Optimizing for the future smart grid: Efficient methods for nonconvex AC power flow problems

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New challenges for the smart grid



Traditional Grid





New infrastructure More data Increased demand More cyclic structure

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Fundamental challenges in power system optimization





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Fundamental challenges in power system optimization



Optimality

- Nonlinear nature of alternating current (AC) power flow → many problems are nonconvex
- Difference between local and global solutions is estimated at billions of \$ annually in the US (source: FERC)



In practice

- Optimization stage: Linearize power flow equations (DC approximation)
- Use heuristics to generate feasible AC solution
- New interest in conic relaxations that have global guarantees

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Goals of my PhD thesis work

Take a cross-disciplinary approach to solve important problems in power systems optimization

➢ Focus on both fundamental problems and new problems

Synthesize advanced methods from optimization and mathematics
 Algebraic geometry, graph theory, numerical methods
 Domain-specific understanding: the physics of power flow, sparse graph structure¹

Leverage novel theory to develop new algorithms

¹S. Sojoudi and J. Lavaei, "Physics of power networks makes hard optimization problems easy to solve," 2012.

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Underlying + new power system problems

Many problems in power systems planning and operation are based on fundamental problems



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Part I: Optimal Power Flow (OPF)

Two projects:

1) Finding the worst-case local minimum of OPF

2) Finding the global solution to a post-contingency OPF

Part I: Optimal Power Flow (OPF)

Two projects: **1)** Finding the worst-case local minimum of OPF
2) Finding the global solution to a post-contingency OPF

Mentor: Prof. Somayeh Sojoudi

Optimal Power Flow (OPF)

- ➢Goal: find minimum cost production of committed generating units
 - While satisfying technological and physical constraints
- Existing methods
 - Local: Interior Point Methods (IPM), Sequential Quadratic Programming (SQP)
 - Global: Convex relaxations (SDP, SOCP)^{1,2,3}



¹X. Bai et al. "Semidefinite programming for optimal power flow problems," 2008.
²J. Lavaei and S. Low, "Zero Duality Gap in Optimal Power Flow Problem," 2012.
³W. Bukhsh et al. "Local Solutions of the Optimal Power Flow Problem," 2013.

Finding the worst-case local minimum¹



¹E. Glista and S. Sojoudi, "Convex model to evaluate worst-case performance of local search in the optimal power flow problem," *IEEE 59th Conference on Decision and Control*, 2020.

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Idea: Create an upper bound on the worse-case local minimum



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Exactness of SDP relaxation

Example	$\min_{x \in \mathbb{R}^n} x^T M_0 x$
QCQP	s.t. $x^T x = 1$

- For the second second
- For c > 0, the SDP relaxation is *not exact*

Choice of parameter *c***:**

- \succ Exact value of c is not needed for the SDP relaxation
- Selecting too large of a $c \implies$ larger optimality gap between the SDP relaxation & the original worst-case local min problem

>Also looked at introducing a penalty term to the objective to get tight SDP relaxation



Simulations on realistic networks



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Relation to existing methods



Compare the SDP worst-case upper bound with the SDP lower bound to obtain bounds on the range of possible objective values obtained with local search

Worst-case local min: summary & conclusions

- Formulated a new problem to find the worst-case local minimum for a canonical QCQP (e.g. OPF)
 - Since this problem is still nonconvex, use an SDP relaxation to find an upper bound
- Find that the tightness of the upper bound depends on the choice of a parameter in the second-order necessary optimality condition
- Method provides a metric on how much SDP can outperform local search → evaluate the performance of the *whole class of local search methods*

Part I: Optimal Power Flow (OPF)

*Two projects:*1) Finding the worst-case local minimum of OPF2) Finding the global solution to a post-contingency OPF

Mentors: Prof. Somayeh Sojoudi, Prof. Javad Lavaei Collaborator: SangWoo Park

Parametric OPF for post-contingency analysis¹

$$\begin{array}{ll} \min_{x} & f(x,\lambda) \\ \boldsymbol{H(\lambda)} & \text{s.t.} & h(x,\lambda) = 0 \\ & g(x,\lambda) \leq 0 \end{array}$$

Want to efficiently solve coupled postcontingency OPF problems to global optimality given the solution to the base case



Base SCOPF problem approximates the contingencies but does not explicitly solve for them

¹S. Park, **E. Glista**, J. Lavaei, and S. Sojoudi, "Homotopy method for finding the global solution of post-contingency optimal power flow," *American Control Conference*, 2020. *Won the Best Student Paper Award*.

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Homotopy method to solve contingency-OPF

- Goal: Efficiently find the global solution to all the variations, given a global solution to the base problem
- Approach: Design sequences of intermediate problems that connect the base problem to each of its variations



Background on homotopy methods

Homotopy and continuation methods have long been used in mathematics & engineering to solve systems of nonlinear equations

Power systems: continuation power flow¹

"Easy" problem:
$$s(x) = 0$$
 "Hard" problem: $f(x) = 0$
Define $H(x, \lambda) = \lambda \cdot s(x) + (1 - \lambda) \cdot f(x)$

 \succ Discretize path from $\lambda_0 = 1$ to $\lambda_f = 0$

➢Application to optimization is more recent^{2,3}

$$H(\lambda) = \min_{x} \{\lambda \cdot s(x) + (1 - \lambda) \cdot f(x)\}$$

>Convergence to a global minimum is **not guaranteed** for nonconvex problems

¹D. Mehta et al., "Numerical polynomial homotopy continuation method to locate all the power flow solutions," 2016. ²L.T. Watson and R.T. Haftka, "Modern homotopy methods in optimization," 1989. ³D.M. Dunlavy and D.P. O'Leary, "Homotopy optimization methods for global optimization," 2005.

Implementation of homotopy for contingency-OPF



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Some homotopy paths are more desirable



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Theory to characterize desirable homotopy paths

Some homotopy paths are more desirable than others

➢ If we can say that the global minimum is unique (& satisfies some conditions) for the homotopy OPF problems, then we can track the global minimum¹

>Assumes no degeneracy or infeasibility along the path

 Families of parametric optimization problems generically have a unique global solution satisfying conditions
 Showed that this applies to contingency-OPF¹



¹S. Park, **E. Glista**, J. Lavaei, and S. Sojoudi, "An efficient homotopy method for solving the post-contingency optimal power flow to global optimality," *IEEE Access*. November 2022.

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Homotopy method is effective in practice

3012-bus Polish network with different single line outages



~ 2-5 minutes

Homotopy methods for COPF: conclusions

Need to solve many contingency-OPF problems to global optimality in a short period of time

Process:

- > Defined a **homotopy method** that connects the Base OPF to COPF
- > Each step of the homotopy problem is solved via **fast local-search algorithm**
- Characterized "good" homotopy path that will lead us to the global solution of COPF
- Applied to real-world networks

Demonstrated that the method results in *significant violation cost reductions* in about 10% of the hundreds of examined cases and no worse performance in the others

Part II: Power Systems State Estimation (SE)

Project: Optimizing sensor placement to ensure robustness in power system SE

Mentor: Prof. Somayeh Sojoudi

State estimation (SE) is critical for grid operation



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Robust SE and the optimization of sensor placement

- Determine real-time state of power network
 → power systems state estimation (SE)
- Noisy or corrupted/attacked data → robust power systems SE
- Focus: How to place sensors in a power network to optimize for robustness of power systems SE
- Approach: Formulate a mixed-integer linear program (MILP) for measurement choice that optimizes a robustness condition¹



¹E. Glista and S. Sojoudi, "A MILP for Optimal Measurement Choice in Robust Power Grid State Estimation," 2022 IEEE Power & Energy Society General Meeting. Won Best Conference Paper Award (Power Systems Modeling & Analysis).

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Builds on linearized SE model¹

- Nonlinearity of AC power flow \rightarrow SE is nonlinear, nonconvex \rightarrow hard to solve!
- Two-stage model¹ that can be solved to global optimality with local search methods

Given: Power network given as $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{N}, \mathcal{L})$, set of buses \mathcal{N} and set of lines \mathcal{L} , measurement set \mathcal{M}

Input: Noisy, corrupted measurements $\mathbf{y} \in \mathbb{R}^m$, where $m := |\mathcal{M}|$ Stage 1: Solve SE problemusing linearized basis $\mathbf{x} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ to get an estimate $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$.

Stage 2: Recover an estimate of underlying voltage vector $\hat{\mathbf{v}}$ from $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$.

¹M. Jin et al., "Scalable and robust state estimation from abundant but untrusted data," *IEEE Transactions on Smart Grid*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 1880–1894, 2020.

Linearized SE model & mutual incoherence



- Mutual coherence is a measure of the cross-correlation of the columns of a matrix
- "Mutual incoherence" measures alignment of two submatrices in A, one related to clean data, one to corrupted data

Bad data supportClean data support \mathcal{B} := supp(**b**) $\mathcal{B}^c = \mathcal{M} \setminus \mathcal{B}$

$$Mutual incoherence \rho(\mathcal{B}) = \left\| \mathbf{A}_{\mathcal{B}^{c}}^{\mathrm{T}\dagger} \mathbf{A}_{\mathcal{B}}^{\mathrm{T}} \right\|_{\infty}$$

If $\rho(\mathcal{B}) < 1$, then Stage 1 recovers $\hat{\mathbf{x}}$ with small error from $\mathbf{x^*}$ with high probability¹

¹M. Jin et al., "Scalable and robust state estimation from abundant but untrusted data," *IEEE Transactions on Smart Grid*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 1880–1894, 2020.

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Local certification of mutual incoherence

Instead of considering the bad data support (unknown), we consider a local condition



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Measurement choice as a MILP

❖ Idea: Optimize the choice of measurements in \mathcal{M} such that $\rho^{ij} < 1$ for all $(i, j) \in \mathcal{L}$

 $n_{12} n_{21}$

Our method:

Consider all possible measurements	 network topologie available sensor 	gy rs	$ v_1 ^2$	p_2	$\begin{array}{c} p_3 \\ \hline \\ 3 \\ \hline \\ \hline \\ \\ \hline \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ $	$ v_4 ^2$	
Partition measureme	nts	attacked regionboundary regionssafe region		p_{23}		04	
Introduce binary measurement choice variable $\phi \in \{0,1\}^m$				• ϕ couples optimization problems over each ρ^{ij} , $\forall (i,j) \in \mathcal{L}$			
	Formula	ate an optimization ze β where $ ho^{ij} \leq eta$	n probl 6 for al	$ \begin{array}{l} lem over \phi t \\ l (i, j) \in \mathcal{L} \end{array} \end{array} $	0		
		Relax nonlinear prove exact	constr	aints and			

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 m_{-} , m_{-}

Simulations on IEEE test cases

		Results of problem that minimizes β where $\rho^{ij} \leq \beta$ for all $(i,j) \in \mathcal{L}$				Results of problem that minimizes the number of violations of $ ho^{ij}$ < 1			
Network		Fraction of meas.	β = max ρ^{ij}	Solve time (s)		Fraction of meas.	Lines where $\rho^{ij} < 1$	Solve time (s)	
case5		29 / 39	1.26	0.69		30 / 39	6 / 12	1.89	
case9		42 / 57	1.48	1.12		36 / 57	12 / 18	1.49	
case14		95 / 120	1.61	9.33		92 / 120	18 / 40	120.5	
case30		193 / 248	1.61	39.3		190 / 248	37 / 82	831.1	
No choice of measurements such that <i>all</i> lines are robust in case of attack!									
However, we can find subsets of measurements that are more optimal than others in terms of SE robustness									

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Measurement choice: conclusions





Measurement Set A

Having more lines satisfy the mutual incoherence condition *guarantees* a reduction in the impact of the attack on power system SE for nodes far from the attacked region

Measurement Set B

Part III: Power Flow (PF) Mapping Problem

Project: Learning the power system topology using a data-driven, physics-informed optimization

Mentor: Prof. Somayeh Sojoudi

Uncertain topology \rightarrow problems for most PF methods





Uncertain topology in WB5 network

Uncertain topology = parameter uncertainty

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Exploiting large datasets to learn topology



➤ Previous Approaches: Neural networks (NN), maximum likelihood estimation, support vector regression (SVR)^{1,2} → overfitting + ignore physics!

¹J. Yu, Y. Weng, and R. Rajagopal, "Robust mapping rule estimation for power flow analysis in distribution grids," in 2017 NAPS. ²J. Yuan and Y. Weng, "Support matrix regression for learning power flow in distribution grid with unobservability," *IEEE Transactions on Power Systems*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 11510-1161, 2022.

Data-driven approach to learn topology

Goal: Recover the underlying power system topology from system data

- "Topology" = network connectivity & line parameters
- Robust in the presence of outliers and noise in data

> Our Approach: Design a constrained support vector regression (SVR) problem

- Approach allows *exact* representation of the true AC power system & its inherent sparsity
- Can efficiently solve SVR optimization problem with off-the-shelf quadratic program (QP) solvers or tailored algorithm

¹E. Glista and S. Sojoudi, "Leveraging the physics of AC power flow in support vector regression to identify power system topology," submitted to the 2023 Conference on Decision and Control (CDC), 2023.

Background on SVR



Idea: Find linear estimator that maximizes data proximity to plane



Kernel trick for nonlinear mappings

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Power flow (PF) mapping as constrained SVR

* Idea: Create new SVR formulation with constraints that represent network sparsity

Our method: $K(\mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{x}_2) = (\langle \mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{x}_2 \rangle)^2 = \phi(\mathbf{x}_1)^T \phi(\mathbf{x}_2)$ for carefully chosen state $x \in \mathbb{R}^{2n}$ where n is the number of buses equipped with PMUs Formulate PF mapping *exactly* as \rightarrow Power flow mapping: $p_{ij} = \langle \mu_{p_{ij}}, \phi(\mathbf{x}) \rangle$, $q_{ij} = \langle \mu_{q_{ij}}, \phi(\mathbf{x}) \rangle$ quadratic kernel Define SVR problem with State equation model: $y_t = W\phi(x_t)$ multiple types of SCADA for time steps $t \in \{1, ..., T\}$ measurements Define sparsity pattern for power Controls the network \rightarrow add as constraint to SVR structure of WShow that the constrained SVR and its dual are both convex quadratic programs (QPs)

Simulations with SCADA + PMU errors

14-bus IEEE network



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Simulations with varying PMU penetration

30-bus IEEE network



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Summary & conclusions

- Proposed a new constrained SVR method that can exactly learn the true power network topology in the case without noise
 - Method has high accuracy in the cases with measurement noise and/or outliers and varying levels of PMU penetration
 - Performs much better than state-of-the-art methods in terms of line parameter recovery and solution time



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Research advisor:

Prof. Somayeh Sojoudi

Mechanical Engineering, EECS (joint)



Collaborator:

Prof. Javad Lavaei

Industrial Engineering & Operations Research



Collaborator:

SangWoo Park

Industrial Engineering & Operations Research



Mentor:

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Thank you!

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Worst-case local min	$\max_{x \in \mathbb{R}^n} x^T M_0 x + k$ s.t. $x \in \{ \text{local minima of OPF} \}$		
Lagrange multiplier $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}^p, \;\; (x^*,\lambda^*)$ corresponding to local minima:			
First-order conditions	$0 = \nabla_x L(x^*, \lambda^*) = 2M_0 x^* + 2\sum_{i=1}^p \lambda_i^* M_i x^*$ $(x^*)^T M_i x^* = a_i \qquad \forall i = 1, \dots, p$		
Second-order necessary condition	$y^{T} (\nabla_{xx}^{2} L(x^{*}, \lambda^{*})) y \ge 0$ for all y such that $y^{T} M_{i} x^{*} = 0, \forall i = 1,, p$ where $\nabla_{xx}^{2} L(x^{*}, \lambda^{*}) = 2M_{0} + 2\sum_{i=1}^{p} \lambda_{i}^{*} M_{i}$		

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Worst-case local min	$\max_{x \in \mathbb{R}^n} x^T M_0 x + k$ s.t. $x \in \{\text{local minima of OPF}\}$
Lagrange multiplier $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}^{3}$	p^{p} , (x^{*}, λ^{*}) corresponding to local minima:
First-order conditions	$0 = \nabla_{x} L(x^{*}, \lambda^{*}) = 2M_{0}x^{*} + 2\sum_{i=1}^{p} \lambda_{i}^{*}M_{i}x^{*}$ $(x^{*})^{T}M_{i}x^{*} = a_{i} \forall i = 1,, p$
Alternative second-order necessary condition	$M_{0} + \sum_{i=1}^{p} \lambda_{i}^{*} M_{i} + c \sum_{i=1}^{p} M_{i}(x^{*})(x^{*})^{T} M_{i} \ge 0$
	for some <i>c</i> above a certain threshold, $c > \overline{c}$

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> Nonconvex

>Any upper bound on the problem will also upper bound the worst-case local minimum

>Use a relaxation of the problem into a semidefinite program (SDP)

SDP relaxation of the worst-case local min



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Simulations on realistic networks¹



¹E. Glista and S. Sojoudi, "A Semidefinite Program to Bound the Worst-case Solution of Local Search Methods in Optimal Power Flow," 2020.

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3375-bus Polish network with single generator outage



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Measurement choice problem v1



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Measurement choice problem v2

$$\min_{\substack{\phi \in \{0,1\}^m \\ Z^{ij}, Y^{ij}, \beta^{ij}, \forall (i,j) \in \mathcal{L} \end{pmatrix}} \sum_{\substack{(i,j) \in \mathcal{L} \\ (i,j) \in \mathcal{L} \end{pmatrix}} \mathbf{1} \{ \beta^{ij} \ge 1 \}$$
Objective: minimize number of violations of $\rho^{ij} > 1$
s.t. $\underline{M} \le \sum_{i=1}^{m} \phi_i \le \overline{M}$
 $\sum_{i=1}^{|\Phi_x|} \Phi_x[i] \ge 1, \quad \forall x \in \mathcal{X}$
 $\forall (i,j) \in \mathcal{L} :$
 $\sum_{r=1}^{m_{ib}^{ij}} R_{kr}^{ij} Z_{rl}^{ij} = S_{kl}^{ij} \phi[\tilde{\mathcal{M}}_{db}^{ij}(l)], \quad \forall k \in [n_b^{ij}], \forall l \in [m_{db}^{ij}]$
 $Y_{rl}^{ij} \ge \max\{-Z_{rl}^{ij}, Z_{rl}^{ij}\}, \quad \forall r \in [m_{ib}^{ij}], \forall l \in [m_{db}^{ij}]$
 $Y_{rl}^{ij} \le C \phi[\tilde{\mathcal{M}}_{ib}^{ij}(r)], \quad \forall r \in [m_{ib}^{ij}], \forall l \in [m_{db}^{ij}]$
 $\sum_{l=1}^{m_{db}^{ij}} Y_{rl}^{ij} \le \beta^{ij}, \quad \forall r \in [m_{ib}^{ij}]$

Sensor placement for robust SE: summary & conclusions

- Novel framework to *formally optimize the placement of sensors* in a power network in order to satisfy a condition for SE robustness
- ≻Method:
 - Leveraged a linearized SE framework and the concept of local partitioning
 - Defined a MILP that optimizes the local mutual incoherence metric for each line in the network
- Can be used to place new sensors in an existing legacy power network in order to improve SE robustness
- Could be used to classify the measurements that are most susceptible to error propagation