



# An Interleaved High-Power Flyback Inverter for Photovoltaic Application

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**Abstract**—This paper presents analysis, design, and implementation of an isolated grid-connected inverter for photovoltaic (PV) applications based on interleaved flyback converter topology operating in discontinuous current mode (DCM). The primary objective of this study is to design the flyback converter at high power and demonstrate its practicality with good performance as a central type PV inverter. For this purpose, an inverter system rated at 2 kW is developed by interleaving of only three flyback cells with added benefit of reduced size of passive filtering elements. The efficiency of this system is better as compared to the earlier system. This paper also gives an optimum strategy for the interleaved flyback inverter to improve the efficiency over wide operating range.

**Key Words**— Flyback converter, harmonics, interleaved converters, photovoltaic inverters

## I. INTRODUCTION

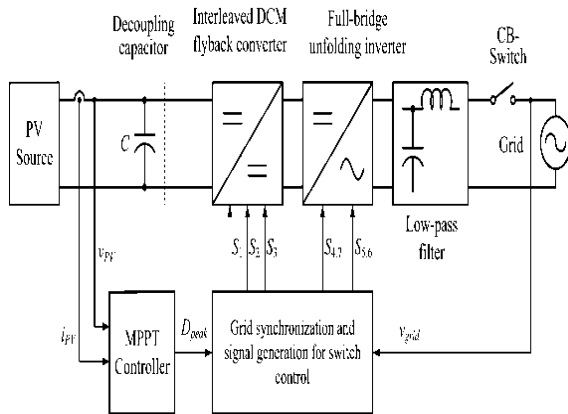
Solar energy is considered as one of the most renewable and freely available sources of energy and the candidate to play a greater role in the energy market of the world in the near future. Therefore, the primary objective of the study presented in this paper is to contribute to the research and development in the photovoltaic inverter technology with the help of flyback inverter at high power. The flyback converter is the lowest cost converter among the isolated topologies since it uses the least number of components. In other types of isolated topologies, the energy storage inductor and the transformer are separate elements. But the combination of these two components in a flyback topology makes cost effective and reduction in

the size of the whole circuit. For this reason, as we try to achieve the high-power implementation of the flyback converter with good performance, which is our primary research contribution, we will also try to preserve the cost advantage during the final implementation stage.

Practical implementation of a transformer with relatively large energy storage capability is always a challenge. The air gap is where the energy is stored, so a high-power flyback converter design needs a relatively large air gap which is an important part of the scheme design. A flyback converter built with a transformer that has large leakage flux and poor coupling will have poor energy transfer efficiency. Mainly for this reason, the flyback converters are generally not designed for high power. As a result, the flyback topology finds a limited role in photovoltaic applications only at very low power as a micro inverter.

## II. PROPOSED SYSTEM

Fig. 1 shows the block diagram of the proposed inverter system. The results of an earlier work based on the same topology where the primary objective was to prove the concept with a design at 1 kW were presented in [1]. Since the time of that work, there have been major design changes and upgrades in order to process twice more power and at the same time to achieve better overall performance.

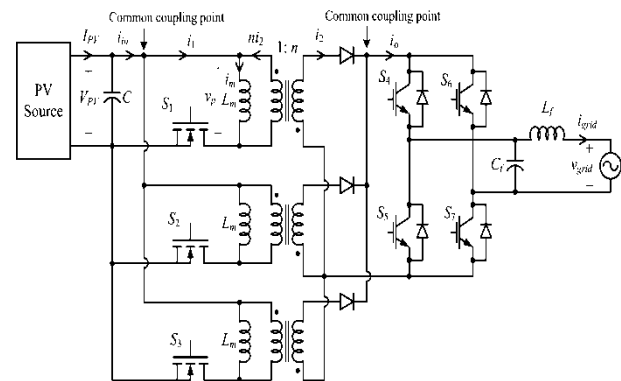


**Figure 1** Block diagram of the proposed grid-connected PV inverter system based on interleaved DCM flyback converter topology.

As mentioned before, the choice of operation mode for the converter is DCM. The fundamental motivations for selecting DCM operation are summarized below.

- 1) It provides dynamic response and stability for all the operating condition under consideration.
- 2) No reverse recovery problem. The diodes exhibit reverse recovery problem in CCM operation which causes noise. So this operation eliminates all complications.
- 3) No turn-on losses.
- 4) Small size of the transformer.
- 5) Easy control. No need for a feedback loop for the control of the grid current. Only an open-loop control is enough to synthesize a sinusoidal current with good THD. This makes the implementation of the control system less complex for DSP and allows faster execution time.

Contrary to the aforementioned great benefits of the DCM operation, it has several disadvantages as well. In this mode of operation, the current waveforms have higher form factor (high RMS to mean ratio) compared to continuous current mode (CCM). This normally leads to more power losses. So, as a solution, every current-carrying path including the switching devices should have low resistivity. Another drawback of DCM operation is the current pulses with large peaks and high amount of discontinuity in the waveforms. Device paralleling is a way to handle the high peak currents. Nevertheless, these disadvantages can be considerably reduced by interleaving of several cells. As a first benefit, the current in each cell will have much less peak but the same amount of discontinuity. However, the discontinuity will be significantly reduced as soon as the cells connect at the common point. All these benefits come from the ability of phase-shifted several cells spreading the power flow evenly over the switching cycle with minimum discontinuity at the source and grid side. In brief, the effective interleaving has the potential to solve or greatly reduce the adverse effects of the DCM operation [21]. Consequently, the circuit diagram of the proposed inverter system based on three-cell interleaved DCM flyback converter topology is shown below.



**Figure 2** Circuit schematic of the proposed PV inverter system based on three-cell interleaved flyback converter topology.

### III. CONVERTER DESCRIPTION

As shown in Fig. 2, the PV source is applied to a three-cell interleaved flyback converter through a decoupling capacitor. Each flyback converter uses a metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect transistor (MOSFET) for switching at the primary side, a flyback transformer, and a diode at the secondary side. The topology also has to employ a full-bridge inverter and a low-pass filter for proper interface to the grid. When the flyback switches ( $s_1, s_2, s_3$ ) are turned on, a current flows from the common point (the PV source) into the magnetizing inductance of the flyback transformers, and energy is stored in the form of magnetic field. During the on-time of the switches, no current flows to the output due to the position of the secondary side diodes; therefore, energy to the grid is supplied by the capacitor and the inductor. When the flyback switches are turned off, the energy stored in the magnetizing inductances is transferred into the grid in the form of current. So, the flyback inverter acts like a voltage-controlled current source. The converter is operated in DCM for easy and stable generation of AC currents at the grid interface. The DCM operation of the converter under open-loop control produces triangular current pulses at every switching period. If sinusoidal PWM method is used for control, the inverter will regulate these current pulses into a sinusoidal current in phase with the grid voltage.

The full-bridge inverter is only responsible for unfolding the sinusoidally modulated DC current pulses into AC at the right moment of the grid voltage. Since the switches of the inverter are operated at the grid frequency, the switching losses are insignificant. Only conduction losses are concerned.



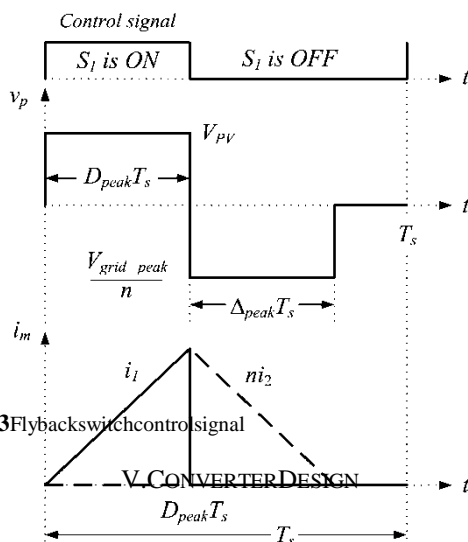
For this reason, the bridge can use thyristor or event transistor switches for lower cost. However, for easy control also the availability in the laboratory for fast prototyping, we prefer using IGBT switches for this design. But, the final prototype will not use IGBTs.

#### IV. CONVERTER ANALYSIS

The analysis of the converter is performed based on the circuit schematic given in Fig. 2 and only considers the first flyback cell. And it is done over one particular switching period when both the grid voltage and the duty ratio are at their peak values. Later, the analysis results will be generalized to include all the cells and extended for the operation of the converter over a full grid period. Consequently,

Fig. 3 shows the control signal for the flyback switch, flyback transformer primary voltage ( $V_p$ ), and magnetization current ( $i_m$ ) with its components and over the selected switching period where the duty ratio is at its peak value.

The control system used in this design does not employ a feedback loop for the regulation of the output current. Therefore the waveform quality of the grid current is greatly dependent on the quality of the DC voltage at the flyback converter input, which is also the voltage at the PV terminals. For that reason, a relatively constant DC voltage is required for synthesizing a sinusoidal current with low distortion under open-loop control. Otherwise, some low frequency harmonics appears at the grid current causing increased THD. In addition, the ripple at the PV voltage can create light utilization losses at the PV power as reported in [10]. So, low ripple is also preferred for perfect utilization of the solar power. The main reason that causes the voltage ripple in single-phase grid-connected PV inverters is the demand of the load by the PV source to deliver fluctuating power with a magnitude twice that of the average power and a frequency twice that of the grid frequency



**Figure 3** Flyback switch control signal

Since the design is intended mainly for small electric power systems including residential applications, the power rating is selected as 2 kW. Table I gives the specification to be used for the design of the proposed inverter system. The switching frequency ( $f_s$ ) is selected as 40 kHz in order to achieve high efficiency along with smaller sized magnetics. In DCM operation, the turn-on switching losses are eliminated since the current starts from zero at every switching cycle, which is an important advantage, but in return the switch itself will face large peak current stress and associated high turn-off switching losses. So, the choice of switching devices should have fast current fall time to reduce the turn-off losses.

For this reason, we use MOSFET as the flyback switch. Due to the fact that the MOSFETs with low voltage ratings have much lower on-state resistance and more efficient as far as the conduction losses are concerned, we prefer low voltage design. Also, the maximum converter input voltage is 108.5 V for the selected PV module arrangement. In addition, the flyback switches may face with high voltage stress during turn off due to the leakage inductance of the flyback transformer. So, a clamp and/or a snubber should be employed to keep the switching transients within the safe operating area (SOA) of the selected devices.

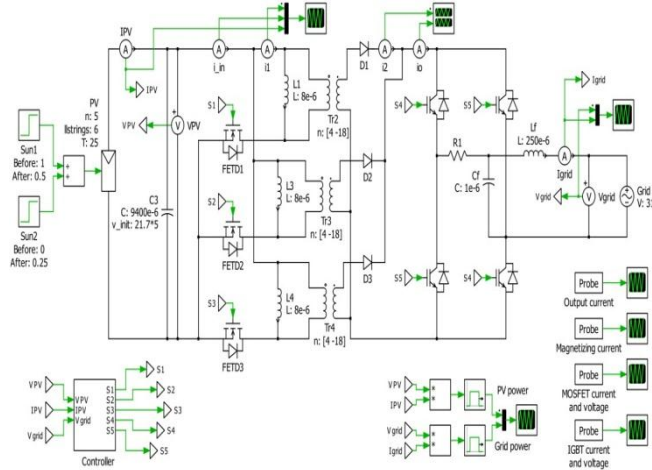
#### VI. CONTROL SYSTEM DESIGN

The control system is designed to perform two important control jobs simultaneously without using a feedback loop. While it is harvesting the maximum power available in the solar cells, it must pump that power into the utility grid with high power quality. For the first job, it should regulate a proper DC current and voltage at the PV interface for maximum energy harvesting. For the second job, it must provide control to convert the DC current, which comes from the panels and continuously regulated for the MPPT purpose, into AC current at the grid interface for power injection. In addition, this AC current should be synchronized with the grid frequency, should have low harmonic distortion, and a power factor close to unity. This generates the peak value of the duty ratio information in order to regulate the magnitude of the grid current. Similar to the voltage modulation ratio used to regulate the magnitude of the output voltage in a voltage source inverter; this signal generated by the MPPT block in this application regulates the magnitude of the grid current. If this control process is implemented successfully, the instantaneous average of these secondary currents is going to be sinusoidal and in phase with the grid voltage. Another control signal (Control2) that is also synchronized with the PLL output is used to control the H-bridge IGBT inverter for unfolding purpose. The whole control system is implemented in TMS320F28335 Texas Instrument's DSP Controller. The flowchart of the DSP firmware is illustrated in Fig 11. In the design of DSP controller



firmware, the PWM interrupt is utilized and the controller waits for that interrupt.

### VII. SIMULINK MODEL USING PLECS



**Figure 4** PLECS model of the proposed PV inverter system

### CONCLUSION

The flyback topology is selected because of its simple structure and easy power flow control with high power quality outputs at the grid interface. It should be noted that interleaved flyback topology is practical at high power as a central type PV inverter, which is the main contribution of this paper. Furthermore, the performance of the proposed system is comparable to the commercial isolated grid-connected PV inverters in the market, but it may have some cost advantage due to its topological benefit.

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