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# Design of a Solid State Circuit Breaker Using a SiC MOSFET for LVDC Applications

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**ABSTRACT** In this paper, a solid state circuit breaker(SSCB) for a low voltage direct current (LVDC) system is presented. The LVDC distribution system such as a household distribution, require a DC input source, DC loads, and a DC circuit breaker. The major problems in the DC distribution system are the arc problem of disconnecting power from loads and a fast acting circuit breaker for the existing power converter. Therefore, a fast acting and high-voltage-withstanding circuit breaker such as the SSCB is required. The SSCB is composed of wide-band gap power semiconductor switch, such as a SiC MOSFET. It can operate in a very short time and contain the energy-absorbing or bypass circuit to protect itself and other components in the LVDC distribution system under a short circuit fault. In this paper, an SSCB using a SiC MOSFET for LVDC applications is presented. It contains a parallel bypass circuit to reduce the fault energy. The circuit of the SSCB was simulated using PSIM and validated experimentally using a prototype.

**INDEX TERMS** LVDC, SSCB, SiC Mosfet, DC grid, protection.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

<span id="page-0-0"></span>Today, the interest in electric energy has increased. In particular, the research on the high-voltage direct current (HVDC) on the transmission side and low voltage direct current (LVDC) on the consumer side is developed widely. In the DC distribution system, several problems are encountered in applying the components of the existing AC system as it is [\[1\],](#page-7-0) [\[2\]. Fo](#page-7-1)r a circuit breaker, unlike in the AC system, the problem of arc generation must be considered very seriously. For this problem, several mechanisms exist such as the mechanical arc block method, a hybrid method that mixes mechanical and semiconductor components, and the semiconductor circuit method [\[3\],](#page-7-2) [\[4\]. Fr](#page-7-3)equently, a power converter with the semiconductor device is used in LVDC applications such as a household distribution. It requires a fast acting circuit breaker to protect the system and other branches under a fault condition. The semiconductor circuit breaker,

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<span id="page-0-3"></span><span id="page-0-2"></span>solid state circuit breaker (SSCB), has the advantage of being able to secure a very short operation time and disadvantage of requiring a high withstand voltage and current specification. The topologies of a typical SSCB are categorized into bypass circuit and energy-absorbing circuit [\[5\],](#page-7-4) [\[6\],](#page-7-5) [\[7\]. A](#page-7-6)n energy absorber type SSCB using a snubber circuit can dissipate the stored energy in load inductor and reduce the spike voltage of power device. The bypass circuit type SSCB can seperate the power devices from the fault side. The stored fault energy can be dissipated by freewheeling through bypass path. The topology used in this paper contains parallel bypass circuit. The fault current rapidly rises to threshold level and the bypass path was activated to reduction fault current in main bypass circuit. This could more reduce the peak spike voltage rapidly than other topologies. Also, the power devices of SSCB can be considered. Usually, the insulated gate bipolor transistor(IGBT) or MOSFET were used in SSCB as main power switch. Recently, the SSCB using a SiC MOSFET or a ganlium-nitride(GaN) power device is researched very widely [\[8\],](#page-7-7) [\[9\]. Th](#page-7-8)e design requirement of a SSCB system

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<span id="page-1-2"></span>

**FIGURE 1.** Powerline configuration of a DC household.

using wide-band gap(WBG) devices such as a SiC MOSFET or GaN is more complicated. The gate drive circuit and protection circuit is different from conventional IGBT or MOSFET circuit. These are considered to design a topology and protection logic of the SSCB. In the LVDC system, because the voltage rating is approximately 380 V and the current rating is low, it is suitable system for applying the SSCB. In this paper, an SSCB using a SiC MOSFET for LVDC applications is presented. The SiC MOSFET was used in main power switches and the SSCB was designed to protect short circuit accident by desaturation detection circuit. The SSCB contains the parallel bypass circuit to reduce the fault energy. The circuit of the SSCB was simulated using PSIM and validated experimentally using a prototype.

The remainder of this paper is presented as follows. In section [II,](#page-1-0) the SSCB used in LVDC system is presented. In subsections  $II-A$  and  $B$ , the conventional SSCB and proposed SSCB are described. The operation of the SSCB is presented in subsection  $II-C$ . In subsection  $II-D$ , the design parameters of the SSCB are presented. The simulation of the SSCB and experimental results are presented in sections [III](#page-4-0) and [IV.](#page-5-0) Finally, section [V](#page-7-9) presents the conclusions of this paper.

# <span id="page-1-0"></span>**II. SOLID STATE CIRCUIT BREAKER OF LVDC SYSTEM**

The symbols and acronyms used in this paper as follows:<br>SSCP Solid State Circuit Brooker



- The power line of system is shown in Fig [1.](#page-1-2)
- 1) In LVDC distribution system, the power distribution consists of an input power converter, a distribution panel, a controller, a circuit breaker, and DC loads. The input power of distribution system is connected to a

power converter. Therefore, under a fault, the use of a fast acting circuit breaker is required to disconnect only the faulty load branch and to protect the power converter. When a fault occurs, the switch of the SSCB may be destroyed owing to an overvoltage induced by line inductive component. A fault energy reducing method is required to protect the power device of the SSCB. As research on LVDC grid systems has increased, research on the SSCB has also been actively conducted [\[8\],](#page-7-7) [\[9\],](#page-7-8) [\[10\],](#page-7-10) [\[11\],](#page-7-11) [\[12\].](#page-7-12)

# <span id="page-1-4"></span><span id="page-1-1"></span>A. CONVENTIONAL SSCB

The topologies of a typical SSCB are categorized into bypass circuit based type [\[13\],](#page-7-13) [\[14\]](#page-7-14) and energy-absorbing circuit based type [\[15\],](#page-7-15) [\[16\],](#page-7-16) [\[17\]](#page-7-17) by reducing fault energy method.

<span id="page-1-6"></span><span id="page-1-5"></span>Fig. [2](#page-1-3) shows the configuration of a conventional SSCB.

<span id="page-1-3"></span>

**FIGURE 2.** Configuration of Conventional SSCB : (a)energy absorber (b)bypass diode.

AS shown in Fig. [2 \(a\),](#page-1-3) the SSCB has an energy absorber unit. Under a fault, the stored fault energy in the output line inductor can be dissipated by an energy absorber such as a snubber circuit. The snubber can reduce the spike voltage of the power device. The snubber parameters must designed properly. The stored energy, fault current, and desired spike voltage level are key variables. The parameters of the snubber can be determined through an analysis of an equivalent circuit of the SSCB.

Fig. [2 \(b\)](#page-1-3) shows the bypass type SSCB. This topology contains a bypass circuit such as a clamping diode. The bypass circuit separates the power devices from the fault side. The stored energy can be dissipated by freewheeling through the bypass diode. Additionally, it can clamp a spike voltage to prevent exceeding the voltage rating of the power devices. The specifications of the metal oxide varistor should be designed considering the stored energy and desired clamping

voltage with its margin. A series or parallel combination of diode-based circuit design can be developed. In another cases, a combination of two SSCB types is used.

# <span id="page-2-0"></span>B. PROPOSED SSCB

Fig. [3](#page-2-2) shows the configuration of the proposed SSCB.

<span id="page-2-2"></span>

**FIGURE 3.** Configuration of proposed SSCB.

The proposed SSCB consist of a bypass circuit using  $R_3$ ,  $C_3$ , and  $D_3$  and a second bypass circuit using  $R_1$ ,  $C_1$ , and thyristor  $T_1$ . Under a fault, the controller detects a fault current over the threshold level and turns off the power devices  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ . The stored energy in  $L_{l_0}$  flows through the bypass path  $D_1-R_3-C_3-D_3-L_{lo}$ . This process reduces overvoltage across the power devices *S*<sup>1</sup> and *S*2. To reduce overvoltage further, the thyristor  $T_1$  turns on at a predetermined fault current level. Subsequently, the fault current flows in the parallel path  $R_3 - C_3 - D_3$  and *R*1-*C*1-*T*1-freewheeling diode of S2. The current path under a fault is shown in Fig. [5.](#page-3-1)

# <span id="page-2-1"></span>C. OPERATION OF SSCB

Figs. [4](#page-2-3) and [5](#page-3-1) depict the operation waveforms and operation modes of the proposed SSCB.

- 1) Mode 1 [before *t*1]: The SSCB operates in the normal mode. The power devices  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  turn on and transfer power from the source to load. This means  $I_{l0} = I_{load}$ ,  $V_{load} = V_{in}$  and  $D_1, D_2, D_3$ , and  $T_1$  remain in the off state.
- 2) Mode 2  $[t_1 \leq t < t_2]$ : At  $t_1$ , a short circuit fault occurs. The load current *ILo* increases with a slope depending on output line inductance *Llo*. At *t*2, the load current exceeds the threshold current level *Ith*, and the gate signal of power device *Vgs*−*<sup>s</sup>* begins turning off.
- 3) Mode  $3[t_2 \leq t < t_3]$ :  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  turn off at  $t_3$ . Before *t*3, the load current still increases with a same slope as in Mode 2. At *t*3, the turning off completes.
- 4) Mode 4  $[t_3 \leq t \leq t_4]$ : After power devices turn off, the fault current freewheels by the bypass path, and the spike voltage across the power devices increases. Moreover, the switch current  $I_{SW_2}$  decreases. The stored energy in output line inductance *Llo* begins flowing through the  $D_1$ - $R_3$ - $C_3$ - $D_3$ - $L_{l0}$  path. The bypass current  $I_{R_3}$  and the spike voltage across power device  $S_2$  ( $V_{ds}$ ) is determined by resistor  $R_3$  and capacitor  $C_3$ .

<span id="page-2-3"></span>

**FIGURE 4.** The operation waveforms of the proposed SSCB.

5) Mode 5  $[t_4 \leq t \leq t_6]$  : At  $t_4$ , the thyristor *T*<sup>1</sup> turns on and the fault current flows through the  $D_1-R_3-C_3-D_3$  path and the  $D_1-R_1-C_1-T_1$ -body diode of the *S*<sup>2</sup> path. The stored energy decreases rapidly at the beginning of the bypass operation. This means that Modes 4 and 5 occur in the very short term. This reduces the spike voltage across the power devices and protects them. The turning on timing of  $T_1$  is determined by the threshold current and the overvoltage margin related on the rating voltage of the power device. As the stored energy

<span id="page-3-1"></span>

**FIGURE 5.** Operation modes of the proposed SSCB during a DC current fault condition.

decreases, the bypass currents of parallel path also decrease.

6) Mode 6  $[t \geq t_6]$  : At  $t_6$ , the fault bypass currents reduce to zero. The sotred fault energy completely is consumed, and the thyristor  $T_1$  turns off.

For a reverse direction, the operation process is same as that above. The difference is the position of fault, a source side fault, and bypass path,  $R_2$ - $C_2$ - $D_2$ . In this case, the additional bypass path through  $T_1$  operates through the same mechanism.

## <span id="page-3-0"></span>D. DESIGN PARAMETERS OF SSCB

The design requirements of the proposed SSCB is shown in Table [1.](#page-3-2) To design parameter of SSCB, the target spike voltage, fault current and operating temperature were predetermined. These requirement affected to select power devices of SSCB and could be affected by designed parameters for optimizing procedure. As shown in Fig. [5,](#page-3-1) the fault current flows through bypass path  $D_1$ - $R_3$ - $C_3$ - $D_3$ - $L<sub>lo</sub>$ . In addition, after  $T_1$  is turned on, the fault current also passes through another path, *D*1-*R*1-*C*1-*T*1-body diode of *S*2. To design each parameter, we consider the analysis of

<span id="page-3-2"></span>**TABLE 1.** Design requirement of proposed SSCB.

<b>Electrical Requirement</b>		
Input voltage	<b>DC 380 V</b>	
Maximum Fault current	$\leq 120A$	
Normal current rating	10 A	
Target spike voltage	$\leq 1000V$	
<b>Dynamics Requirement</b>		
Breaking time	$\leq 20 \mu s$	
Thermal Requirement		
Cooling method	Air cooling	
Operating temperature	≤70 °C	
<b>Mechanical mounting Requirement</b>		
<b>Mounting Style</b>	Base plate + power module + $PCB + case$	

<span id="page-3-3"></span>equivalent circuit after a fault [\[18\]. I](#page-7-18)n Mode 4, after S<sub>1</sub> and  $S_2$  are turned off, the stored energy in  $L_{l0}$  is in capacitor  $C_3$ . The spike voltage across the power devices is related to the capacitance of  $C_3$  and the resistance of  $R_3$  [\[17\],](#page-7-17) [\[18\].](#page-7-18) Even in worst case where the thyristor is not operating, the stored energy can be dissipated, and  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  can be protected from the overvoltage stress. Therefore, considering this requirement, the mathematical model of the SSCB circuit

in Mode 4 is represented in  $(1)-(2)$  $(1)-(2)$ . The voltage model is shown in [\(1\)](#page-4-1) by using KVL analysis. The input voltage is the same as a voltage across an output line inductor, a resistor *R*<sup>3</sup> and a capacitor *C*3.

$$
V_{dc} = R_3 i_{R_3}(t) + L_{lo} \frac{di_{lo}(t)}{dt} + V_{C_3}(t)
$$
  

$$
i_{lo} = i_{R_3} = C_3 \frac{dV_{C_3}(t)}{dt}
$$
 (1)

where  $V_{C_3}$  is the charged voltage in  $C_3$ , and  $i_{R_3}$  is the current passing through *R*3, which is the same as the fault current *ilo*. To achieve a fast reaction of the SSCB, we adopt the underdamped response in this model. The charged capacitor voltage and the bypass current is described in [\(2\).](#page-4-2)

$$
V_{C_3}(t) = V_{dc} + e^{-\alpha t} (D_1 \cos \omega_d t + D_2 \sin \omega_d t).
$$
  
\n
$$
\alpha = \frac{R_3}{2L_{lo}}, \omega_0 = \frac{1}{\sqrt{L_{lo}C_3}}, \omega_d = \sqrt{\omega_0^2 - \alpha^2}.
$$
  
\n
$$
D_1 = -V_{dc}, D_2 = \frac{I_{flt}}{C_3} + \alpha V_{dc}.
$$
 (2)

where  $\alpha$  is the damping coefficient,  $\omega_0$  is the resonant frequency, and  $\omega_d$  is damped natural frequency.  $I_{\text{flt}}$  is the fault current, which is the maximum current in the bypass path. At  $t = t_4$ , the  $I_{SW_2}$  reaches its minimum value in the energy dissipation process, and the bypass current reaches the peak value. When operating with  $T_1$ ,  $I_{SW_2}$  does not reach zero. In the other case,  $I_{SW_2}$  reaches zero. In both of them, the bypass current  $I_{R_3}$  can be the peak current value, and the capacitor voltage  $V_{C_3}$  reaches the peak value. To prepare for a scenario where  $T_1$  is not operating, we must consider the parameters of only the single bypass path without the thyristor. The spike voltage across the power devices can be limited in the maximum voltage of the power devices, and the consumption of the bypass path capability should be greater than the fault energy stored in line inductance *Llo*. The capacitance of  $C_3$  is designed using the criterion described in [\(3\).](#page-4-3)

$$
\frac{1}{2}C_3(V_{spk} - V_{dc})^2 \ge \frac{1}{2}L_{lo}I_{fl}^2.
$$
 (3)

where *Vspk* is the maximum target spike voltage.

Therefore, the minimum value of capacitance of  $C_3$  is given by

$$
C_3 \ge L_{lo} (\frac{kI_{\text{fit}}}{V_{spk} - V_{dc}})^2, (1 < k \le 1.2). \tag{4}
$$

where k is the margin factor.

The resistor  $R_3$  reduces the fault current rapidly. This means that a small resistor value reduces the peak voltage of the power devices. However, in this case, the very large current exceeding the current rating of power devices causes severe damage. Therefore, the resistor value is considered of the initial charging voltage, i.e,  $V_{dc}$ .  $R_3$  is expressed in [\(5\).](#page-4-4) The resistor  $R_1$  in parallel bypass path could be determined by considering fault current level and balancing of current in both path.

<span id="page-4-4"></span>
$$
R_3 \geqslant \frac{V_{C_3}}{k I_{fl}}.\tag{5}
$$

<span id="page-4-1"></span>The design process of the proposed SSCB is shown in Fig. [6.](#page-4-5) The parameter  $C_3$  and  $R_3$  are closely related to each other. The change of capacitance  $C_3$  affects the change the peak spike voltage and the energy flowed bypass path. To compensate this, the resistance or  $R_3$  could be changed. Similarly, the change of resistance affects the capacitance of  $C_3$ . The target spike voltage and the fault current could be considered again to optimize parameter  $C_3$  and  $R_3$  iterationally.

<span id="page-4-5"></span><span id="page-4-2"></span>

**FIGURE 6.** The procedure to design parameters of the proposed SSCB.

# <span id="page-4-0"></span>**III. SIMULATIONS**

#### A. SIMULATION SETUP

<span id="page-4-3"></span>Fig. [7](#page-5-1) shows the simulation setup block using PSIM tools. The simulation parameters are presented in Table [2.](#page-5-2) The input voltage was 380 Vdc and output rated current was 10 A. The simulation achieved at first normal operating mode and then the short circuit fault occurred at  $t = 1$  ms. The fault current cut off level was set to 120 A, and the load line inductance was 12.5  $\mu$ H.

## B. SIMULATION RESULTS

Fig. [8](#page-5-3) shows the simulation results. In Fig[.8 \(a\),](#page-5-3) the fault current bypass path is only the  $D_1$ - $R_3$ - $C_3$ - $D_3$ - $L_{l0}$  path. The simulation the spike voltage across the power device was 923 V. When using  $T_1$ , the fault current flowed through the parallel bypass path,  $D_1-R_3-C_3-D_3$  and  $D_1-R_1-C_1-T_1$ body diode of the *S*<sup>2</sup> path, as shown in Fig. [8 \(b\).](#page-5-3) The simulation spike voltage across the power device was 785 V, which was less than the case without thyristor operation. The proposed SSCB reduced the spike voltage peak and mitigated severe damage to the power device.

<span id="page-5-1"></span>

**FIGURE 7.** Block diagram of the SSCB simulation using PSIM tool.

<span id="page-5-2"></span>**TABLE 2.** Simulation parameters of the proposed SSCB.

Parameter	Specifications	Units
$\sqrt{i}n$	380	dc
$\scriptstyle \mu_o$	12.5	
$R_{load}$		
$R_1, R_3$	3.3	
$C_1, C_3$	.44	
t.h.		

## <span id="page-5-0"></span>**IV. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS**

A. TEST SYSTEM AND THE SSCB PROTOTYPE HARDWARE Fig. [9](#page-5-4) shows a test system of a prototype of the proposed SSCB. The test system consisted of an input power source, a dc-link capacitor bank, a SSCB prototype, resistor loads, and a fault generator. The circuit breaker separated the dc-link capacitor bank from the input power source to protect the power source. The fault generator was another circuit breaker or fault inductor to produce a short circuit fault. When using the fault inductor, the output total inductance was set to 12.5  $\mu$ H. The parameters of the SSCB prototype are presented in Table [3.](#page-6-0) The parameters of the bypass components  $R_1 \sim R_3$  and  $C_1 \sim C_3$  were selected considering the overvoltage of power device and the fault current level.

The test procedure was conducted as follows. The circuit breaker connected the power source to the capacitor bank, and the capacitor bank charged to 380 V. After the circuit breaker was turned off and a short circuit fault was generated, the SSCB turned on. To test the for reverse direction, we swapped the load and source sides.

<span id="page-5-3"></span>

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**FIGURE 8.** Simulation results: (a) without thyristor operation (b) with thyristor operation.

<span id="page-5-4"></span>

**FIGURE 9.** Configuration of test system for the proposed SSCB test.

<span id="page-5-5"></span>

**FIGURE 10.** Gate drive circuit of the SSCB.

The power device selected for the SSCB was C3M0016120D. This is a discrete SiC MOSFET with a 1.2 kV voltage rating and drain-source on state resistance



#### <span id="page-6-0"></span>**TABLE 3.** Parameters of proposed SSCB.

of 16 m $\Omega$ .  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  were directed to each other for bidirectional operation. The gate signals of *S*<sup>1</sup> and *S*<sup>2</sup> were generated using a single gate driver, as shown in Fig. [10.](#page-5-5) The short circuit current detection and protection were operated using a desaturation detection circuit [\[19\],](#page-7-19) [\[20\].](#page-7-20)

<span id="page-6-3"></span><span id="page-6-1"></span>

**FIGURE 11.** Experimental setup : (a) SSCB prototype (b) test setup.

Fig[.11 \(a\)](#page-6-1) and [\(b\)](#page-6-1) present the proposed SSCB prototype and test setup.

## B. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Fig. [12](#page-6-2) presents the experimental results of the proposed SSCB prototype for operation in both directions. As shown in Fig. [12 \(a\)](#page-6-2) presents the case when the thyristor was not operating. The gate signal of  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  turned on and the output current increased with slope  $32$  A/ $\mu$ s. The output current reached the threshold current level 120 A. Subsequently, the gate signal began turning off, and the output current still increased.  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  turned off completely and the voltage across the power devices *Vds* increased. The output current decreased and the fault current flowed through the bypass path. The bypass current reached the peak value, and *Vds* reached the peak point. The peak voltage was measured as 917 V. Fig.  $12(b)$  shows the case for the operating thyristor. Here, when the gate signal completely turned off, the output current decreased but the fault current flowed in the parallel  $D_1$ - $R_3$ - $C_3$ - $D_3$  path and  $D_1$ - $R_1$ - $C_1$ - $T_1$ -body diode of  $S_2$  path. The peak voltage of *Vds* was measured as 775 V. These results were approximate the simulation results 923 and 785 V. Fig. [12 \(c\)](#page-6-2) and [\(d\)](#page-6-2) depict the experimental results of the reverse direction case. The peak output voltages were 919 V(w/o thyristor) and 816V (with thyristor). The

<span id="page-6-2"></span>

**FIGURE 12.** Experimental Results : (a) without thyristor operation (b) with thyristor operation (c) without thyristor in reverse direction (d) with thristor in reverse direction.

oscillations of experimental waveforms in Fig. [12](#page-6-2) is caused by caused by resonance between output line inductor, capacitor of bypass circuit. The output line inductance is different for each location. After the environment is selected, it can be optimized.

The experimental results validate the proposed SSCB. The peak voltage of *Vds* with the operating thyristor was lower than without the thyristor. Even when the thyristor was not operating, the peak voltage of *Vds* was lower than the voltage rating of the power devices. This means that the proposed SSCB can protect the power devices even for changing bypass paths under short circuit faults.

#### <span id="page-7-21"></span>**TABLE 4.** Comparison table.



 $\odot$ : good,  $\odot$ : better, X: no

# <span id="page-7-9"></span>**V. CONCLUSION**

In this paper, an SSCB using a SiC MOSFET for LVDC applications is presented. It comprise a parallel bypass circuit to reduce the fault energy. The circuit of the SSCB was simulated using PSIM and validated experimentally using a prototype. The characteristics of other conventional SSCBs and proposed SSCB are compared as shown in Table [4.](#page-7-21) The proposed SSCB is more than or equal to other SSCBs on the whole. The SSCB operates in a very short time, and the parallel bypass circuit reduces the surge voltage, which is proportional to the fault energy and line inductance. The bypass circuit was designed considering a single bypass operation without thyristor. It protects the power devices under a fault. The parallel bypass operation is useful for reducing the fault energy rapidly at a fault generating moment. The operation in the reverse direction is also studied. The gate drive signals of power devices  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  are generated in a single gate driver. The over current fault is detected and protected by the desaturation circuit of the gate driver.

The circuit of SSCB was simulated using PSIM. The experimental results were obtained using a SSCB prototype. The experiment of operations with and without thyristor  $T_1$  were compared. With the thyristor, the spike voltage of power devices was lower than that without it. Almost similar results with simulation results were obtained, indicating that the proposed SSCB can be useful in the LVDC distribution system.

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