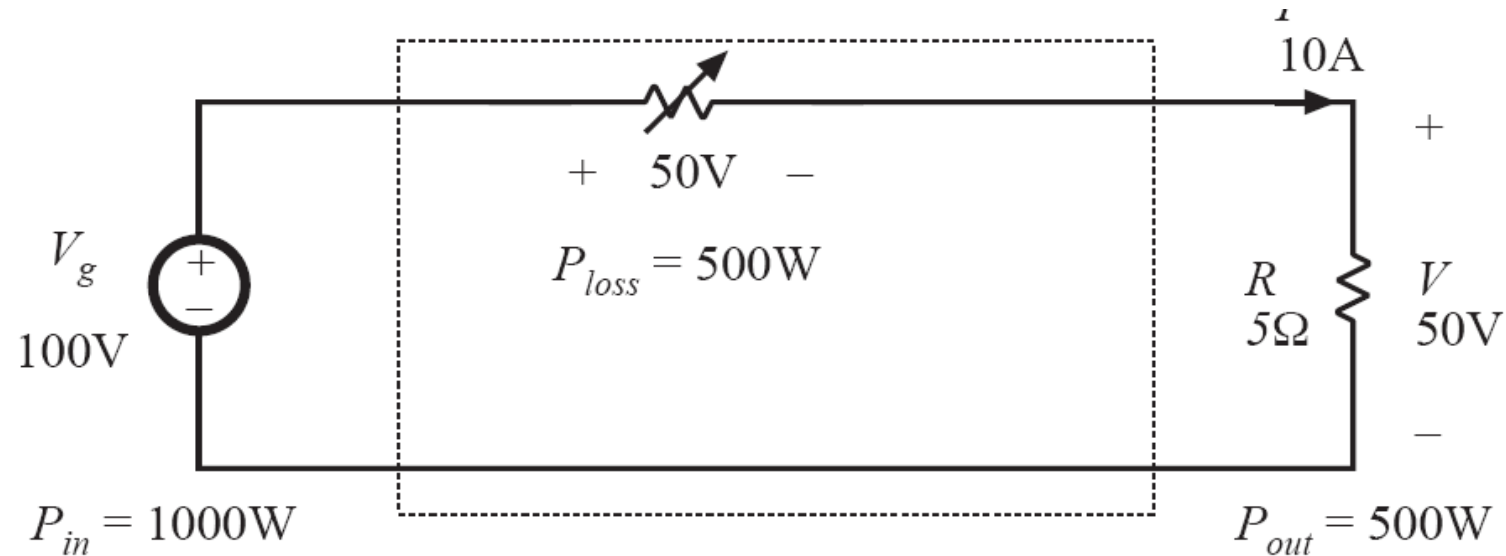
DC-DC Converter Example



- **Input: 100 V**
- **Output: 50 V, 10 A, 500 W**

Realization of a DC-DC Converter: Solution #1

- **Resistive Voltage Divider**

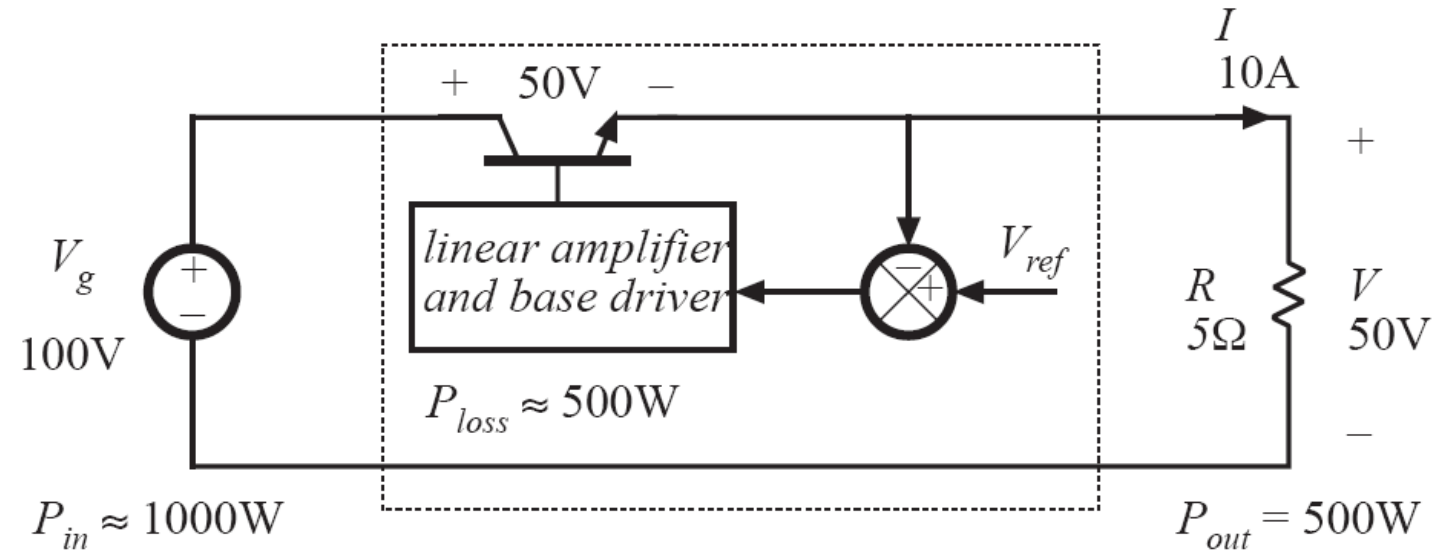


- **Shortcomings:**

- Efficiency is awfully low (and variable)
- Output voltage can not be easily changed or regulated.
- Loading of output will change the voltage.

Realization of a DC-DC Converter: Solution #2

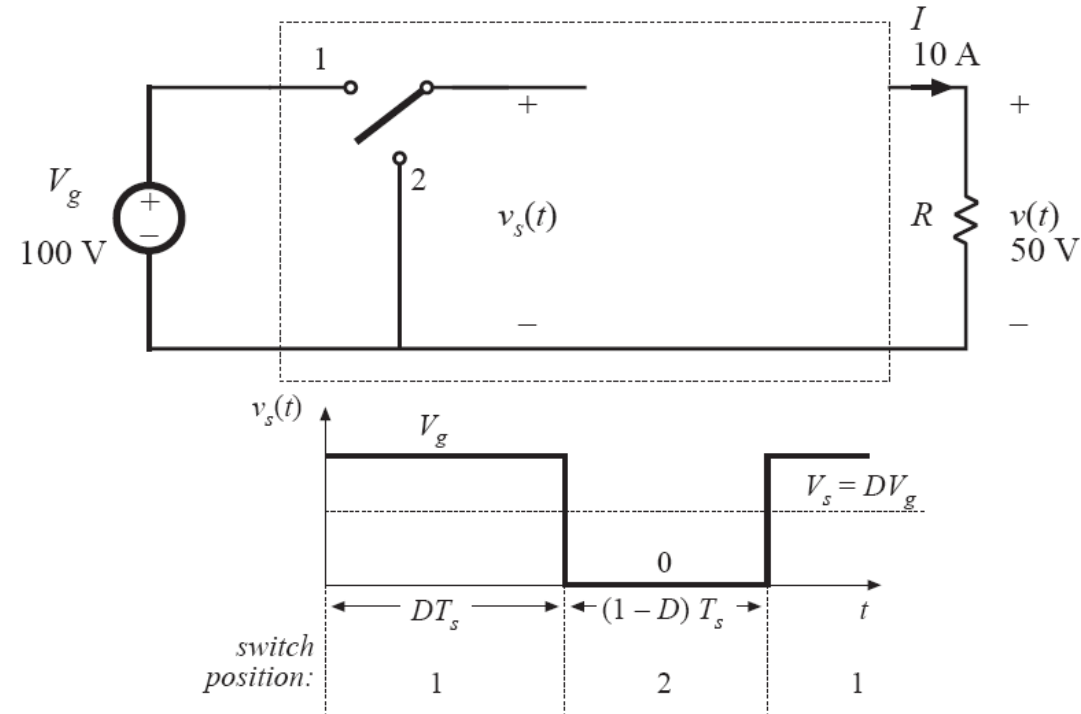
- Transistor in Active Region



- Shortcomings:
 - Efficiency is awfully low (and variable)
- Solved these shortcomings of the previous solution:
 - Output voltage can not be easily changed or regulated - SOLVED
 - Loading of output will change the voltage - SOLVED

Realization of a DC-DC Converter: Solution #3

- **Power Electronics**



- **Shortcoming**

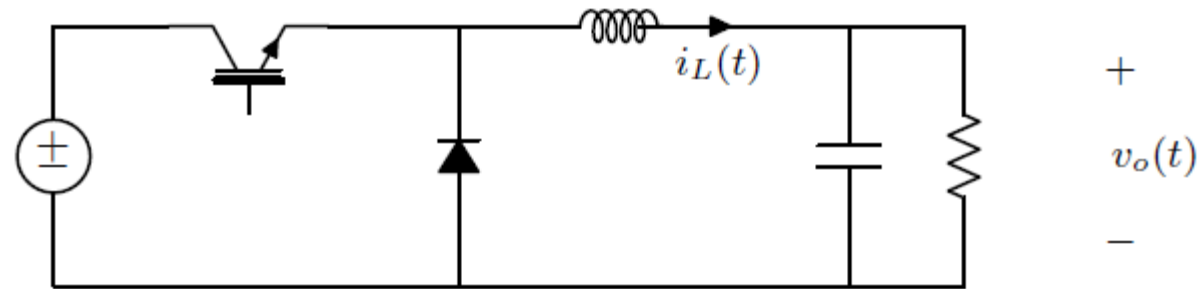
- Chopped voltage, need to look at the average value

- **Solved these shortcomings of the previous solution:**

- Efficiency is awfully low (and variable) - SOLVED
- Output voltage can not be easily changed or regulated - SOLVED
- Loading of output will change the voltage - SOLVED

Recap

- Let's add a low-pass filter: an LC branch.
- While at it, let's also add a diode. Why?

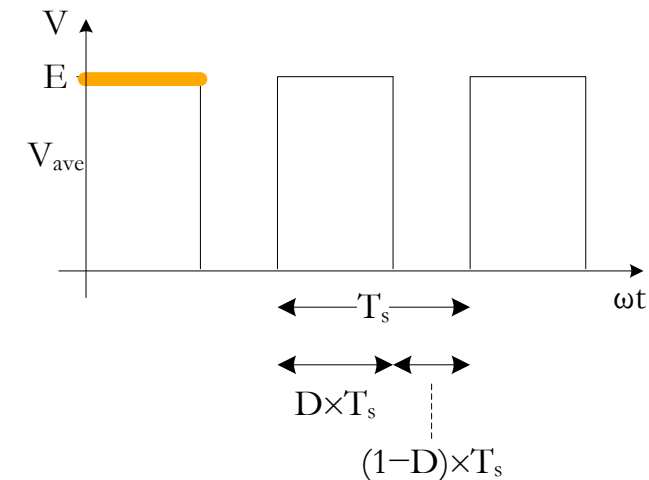
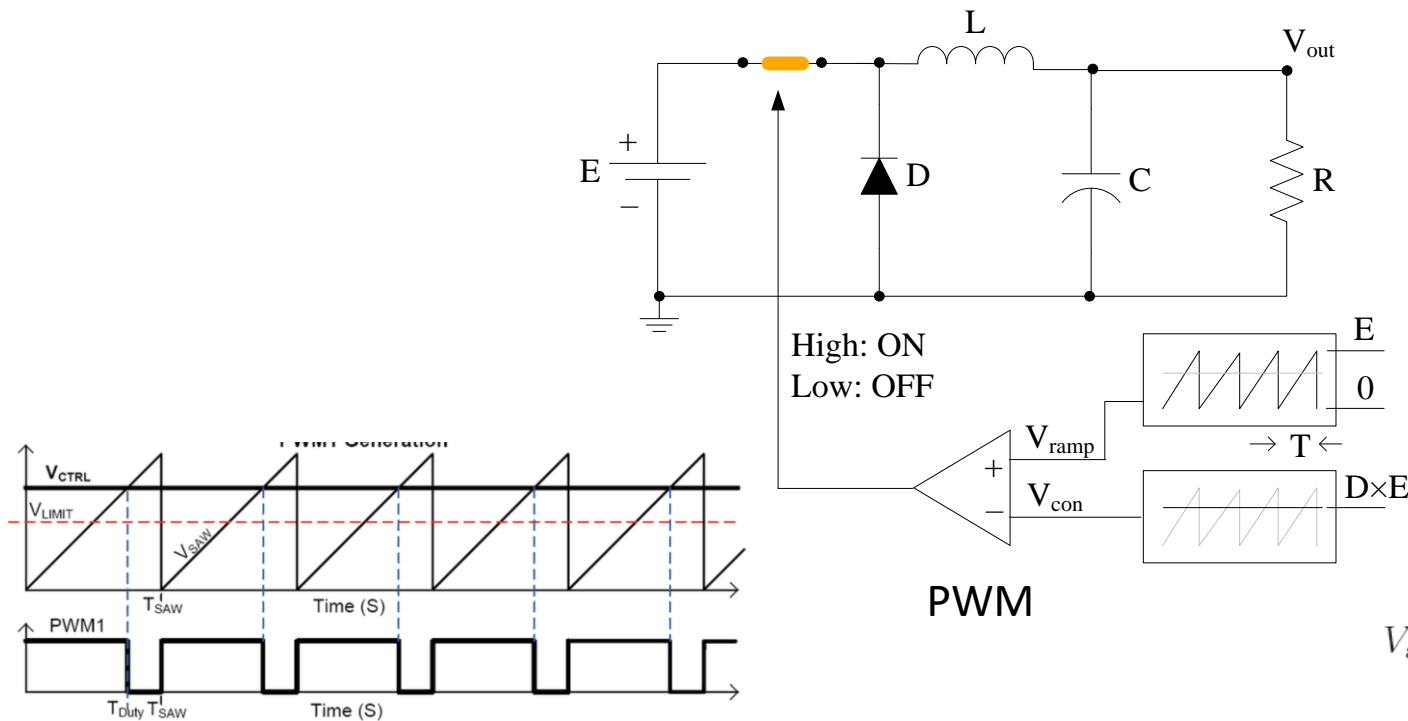


- This is now called a buck converter.

$$v_o(t) = d(t)V_s$$

Time-Averaging of Voltages

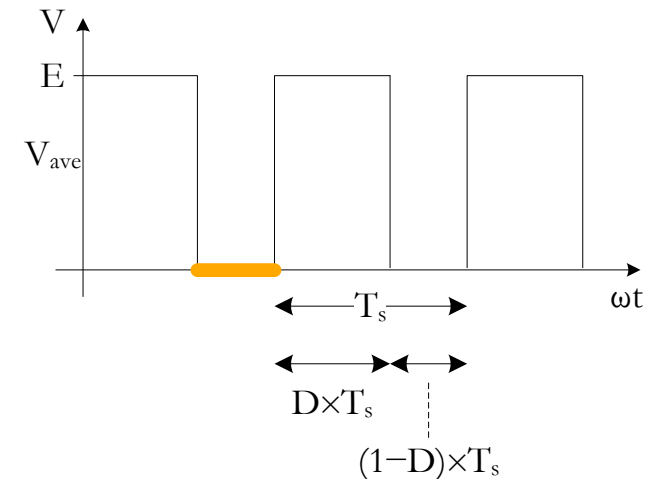
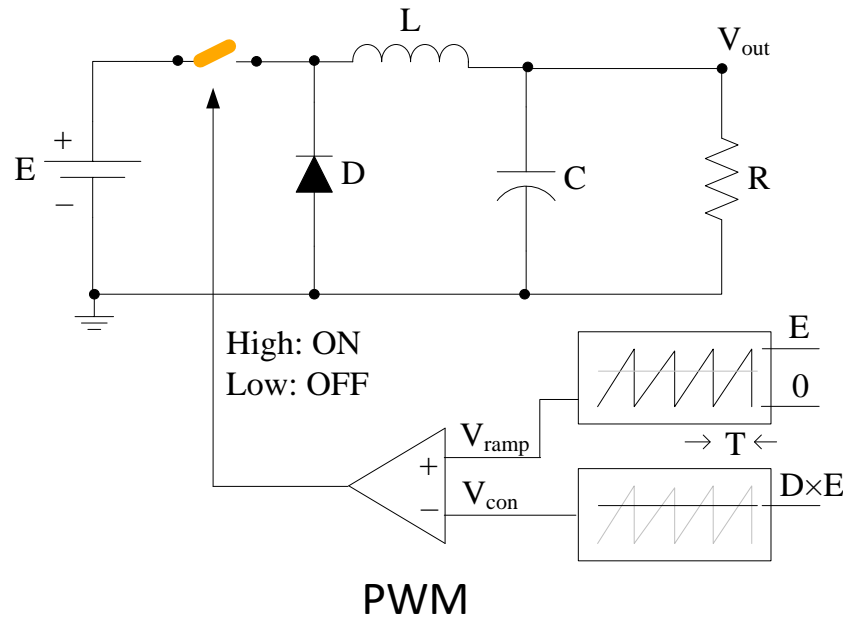
- The underlying idea is simple.
- Back to the simple idea of dc converters (Buck converter):
 - There are only two voltage levels: 0 and E .
 - So we control the converter by applying the voltage E only for part of the sampling time.
 - On state



$$V_{ave} = \frac{T_{ON} \times E + (1-D) \times T_s \times 0}{T_s} = D \times E$$

Time-Averaging of Voltages

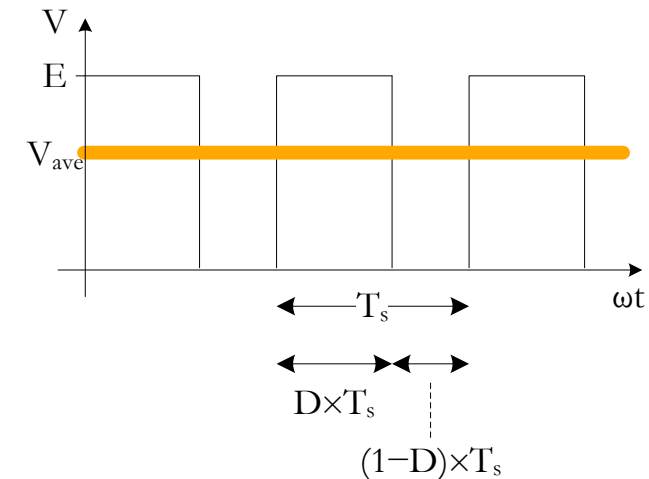
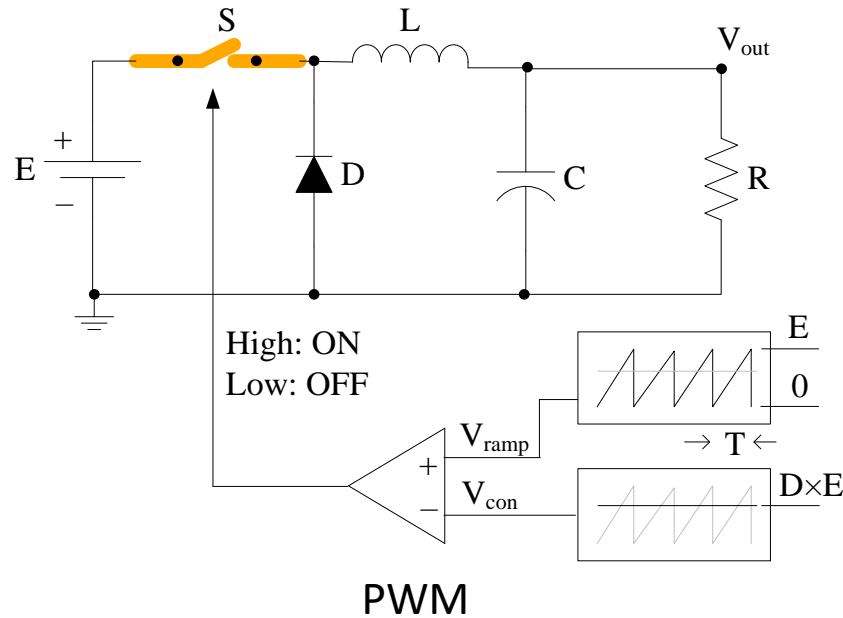
- The underlying idea is simple.
- Back to the simple idea of dc converters (Buck converter):
 - There are only two voltage levels: 0 and E .
 - So we control the converter by applying the voltage E only for part of the sampling time.
 - On state
 - Off state



$$V_{ave} = \frac{+ T_{OFF} \times 0}{T_s} =$$

Time-Averaging of Voltages

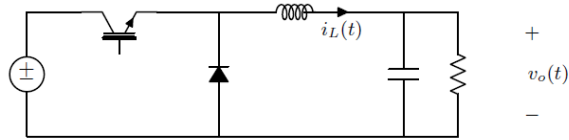
- The underlying idea is simple (whew!)
- Back to the simple idea of dc converters (Buck converter):
 - There are only two voltage levels: 0 and E .
 - So we control the converter by applying the voltage E only for part of the sampling time.
 - On state
 - Off state
 - Average



$$V_{ave} = \frac{T_{ON} \times E + T_{OFF} \times 0}{T_s} = D \times E$$

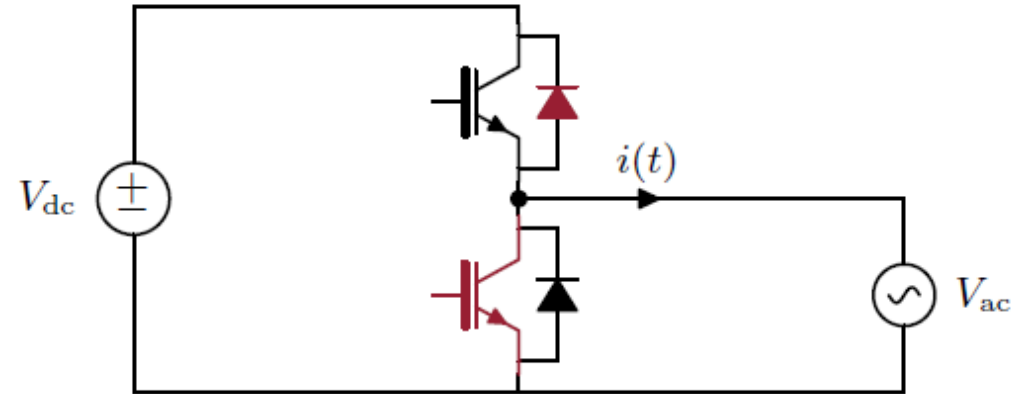
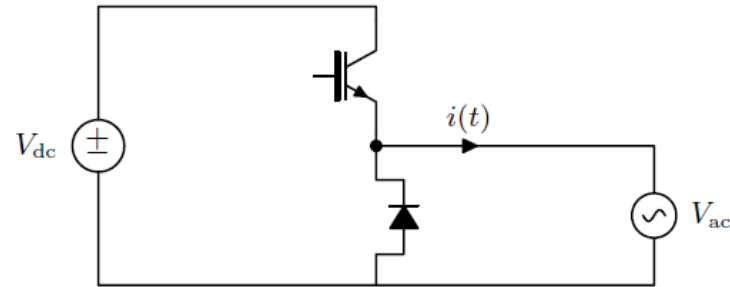
But this is (variable) DC. How do we get AC?

- **Redraw**

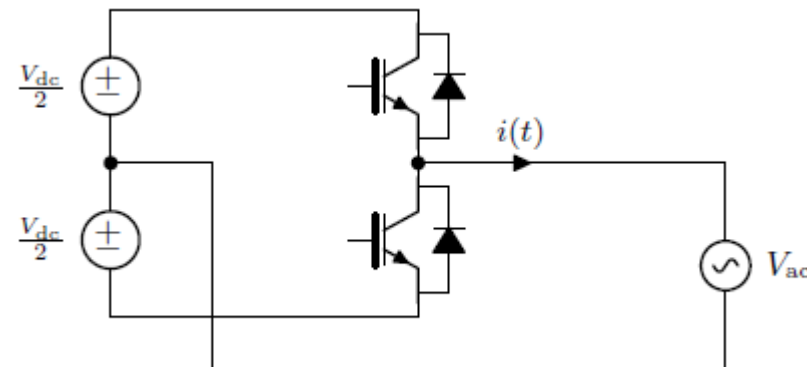


- We need +/- current and voltage

- **Bidirectional Current**

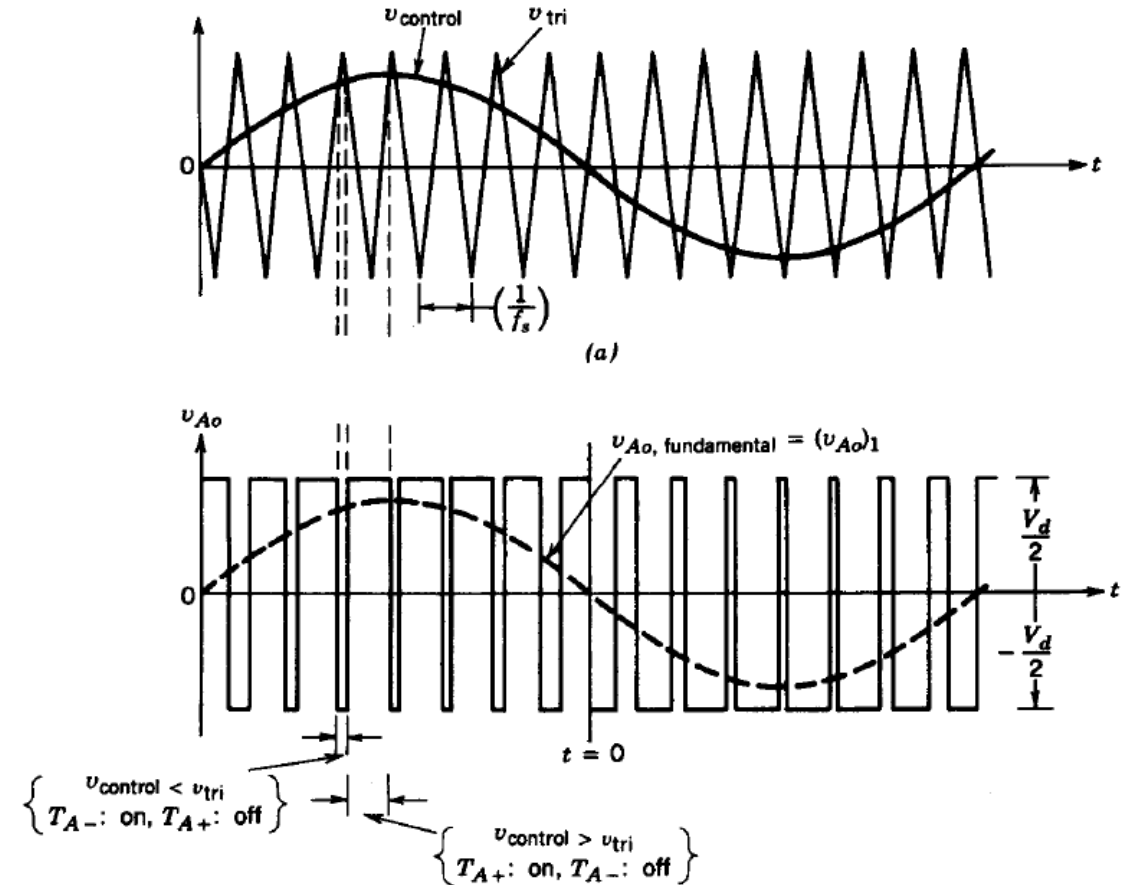


- **Bidirectional Voltage**



AC Waveform Generation

- To generate a sinusoidal output, change duty cycle: $D \rightarrow d(t)$
- **Pulse-width modulation (PWM)**
 - Compare the reference (control) waveform (sinusoidal) to a triangular waveform of much higher frequency.
 - Not the only method: Space vector modulation (SVM), Selective harmonic elimination (SHE), Square wave, PWM+3rd

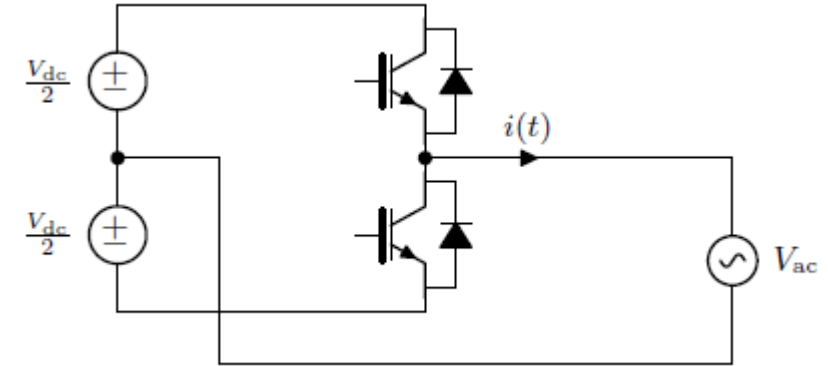


Half-Bridge Converter

- AC voltage, on average, is

$$V_o = d(t) \frac{V_{dc}}{2} + d'(t) \frac{(-V_{dc})}{2}$$

$$V_o = \frac{V_{dc}}{2} (d(t) - d'(t)) = (2d - 1) \frac{V_{dc}}{2}$$



- The relationship of the output voltage to the modulating signal $m(t)$.

$$m(t) = 2d(t) - 1$$

$$m(t) = m \cos(\omega_0 t + \theta_0)$$

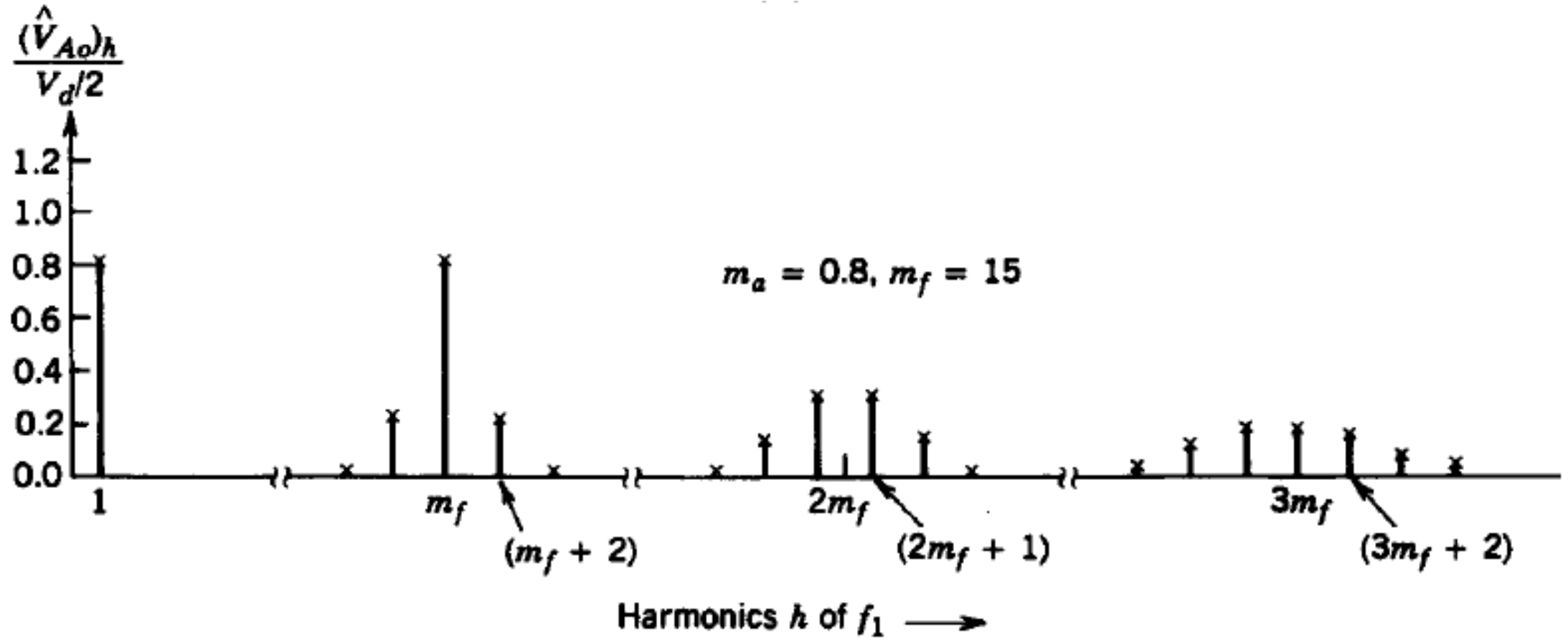
$$d(t) = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} m \cos(\omega_0 t + \theta_0)$$

$$V_{o(t)} = \frac{m(t)V_s}{2} + \text{harmonics}$$

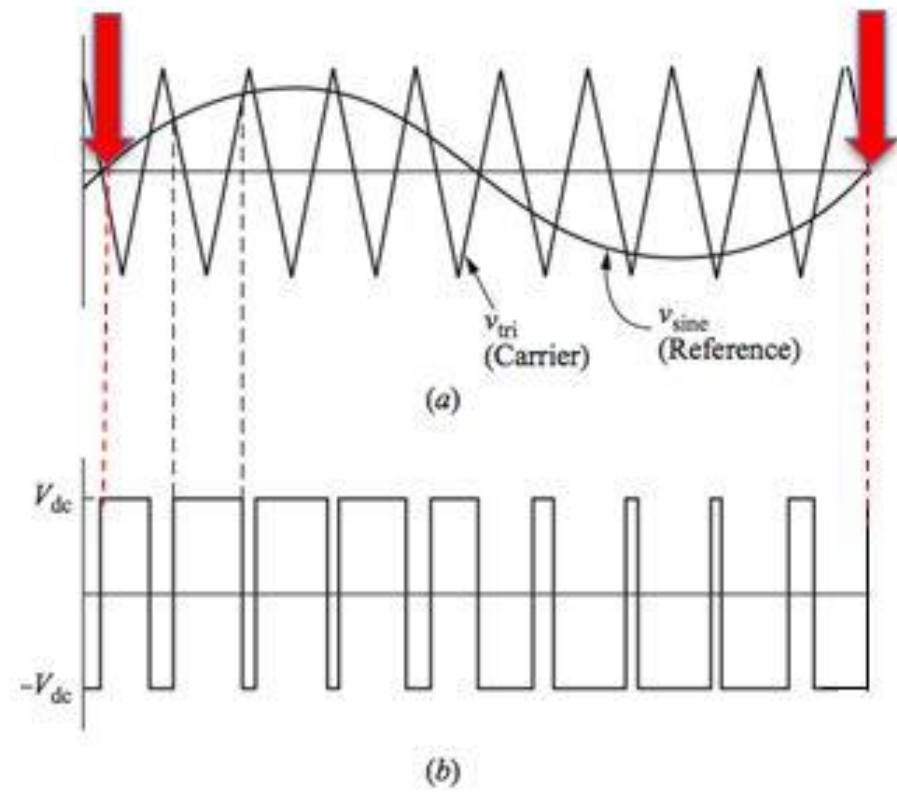
- It is up to the switching strategy (e.g., PWM) to eliminate harmonics. Harmonics can also be reduced using external circuits (e.g., filters or transformer connection).

VSC with PWM

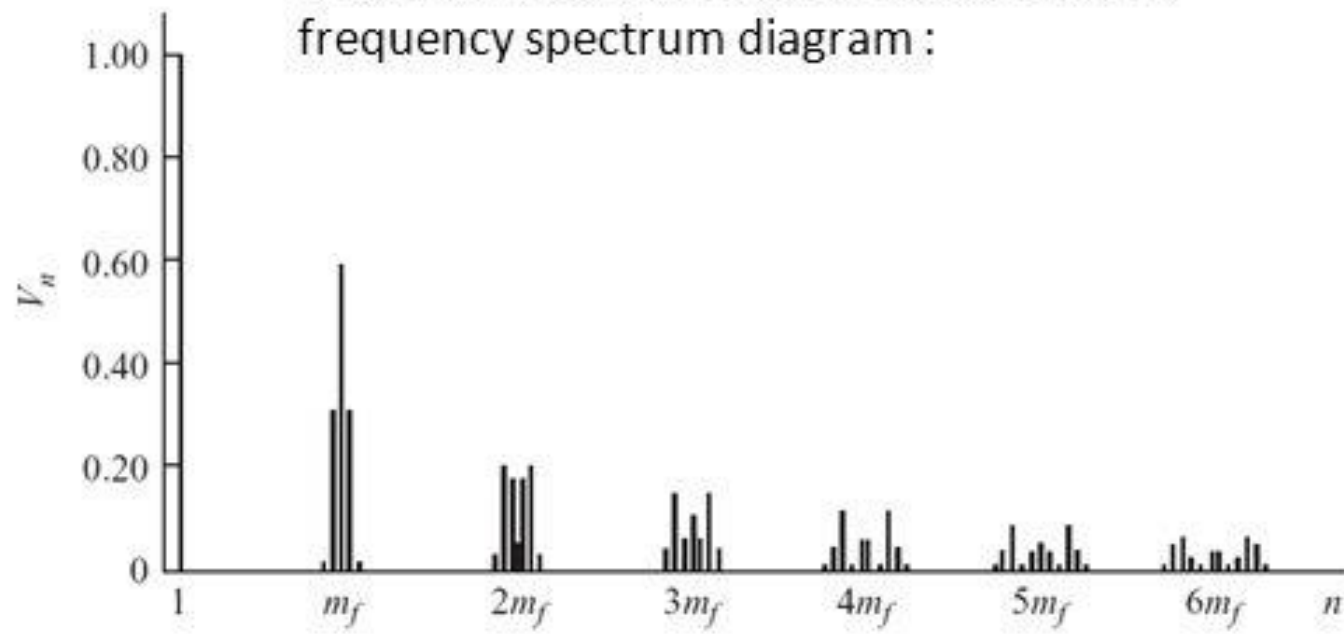
- Harmonics



Harmonics



Graphically, this can be represented using frequency spectrum diagram :



OR using a normalized Fourier coefficients table:

	$m_a=1$	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1
$n=1$	1.00	0.90	0.80	0.70	0.60	0.50	0.40	0.30	0.20	0.10
$n=m_f$	0.60	0.71	0.82	0.92	1.01	1.08	1.15	1.20	1.24	1.27
$n=m_f \pm 2$	0.32	0.27	0.22	0.17	0.13	0.09	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.00

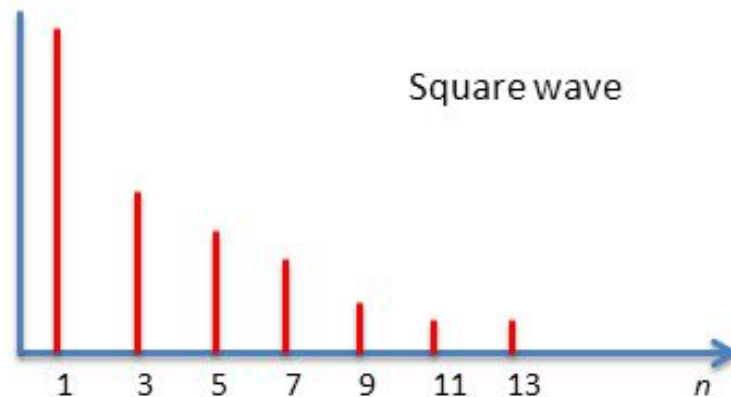
Looking Back: Why PWM?

SQUARE-WAVE

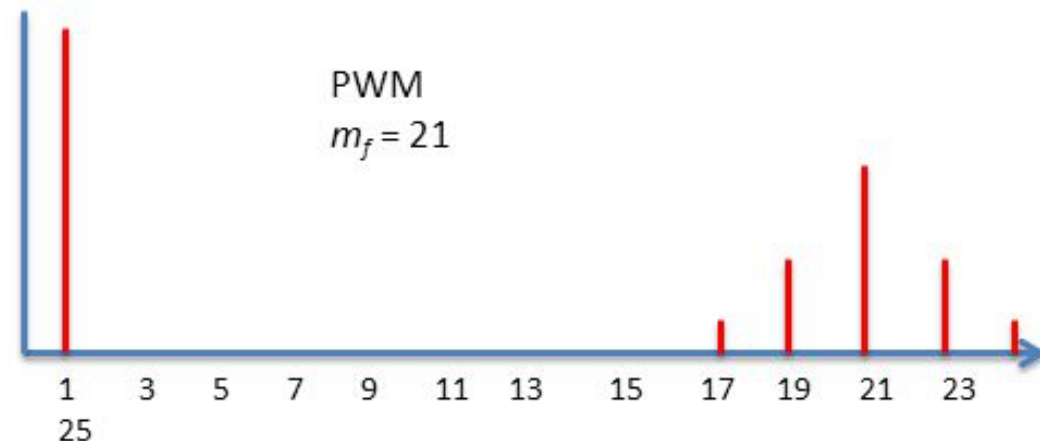
- Contains harmonics at relatively low frequency: 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, etc.
- In order to improve the THD_V , a low pass filter can be employed \rightarrow filter will be bulky since cutoff frequency is low \rightarrow difficult to remove harmonics since at the same time must ensure fundamental component is not attenuated.

PWM

- Harmonics appear around m_f which is further away from fundamental.
- To improve THD_V , filter with higher cutoff can be used \rightarrow smaller in size \rightarrow easier to filter out harmonics.



Square wave

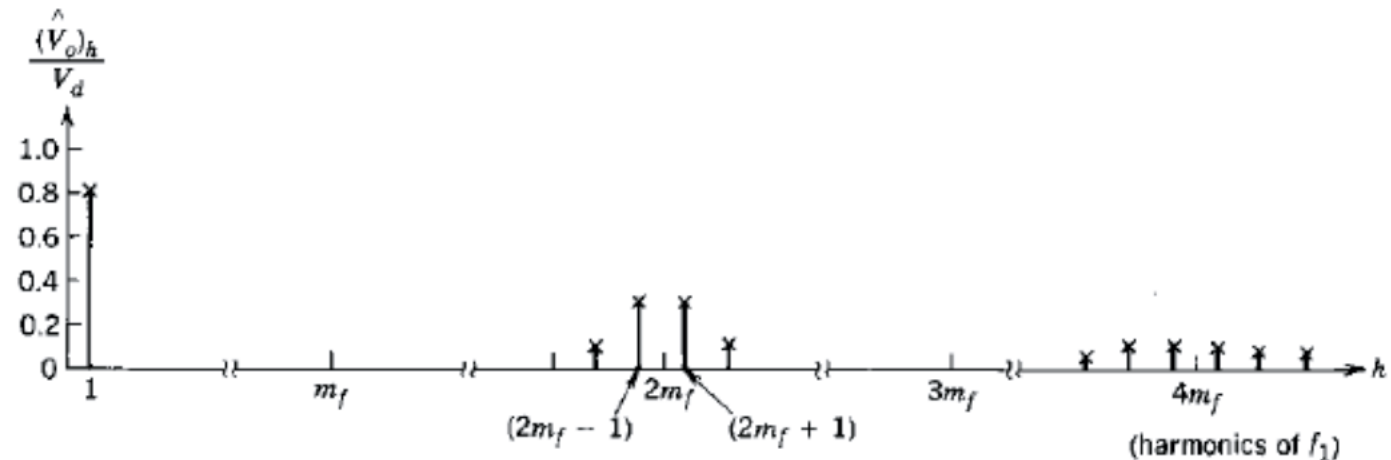
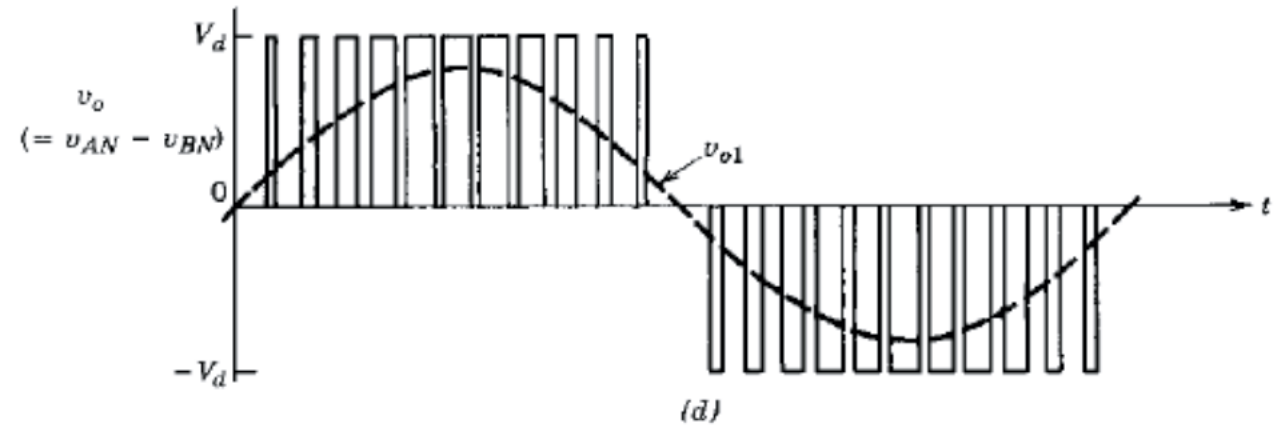
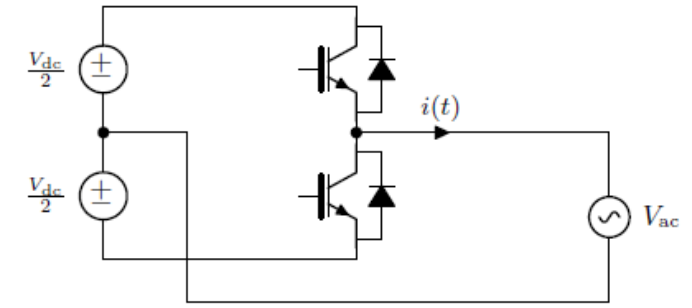
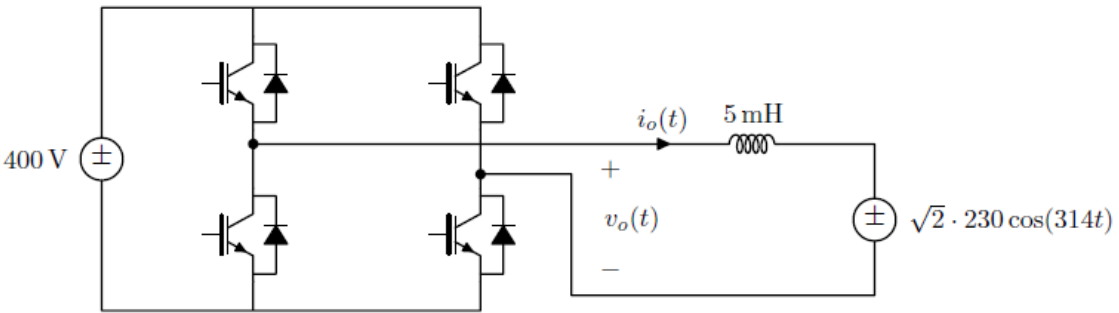


PWM
 $m_f = 21$

Adding More Legs (That is, Phases)

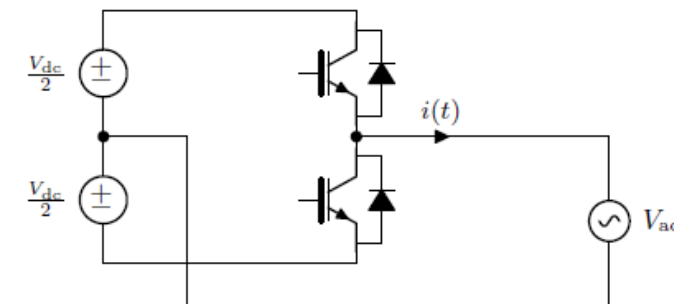
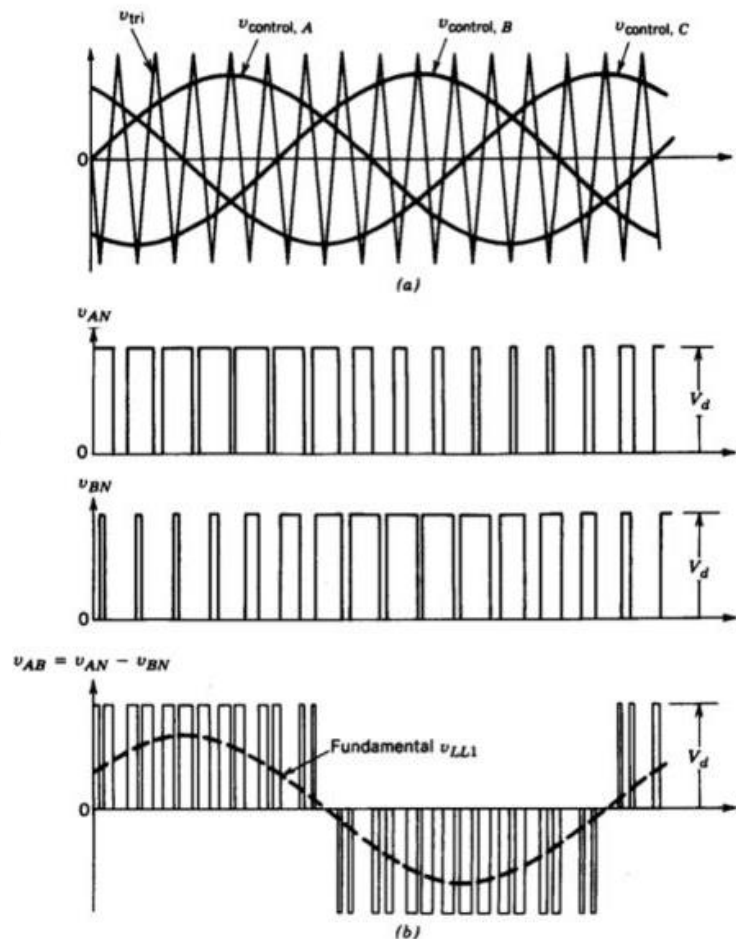
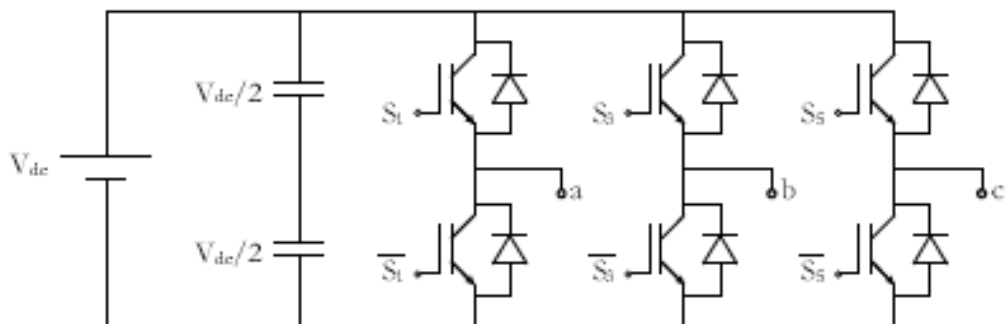
- **Two Legs: Full Bridge**

- No need to the DC midpoint
- Twice the voltage
- Less harmonics (at $2m_f$, $4m_f$, etc)



Adding More Legs (That is, Phases)

- Three Legs: Voltage-Sourced Converter



m_f is chosen to be multiple of 3 so that the harmonic at multiple of 3, including m_f (and its multiple) are suppressed (or canceled out) in the line-line voltage

m_a	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.0
h	0.122	0.245	0.367	0.490	0.612
$m_f \pm 2$	0.010	0.037	0.080	0.135	0.195
$m_f \pm 4$				0.005	0.011
$2m_f \pm 1$	0.116	0.200	0.227	0.192	0.111
$2m_f \pm 5$				0.008	0.020
$3m_f \pm 2$	0.027	0.085	0.124	0.108	0.038
$3m_f \pm 4$		0.007	0.029	0.064	0.096
$4m_f \pm 1$	0.100	0.096	0.005	0.064	0.042
$4m_f \pm 5$			0.021	0.051	0.073
$4m_f \pm 7$				0.010	0.030

Note: $(V_{LL})_h/V_d$ are tabulated as a function of m_a where $(V_{LL})_h$ are the rms values of the harmonic voltages.

Modulation Methods: Carrier-Based PWM

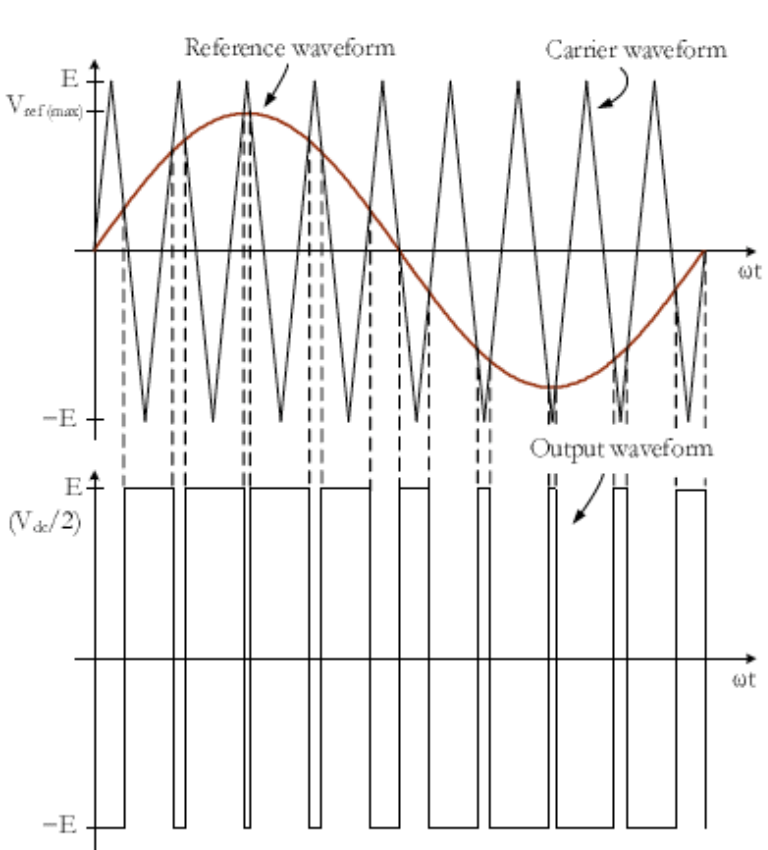


Fig. 3.1. Output voltage generated by two-level SPWM.

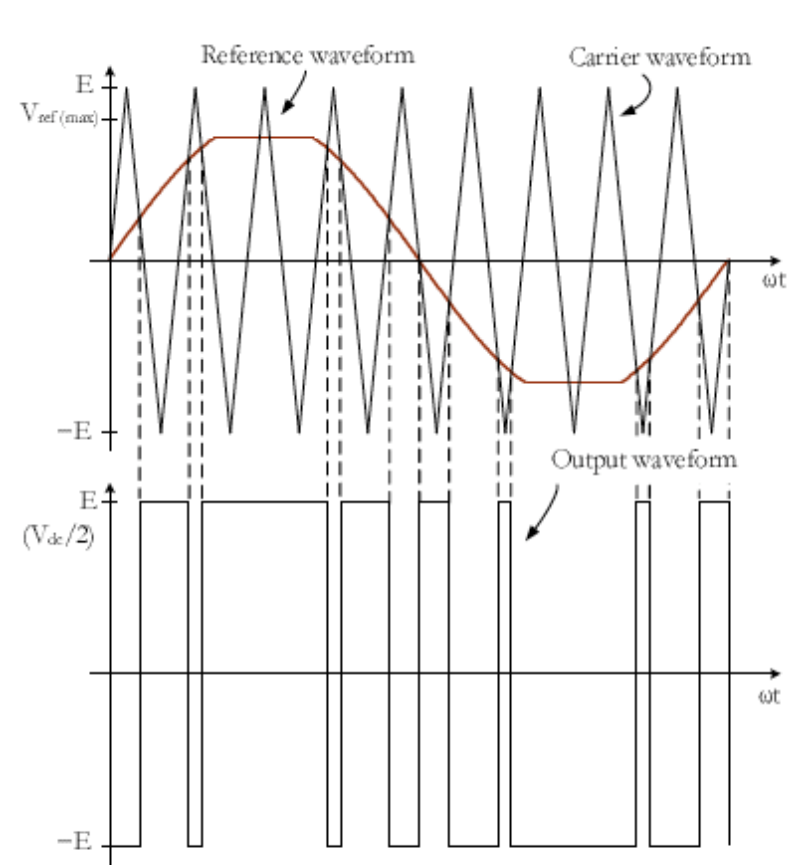


Fig. 3.3. 60-degree modulation.

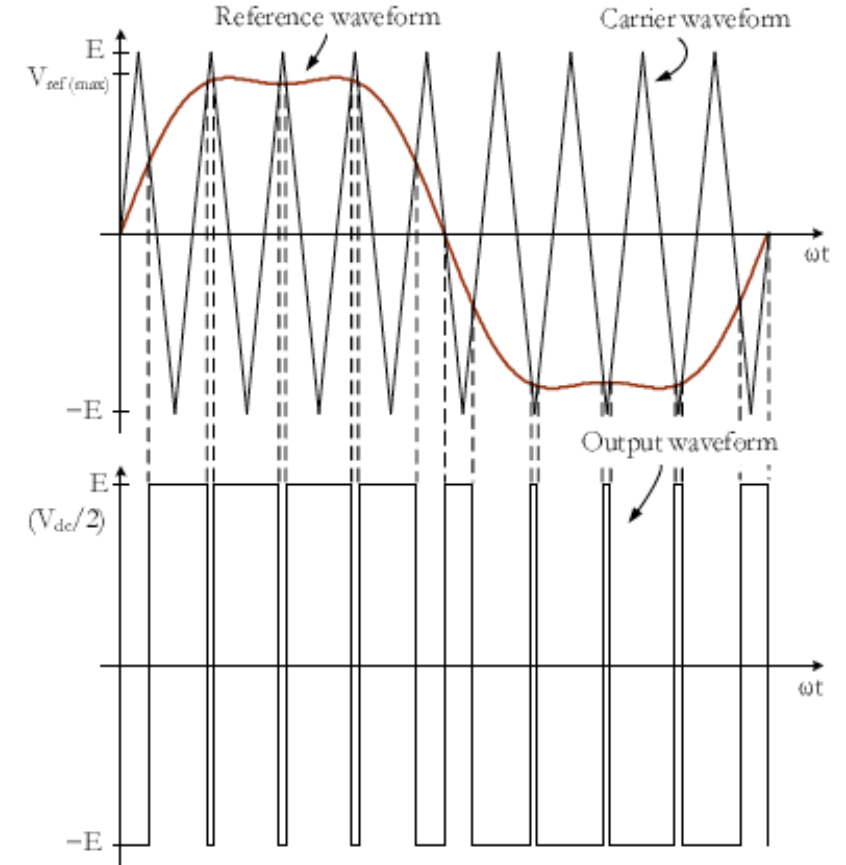


Fig. 3.5. Third-harmonic injection PWM.

Modulation: Selective Harmonic Elimination

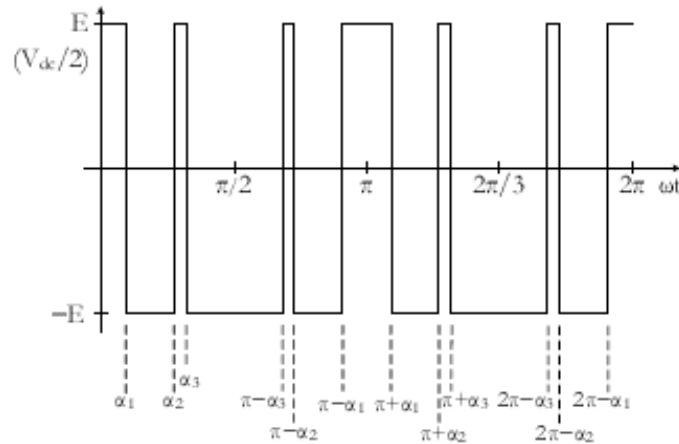


Fig. 3.7. Output voltage of a two-level, three-switching-angle SHE.

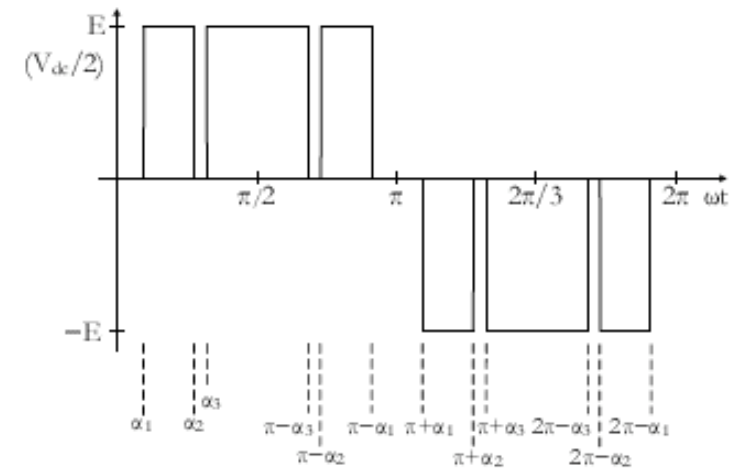
$$v(t) = \frac{2V_{dc}}{\pi} \left\{ (1 - 2\cos\alpha_1 + 2\cos\alpha_2 - 2\cos\alpha_3 + \dots) \sin\omega t \right. \\ \left. + (1 - 2\cos 3\alpha_1 + 2\cos 3\alpha_2 - 2\cos 3\alpha_3 + \dots) \frac{\sin 3\omega t}{3} \right. \\ \left. + (1 - 2\cos 5\alpha_1 + 2\cos 5\alpha_2 - 2\cos 5\alpha_3 + \dots) \frac{\sin 5\omega t}{5} + \dots \right\} \\ = \frac{2V_{dc}}{\pi} \left\{ \sum_{n=1,3,\dots}^{\infty} \frac{\sin n\omega t}{n} \left[1 + 2 \sum_{k=1}^m (-1)^{k+1} \cos n\alpha_k \right] \right\}$$

$$v_{1,rms} = \frac{\sqrt{2}V_{dc}}{\pi} (1 - 2\cos\alpha_1 + 2\cos\alpha_2 - 2\cos\alpha_3)$$

$$0 = (1 - 2\cos 5\alpha_1 + 2\cos 5\alpha_2 - 2\cos 5\alpha_3)$$

$$0 = (1 - 2\cos 7\alpha_1 + 2\cos 7\alpha_2 - 2\cos 7\alpha_3)$$

- Very high-power applications



$$v(t) = \frac{2V_{dc}}{\pi} \left\{ (\cos\alpha_1 - \cos\alpha_2 + \cos\alpha_3 + \dots) \sin\omega t \right. \\ \left. + (\cos 3\alpha_1 - \cos 3\alpha_2 + \cos 3\alpha_3 + \dots) \frac{\sin 3\omega t}{3} \right. \\ \left. + (\cos 5\alpha_1 - \cos 5\alpha_2 + \cos 5\alpha_3 + \dots) \frac{\sin 5\omega t}{5} + \dots \right\} \\ = \frac{2V_{dc}}{\pi} \left\{ \sum_{n=1,3,\dots}^{\infty} \frac{\sin n\omega t}{n} \left[\sum_{k=1}^m (-1)^{k+1} \cos n\alpha_k \right] \right\}$$

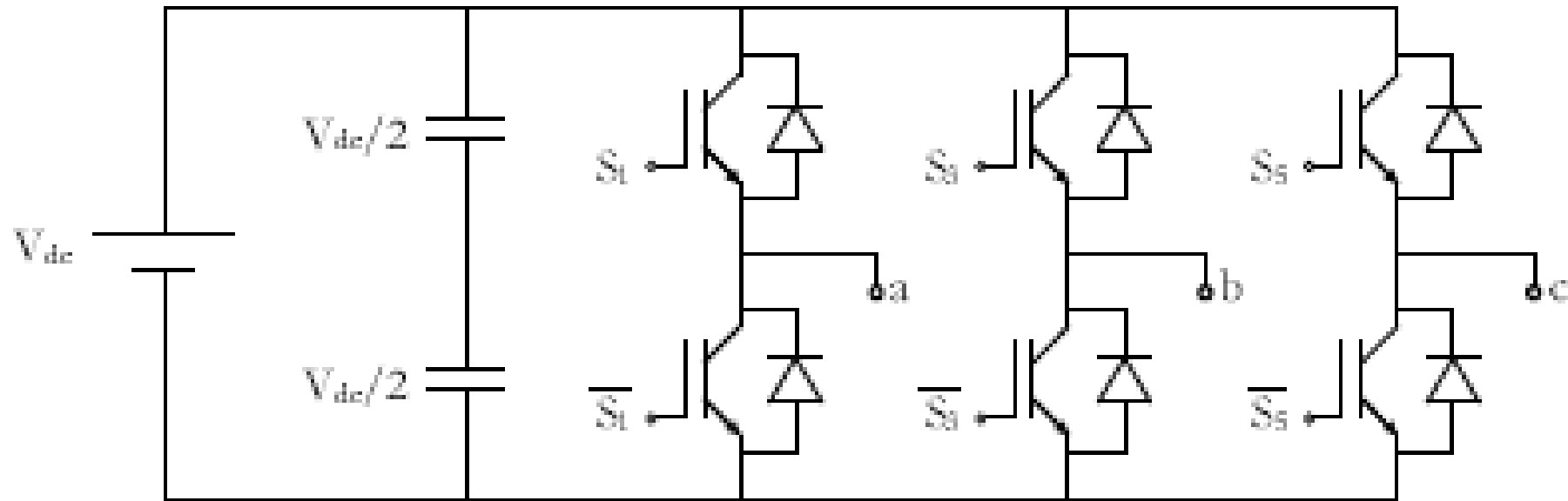
$$v_{1,rms} = \frac{\sqrt{2}V_{dc}}{\pi} (\cos\alpha_1 - \cos\alpha_2 + \cos\alpha_3)$$

$$0 = (\cos 5\alpha_1 - \cos 5\alpha_2 + \cos 5\alpha_3)$$

$$0 = (\cos 7\alpha_1 - \cos 7\alpha_2 + \cos 7\alpha_3)$$

Modulation Methods: Space Vector Modulation

- There are 8 converter states depending on the status of switches. No two switches can be on or off at the same time in each leg.

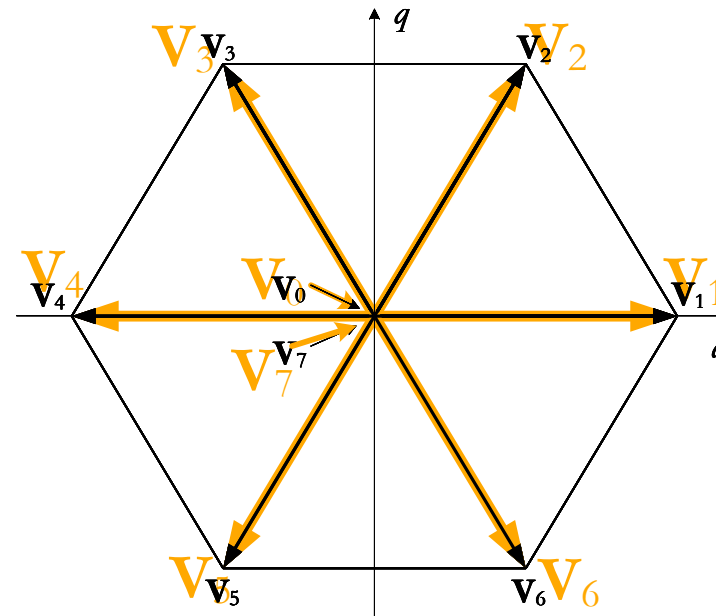
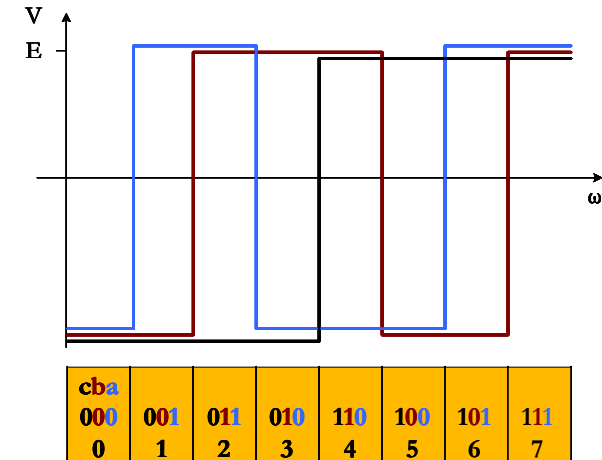
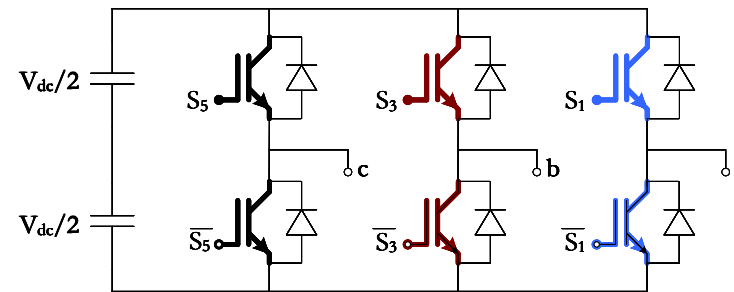


$$\mathbf{V} = \frac{2}{3} (v_a(t) + v_b(t)e^{j2\pi/3} + v_c(t)e^{-j2\pi/3})$$

Time-Averaging of Voltages (4/6)

- The same states, now also on the hexagon:
 - zero

, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven



hide SVs

Construction of Output Voltages

- The reference vector, in sector 1, can be projected onto \mathbf{V}_1 and \mathbf{V}_2 .

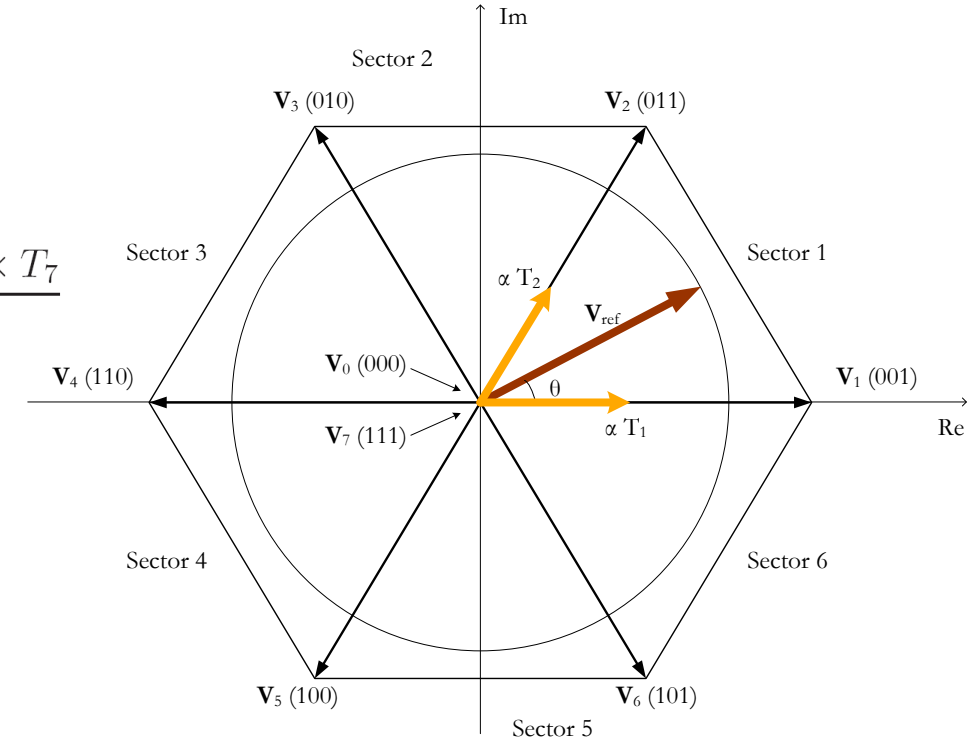
- If the converter is placed in \mathbf{V}_1 state for T_1 and in \mathbf{V}_2 for T_2 , the average voltage over the sampling period T_s can be found from

$$\mathbf{V} = \frac{2}{3} (v_a(t) + v_b(t)e^{j2\pi/3} + v_c(t)e^{-j2\pi/3}) \quad \mathbf{V}_{\text{ref}} = \frac{\mathbf{Z}_0 \times T_0 + \mathbf{A}_1 \times T_1 + \mathbf{A}_2 \times T_2 + \mathbf{Z}_7 \times T_7}{T_s}$$

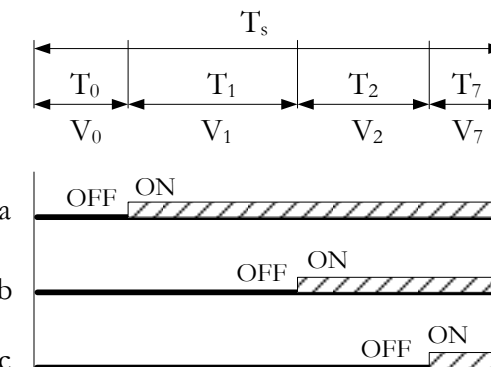
$$T_1 = \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \times T_s m \sin(\pi/3 - \theta)$$

$$T_2 = \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2} \times T_s m \sin(\theta)$$

$$T_0 + T_7 = T_z = T_s - T_1 - T_2$$



- Zero vectors do not change the average value,
 - The rest of T_s is filled with them.
- Both \mathbf{V}_0 and \mathbf{V}_7 generate zero line voltages,
 - So both can be used interchangeably and in any order.



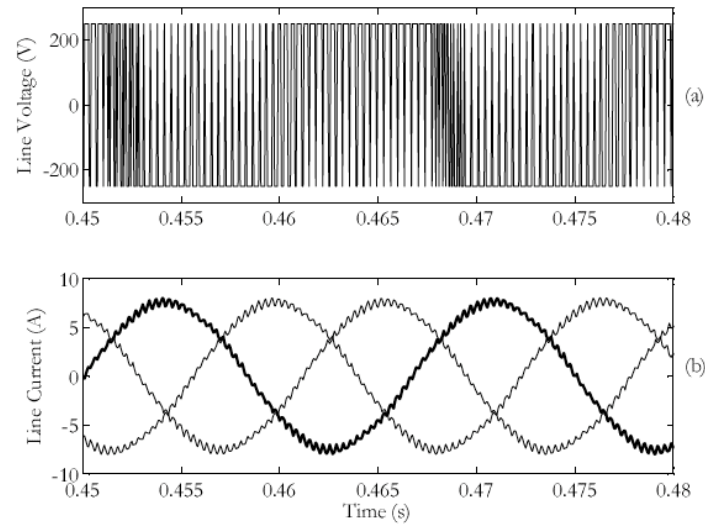


Fig. 5.3. Line voltage and currents of the two-level space-vector modulator.

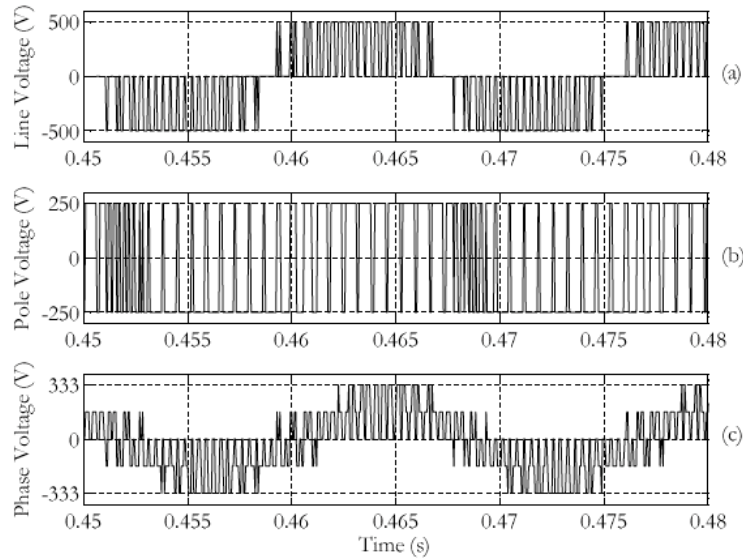


Fig. 5.4. Generated (a) line voltage, (b) pole voltage, and (c) phase voltage, $F_{sn} = 48$ and $m = 0.8$.

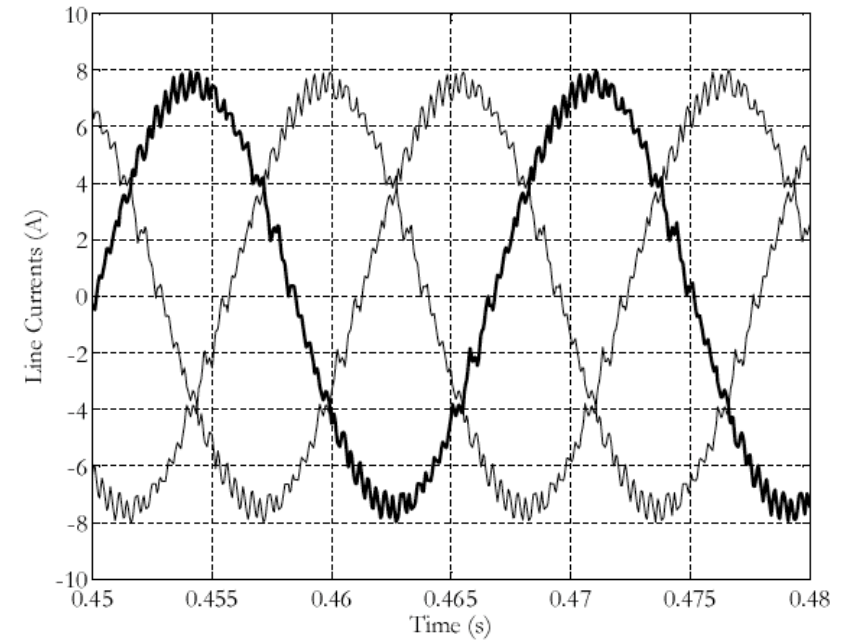
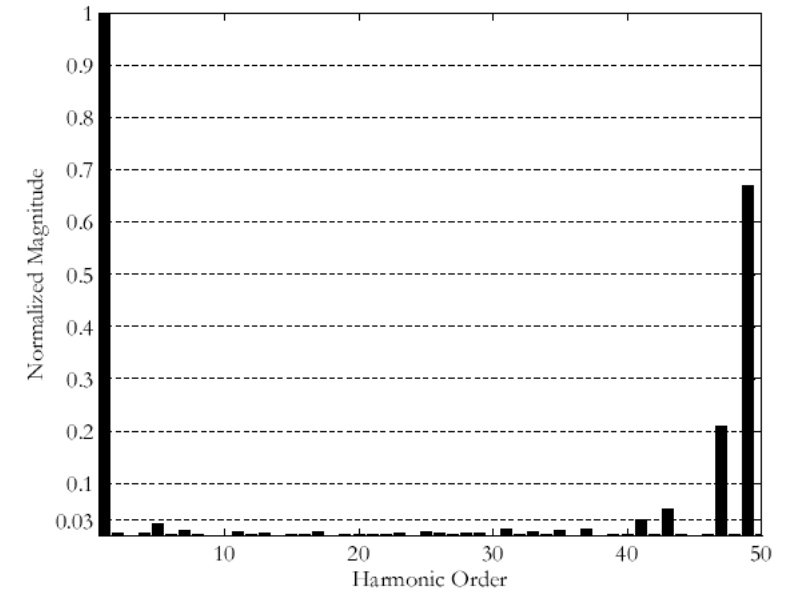


Fig. 5.6. Line currents, $F_{sn} = 48$ and $m = 0.8$.

Bigger Picture

- **Buck-boost--ness is in the eye of the beholder.**
 - Converters may be built to be “reversible.” (bidirectional flow of power)
- **An inverter (DC-AC) is essentially a DC-DC converter with a slowly varying duty cycle.**
 - Variations of $d(t)$ should be much slower than the switching frequency.
- **An AC voltage controller (AC-AC) is essentially a rectifier (AC-DC) with slowly varying delay angle α .**
 - Variations of $\alpha(t)$ should be much slower than input frequency.
- **Ultimately, DC-DC and AC-AC can be thought of as controllable transformers.**
 - Can change effective resistance (impedance) seen by the source (utility).

Module 1c: Power Electronics 101

Fundamentals of Switching Power Converters

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HVDC Learn

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Waveform Generation

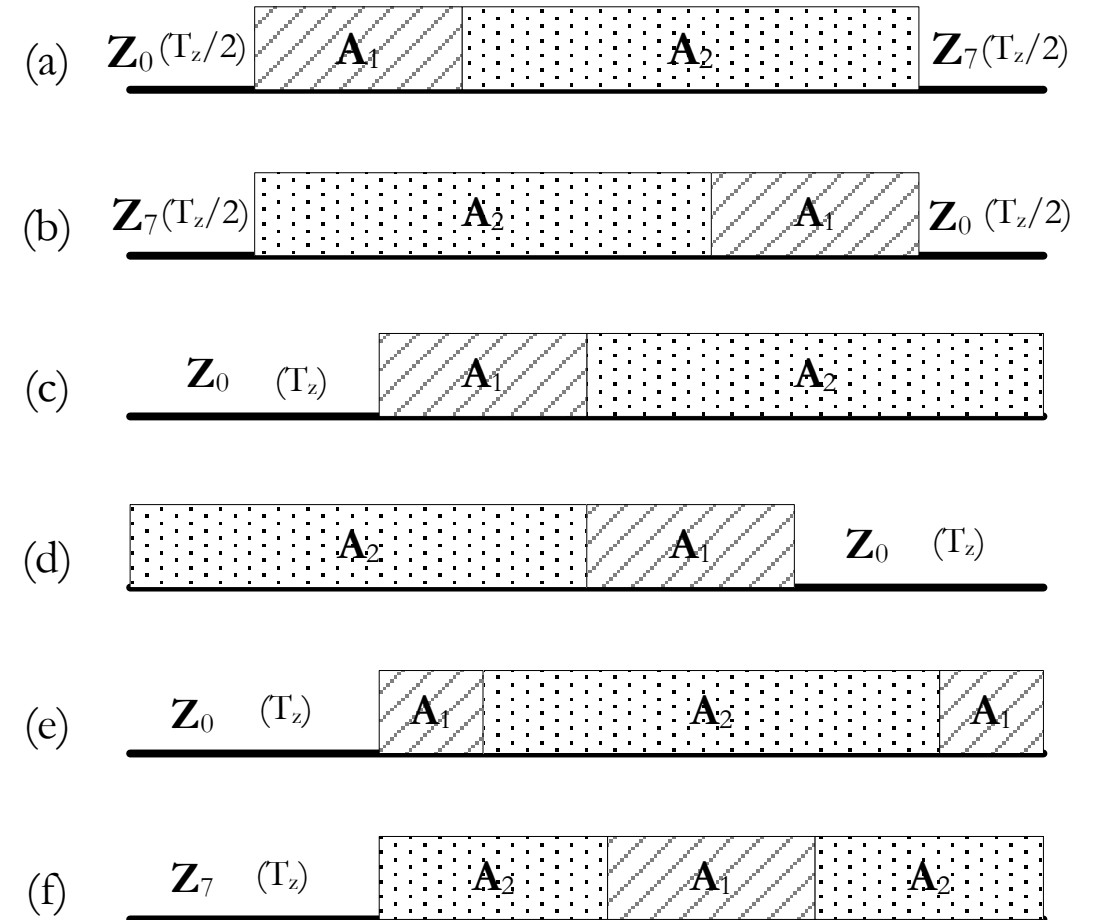
- SVM can put the inverter in one of the 8 states, each giving a certain voltage space vector.
- The reference voltage (v_a , v_b , v_c) can also be expressed as an SV based on

$$\mathbf{V} = \frac{2}{3} (v_a(t) + v_b(t)e^{j2\pi/3} + v_c(t)e^{-j2\pi/3})$$

- The idea is now simple. For each sampled value of the reference voltage, we try to find out how we can reconstruct it based on the 8 (7) SVs. This is a simple decomposition problem.

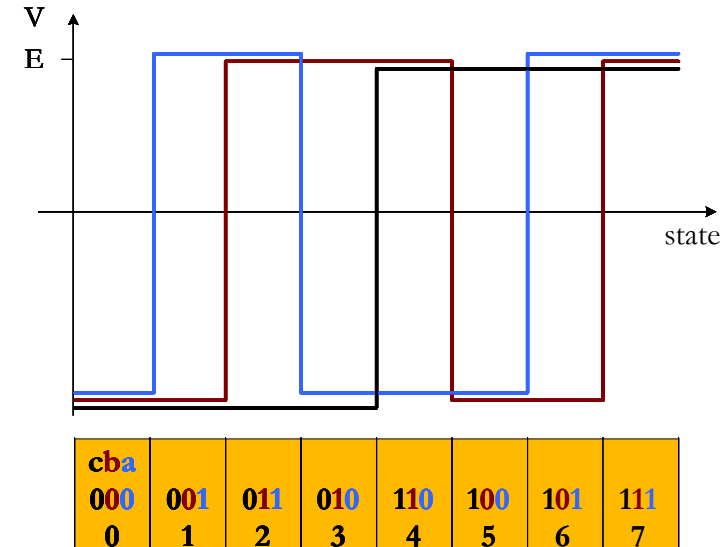
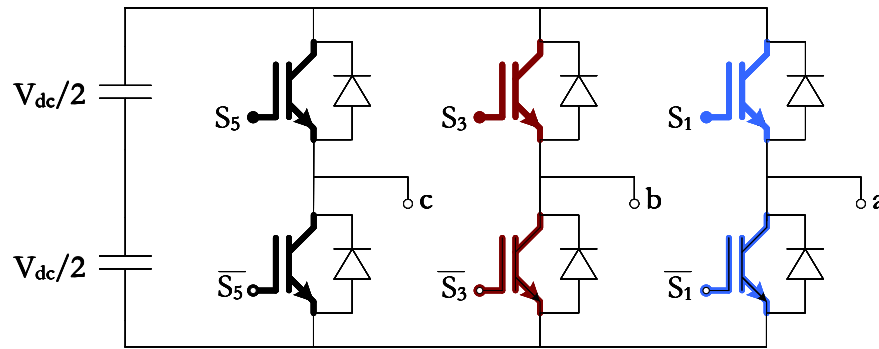
Degrees of Freedom

- Individual shares of Z_0 , Z_7
- Placement of SVs within the sampling period
- These can be decided based on the different harmonic performance requirements, number of switchings allowed, and losses.



Time-Averaging of Voltages (2/6)

- **Applying the same idea for ac converters (three-phase):**
 - Likewise, the number of combinations of switching states of the VSC is limited.
 - In a two-level VSC, there are three “independent” switches, hence $2^3 = 8$ states.
 - zero
 - , one, two, three, four, five, six, seven



Time-Averaging of Voltages _(3/6)

- **Now, we define a reference vector, through one-to-one transformation of the individual phase voltages**

$$\mathbf{V} = \frac{2}{3} (v_a(t) + v_b(t)e^{j2\pi/3} + v_c(t)e^{-j2\pi/3})$$

- This reference vector uniquely determines the desired three-phase waveforms.
 - Therefore, we don't need the three-phase reference waveforms we started with.
-
- **This leaves us with a graphical representation of the system**
 - A hexagon, with the 6 states of the system (active) as its vertices, and two zero states in the origin.

EIGHT SPACE-VECTORS AND THEIR CORRESPONDING PHASE- AND LINE-VOLTAGES

State	c, b, a	V	Pole Voltage, multiply by $V_{dc}/2$			Phase Voltage		
			V_{az}	V_{bz}	V_{cz}	V_{an}	V_{bn}	V_{cn}
0	000	0	-1	-1	-1	0	0	0
1	001	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j0}$	1	-1	-1	$2V_{dc}/3$	$-V_{dc}/3$	$-V_{dc}/3$
2	011	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j\pi/3}$	1	1	-1	$V_{dc}/3$	$V_{dc}/3$	$-2V_{dc}/3$
3	010	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j2\pi/3}$	-1	1	-1	$-V_{dc}/3$	$2V_{dc}/3$	$-V_{dc}/3$
4	110	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j\pi}$	-1	1	1	$-2V_{dc}/3$	$V_{dc}/3$	$V_{dc}/3$
5	100	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j4\pi/3}$	-1	-1	1	$-V_{dc}/3$	$-V_{dc}/3$	$2V_{dc}/3$
6	101	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j5\pi/3}$	1	-1	1	$V_{dc}/3$	$-2V_{dc}/3$	$V_{dc}/3$
7	111	0	1	1	1	0	0	0

Algorithm for SVM

Algorithm 4.1 Summary of implementation of two-level SVM

1. Decide on the SVM sequence to be used.
2. Repeat, for each sample of the reference vector \mathbf{V}_{ref}
 - 2.1. Find the sector in which \mathbf{V}_{ref} lies, and \mathbf{A}_1 and \mathbf{A}_2 , based on θ .
 - 2.2. **Project** the reference vector to the first sector.
 - 2.3. Find **time shares** T_1 , T_2 , and T_z , based on m and θ .
 - 2.4. If $T_z > 0$, share T_z between T_0 for \mathbf{Z}_0 and T_7 of \mathbf{Z}_7 , based on the sequence;
otherwise, set $T_z = 0$ and adjust T_1 and T_2 based on the **overmodulation** strategy.
 - 2.5. **Place** the VSC in states \mathbf{A}_1 , \mathbf{A}_2 , \mathbf{Z}_0 , and \mathbf{Z}_7 in the order determined by the chosen sequence.

Overmodulation

- Maximum m is 1.15. Already 15% more than PWM.

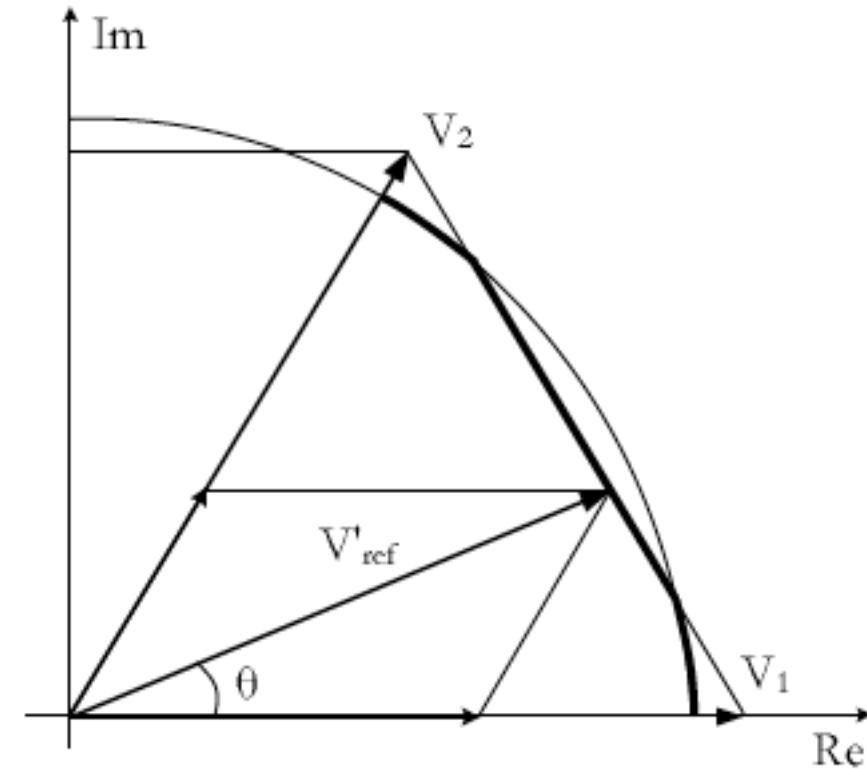
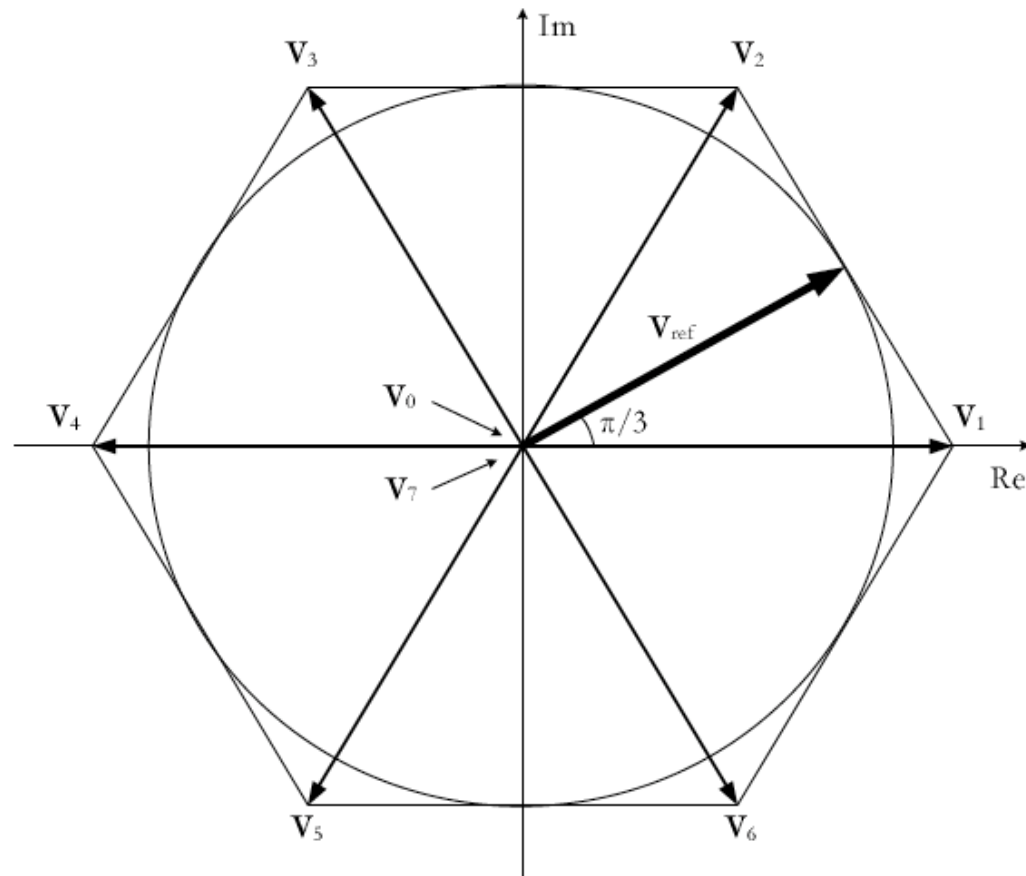


Fig. 4.5. Maximum length of the reference vector for $m = 1.15$.

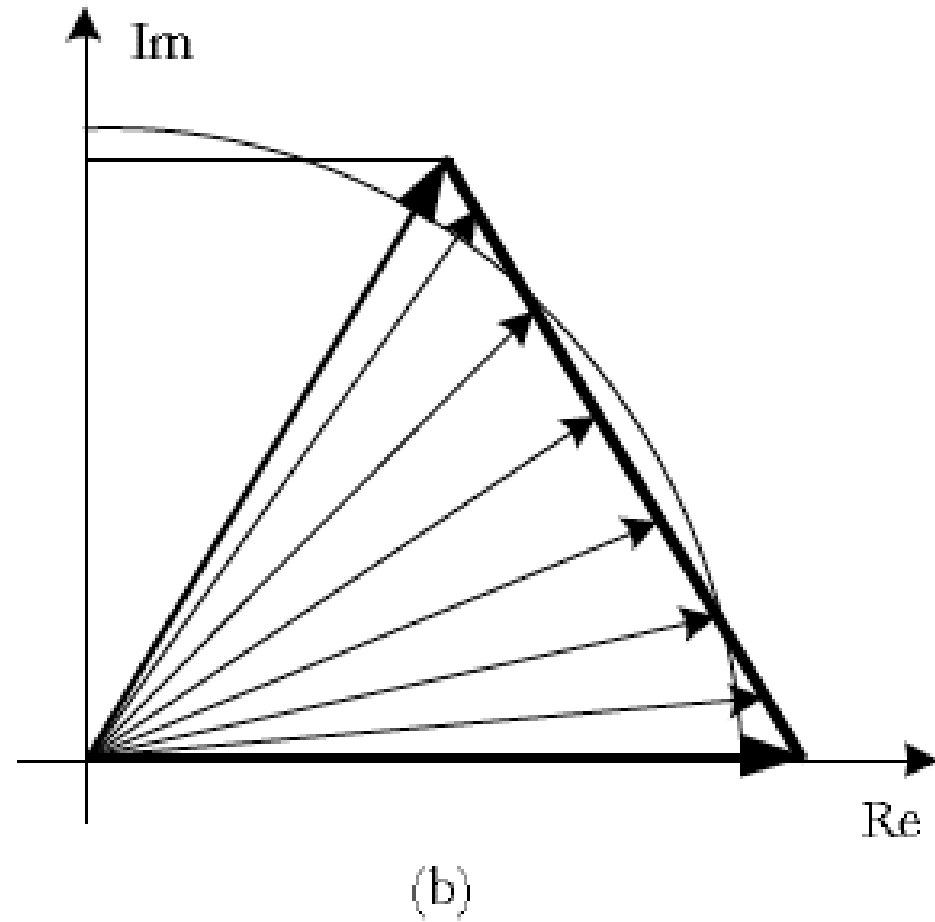
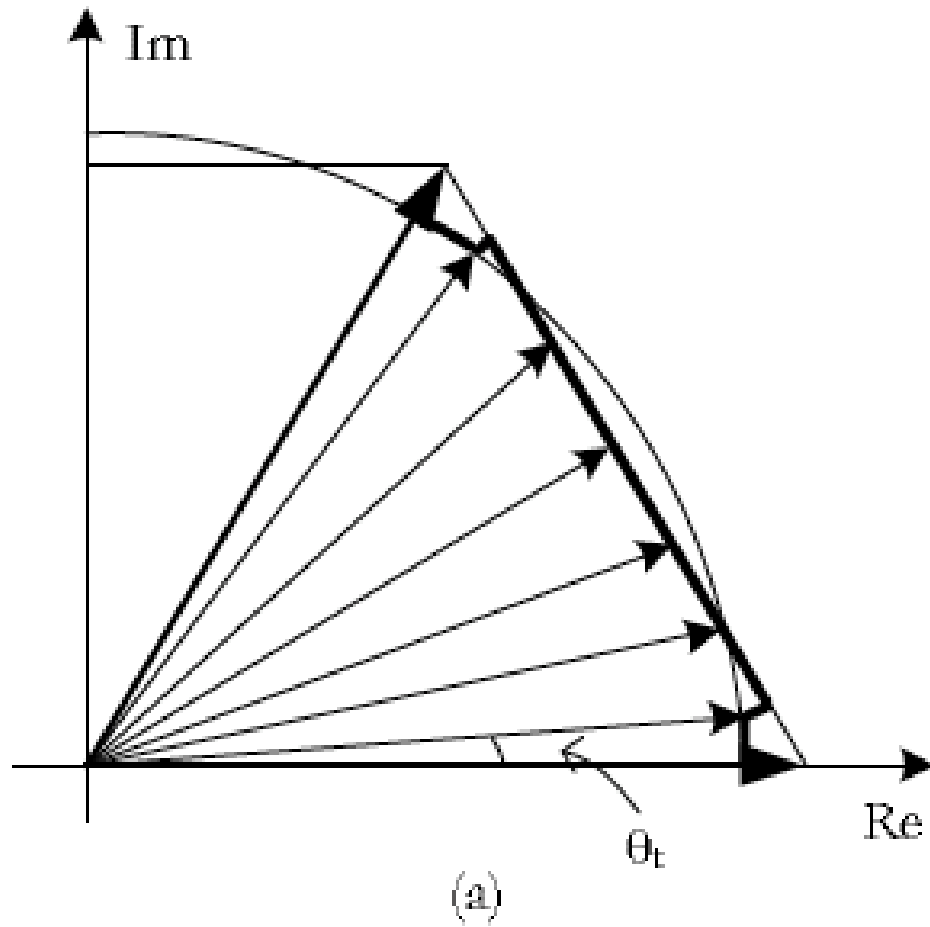


Fig. 4.8. Two-zone overmodulation approach, (a) zone I, and (b) zone II.

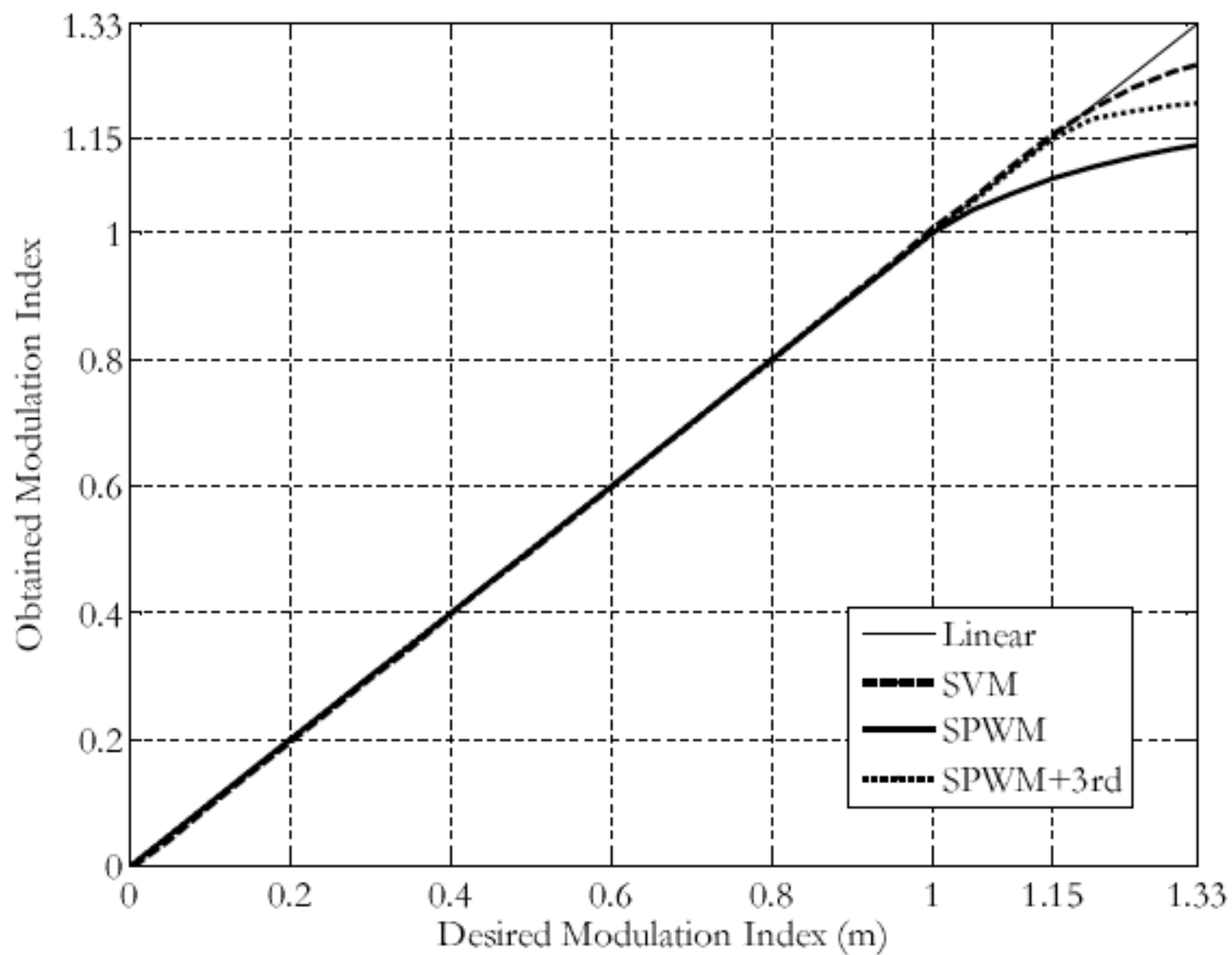


Fig. 4.7. Comparison of the degree of overmodulation in PWM methods.

Time-Averaging of Voltages (4/6)

- The same states, now also on the hexagon:
 - zero

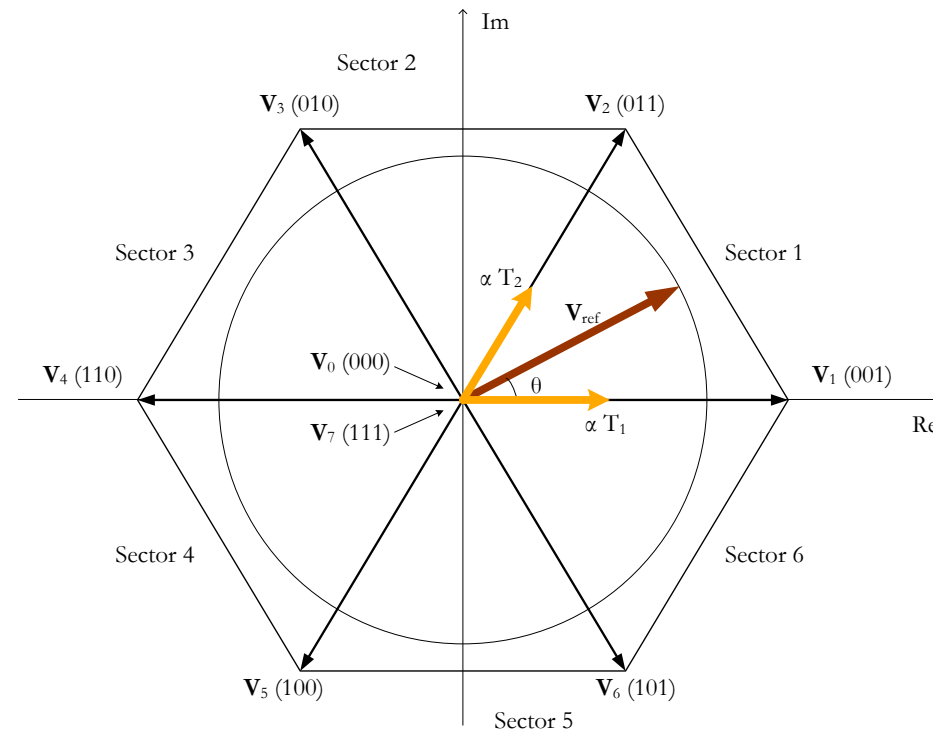
State	c, b, a	V	Pole Voltage, multiply by $V_{dc}/2$			Phase Voltage		
			V_{az}	V_{bz}	V_{cz}	V_{an}	V_{bn}	V_{cn}
0	000	0	-1	-1	-1	0	0	0
1	001	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j0}$	1	-1	-1	$2V_{dc}/3$	$-V_{dc}/3$	$-V_{dc}/3$
2	011	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j\pi/3}$	1	1	-1	$V_{dc}/3$	$V_{dc}/3$	$-2V_{dc}/3$
3	010	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j2\pi/3}$	-1	1	-1	$-V_{dc}/3$	$2V_{dc}/3$	$-V_{dc}/3$
4	110	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j\pi}$	-1	1	1	$-2V_{dc}/3$	$V_{dc}/3$	$V_{dc}/3$
5	100	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j4\pi/3}$	-1	-1	1	$-V_{dc}/3$	$-V_{dc}/3$	$2V_{dc}/3$
6	101	$2V_{dc}/3e^{j5\pi/3}$	1	-1	1	$V_{dc}/3$	$-2V_{dc}/3$	$V_{dc}/3$
7	111	0	1	1	1	0	0	0



hide SVs

Time-Averaging of Voltages (5/6)

- Using the aforementioned transformation,
 - The reference vector can be shown in the dq -plane; and
 - The reference vector **is rotated** in the plane with the desired output frequency;
 - (and virtually **sampled** with the sampling frequency).
 - Now, we can go back to the idea of time-averaging.



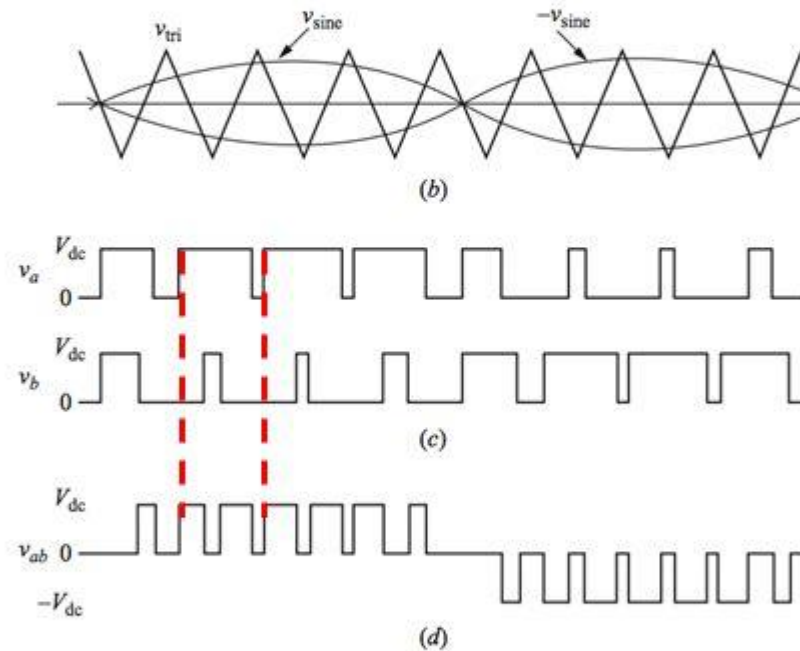
Time-Averaging of Voltages (6/6)

- **As the legs cannot be continuously switched on and off,**
 - This reference vector is sampled;
 - The “sampled” reference vector is only changed at each T_s (a new “virtual” sample is taken);
 - This is an approximation to the actual vector
 - and gets better as the sampling interval T_s gets smaller, at the expense of losses.
- **So in each T_s , we need to construct the reference vector,**
 - There are only 6 active states for the converter (just like voltages 0 and E in the Buck converter example);
 - The reference vector is synthesized by the adjacent space vectors.

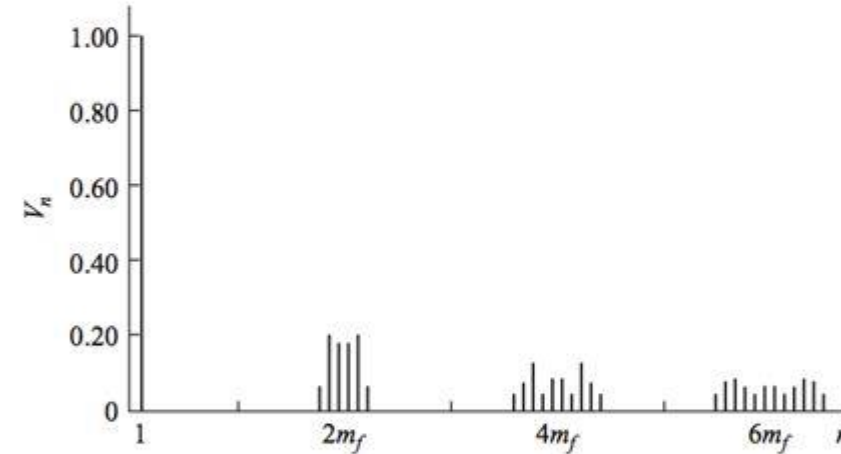
INVERTERS

Harmonics in PWM single-phase inverter : Unipolar switching scheme

- The frequency of the output voltage is doubled.
- If m_f is chosen as even integer then the first cluster of harmonics appear around $2m_f$ (the harmonic at $2m_f$ itself is zero)



Graphically, this can be represented using frequency spectrum diagram :



Or using a normalized Fourier coefficients table:

	$m_a=1$	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1
$n=1$	1.00	0.90	0.80	0.70	0.60	0.50	0.40	0.30	0.20	0.10
$n=2m_f \pm 1$	0.18	0.25	0.31	0.35	0.37	0.36	0.33	0.27	0.19	0.10
$n=2m_f \pm 3$	0.21	0.18	0.14	0.10	0.07	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.00	0.00

VSC – Need for Diodes

