

Evaluation of a Hybrid Multi-Level Flying-Capacitor Bridge-Leg Topology for **Beyond 99%** Power Conversion Efficiency



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www.pes.ee.ethz.ch

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In collaboration with:

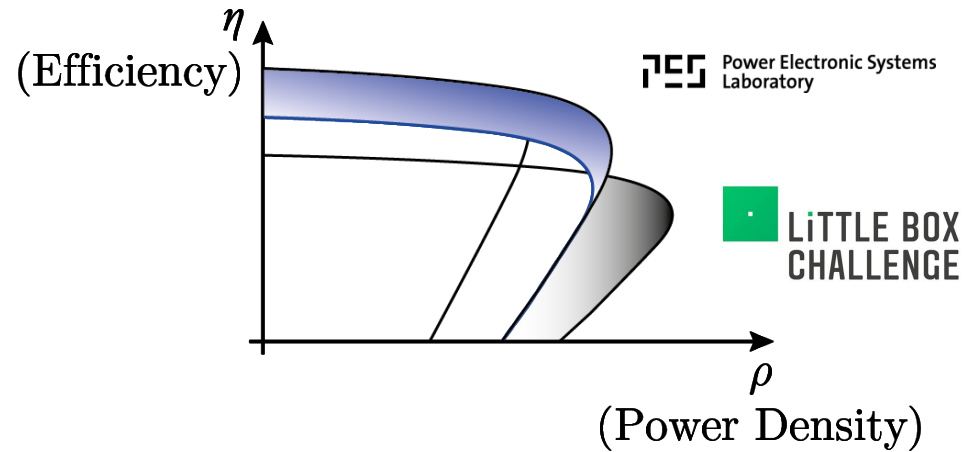
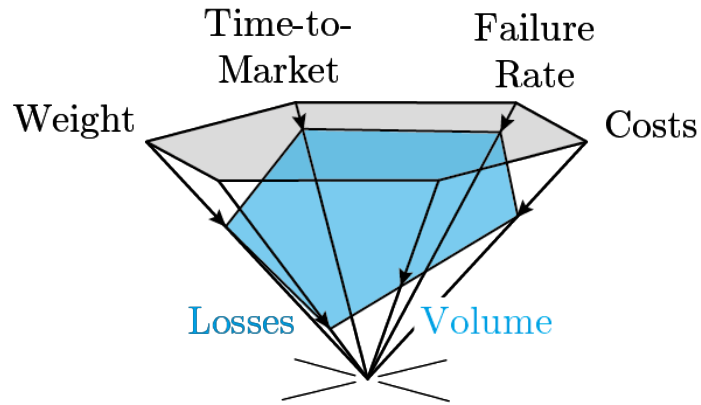


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Acknowledgements: K. L. Pally



► Towards Ultra-High Efficiency



Agenda

Introduction:
Existing Solutions

18 Slides

Hybrid Multi-Level
Inverter

9 Slides

6 Sl.

14 Slides

Final Results

13 Slides

4 Sl.

Motivation for Multi-Level
Solutions for
Ultra-High Efficiency

Pareto
Optimization

Conclusion

Pushing the Barriers: Existing Solutions



- *Ultra-High Efficiency*
- *Ultra-High Power Density*

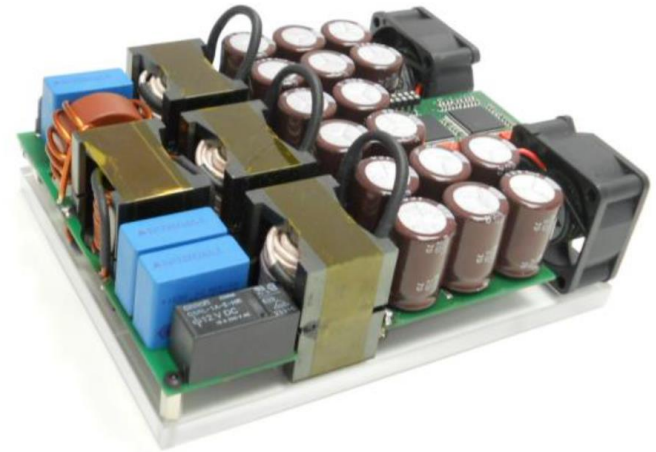
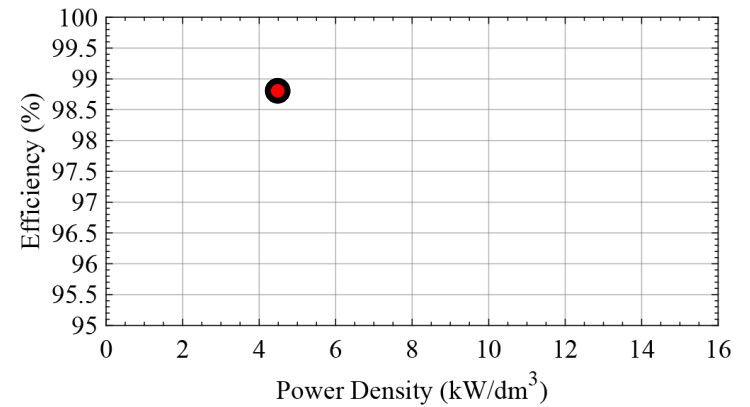
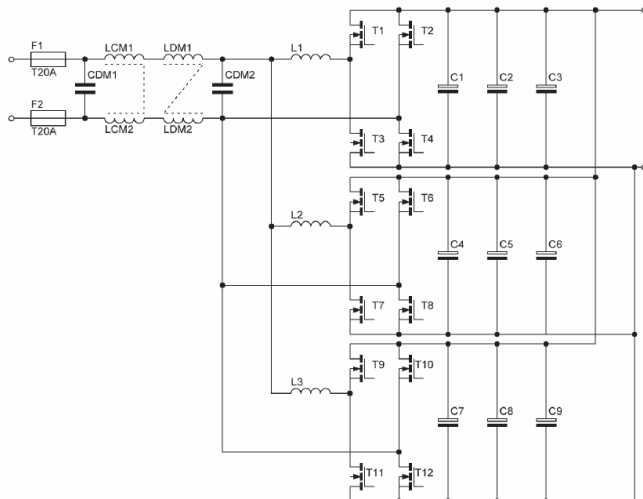
► Ultra-High Efficiency (1)

➤ Boost-Type TCM PFC Rectifier – ETH Zurich

- Input Voltage: 184...264V_{AC}
- Output Voltage: 400 V_{DC}
- Rated Power: 3.3 kW

■ Triple-Interleaved Topology

- 4.5kW/dm³ (73.8W/in³)
- 15.0cm x 12.0cm x 4.0cm
- 98.8% Peak Efficiency

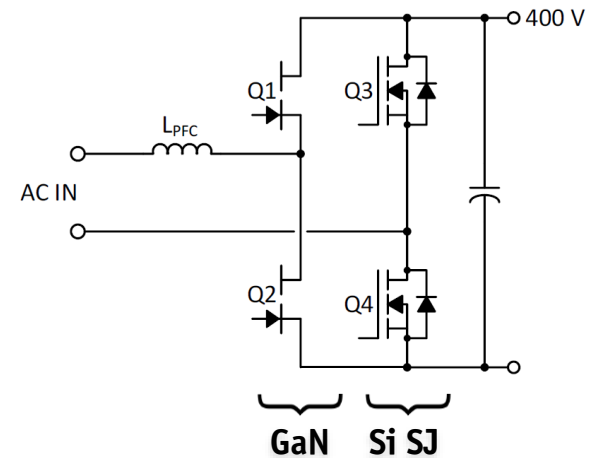


► Ultra-High Efficiency (2)

► Infineon PFC Rectifier Evaluation Board

- Input Voltage: 85...265V_{AC}
- Output Voltage: 400 V_{DC}
- Rated Power: 2.5 kW

- CoolGaN™ → 70mΩ / 600V (GaN HEMTs)
- CoolMOS™ C7 → 33mΩ / 650V (Silicon SJ technology)
- CCM (Hard-Switching) → @ 65kHz
- Totem-Pole Full-Bridge Topology
- Fulfills EMI CISPR Class B

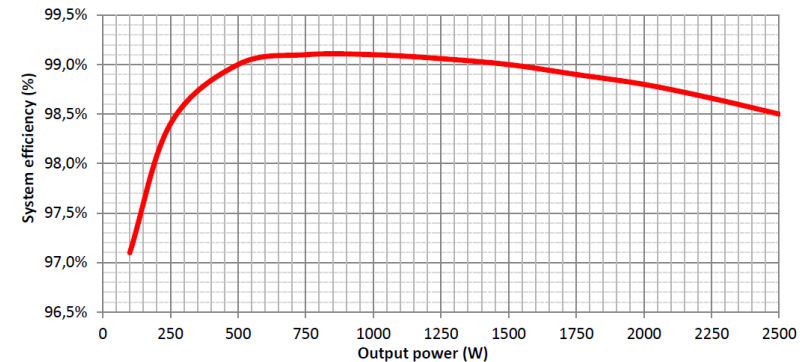
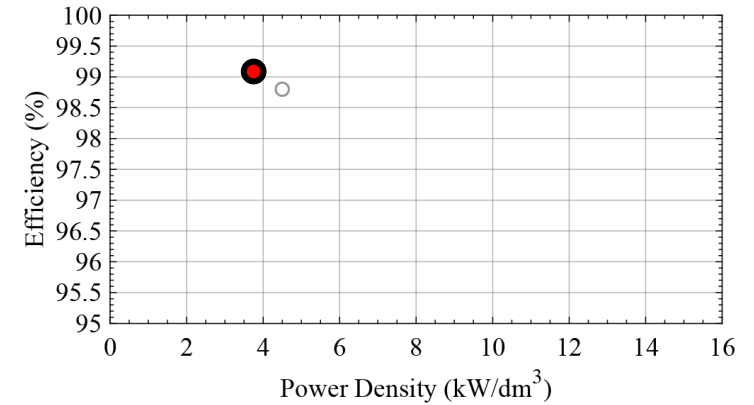


► Ultra-High Efficiency (2)

► Infineon PFC Rectifier Evaluation Board

- Input Voltage: 85...265V_{AC}
- Output Voltage: 400 V_{DC}
- Rated Power: 2.5 kW

- 3.76kW/dm³ (61.7W/in³)
- 22.0cm x 7.2cm x 4.2cm
- $f_s = 65\text{kHz}$ (PWM → Soft + Hard Switching)
- 99.1% Peak Efficiency

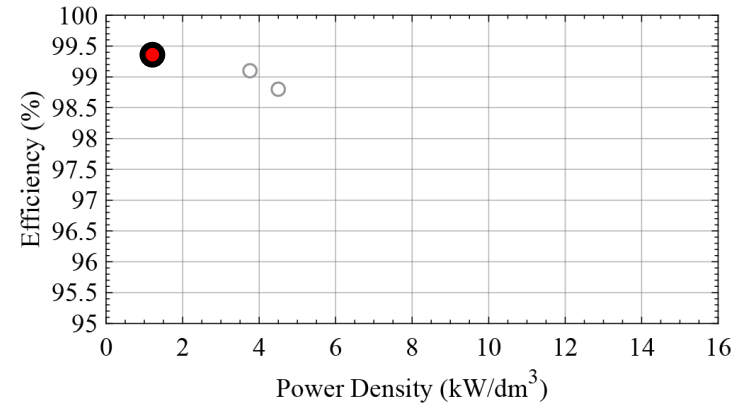
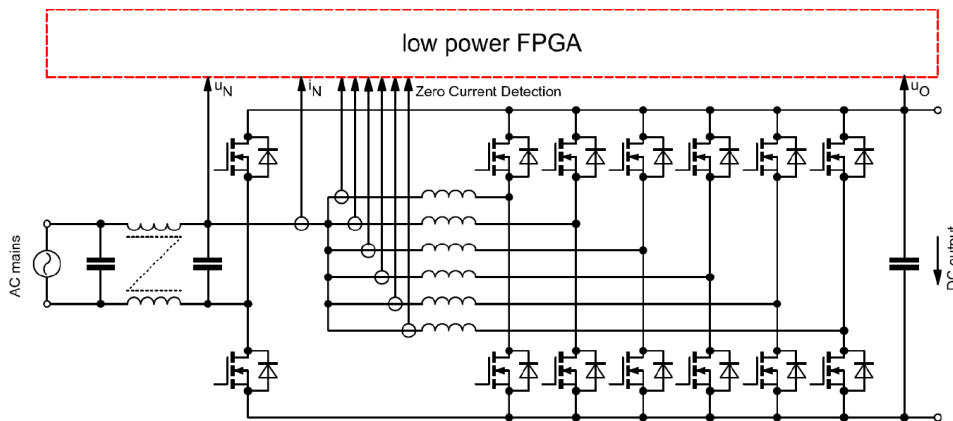


► Ultra-High Efficiency (3)

➤ Interleaved TCM PFC Rectifier – ETH Zurich

- Output Voltage: 400 V_{DC}
- Rated Power: 3.3 kW
- ZVS in All Bridges
- Large effective f_s for Filter
- High Partial Load Efficiency (>99% for P>500W)
- Fulfills EMI CISPR Class B
- Only Si SJ MOSFETs → No SiC devices

- 1.20kW/dm³ (19.7W/in³)
- f_s max. 100kHz
- 99.36% Peak Efficiency



► Ultra-High Power Density (1)

➤ GLBC: ETH Zurich (1.0)

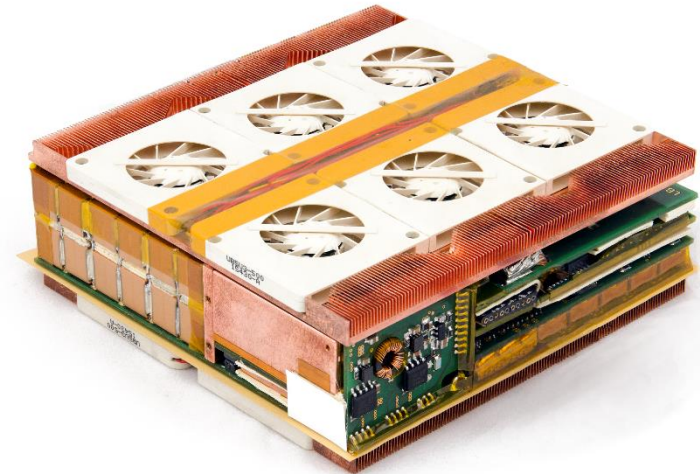
- System Employing Active CeraLink™
1- Φ Power Pulsation Buffer
- Interleaving of 2 Bridge Legs per Phase

- 8.2kW/dm³ (135W/in³)
- 8.9cm x 8.8cm x 3.1cm
- $f_s = 250\text{kHz} \dots 1\text{MHz}$
- 96,3% Peak Efficiency @ 2kW
- $T_c = 58\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ @ 2kW

■ Compliant to All “Original” Specifications (!)

- $i_{\text{gnd}} < 5\text{mA}$ (!)
- No Low-Frequ. CM Output Voltage Component
- No Overstressing of Components
- All Own IP / Patents

 **LITTLE BOX
CHALLENGE**



► Ultra-High Power Density (1)

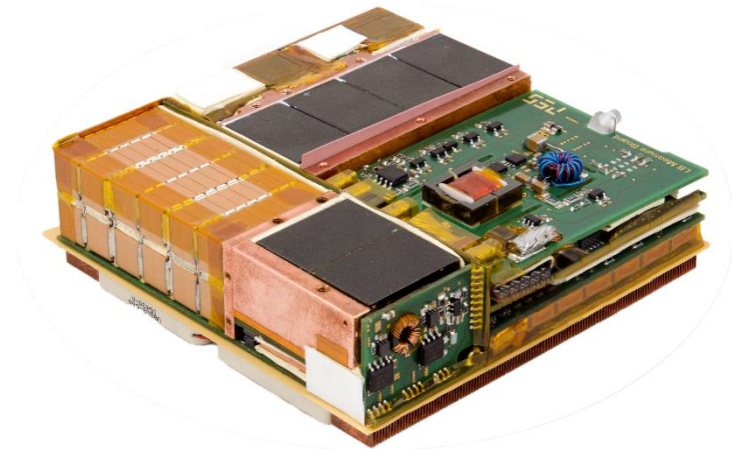
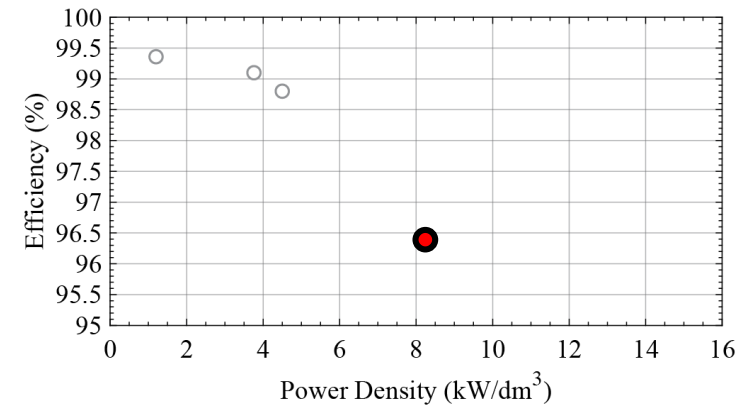
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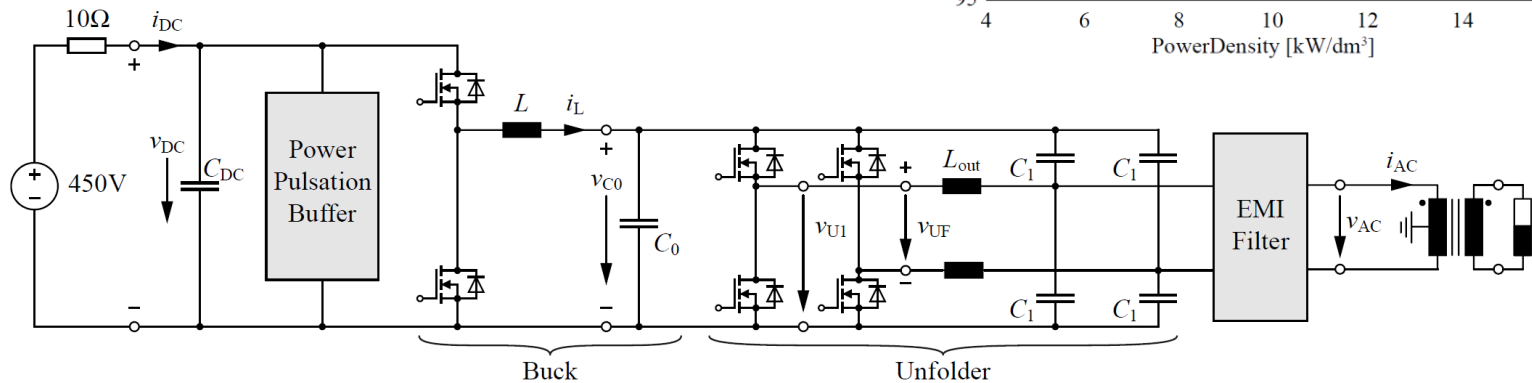
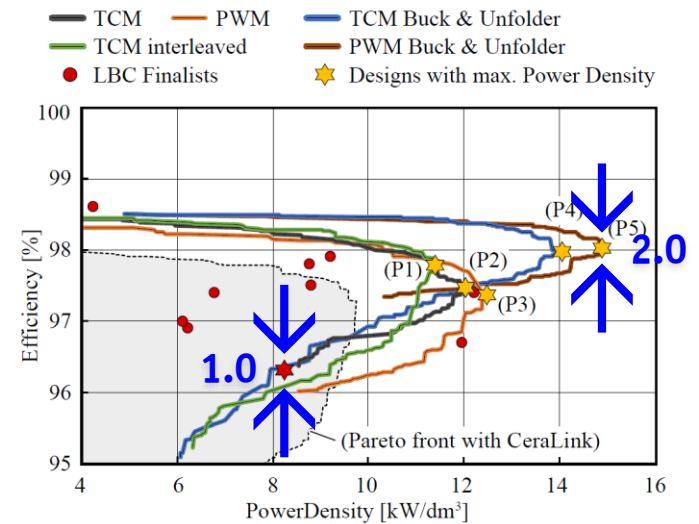


► Ultra-High Power Density (2)

➤ GLBC: ETH Zurich (2.0)

- Alternative Converter Topology: DC/|AC| - Buck Converter + Unfolder
- 60Hz – Unfolder
- TCM or PWM of DC/|AC| - Buck Converter
- X6S capacitors instead of Ceralink™

- DC/|AC| + Unfolder → Best Performance
- 2 Switching Bridge Legs → Larger Volume & Losses
- Interleaving → Not advantageous

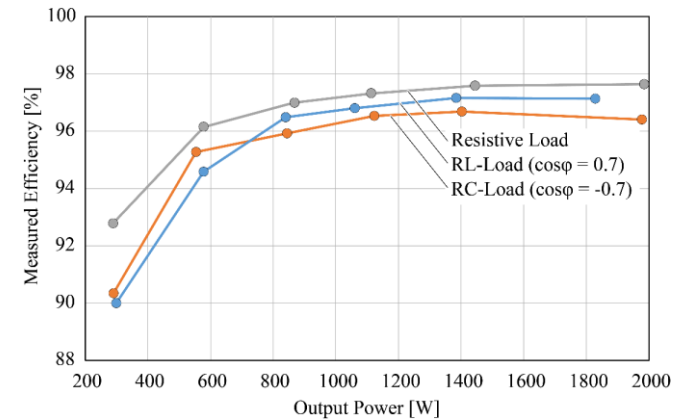
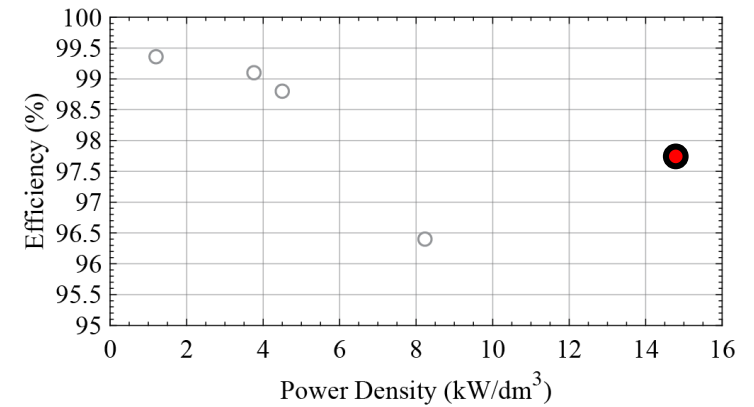
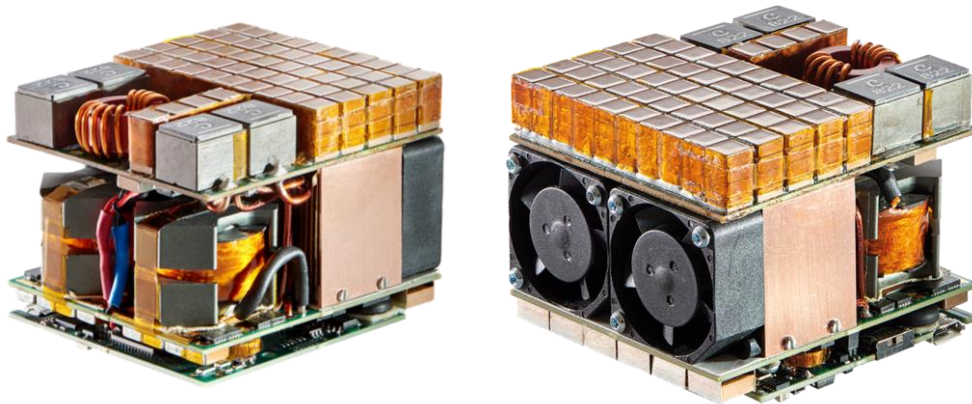


► Ultra-High Power Density (2)

➤ GLBC: ETH Zurich (2.0)

- Performance of First DC/|AC| + Unfolder Prototype
- PWM Operation
- Without Power Pulsation Buffer

- 14.8kW/dm³ (243W/in³)
- 6.0cm x 5.0cm x 4.5cm
- $f_s = 250\text{kHz}$
- 97.8% Peak Efficiency @ 2kW



► Ultra-High Power Density (3)

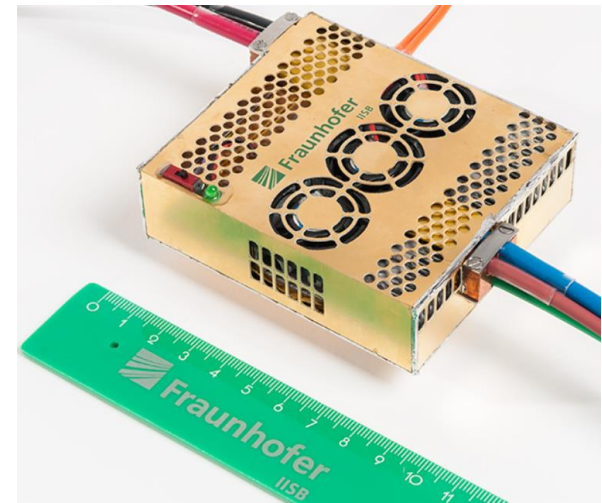
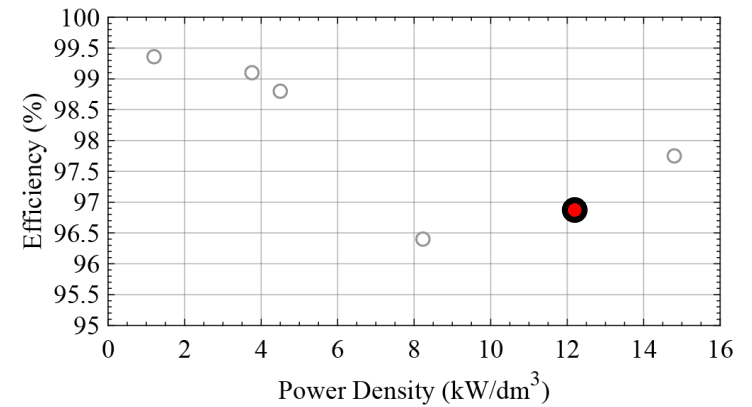
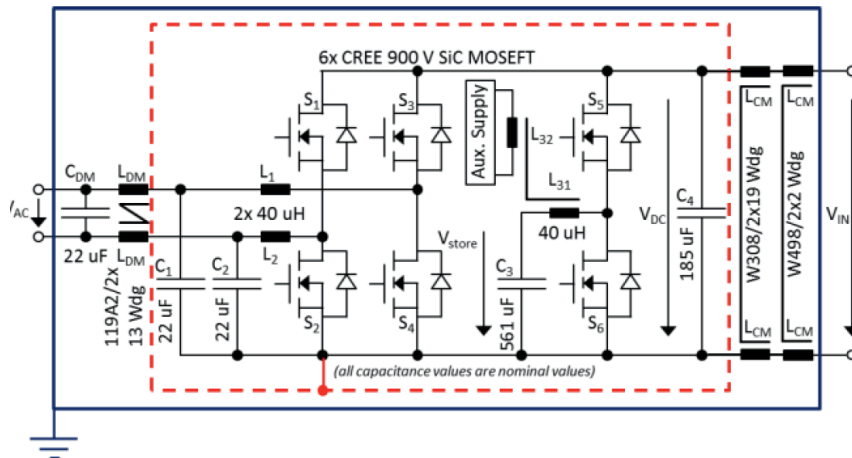
➤ GLBC: Fraunhofer IISB

- Very Well Engineered:
 - 3D Printed Heatsinks w/ Integrated Fans
 - 1 PCB Board
- Multi-Airgap Inductors
- 900 V SiC with PWM (Soft + Hard Switching)
- Buck-Type DC-side Power Pulsation Buffer

- 12.2kW/dm³ (201W/in³)

- $f_s = 140\text{kHz}$

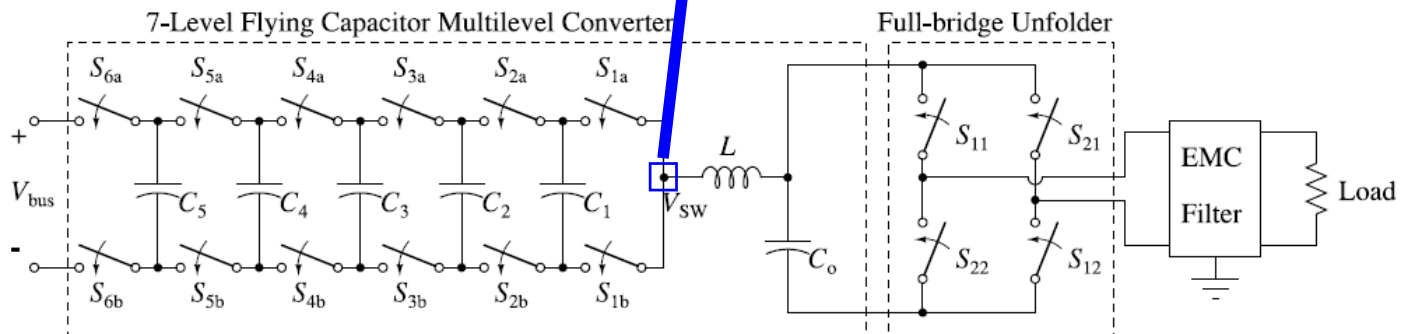
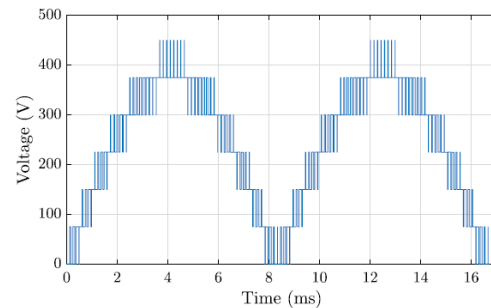
- 96.9% Peak Efficiency



► Ultra-High Power Density (4)

➤ GLBC: UIUC (Prof. Pilawa)

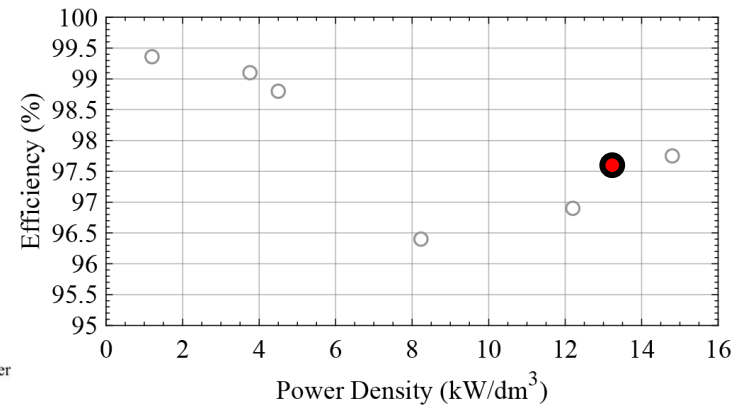
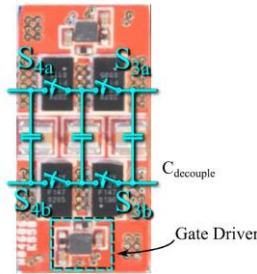
- Multi-Level Topology: Flying Capacitor Converter (FCC)
- Seven-Level Output Voltage: Smaller Output Filter
- Low-Voltage (150V) GaN Switches (EPC 2033)
- 60Hz-Unfolder
- Full-Bridge Active Power Buffer



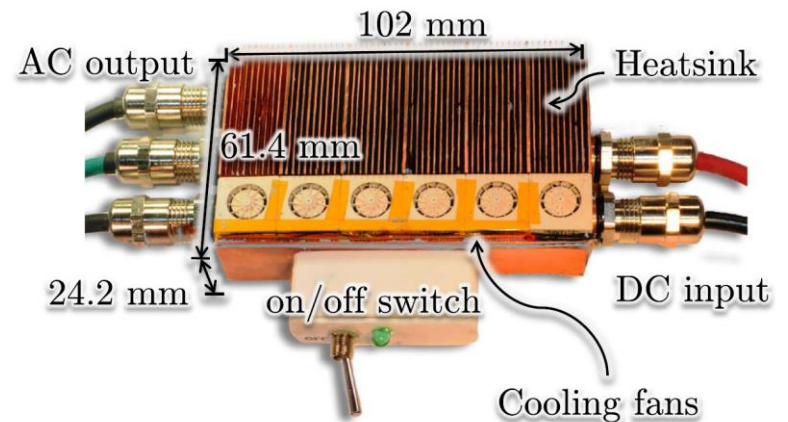
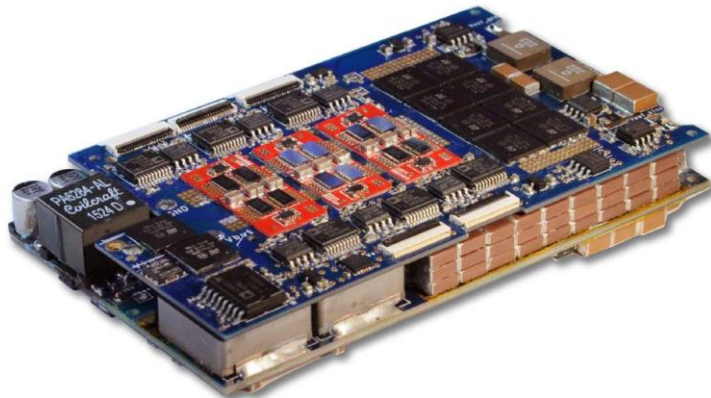
► Ultra-High Power Density (4)

➤ GLBC: UIUC (Prof. Pilawa)

- Careful Design of Switching Cells →
 - Modularity
 - Reduced Parasitic Inductance
 - Reduced Switching Overvoltage



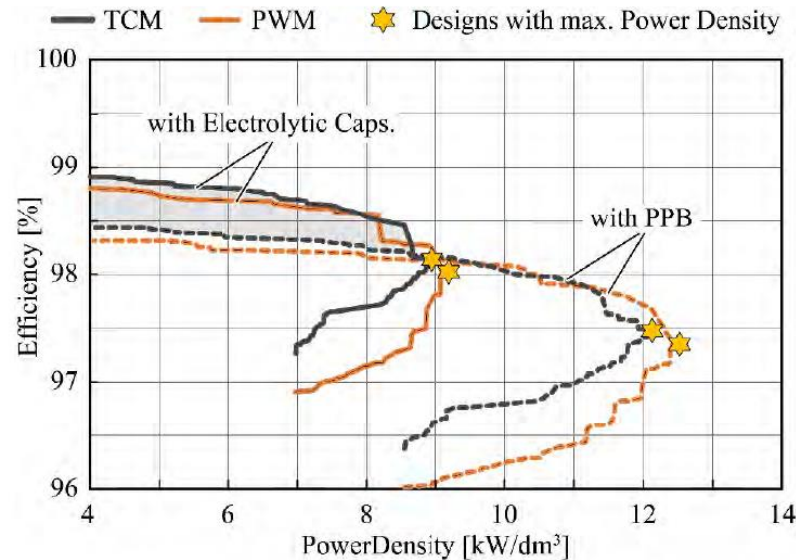
- 13.2kW/dm³ (216W/in³)
- 10.2cm x 6.1cm x 2.4cm
- $f_s = 120\text{kHz}$ (effective 720kHz)
- 97.6% Peak Efficiency



► Performance Drivers for High Efficiency

1. Power Pulsation Buffer (PPB)

- Analysis for Google Little Box Challenge ($\Delta V/V < 3\%$)
- Efficiency Benefit of PPB → For High Power Density ($\rho > 9\text{kW}/\text{dm}^3$)

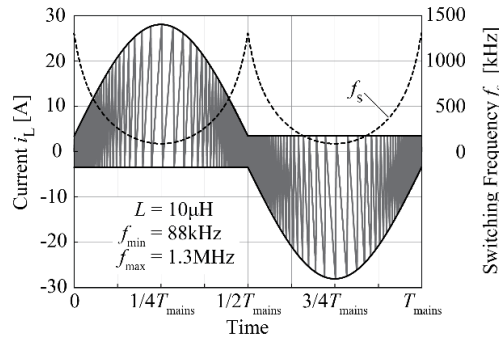


- Electrolytics Favorable for High Efficiency @ Moderate Power Density ($\Delta\eta = +0.5\%$)
- Electrolytics Show Lower Vol. & Lower Losses if Large $\Delta V/V$ is accepted

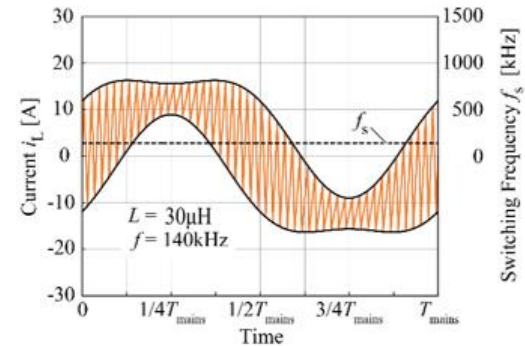
► Performance Drivers for High Efficiency

2. TCM vs. CCM

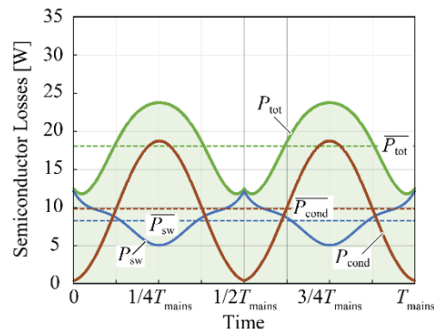
- **TCM:**
 - + Low (Soft) Switching Losses
 - Larger RMS Currents in Inductor and Switches



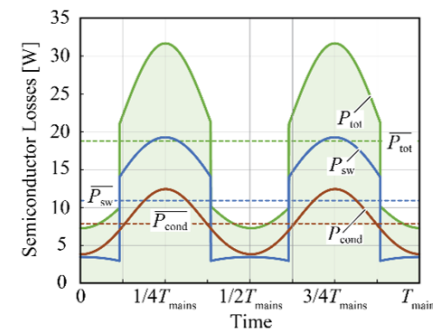
- **CCM (PWM):**
 - + Lower RMS Currents in Inductor and Switches
 - High (Hard) Switching Losses



- **Not a clear winner** → Case Dependent and Has To Be Optimized
- **Optimization for GaN GIT & No Interleaving** → Optimal Inductors: $L_{TCM} = 10\mu\text{H}$ and $L_{CCM} = 30\mu\text{H}$

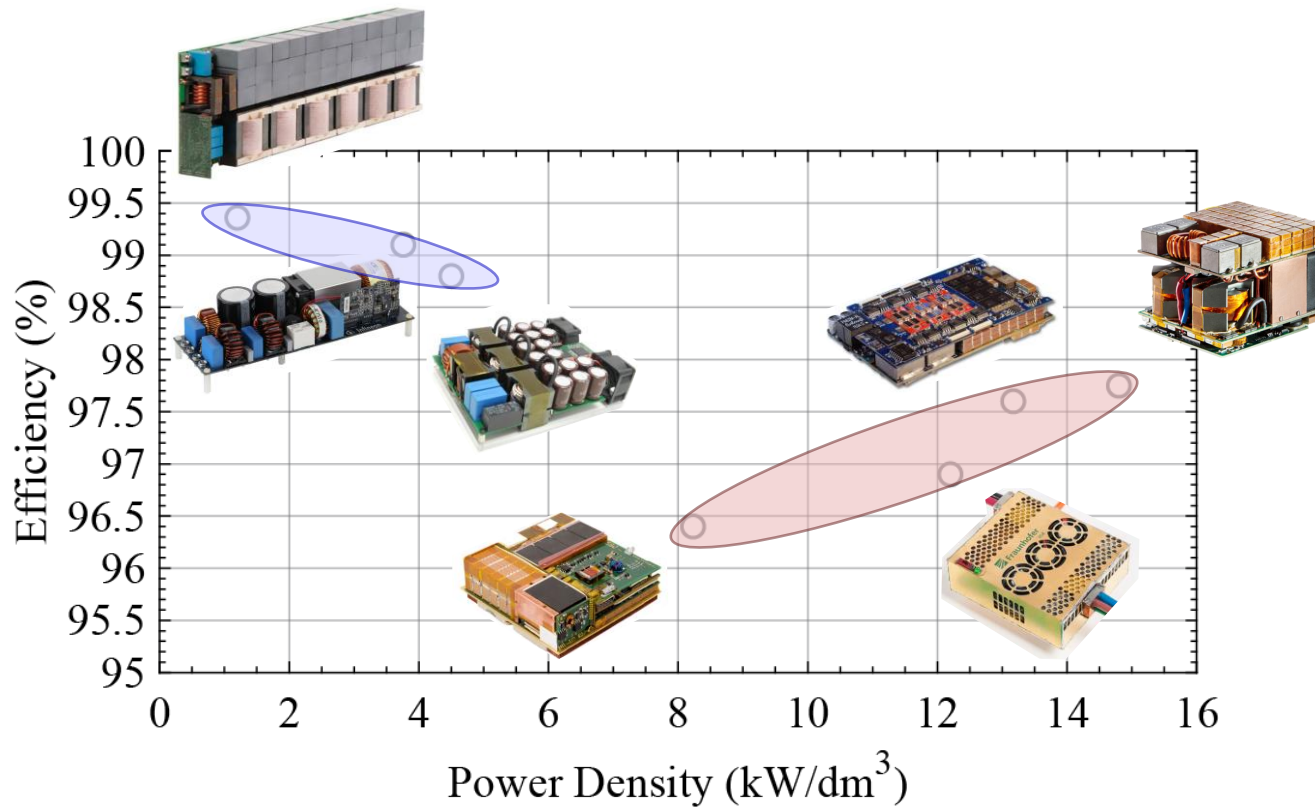


$\rho = 11.9 \text{ kW/dm}^3$
 $\eta = 97.4\%$



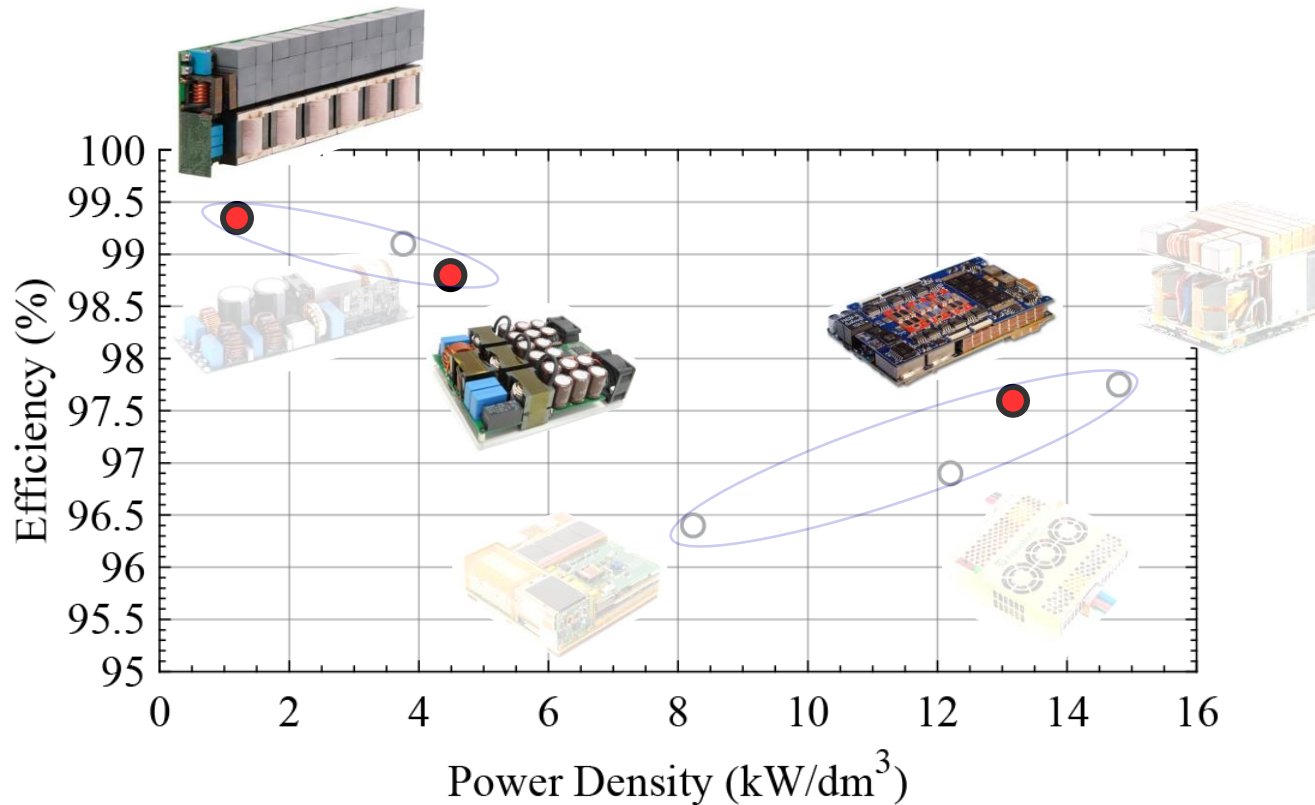
$\rho = 12.5 \text{ kW/dm}^3$
 $\eta = 97.4\%$

► Performance Drivers for High Efficiency



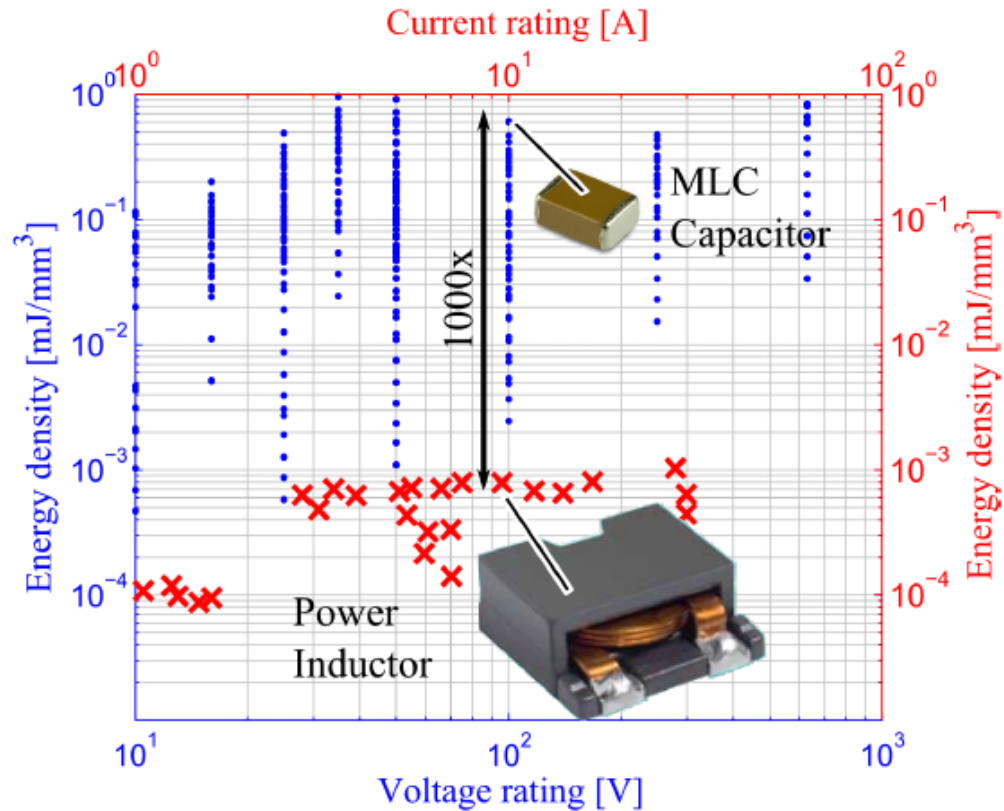
► Performance Drivers for High Efficiency

3. Low Switching Frequency... But High Effective Switching Frequency



► Performance Drivers for High Efficiency

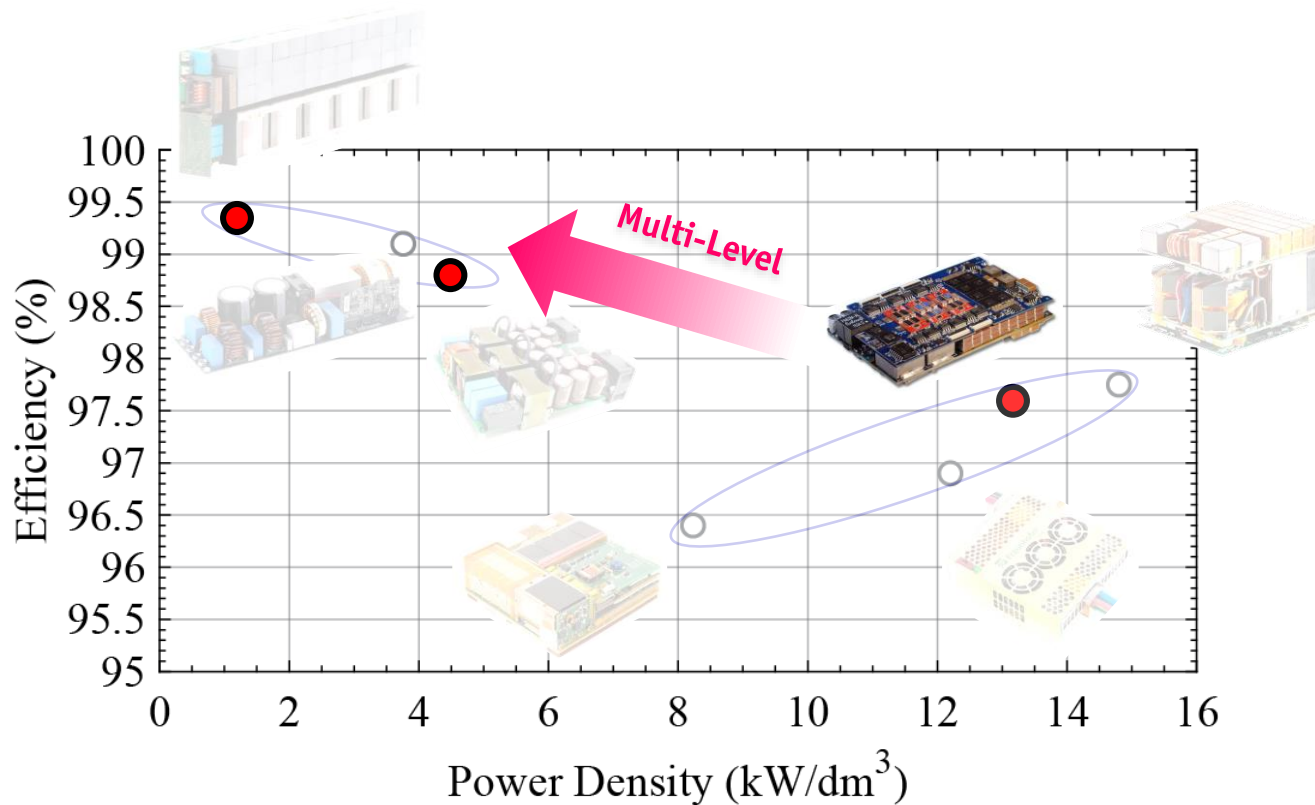
3. Low Switching Frequency... But High Effective Switching Frequency



Source: Pilawa

► Performance Drivers for High Efficiency

3. Low Switching Frequency... But High Effective Switching Frequency



Multi-Level Solutions Ultra-High Efficiency

- *Specifications*
- *Motivation for Multi-Level*
- *Bridge Leg Comparison*




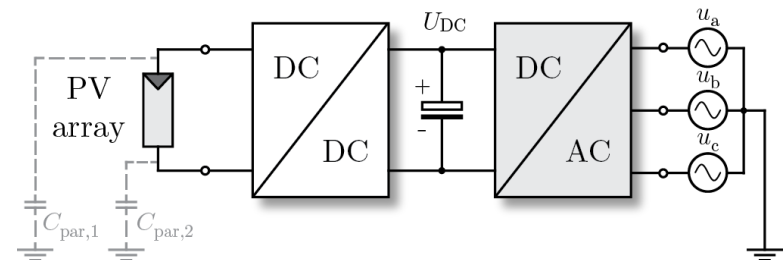
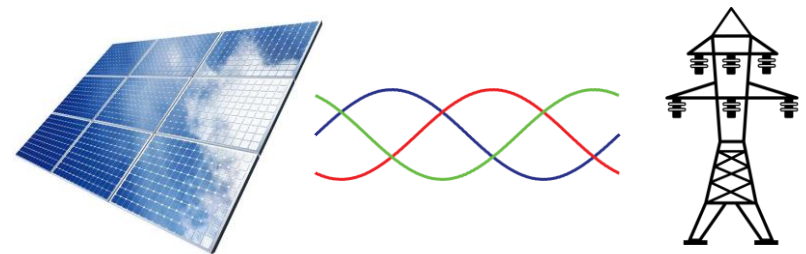
► Specifications

Nom. Power	10 kW
Max. Power	12.5 kW
$V_{DC,nominal}$	720 V (max. 800V)
$V_{AC,nominal,RMS}$	230 V
Operation Mode	DC/AC (bidirectional)
EMI Filtering	Class A
# Phases	3

■ Questions to be answered:

- Can 99.5 % peak efficiency be reached?
- At what price (volume, weight and cost)?

Target  **99.5 % Efficiency**



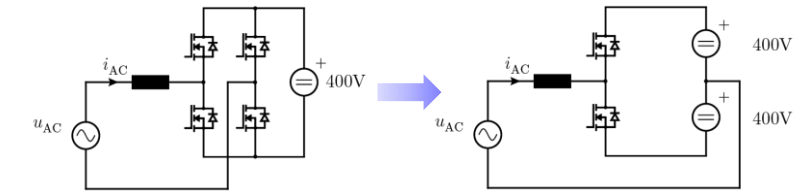
► DC-Link Voltage: 400V...800V

■ What is the Challenge from 400V_{DC} to 800 V_{DC}?

→ For the same AC-side power:

► Semiconductor Switching Losses

- Switched Currents Don't Change
- Switched Voltage Changes



- Determined by AC Current
- Determined by DC Voltage

Increase in Losses

► Semiconductor Conduction Losses

- RMS Current in Half-Bridge Doesn't Change
- Semicond. On-State Resistance Changes

- Determined by AC side
- Blocking Voltage Dependent

Increase in Losses

► Capacitor Voltage Rating – Series Connection

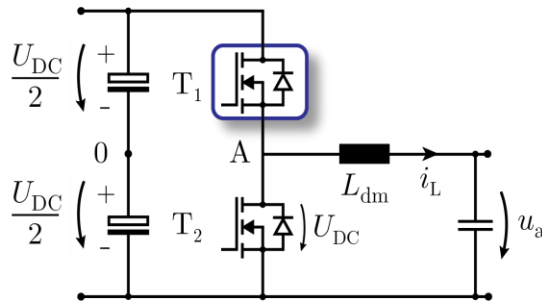
- Volume Quadratic With # of Series Connected Capacitors for Same C
- Passive (Resistive) Voltage Balancing



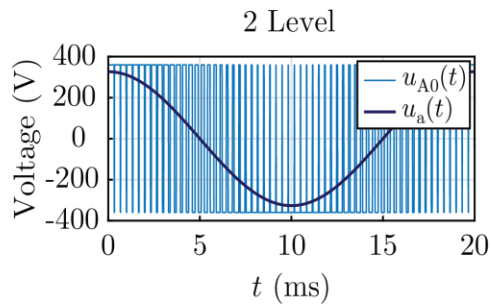
Increase in Volume & Losses

► Motivation for Multi-Level Topologies

- Analyze best strategy to achieve target **99.5%** efficiency

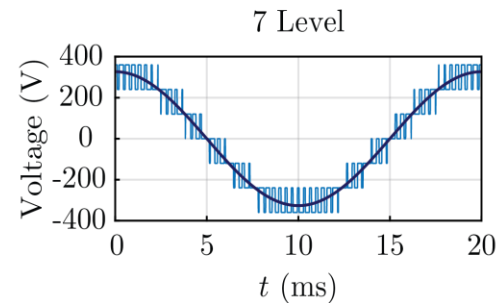
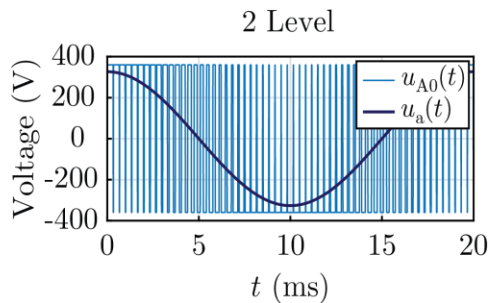
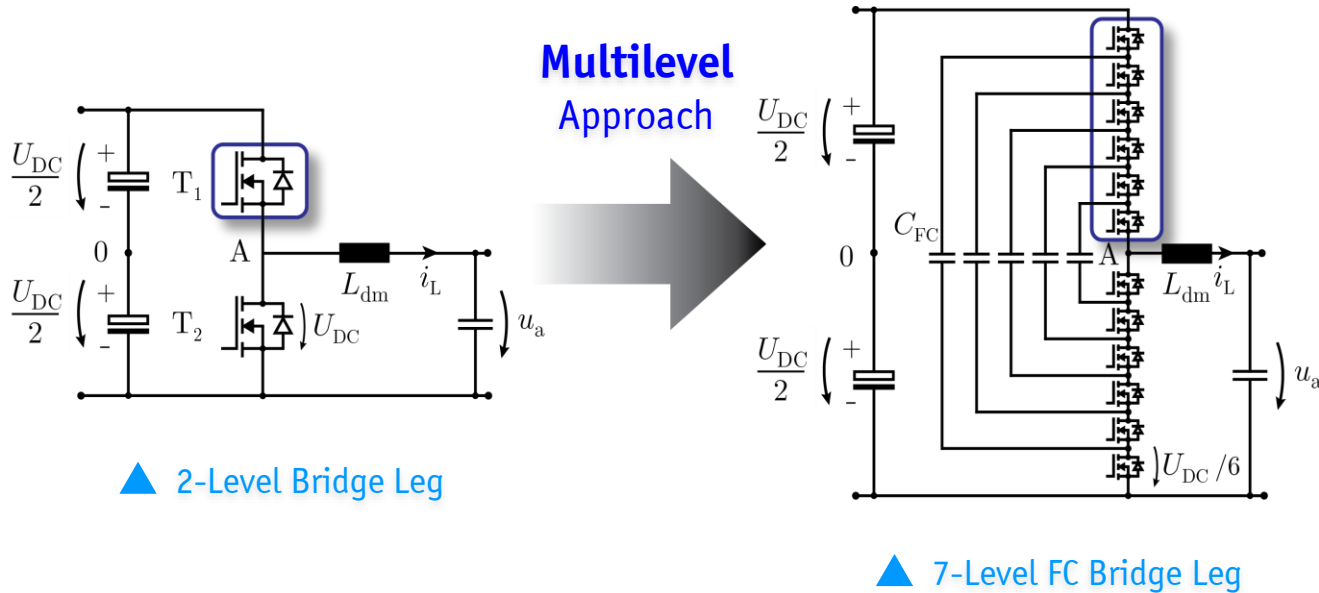


▲ 2-Level Bridge Leg



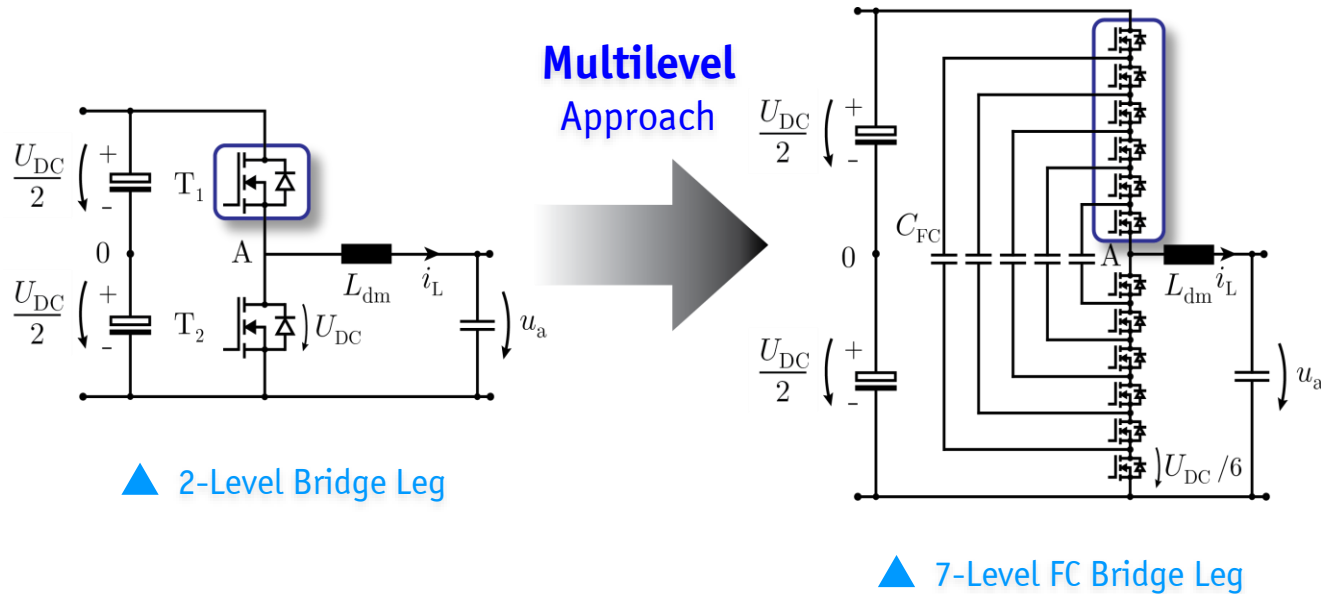
► Motivation for Multi-Level Topologies

- Analyze best strategy to achieve target 99.5% efficiency



► Motivation for Multi-Level Topologies

- Analyze best strategy to achieve target **99.5%** efficiency



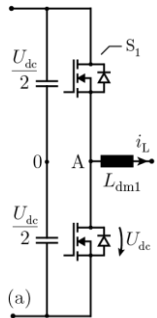
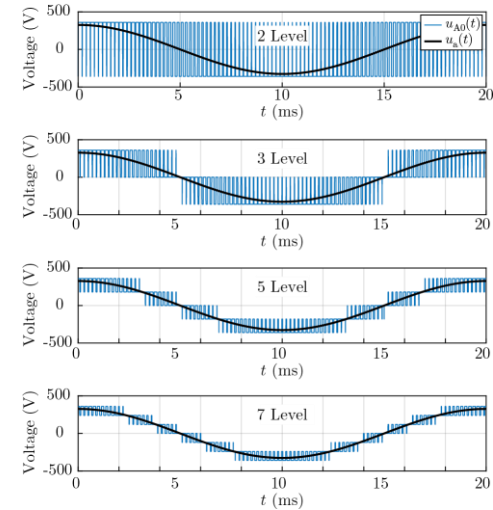
- **Three main advantages**

1. More output voltage levels
 2. Higher effective frequency
 3. Better switch utilization (LV switches outperform HV switches)
- } **Smaller magnetics**

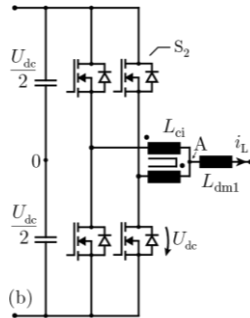
$$\Delta i_L \propto \frac{1}{N_{lev}^2} \cdot \frac{1}{L}$$

► Bridge Leg Analysis – 99.5% Efficiency Target

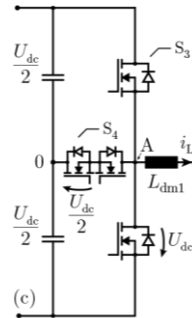
- Optimum Number of Levels?
- Compared topologies:
 - 2 Level
 - 2 Level-Interleaved (3 Level)
 - 3 Level T-type
 - 3, 5 and 7 Level Flying Cap. Converter (FCC)
 - 5 and 7 Level Hybrid Active NPC (HANPC)



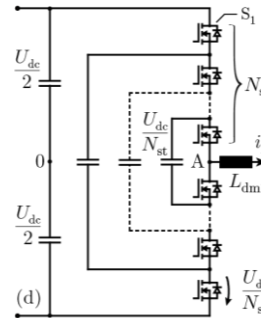
▲ 2-L



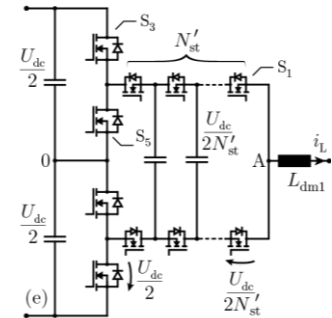
▲ 2-L
Interleaved



▲ 3-L
T-type



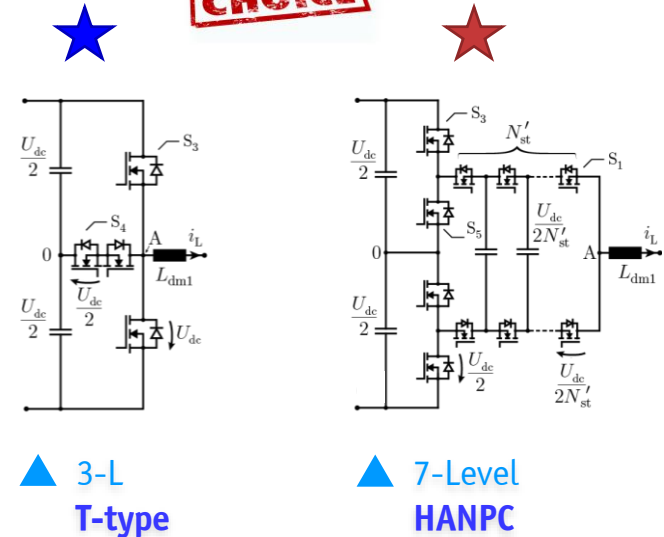
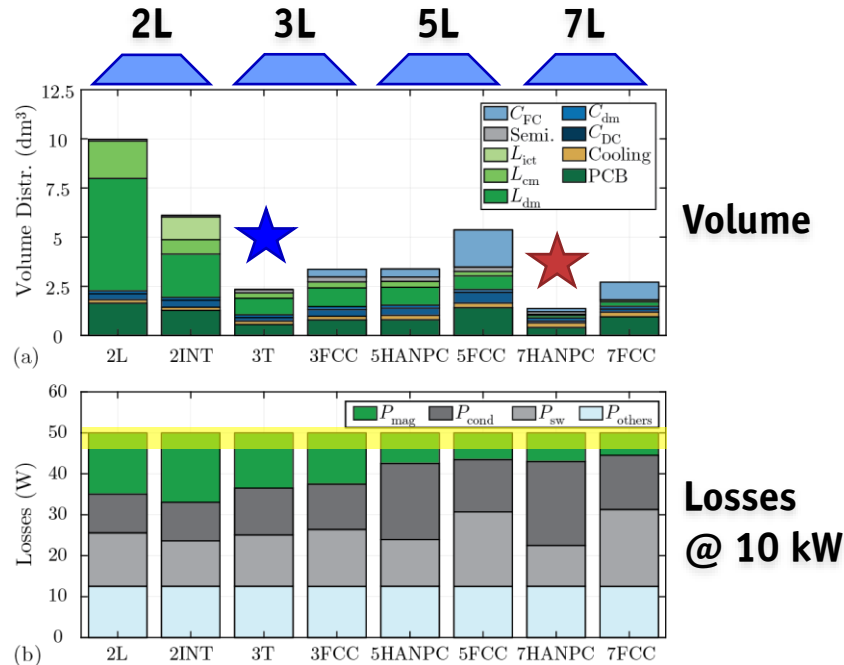
▲ $(N_{st}+1)$ Level
FCC



▲ $(2N'_{st}+1)$ Level
HANPC

► Result of the Bridge Leg Analysis – 99.5% Efficiency Target

- Aim: topologies with highest power density (lowest volume).



■ Conclusions:

- ✓ 3L T-type: Good trade-off between magnetics and semiconductors. No capacitors.
- ✓ 7L HANPC: Good trade-off between capacitors and semiconductors. Small magnetics.

► Hardware prototypes

3-Level T-type

7-Level HANPC converter



**TO BE
COMMISSIONED**



2.35 kW/dm³ (39.3 W/in³)

3.34 kW/dm³ (55.9 W/in³)

1.06 kW/kg (11.8 kg)

2.63 kW/kg (4.8 kg)

- % (measured)

99.35 % (measured)

99.5 % (expected)

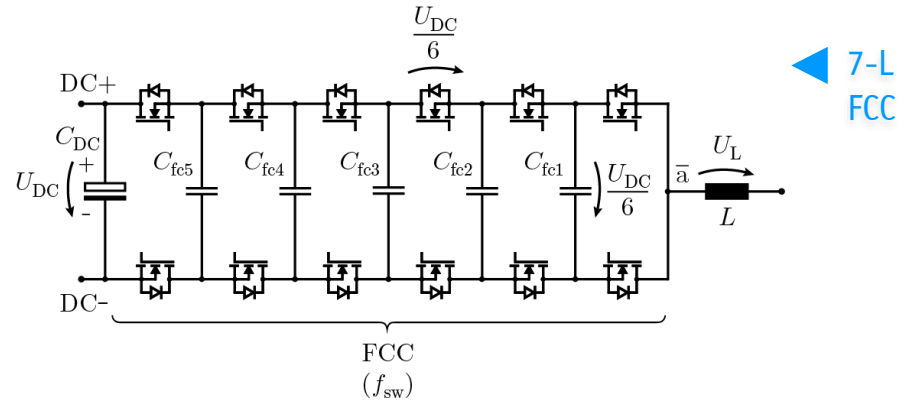
99.37 % (expected)

7-Level HANPC Inverter Topology



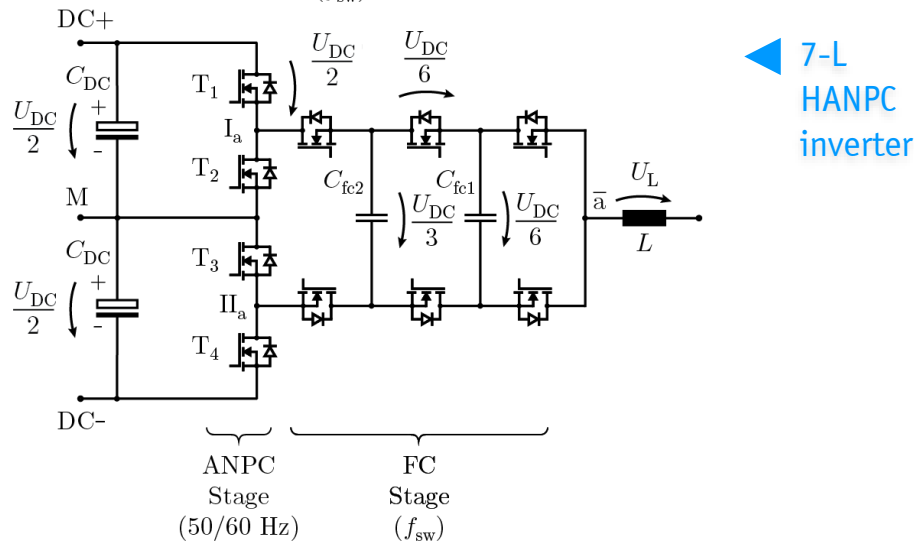
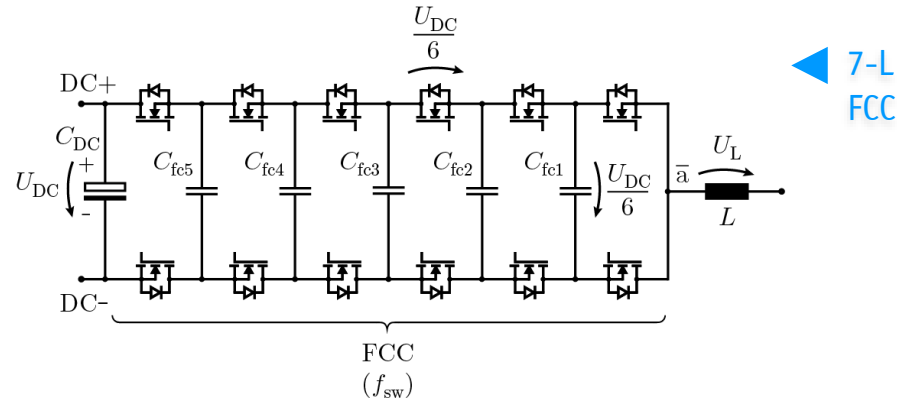
► HANPC topology: derivation

- The **HANPC** topology can be derived from the Flying Capacitor Converter (FCC)



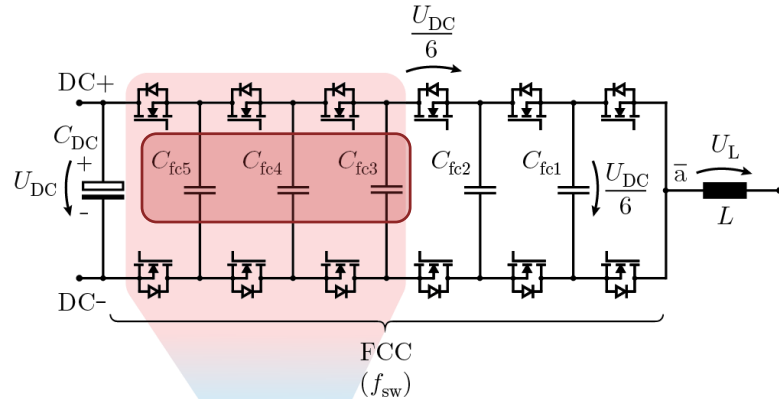
► HANPC topology: derivation

- The **HANPC** topology can be derived from the Flying Capacitor Converter (FCC)



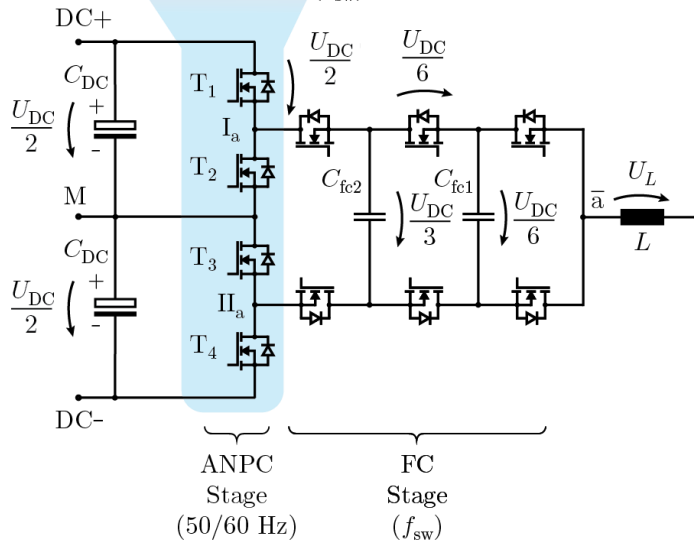
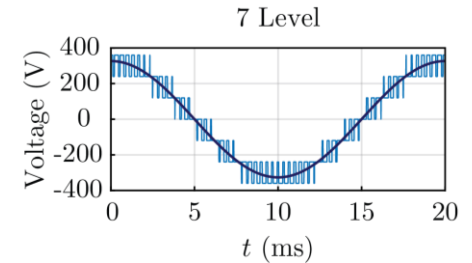
► HANPC topology: derivation

- The HANPC topology can be derived from the Flying Capacitor Converter (FCC)



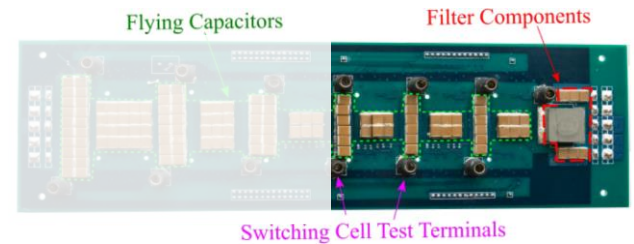
7-L FCC

✓ 7- Level Output



7-L HANPC inverter

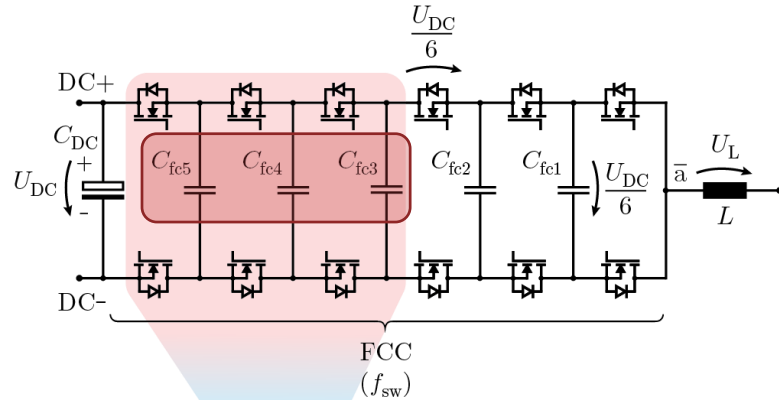
✓ Less than half the capacitors (large volume savings)



▲ 13-Level FCC (Source: Pilawa et al.)

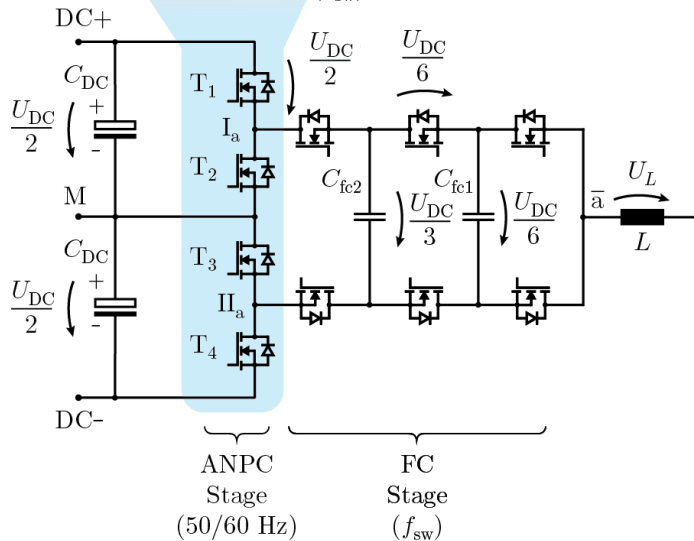
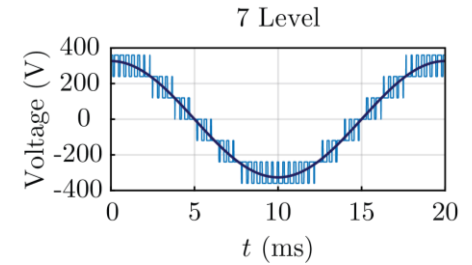
► HANPC topology: derivation

- The **HANPC** topology can be derived from the Flying Capacitor Converter (FCC)



7-L
FCC

✓ 7- Level Output



7-L
HANPC
inverter

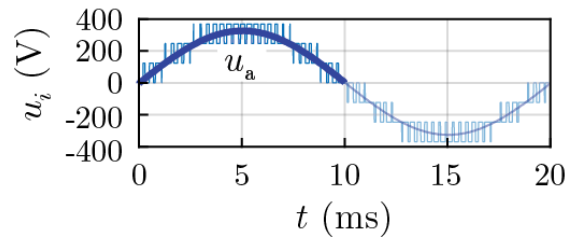
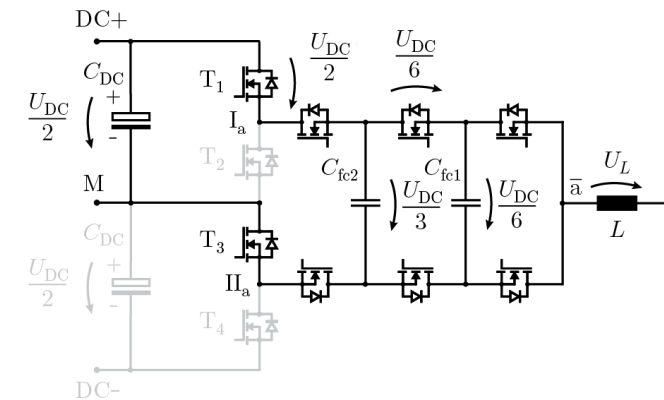
✓ Less than **half** the capacitors
(large volume savings)

✓ Same requirement for
EMI filter

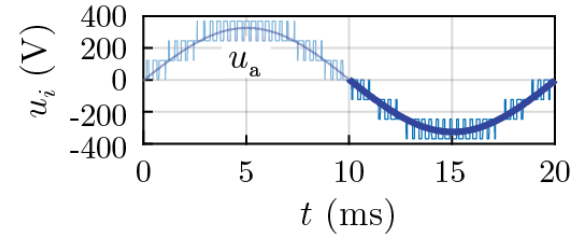
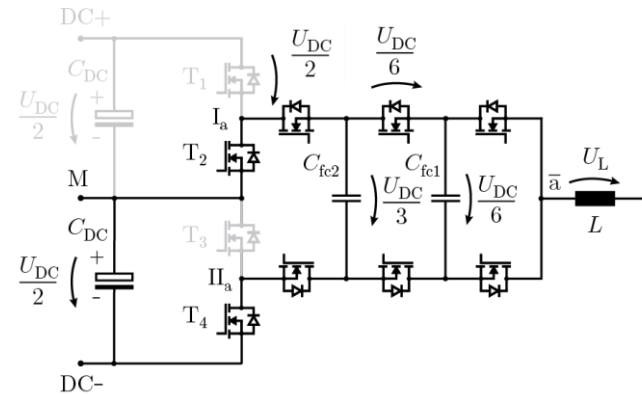
► HANPC topology

- ANPC stage clamps the FC stage to the high-side and low-side DC-link on 50 Hz basis

$U > 0$



$U < 0$



7-Level HANPC

Pareto Optimization

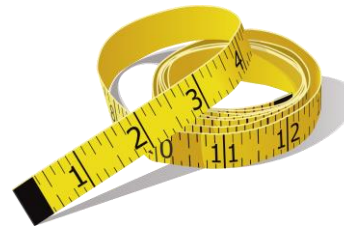


► Switching Loss Data

■ Accurate and Reliable Switching Data is Necessary

- Specially when Switches Account for 60..70% of Total Losses
- LV semiconductor datasheets provide no data

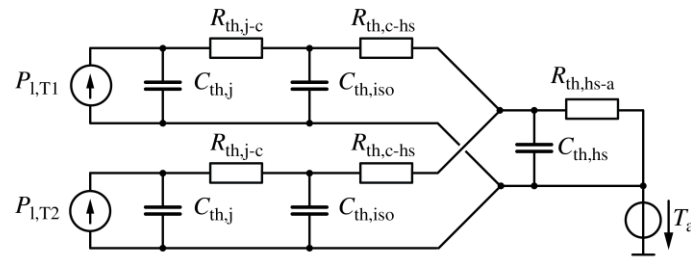
➤ Switching losses have to be measured



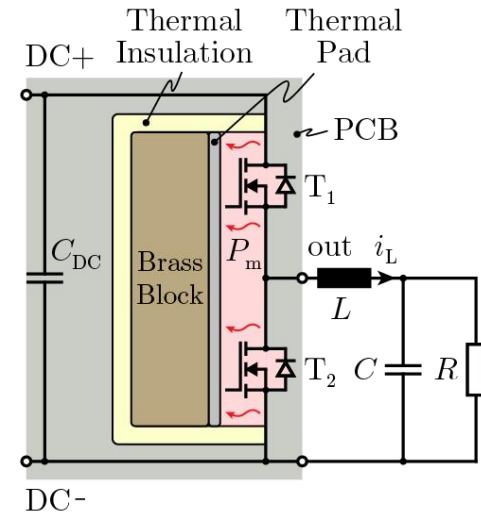
► Switching Loss Measurement Method

► Half-Bridge “In-The-Box”

- Brass Block as Heat-Sink
- Measure Elapsed Time to Heat-Up Block ΔT



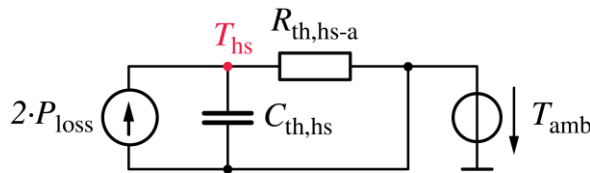
▲ Thermal Circuit



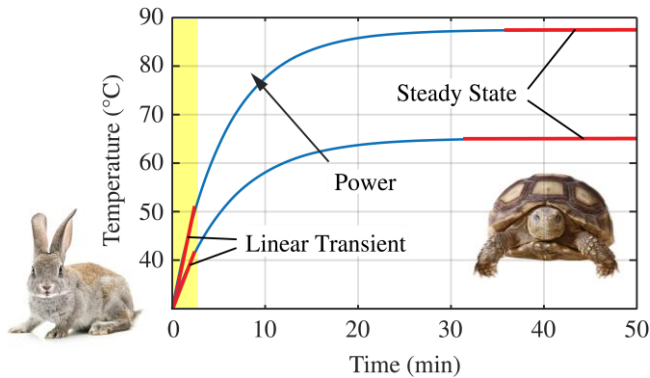
► Switching Loss Measurement Method

► Half-Bridge “In-The-Box”

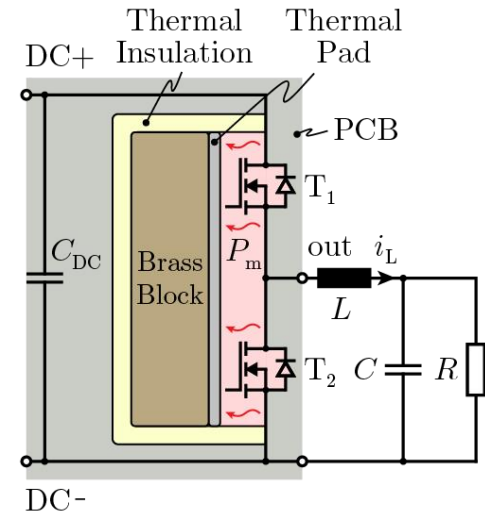
- Brass Block as Heat-Sink
- Measure Elapsed Time to Heat-Up Block ΔT



▲ Simplified Thermal Circuit



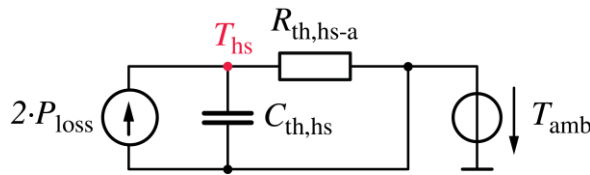
R-C Characteristic



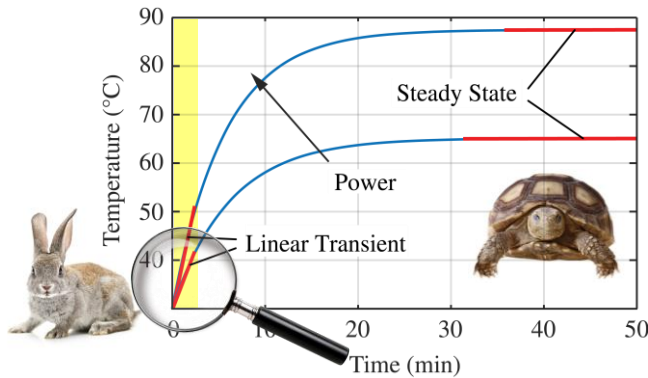
► Switching Loss Measurement Method

► Half-Bridge “In-The-Box”

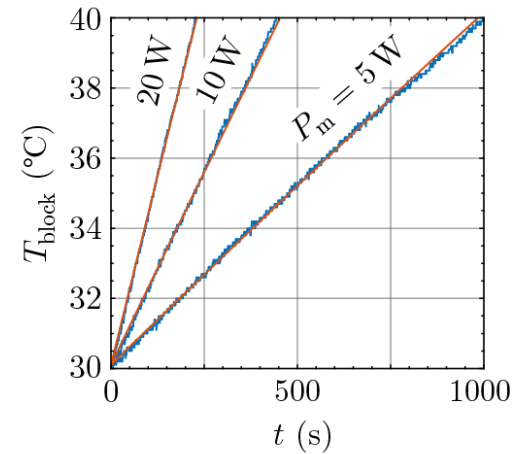
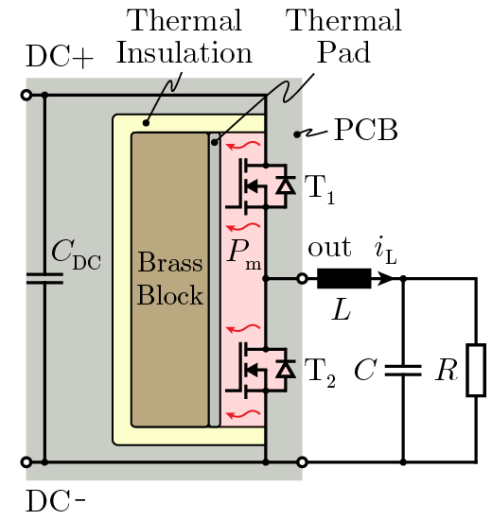
- Brass Block as Heat-Sink
- Measure Elapsed Time to Heat-Up Block ΔT



▲ Simplified Thermal Circuit



R-C Characteristic

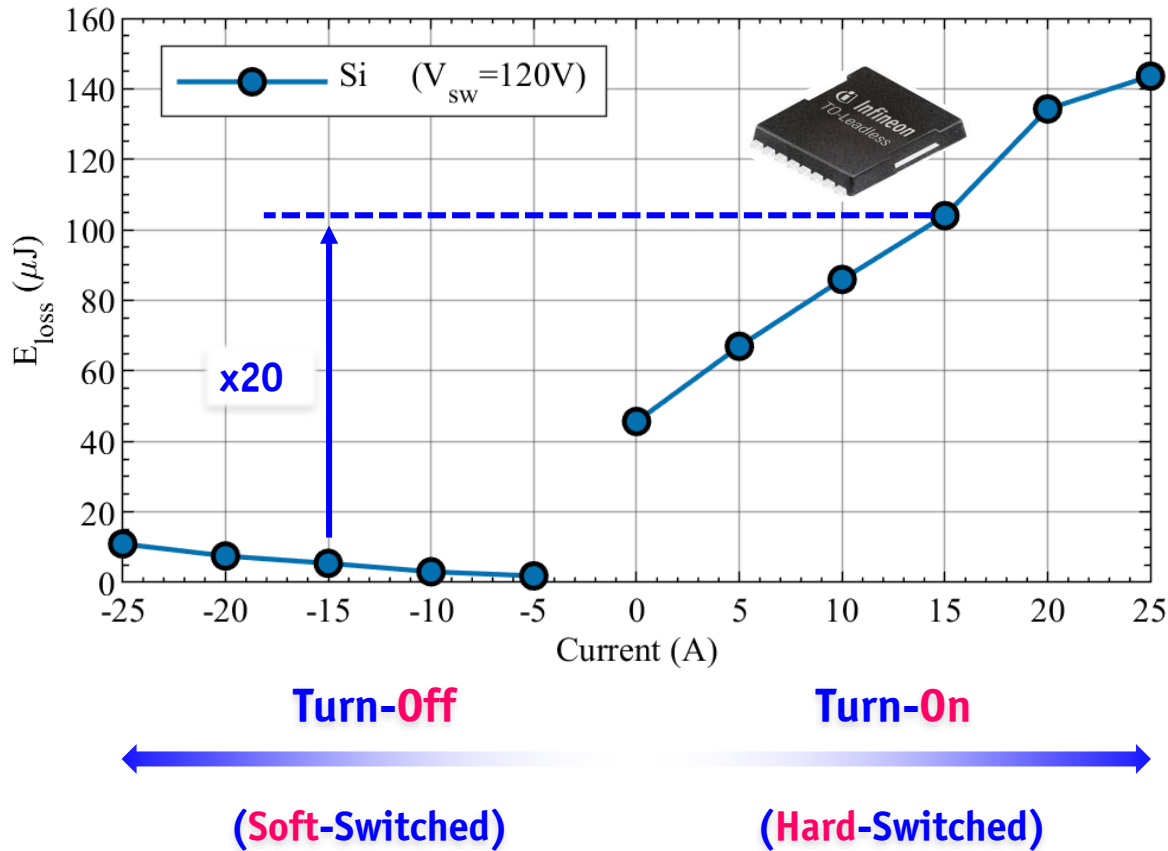


► Switching Loss Measurement Results

■ Obtained Data is Used in Optimization



Silicon FD
200V 11.1mΩ
(Infineon)

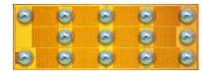


► Switching Loss Measurement Results

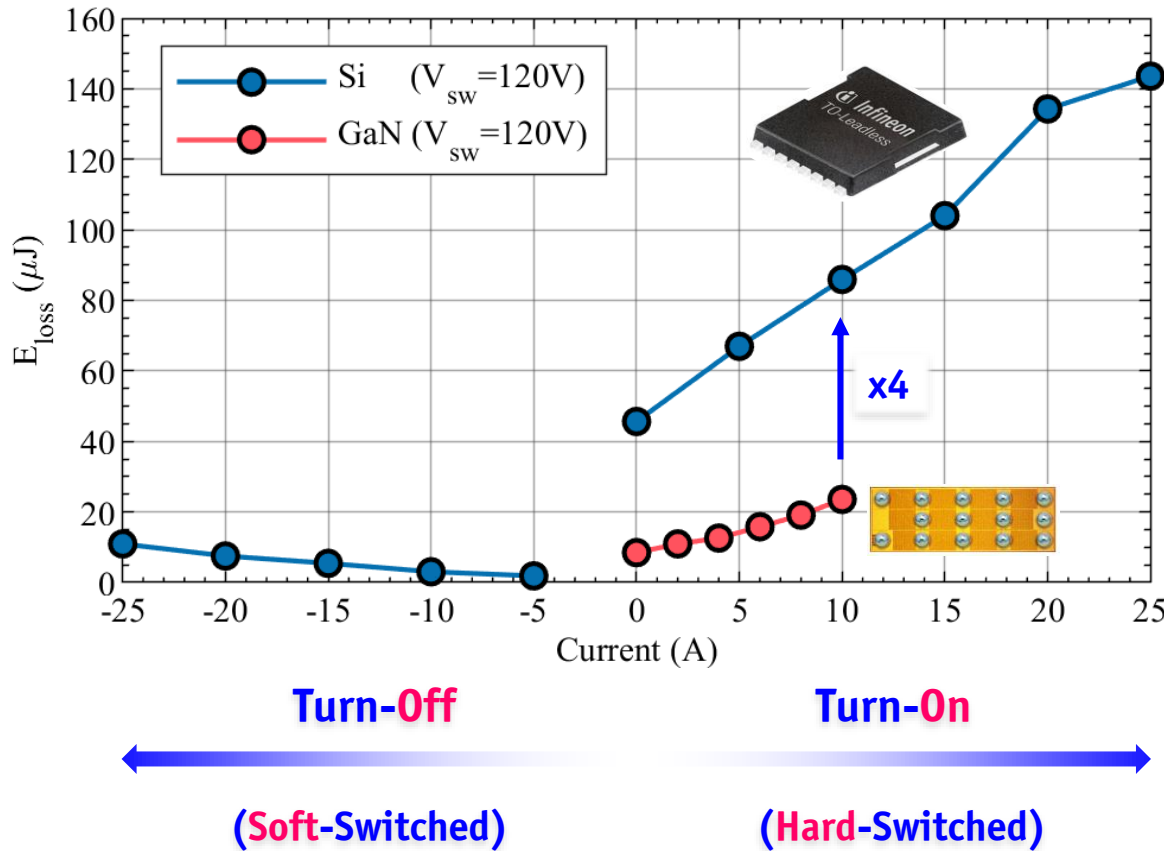
■ Obtained Data is Used in Optimization



Silicon FD
200V **11.1mΩ**
(Infineon)

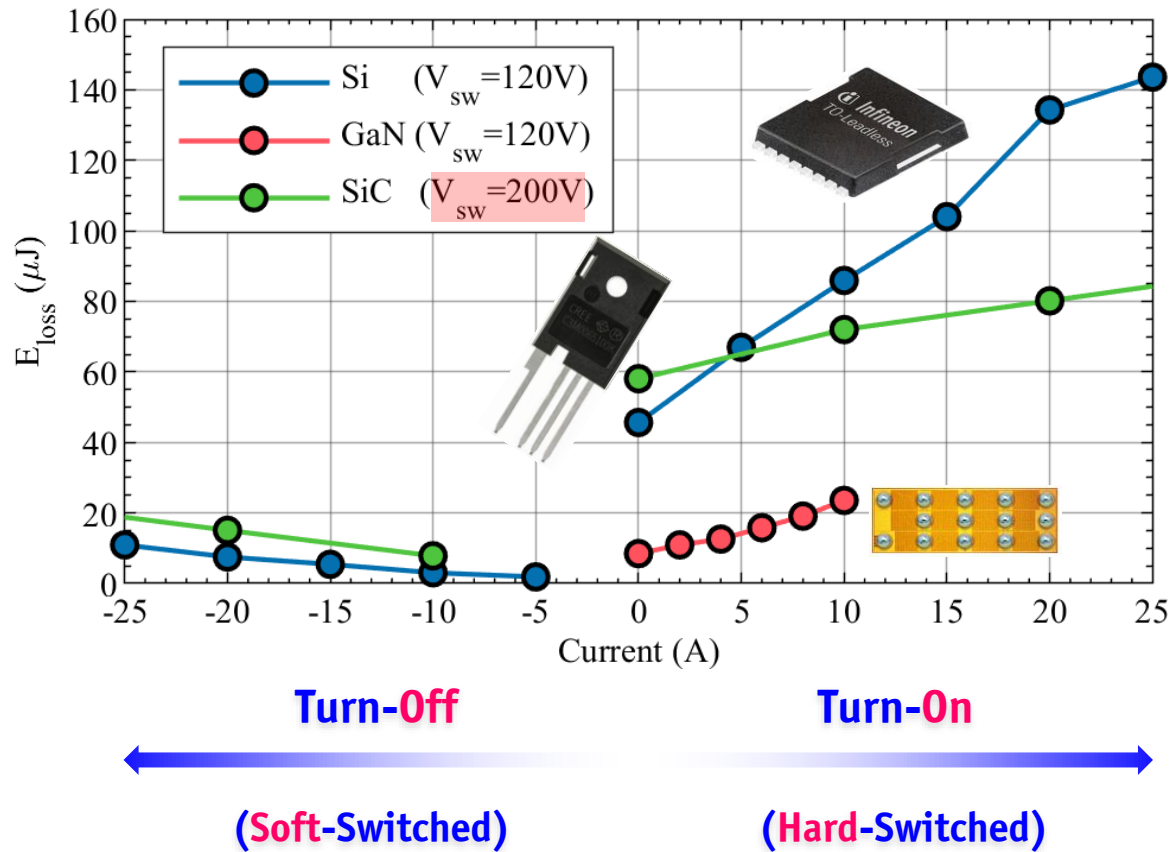


GaN
200V **10mΩ**
(EPC 2047)



► Switching Loss Measurement Results

■ Obtained Data is Used in Optimization



Silicon FD
200V **11.1m Ω**
(Infineon)



GaN
200V **10m Ω**
(EPC 2047)



SiC
900V **10m Ω**
(Wolfspeed)

► Flying Capacitors

■ Dimensioning Criteria:

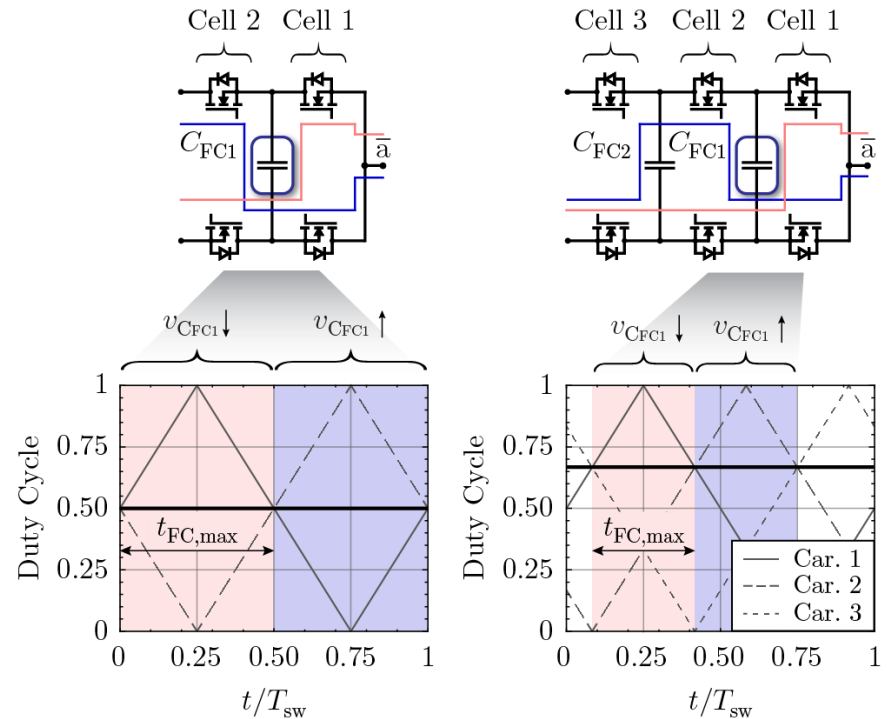
$$C_{FC,min} = \frac{I_{ac,pk}}{N_{FCcell} f_{sw} \Delta U_{FC,max}}$$

■ Max. Voltage Ripple:

- $\Delta U_{FC,max} = 5V$ (arbitrary)

■ Switching Freq.:

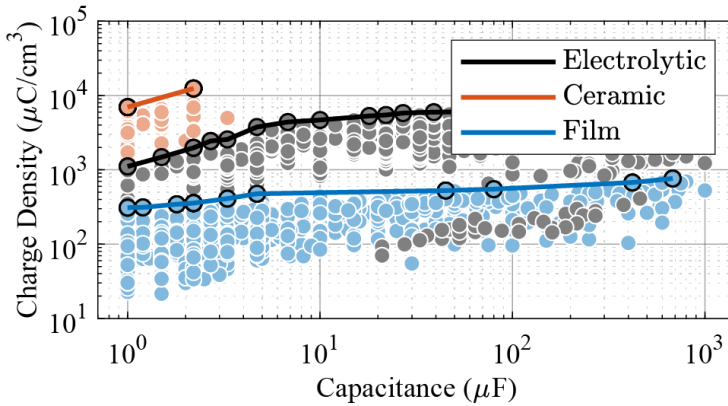
- Highly Affects Cap. Requirement
- Key Volume Contribution



$$t_{FC,max} = \frac{1}{N_{FCcell} f_{sw}}$$

► Flying Capacitors: Capacitor Type Selection

■ Charge Density:



$$Q = C \cdot V$$

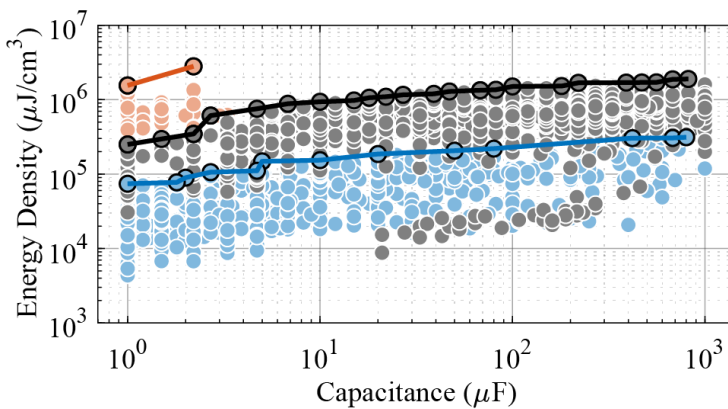
Electrolytic

Film

Ceramic



■ Energy Density:

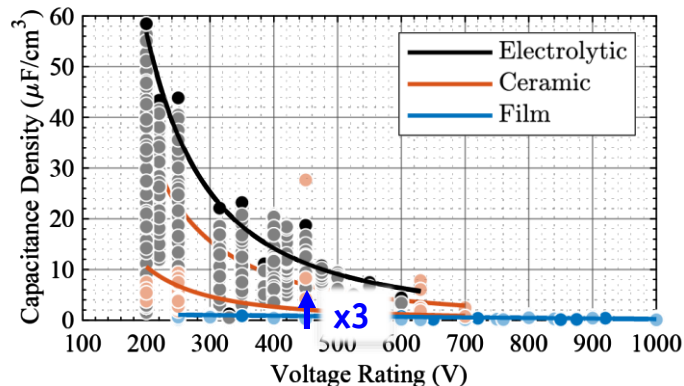


$$E = \frac{1}{2} \cdot C \cdot V^2$$

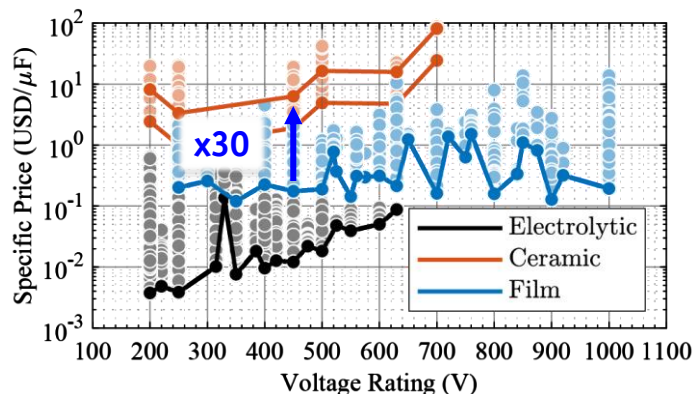
► Flying Capacitors: Capacitor Type Selection

► Key Factors:

■ Capacitance Density:



■ Price/Capacitance Ratio:



► Key Technical Factor for Choosing Capacitor, Not Charge or Energy Density

• Electrolytic Seem the Best... But

- Losses
- Current Rating
- Reliability/Lifetime...

• Ceramic are a Good Alternative for High Switching Frequencies

- Capacitance Derating (30% assumed)
- Price
- Stacking of Ceramic Capacitors
- Losses (problem for LF AC)

• Film are a Good Alternative for Low Switching Frequencies

- Bulky

► Optimization: Considerations

■ Semiconductors

- ANPC Stage (50/60 Hz): Silicon
- FC Stage (f_{sw}): 3 x Silicon + GaN

■ Magnetics

- Nanocrystalline Cores
- Helical Windings



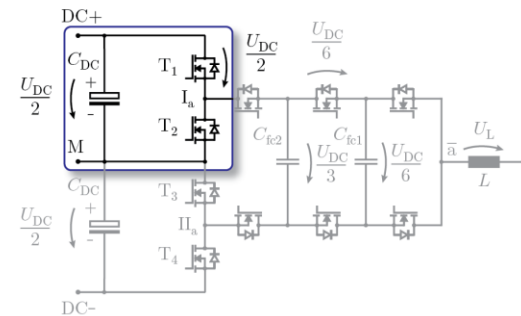
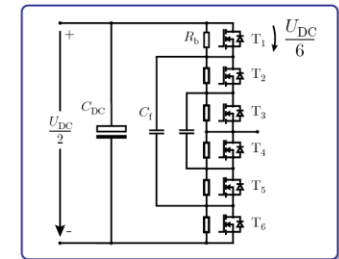
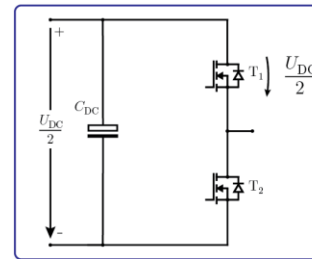
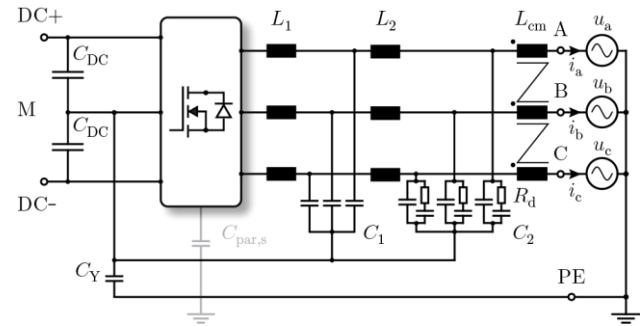
■ EMI Filter

- L-C structure (Simultaneous DM+CM Attenuation)

■ Topology variation

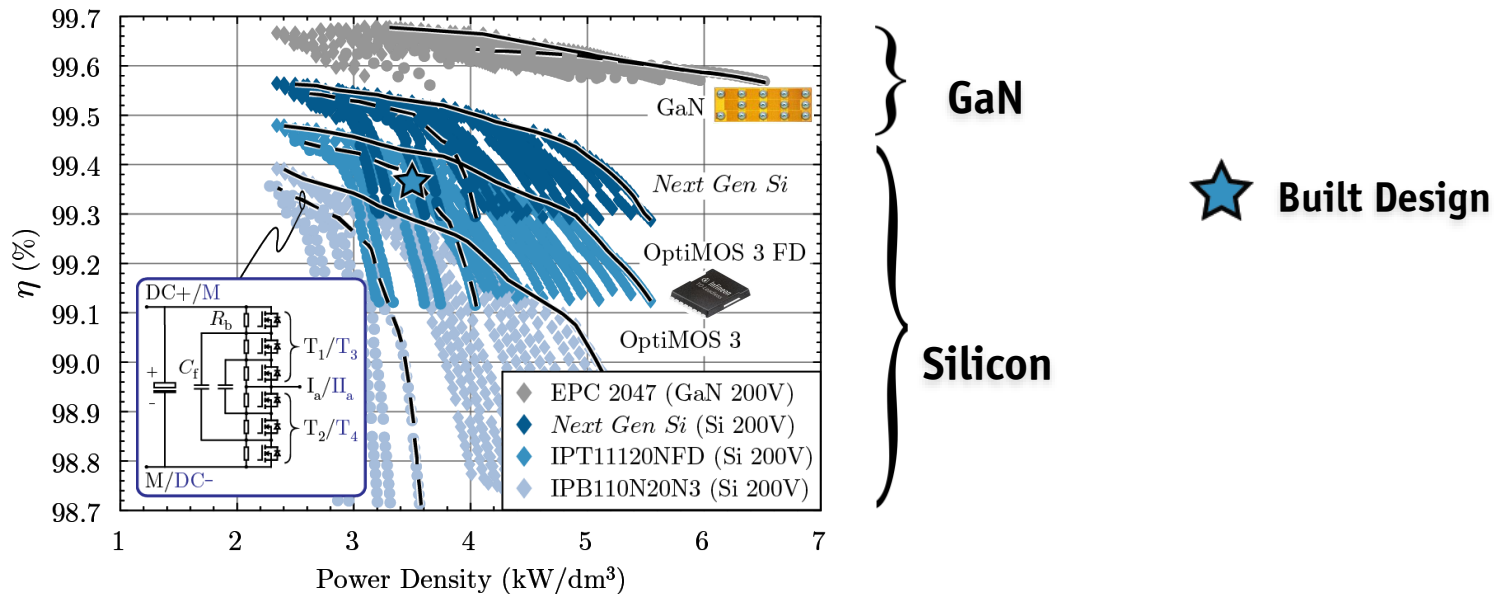
- Low-Voltage Switch Configuration for ANPC Stage: Same Voltage Level Switches in all Converter

▼ Final EMI Filter Stage



▲ Low Voltage Switch Bridge for ANPC Stage

► Optimization: Results

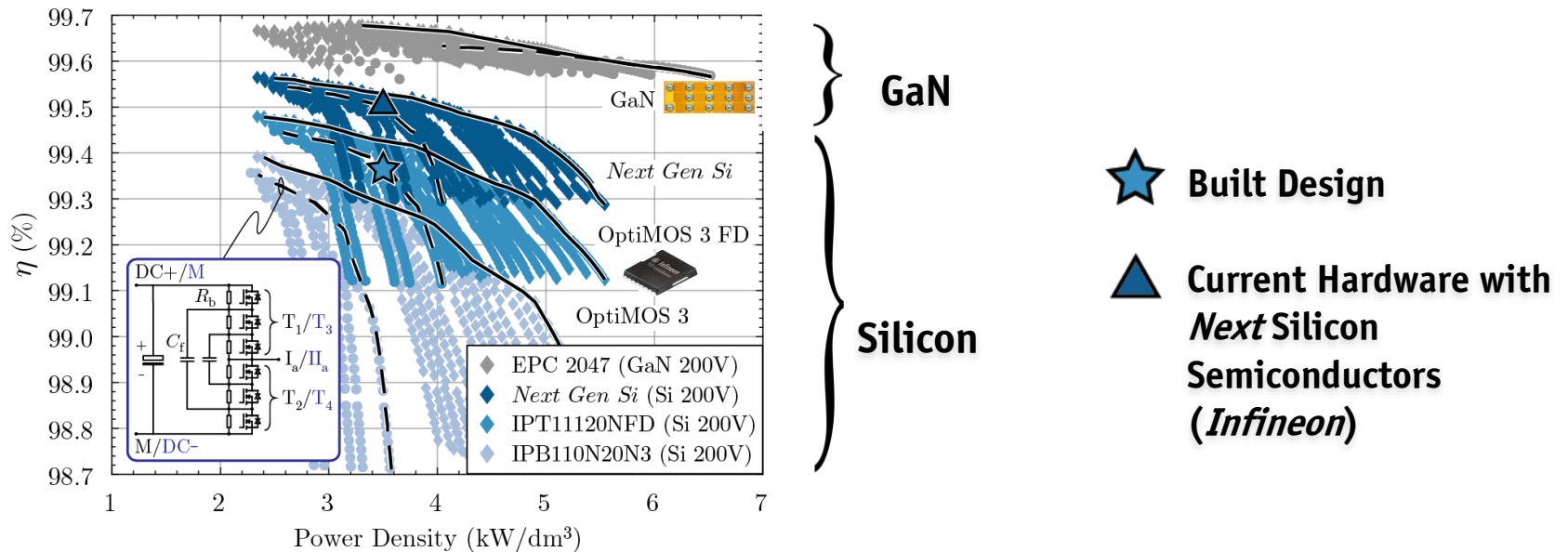


▲ Pareto Front Optimization Results (η @ 10 kW)

★ Built Design

Switches	ANPC Stage: 4 x CoolMOS CFD7 31m Ω (<i>Infineon</i>) FCC Stage: 2 x OptiMOS 3 FD 11.1m Ω (<i>Infineon</i>)
f_{sw}	16 kHz

► Optimization: Results



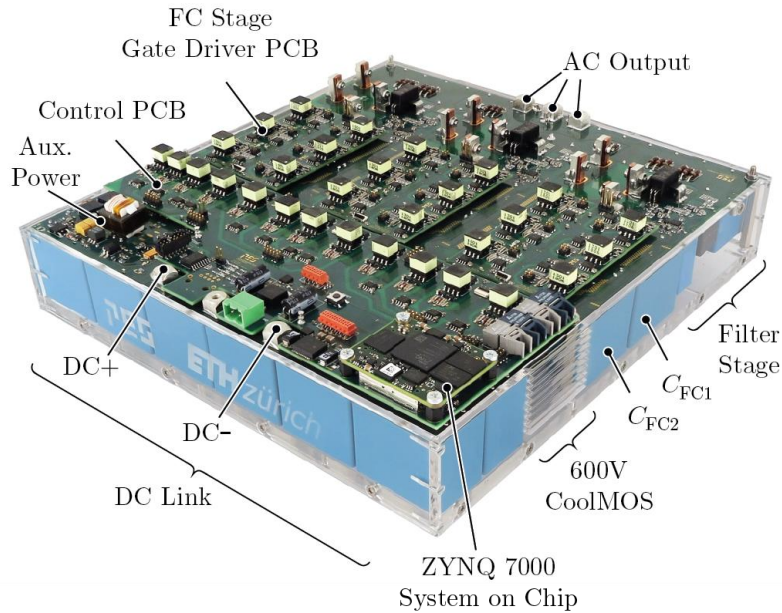
▲ Pareto Front Optimization Results (η @ 10 kW)

Switches	ANPC Stage: 4 x CoolMOS CFD7 31m Ω (<i>Infineon</i>) FCC Stage: 2 x Next Gen. Silicon (<i>Infineon</i>) ▲
f_{sw}	16 kHz

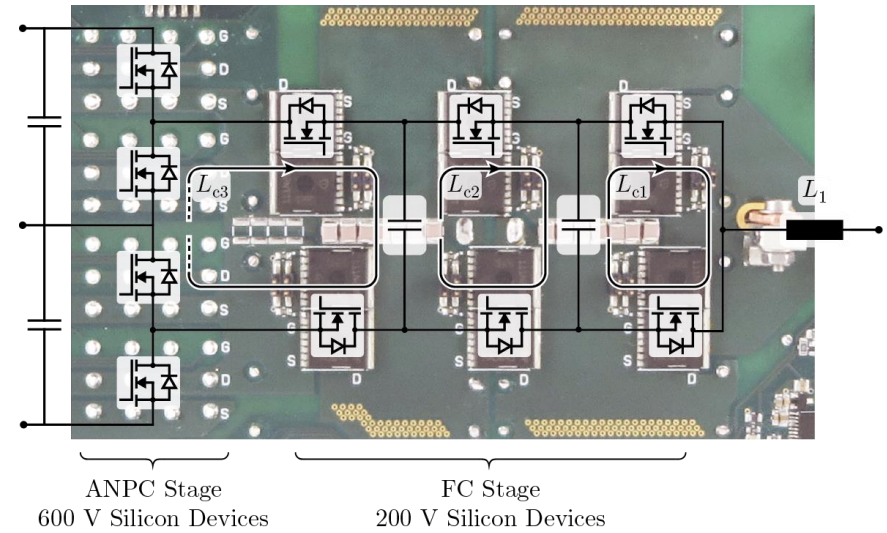
99.35 % Ultra-Efficient 7-Level HANPC Measurements



► Commutation Path



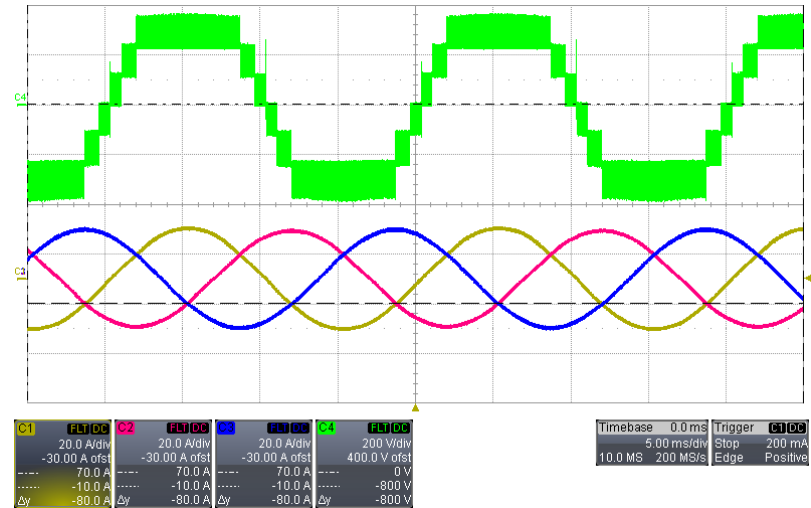
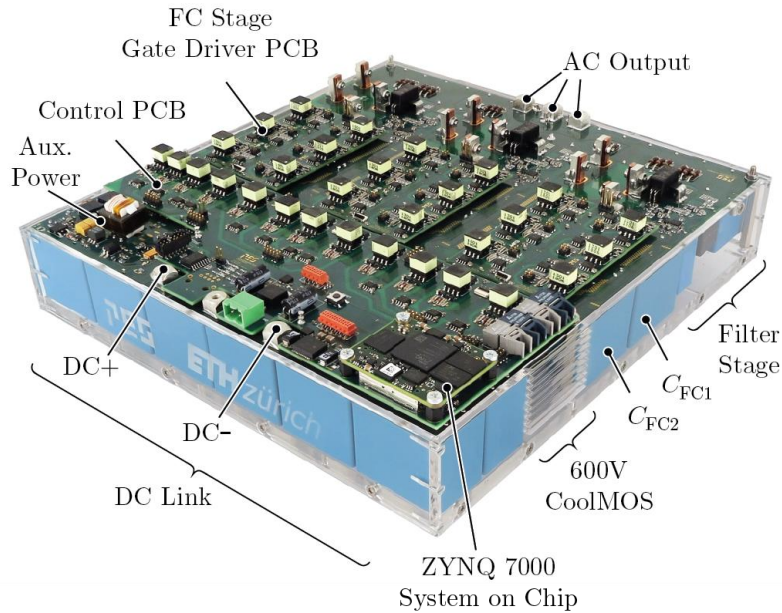
▲ 7L-HANPC Hardware Prototype



▲ Semiconductor Layout on the Power PCB

► Final Results

★ **3.34 kW/dm³** (55.9 W/in³)



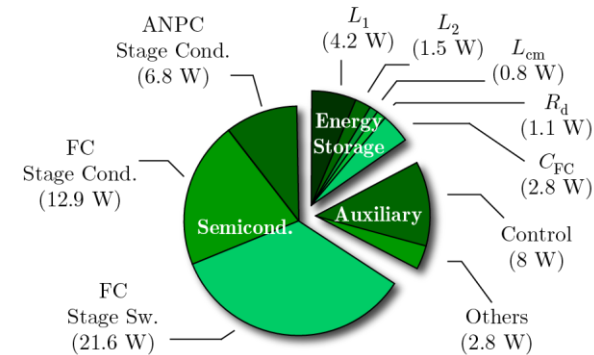
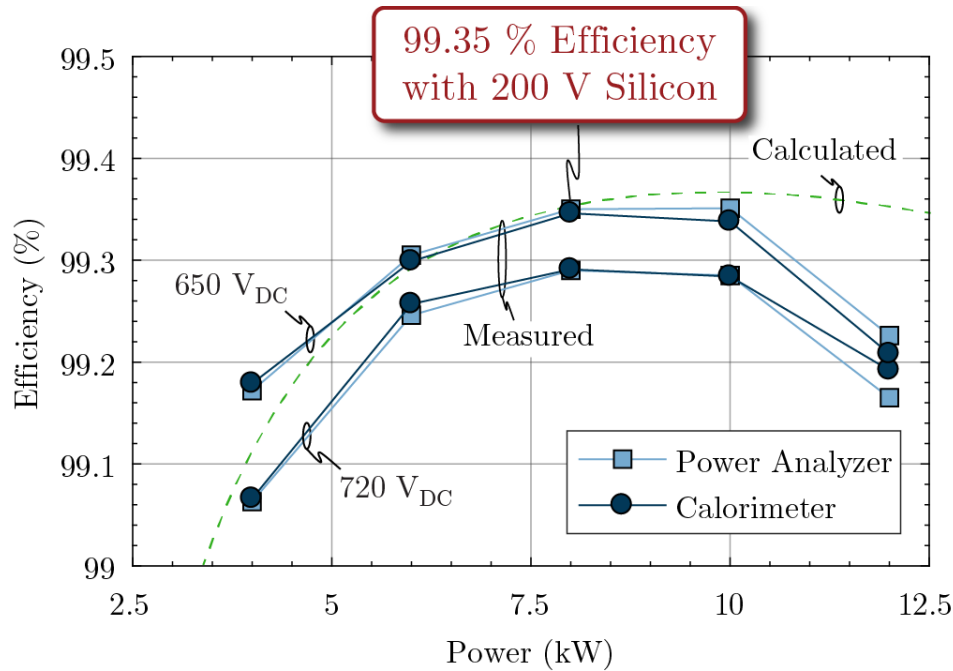
▲ **7-Level Output Voltage and Phase Currents @ 10 kW**

▲ **7L-HANPC Hardware Prototype**

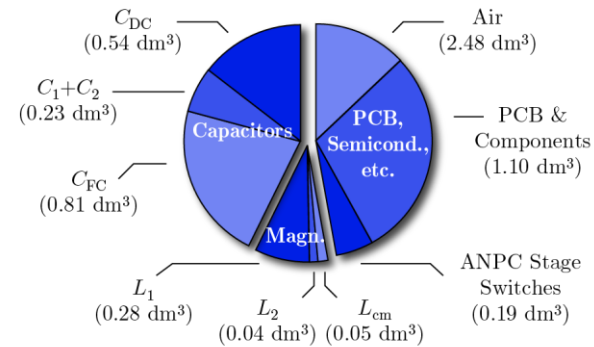


4.8 kg (2.63 kW/kg)

Final Results – Efficiency Measurements



Loss Distr. @ 10kW



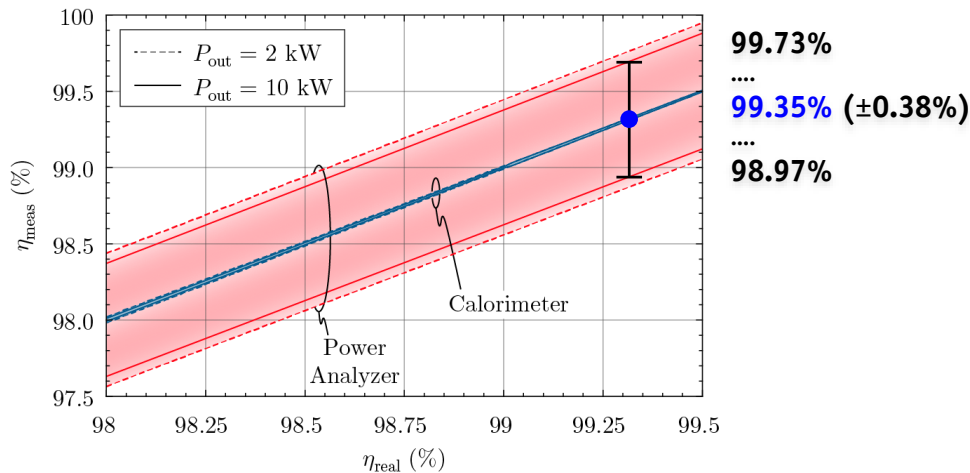
Volume Distr.

Measured Efficiency in Steady-State @ V_{DC} = 720V and V_{DC} = 650V



► Electric vs. Calorimetric Efficiency Measurements

- Large Uncertainty in Loss Determination with Electric Efficiency Measurement

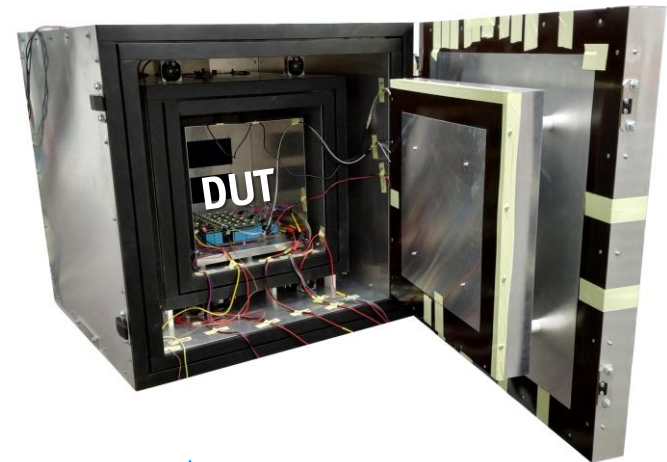


- ▲ Error Bars for Electric & Calorimetric Eff. Meas. Methods

- In This Case, Both Efficiency Measurement Methods Match, But Uncertainty is Too Large



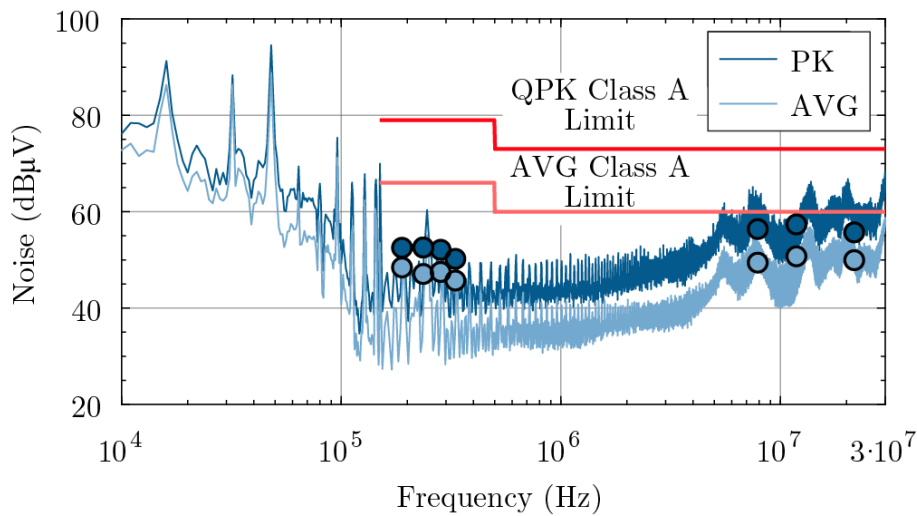
- ▲ Yokogawa WT3000 Precision Power Analyzer



- ▲ Calorimetric Setup

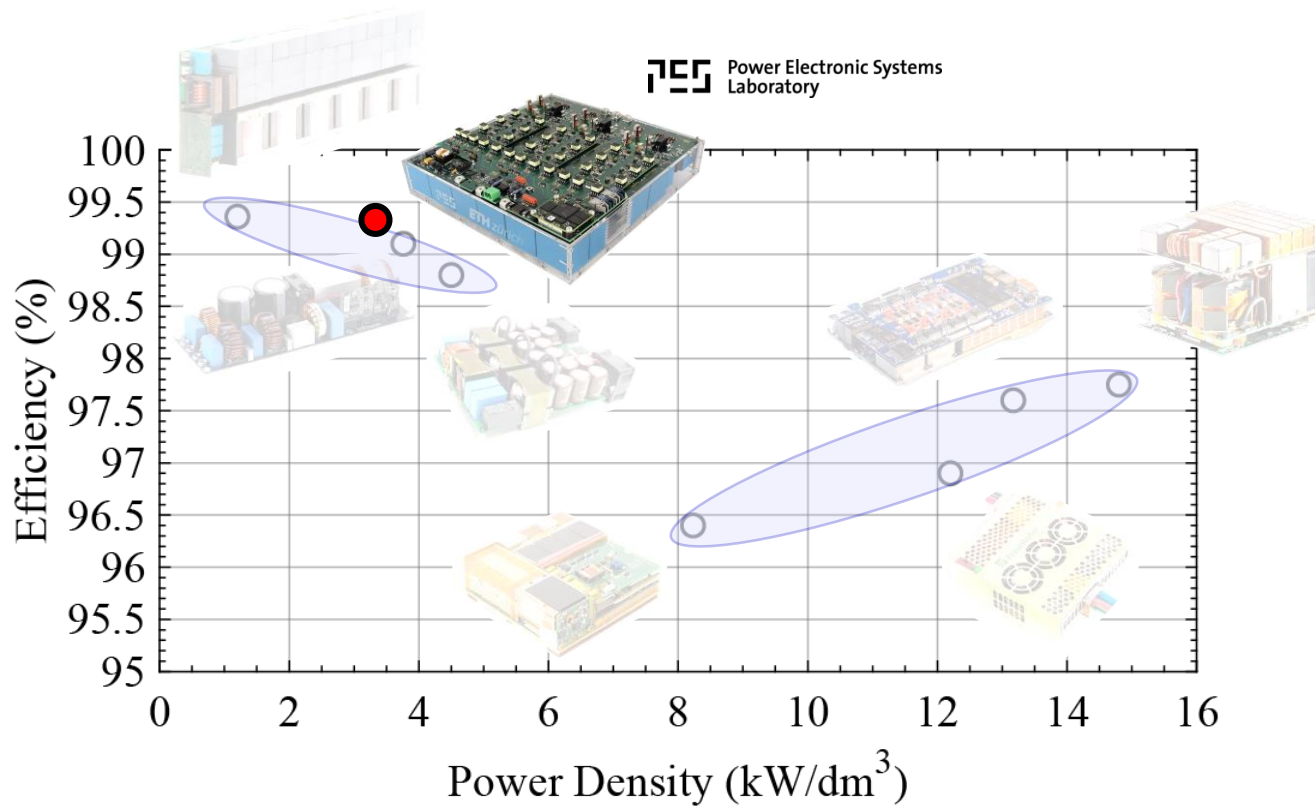
► Final Results – EMI Measurements

■ Hardware Passes EMI CISPR Class A Requirements



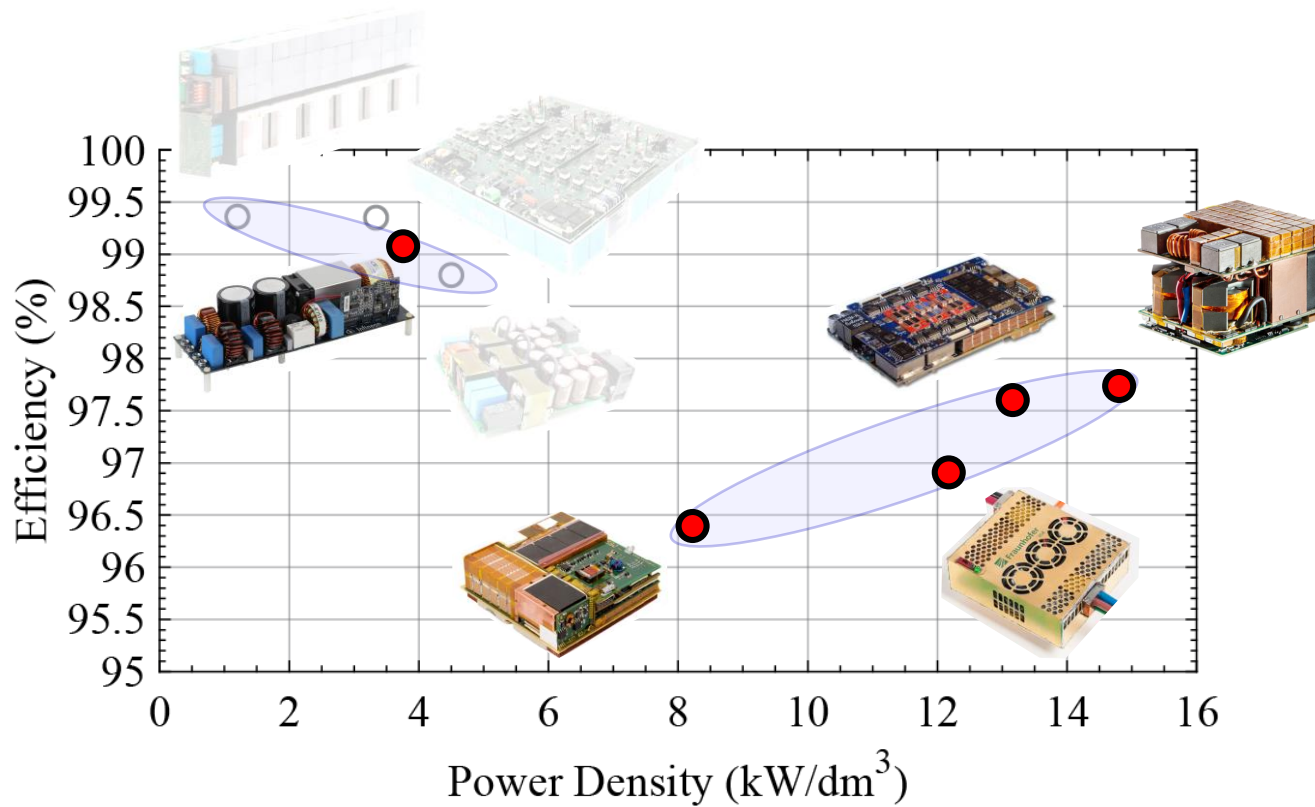
▲ Measured EMI Spectrum with the Quasi-Peak (QPK) and Average (AVG) Test Receivers.

► Multi-Level Approach for High-Efficiency



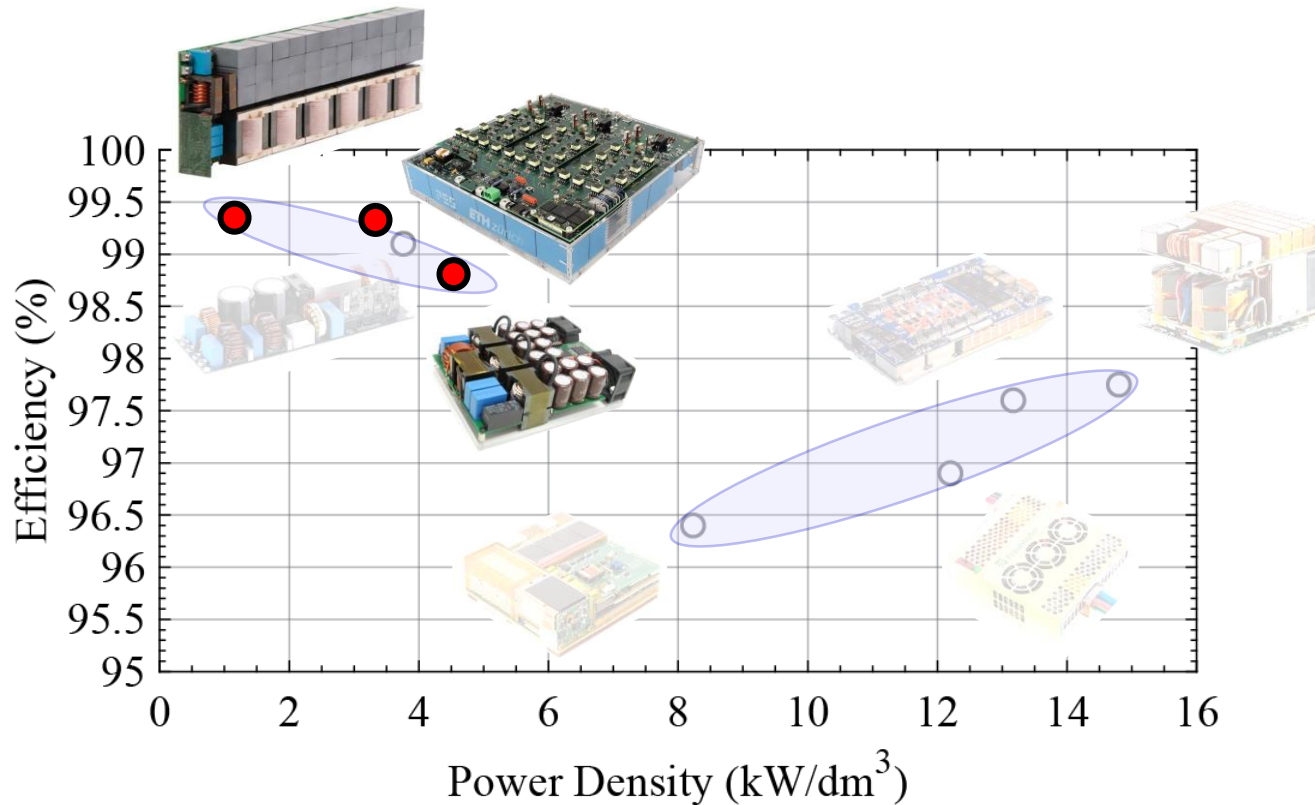
► Multi-Level Approach for High-Efficiency

► Wide Band-Gap (WBG) Technology



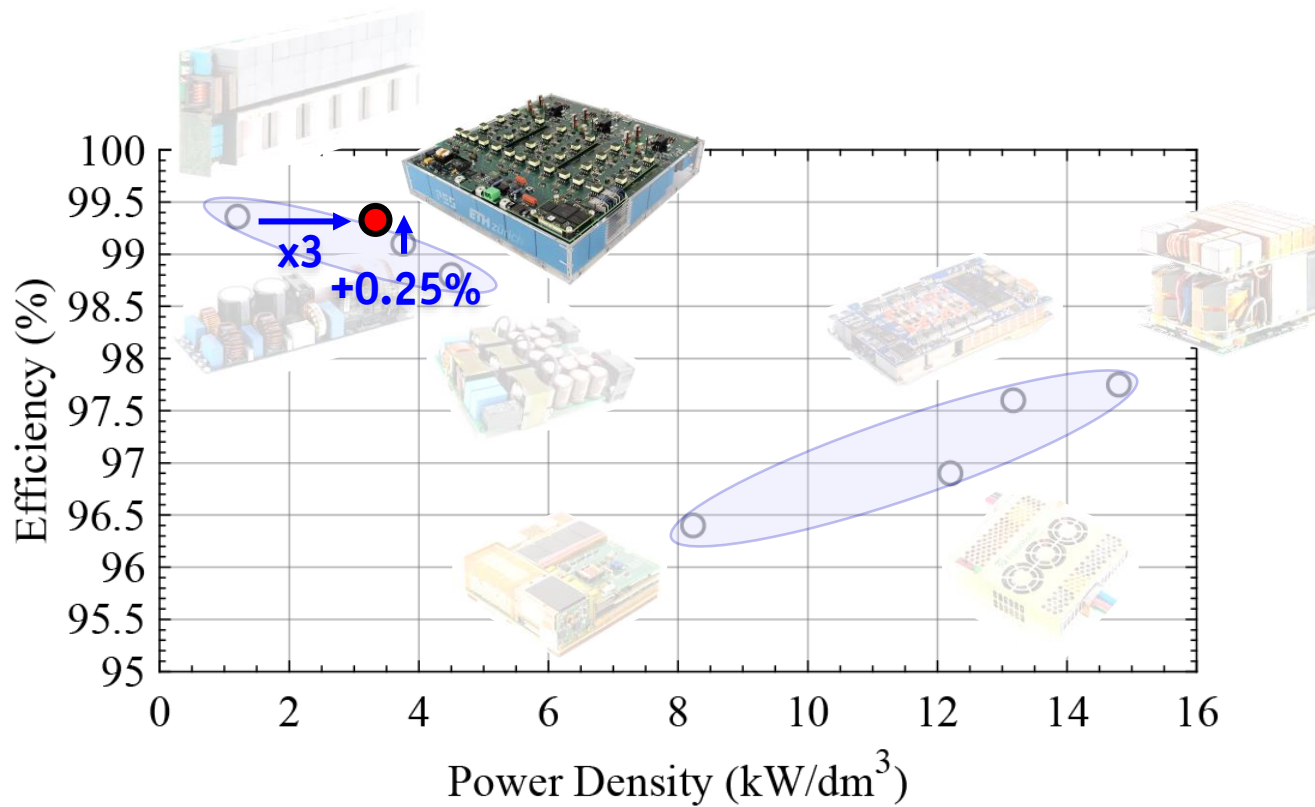
► Multi-Level Approach for High-Efficiency

► Silicon Technology



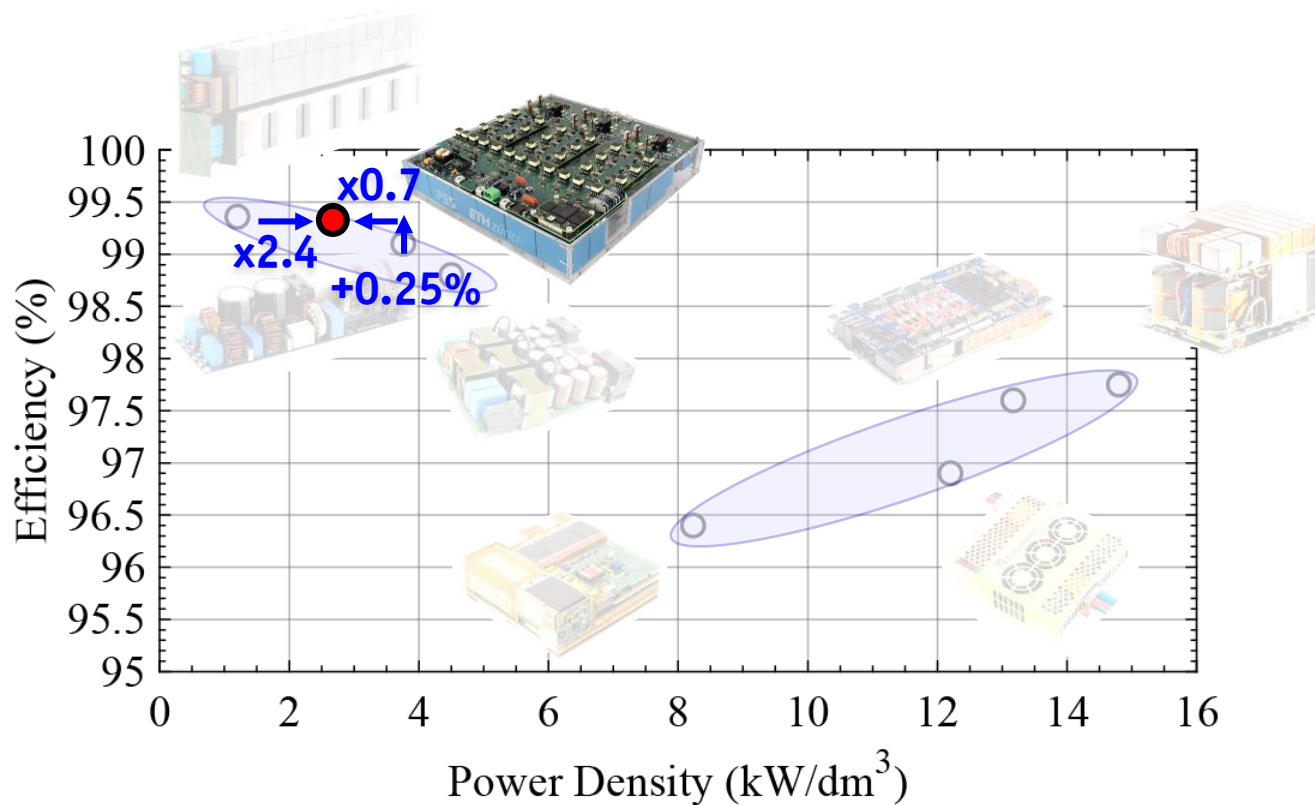
► Multi-Level Approach for High-Efficiency

► System Comparison



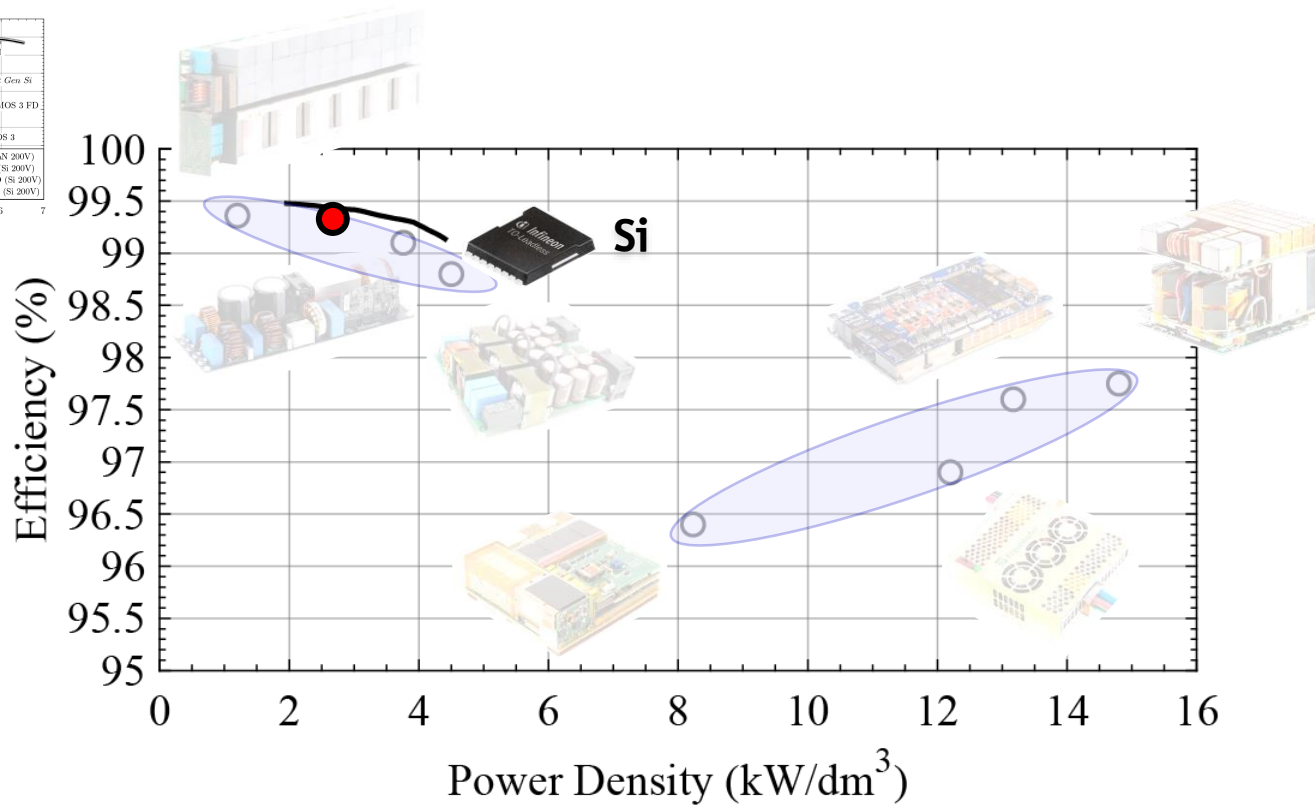
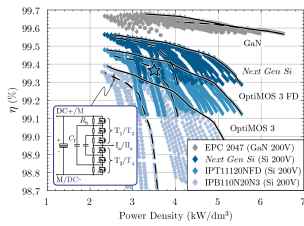
► Multi-Level Approach for High-Efficiency

► System Comparison → 25% Volume Addition for DC-Link 100Hz Power Buffering



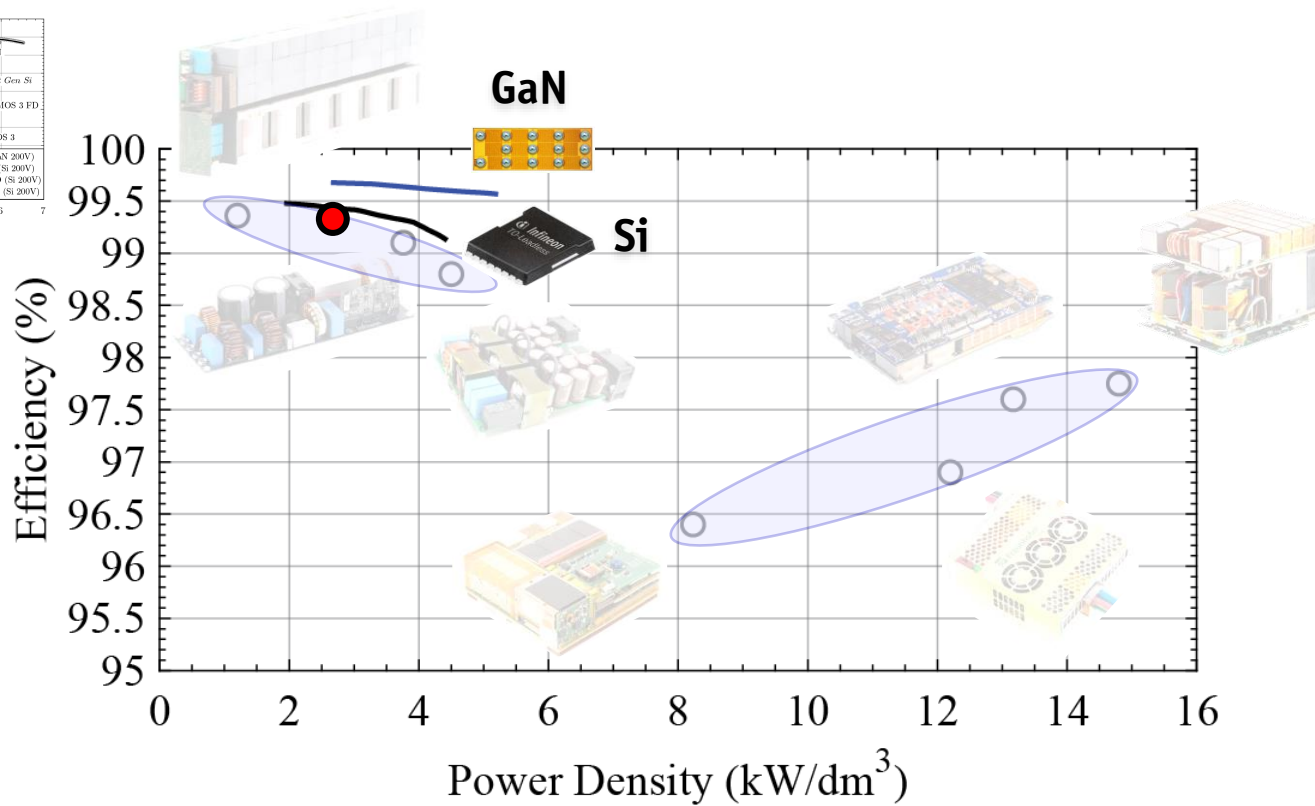
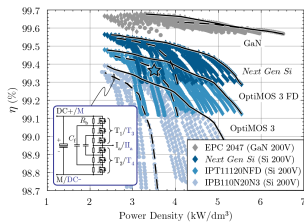
► Multi-Level Approach for High-Efficiency

► System Comparison → 25% Volume Addition for DC-Link 100Hz Power Buffering

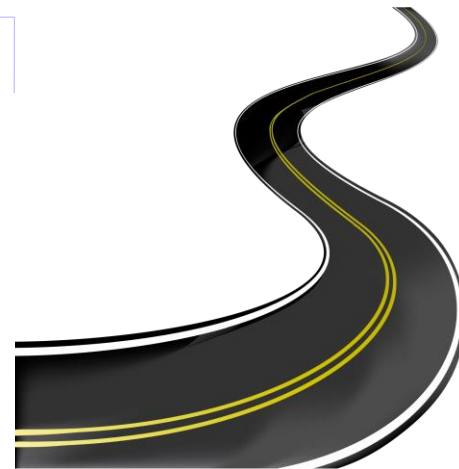


► Multi-Level Approach for High-Efficiency

► System Comparison → 25% Volume Addition for DC-Link 100Hz Power Buffering



Conclusion: Road towards the Future



► Conclusion

- **Multi-Level** Converters are **Adequate** for **Ultra-High Efficiency** Applications
- **Efficiency Barriers Pushed**
 - **99.35%** Peak Efficiency
 - European Weighted Efficiency \approx **99.10%**
 - California Energy Commission (CEC) Weighted Efficiency \approx **99.20%**
- **Ultra-High Efficiency** is Achievable with **Off-The-Shelf Silicon** Semiconductors
- **99.5% Efficiency** can be Reached with **Next-Generation Silicon** Devices
- **99.5+% Efficiency** can be Reached with Commercial **GaN** Devices



► Performance Limits & Future Requirements

► Losses:

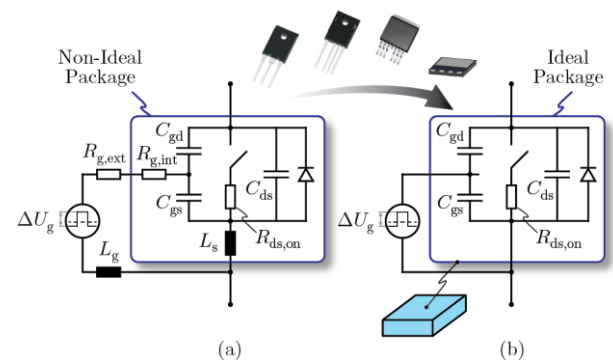
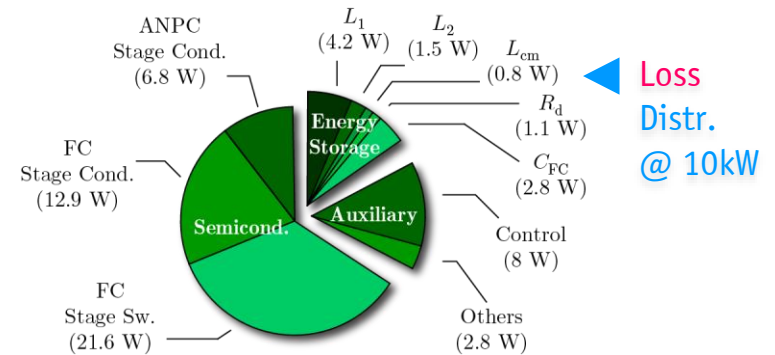
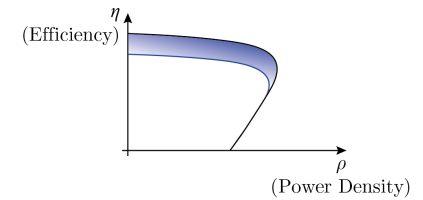
■ Semiconductors

- **66% of the Losses**
- **WBG: Better on Paper... But in Reality?**
- **Advanced Packaging → “Ideal Switch”**

■ Control

- **Low Power μC and/or FPGA/CPLD**

■ Every Watt Counts...



► Transition Towards Ideal Gate Driver and Package

► Performance Limits & Future Requirements

► Losses:

■ Semiconductors

- **66% of the Losses**
- **WBG: Better on Paper... But in Reality?**
- **Advanced Packaging → “Ideal Switch”**

■ Control

- **Low Power μ C and/or FPGA/CPLD**

■ Every Watt Counts...

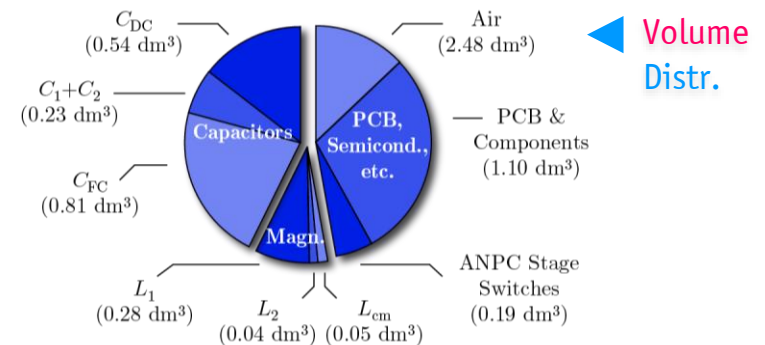
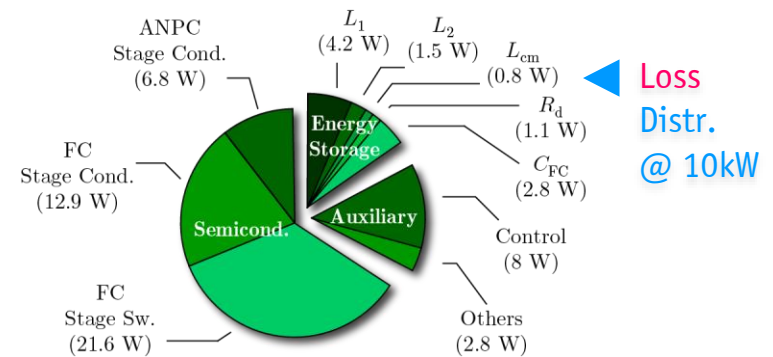
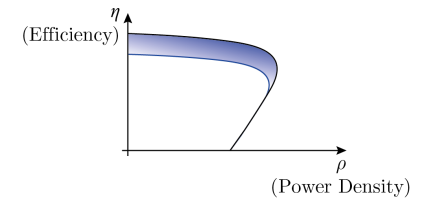
► Volume:

■ Capacitors

- **Determine the Volume for Low Sw. Freq. Converters**
- **-0.2% in Efficiency → +50% Power Density**

■ High Efficiency → No Heat-Sink

■ Building Blocks: Standardized and Low Cost



► Bibliography

- J. Azurza Anderson, E. Hanak, L. Schrittwieser, M. Guacci, J. W. Kolar, G. Deboy, "All-Silicon 99.35% Efficient Three-Phase Seven-Level Hybrid Neutral Point Clamped / Flying Capacitor Inverter," CPSS Transactions on Power Electronics and Applications, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 50-61, Mar. 2019.
- J. Azurza Anderson, E. Hanak, L. Schrittwieser, J. W. Kolar, G. Deboy, "Towards a 99.5% Efficient All-Silicon Three-Phase Seven-Level Hybrid Active Neutral Point Clamped Inverter," Proceedings of the 2nd IEEE International Power Electronics and Application Conference and Exposition (PEAC 2018), Shenzhen, China, November 4-7, 2018.
- J. Azurza Anderson, M. Leibl, L. Schrittwieser, J. W. Kolar, "Multi-Level Topology Evaluation for Ultra-Efficient Three-Phase Inverters," Proceedings of the International Telecommunications Energy Conference (INTELEC 2017), Broadbeach, Australia, October 22-26, 2017.
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Thank You



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