

A Novel Zero-Current Soft-Switching Converter for Switched Reluctance Motor Drives

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Abstract – A new zero-current-transition (ZCT) converter for switched reluctance motor drives is presented. The proposed ZCT converter possesses the definite advantages that both the main and auxiliary switches are operating with zero-current switching (ZCS), as well as minimum current and voltage stresses. It has simple circuit topology, minimum component count and low cost. The ZCT technique can significantly reduce the switch on or off losses by forcing the current to zero prior to its turn-on or turnoff. The proposed converter is especially advantageous for switched reluctance motor (SRM) drives demanding efficient regenerative braking, such as electric vehicle application.

I. INTRODUCTION

The switched reluctance motor (SRM) drive is a kind of brushless motor drives, without any rotor conductors nor permanent magnets. The SRM operates on the force of magnetic attraction with the simplest configuration compared with the other types of brushless motors. The SRM drive has some definite advantages for electric vehicle propulsion – simplest and most reliable construction, high efficiency over wide speed and torque ranges, high starting torque and low starting power, fully controllable four-quadrant operation and fast dynamic response.

Within the last decade, the research and development on SRM drives have been focused on the motor topology design and optimization as well as the motor control strategies. Nevertheless, a number of converter topologies for SRM drives have also been proposed [1]. However, most of these converter topologies employ the hard-switching technique which causes high switching losses and severe electromagnetic interference (EMI).

Recently, a number of soft-switching techniques, providing zero-voltage switching (ZVS) or zero-current switching (ZCS) condition, have been successfully developed for switched-mode power supplies (SMPS) [2]-[7]. Surprisingly, the development of soft-switching converters for dc and SRM drives has been very little. Even so, it has been assumed that those being developed for SMPS can be directly applicable. Until recently, a few studies on soft-switching converters for dc and SRM drives have been carried out [8]-[11].

In this paper, a new zero-current-switching pulse-width-modulated (ZCT-PWM) so called zero-current-transition (ZCT) converter, is proposed for SRM drives. Its principle of operation and simulation results will be given. It possesses some definite advantages over its PWM counterpart and other soft-switching converters, namely both

the main and auxiliary switches can operate with ZCS as well as minimum voltage and current stresses. It has simple circuit topology, minimum hardware count, and low cost, leading to achieve high switching frequency, high power density and high efficiency. The ZCT technique can significantly reduce the switch on or off losses by forcing the current to zero prior to its turn-on or turnoff. The proposed topology is very suitable for SRM drives using insulated gate bipolar transistors (IGBTs), MOS-controlled thyristors (MCTs) or gate-turnoff thyristors (GTOs) as power devices. Since these power devices generally suffer from severe inductive turnoff losses, they prefer ZCS to ZVS.

Fig. 1 shows the circuit diagram of a conventional hard-switching $(n+1)$ -switch converter for SRM drives. The upper chopping switch S_m serves all three phases while the lower commutating switches S_1 , S_2 and S_3 commutate the phases by selecting one phase at a time sequentially. For example, in Fig. 2(a), phase-1 is selected by turning on S_1 and the phase-1 current is controlled by switching S_m . After a desired time, in Fig. 2(b), S_m is turned off and the phase-1 current is freewheeling by D_m . Then, in Fig. 2(c), S_1 is turned off and energy returns to the source through D_m and D_1 . The SRM can be operated at regeneration simply by retarding the firing angles in such a way that the phase winding conduction period comes after the aligned position.

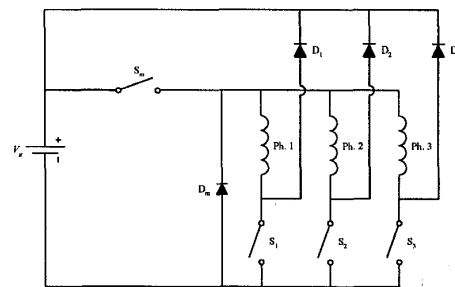


Fig. 1. Conventional converter for SRM drives.

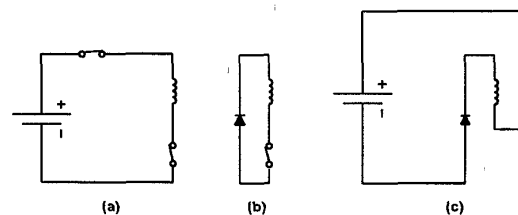


Fig. 2. Conduction modes for one phase.

II. MODES OF OPERATION

A. Single-Pulse Mode

In the single-pulse mode, phase flux builds from zero during each stroke. The supply voltage turns on at the turn-on angle θ_o , and current begins to rise as the rotor poles approach the stator poles of the next phase to be excited. The supply then turns off at the commutation angle θ_c .

B. Voltage PWM Mode

1) Voltage PWM - Soft Chopping Mode: Soft chopping involves turning on S_1 for the full period between θ_o and θ_c , and turning S_m on and off at a high frequency with a fixed duty cycle during the same period. When S_m is on, the supply voltage is connected to the phase winding. When it is off, the winding is short-circuited through S_1 and D_m .

2) Voltage PWM - Hard Chopping Mode: In hard chopping, both S_m and S_1 are switched together at high frequency.

C. Current-Regulated Chopping

It uses a current regulator and reference source to switch the power switches on and off. Both soft and hard chopping schemes are possible. A simple hysteresis controller maintains the current magnitude within an upper and lower limit. As the supply voltage is fixed, the result is that the switching frequency decreases as the incremental inductance of the phase winding increases.

III. PRINCIPLE OF OPERATION OF ZCT-SRM DRIVES

To achieve ZCT operation, two resonant tanks are added to form the proposed ZCT converter for SRM drives shown in Fig. 3. A resonant inductor L_a , a resonant capacitor C_a , an auxiliary switch S_a and a diode D_a are added to the chopping switch S_m . A resonant inductor L_b , a resonant capacitors C_b , a diode D_b , and four auxiliary switches S_b and S_{b1-3} are added to the commutating switches S_{1-3} .

A simplified one-phase circuit diagram is shown in Fig. 4. S_m , D_m , V_g and the phase winding can be treated as a buck converter while S_1 , D_1 , V_g and the phase winding can be treated as a boost converter. The equivalent circuits and operating waveforms are shown in Figs. 5 to 8, respectively.

It should be noted that although the necessary hardware component for achieving the ZCT operation is similar to that for zero-voltage transition (ZVT), their hardware configurations, principles of operation, equivalent circuits as well as operating waveforms and characteristics are very different. As shown in Figs. 5 and 7, there are nine operating stages within one switching cycle, which are briefly described as follows.

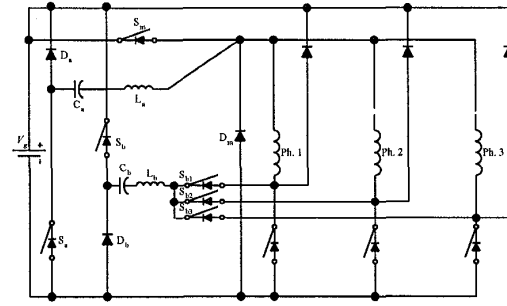


Fig. 3. Proposed ZCT converter for SRM drives.

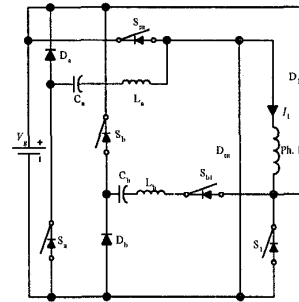


Fig. 4. Simplified one-phase circuit diagram.

A. ZCT Operation of S_m with L_a , C_a , S_a and D_a (Figs. 5 and 6)

- (a) Stage 1 [T_0 - T_1]: S_a is turned on and L_a and C_a start resonating. When i_{L_a} increases from zero to peak and then decreases toward zero and changes direction. i_{L_a} reaches $-I_1$ at T_1 and the antiparallel diode of S_a becomes on.
- (b) Stage 2 [T_1 - T_2]: S_a is turned off and S_m is turned on with ZCS at T_1 . The current of D_m is directed to the auxiliary circuit. i_{L_a} increases rapidly towards zero.
- (c) Stage 3 [T_2 - T_3]: i_{L_a} returns to zero at T_2 and the antiparallel diode of S_a is turned off naturally. L_a and C_a continue resonating and the positive i_{L_a} is conducted by D_a , i_{L_a} returns to zero and D_a is turned off naturally at T_3 .
- (d) Stage 4 [T_3 - T_4]: It is a powering mode.
- (e) Stage 5 [T_4 - T_5]: Before S_m is turned off, S_a is turned on again. L_a and C_a start resonating. When i_{L_a} increases from zero to peak and then decreases toward zero and changes direction and reaches $-I_1$ at T_5 and the antiparallel diode of S_a becomes on.
- (f) Stage 6 [T_5 - T_6]: At T_5 , i_{L_a} reaches $-I_1$ and the current of S_m is reduced to zero, so S_m is turned off with ZCS. As i_{L_a} keeps decreasing, and flows through the antiparallel diode of S_m .

- (g) Stage 7 [T_6-T_7]: At T_6 , i_{L_a} reaches to $-I_1$ and the antiparallel diode of S_m stops conducting.
- (h) Stage 8 [T_7-T_8]: At T_7 , v_{C_a} is discharged to zero and D_m starts to conduct. The current in D_m increases gradually.
- (i) Stage 9 [T_8-T_9]: It is a freewheeling mode via D_m .

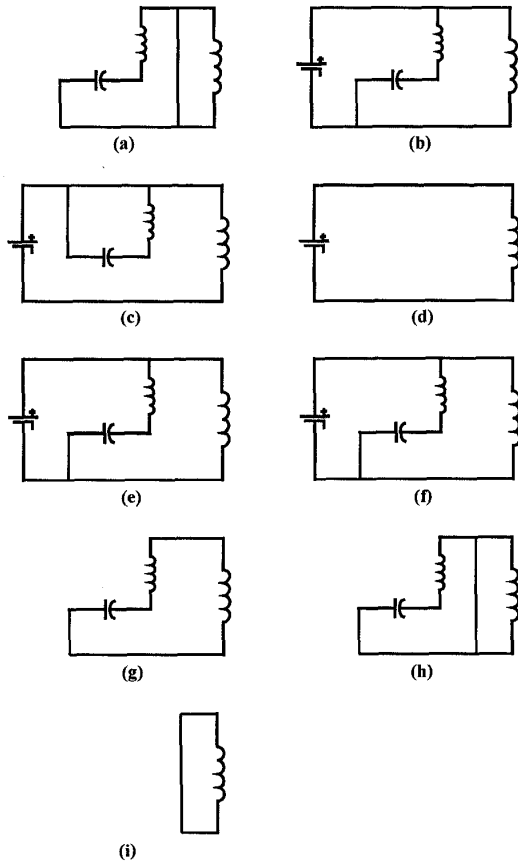


Fig. 5. Equivalent circuit for ZCT operation of S_m .

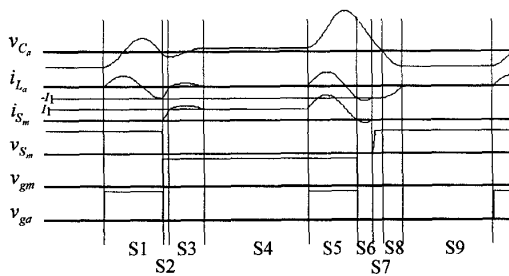


Fig. 6. Key waveforms for S_m .

B. ZCT Operation of S_1 with L_b , C_b , S_b and S_{b1} . (Figs. 7 and 8)

- (a) Stage 1 [T_0-T_1]: S_b and S_{b1} are turned on and L_b and C_b start resonating. When i_{L_b} decreases from zero to negative peak and then increases toward zero and changes direction. i_{L_b} reaches I_1 at T_1 and the antiparallel diode of S_b and S_{b1} become on.
- (b) Stage 2 [T_1-T_2]: S_b and S_{b1} are turned off and S_1 is turned on with ZCS at T_1 . The current of D_1 is directed to the auxiliary circuit. i_{L_b} decreases rapidly towards zero.
- (c) Stage 3 [T_2-T_3]: i_{L_b} returns to zero at T_2 and the antiparallel diode of S_b and S_{b1} are turned off naturally. L_b and C_b continue resonating and the negative i_{L_b} is conducted by D_b and D_{b1} . i_{L_b} returns to zero and D_b and D_{b1} are turned off naturally at T_3 .
- (d) Stage 4 [T_3-T_4]: It is a freewheeling mode.
- (e) Stage 5 [T_4-T_5]: Before S_1 is turned off, S_b and S_{b1} are turned on again. L_b and C_b start resonating. When i_{L_b} decreases from negative zero to peak and then increases toward zero and changes direction and reaches I_1 at T_5 and the antiparallel diode of S_b and S_{b1} become on.
- (f) Stage 6 [T_5-T_6]: At T_5 reaches I_1 and the current of S_1 is reduced to zero, so S_1 is turned off with ZCS. As i_{L_b} keeps increasing, and flows through the antiparallel diode of S_1 .
- (g) Stage 7 [T_6-T_7]: At T_6 , i_{L_b} falls to I_1 and the antiparallel diode of S_1 stops conducting.
- (h) Stage 8 [T_7-T_8]: At T_7 , v_{C_a} is discharged to zero and D_1 starts to conduct. The current in D_1 increases gradually.
- (i) Stage 9 [T_8-T_9]: It is a powering mode via D_1 .

IV. SIMULATION RESULTS

Different modes of operation of the proposed ZCT converter for SRM drives are PSpice-simulated, results are shown in Figs. 9 to 12.

Fig. 9 shows the simulated waveforms of the proposed converter operating in single-pulse mode. The supply voltage turns on at the turn-on angle θ_o , and then turns off at the commutation angle θ_c .

Operating waveforms of voltage PWM - soft chopping mode is shown in Fig. 10. S_1 is turned on for the full period between θ_o and θ_c , and S_m is turned on and off at a high frequency with a fixed duty cycle during the same period.

Fig. 11 shows the operating waveforms of the ZCT converter operating in voltage PWM - hard chopping mode. Both S_m and S_1 are switched together at high frequency.

For Fig. 12, a hysteresis controller is used to maintain the current magnitude within an upper and lower limit for the simulation of the proposed converter to operate in current-regulated soft chopping mode.

From Figs. 9 to 12, the simulated results agree with those theoretical waveforms. The main and auxiliary switches of the proposed ZCT converter (S_m , S_a , S_1 , S_b and S_{b1}) can always operate with ZCS.

V. CONCLUSION

A new ZCT converter for SRM drives has been presented. The ZCT converter possesses the definite advantages that both the main and auxiliary switches can always maintain ZCS with minimum current and voltage stress, as well as it can be implemented with a simple circuit topology, minimum hardware count and low cost, leading to achieve high power density and high efficiency.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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VII. REFERENCES

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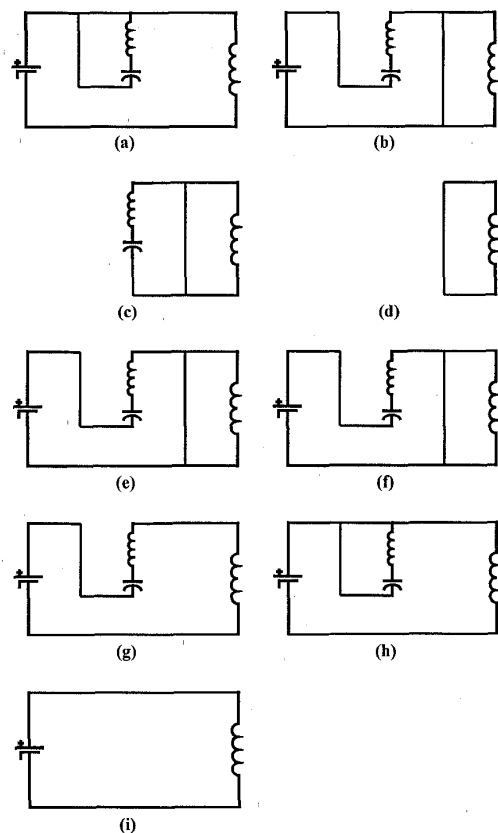


Fig. 7. Equivalent circuit for ZCT operation of S_1 .

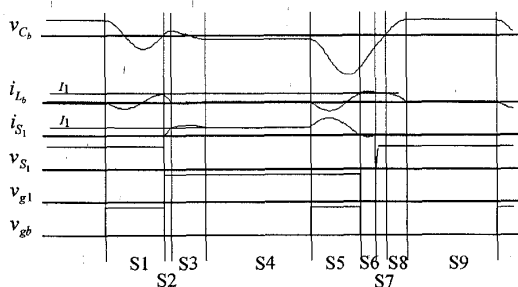


Fig. 8. Key waveforms for S_1 .

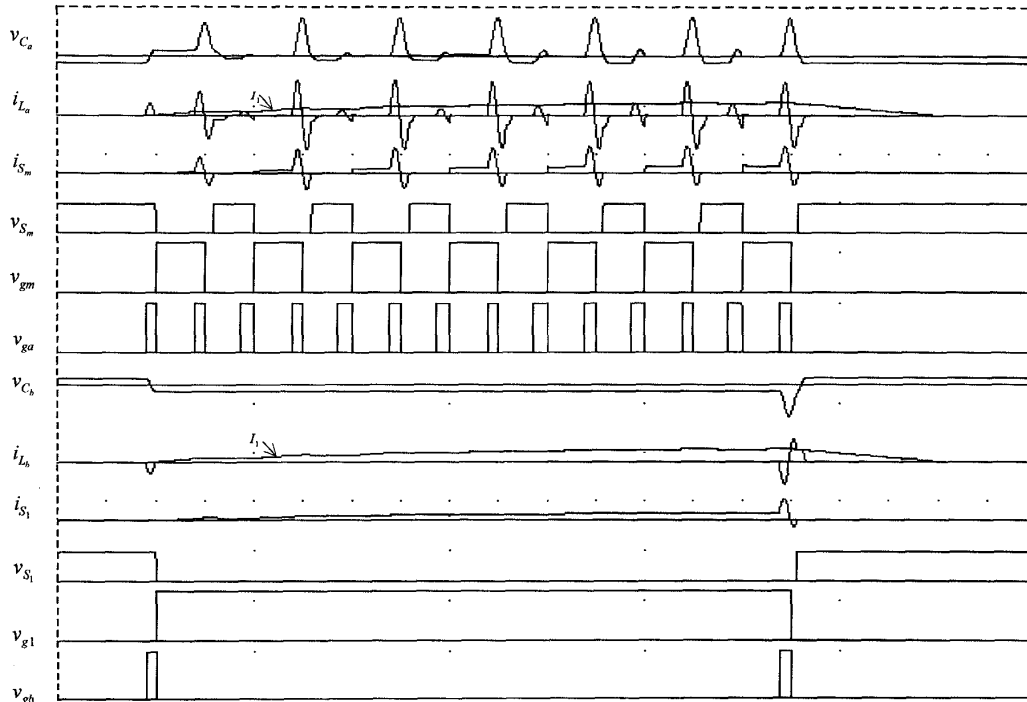


Fig. 9. PSpice simulation showing key waveforms of the ZCT converter (Single-pulse mode).

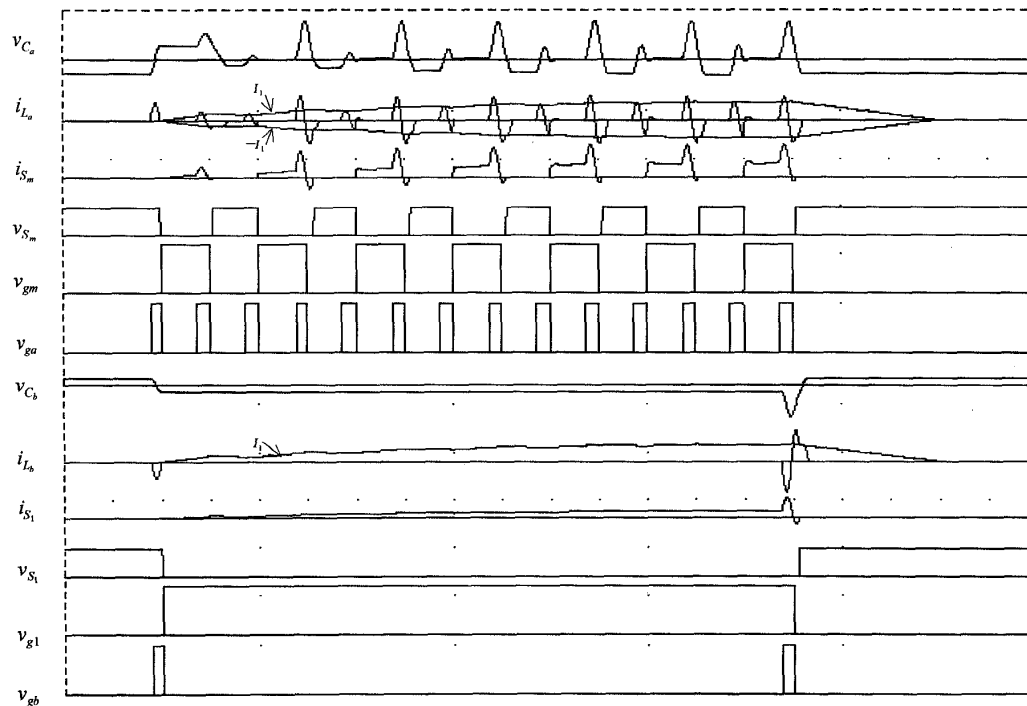


Fig. 10. PSpice simulation showing key waveforms of the ZCT converter (Voltage PWM - soft chopping mode).

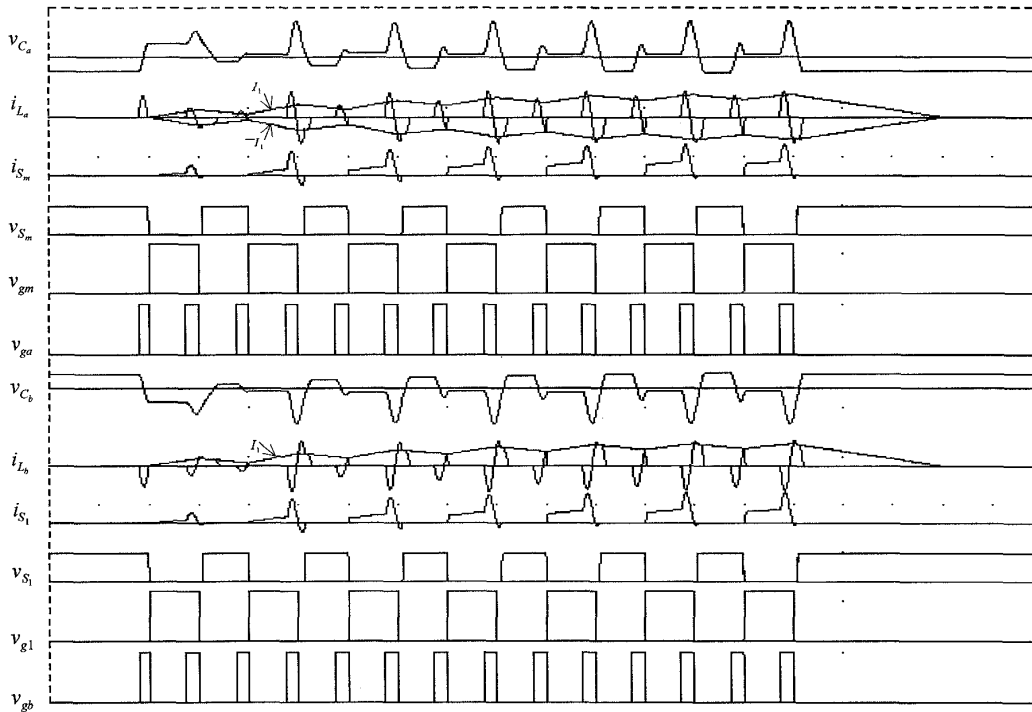


Fig. 11. PSpice simulation showing key waveforms of the ZCT converter (Voltage PWM - hard chopping mode).

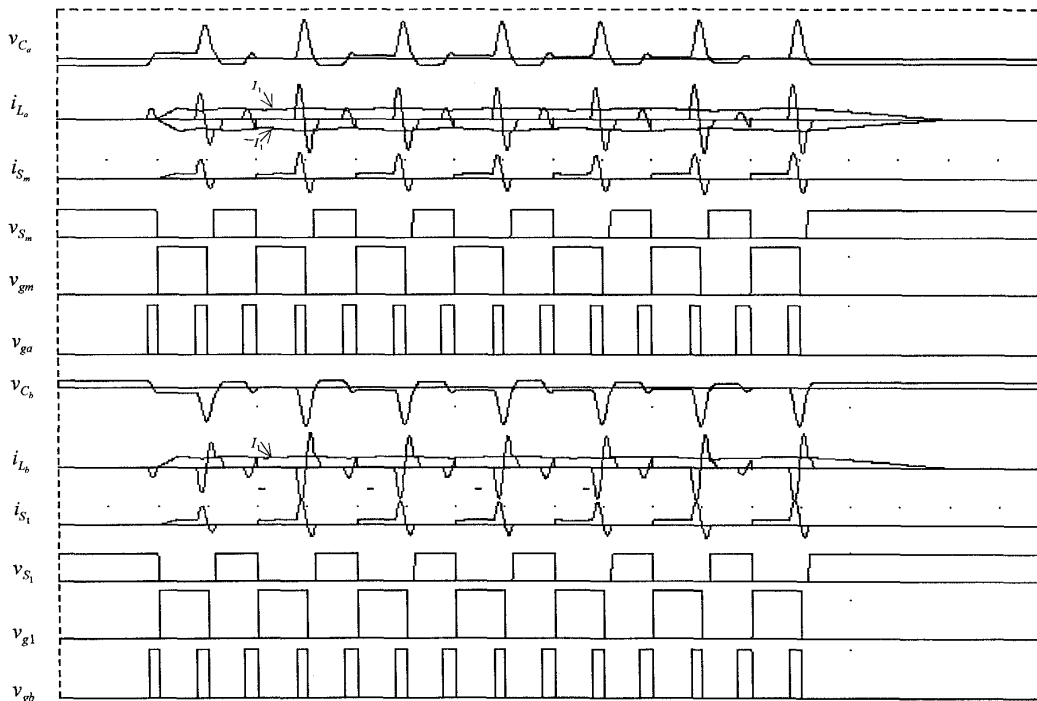


Fig. 12. PSpice simulation showing key waveforms of the ZCT converter (Current regulation - soft chopping mode).