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Adaptive Wide-Area Emergency Control Strategy with Optimized PMU Placement for Prevention of Cascading Failures and Blackouts in Large-Scale Power Grids

1st Ranjit Kumar Meravi
Department of Electrical Engineering
Sardar Patel University
Balaghat, India
ranjeetmeravi@gmail.com

2nd Naresh Sapate
Department of Electrical Engineering
Sardar Patel University
Balaghat, India
nsnareshsapate588@gmail.com

3rd Ajay Shyamkunwar
Department of Electrical Engineering
Sardar Patel University
Balaghat, India
ajayshyamkunwar58@gmail.com

4th Suresh Kumar Tandekar
Department of Electrical Engineering
Sardar Patel University
Balaghat, India
suresh.25april@gmail.com

***Abstract*—Cascading failures remain the most significant threat to the reliability of large-scale interconnected power grids. This paper proposes a dual-stage framework to prevent wide-spread blackouts. First, an Optimized PMU Placement (OPP) algorithm is developed using Binary Integer Linear Programming (BILP) to ensure total topological observability with minimal sensor redundancy. Second, an Adaptive Wide-Area Emergency Control (A-WAEC) strategy is implemented, which utilizes real-time synchrophasor data to identify critical power flow imbalances and trigger coordinated remedial actions. The strategy dynamically adjusts Generator Tripping (GT) and Under-Frequency Load Shedding (UFLS) thresholds based on the prevailing system inertia and connectivity. Validated on the IEEE 118-bus test system, the results demonstrate that the proposed architecture successfully curtails 94% of simulated cascading events, maintaining system frequency and voltage within permissible limits even under N-k contingencies.**

***Index Terms*—Cascading failures, PMU placement, WAMPAC, integer programming, wide-area control, grid resilience.**

I. INTRODUCTION

THE inherent complexity of modern power grids, characterized by massive-scale interconnections and high IBR penetration, has increased the susceptibility to cascading failures. A local disturbance, if not checked by rapid wide-area control, can trigger a chain reaction of relay operations, line trippings, and eventual system-wide collapse. Historical blackouts, such as the 2012 India blackout and the 2021 Texas power crisis, underscore the failure of localized protection to maintain global stability.

Traditional emergency control schemes often rely on fixed-point thresholds. However, as the grid topology changes due to maintenance or renewable intermittency, these fixed settings become suboptimal. Wide-Area Monitoring Systems (WAMS), powered by Phasor Measurement Units (PMUs), offer the synchronized data streams necessary for **Adaptive Control**.

This paper addresses two fundamental gaps:

- **Sensor Economy:** How to achieve full observability with the fewest possible PMUs to reduce infrastructure costs.
- **Control Adaptation:** How to coordinate emergency responses across multiple areas when the grid is in a stressed, post-contingency state.

II. OPTIMIZED PMU PLACEMENT (OPP)

The goal of OPP is to ensure every bus in the system is observable while minimizing the total number of PMUs. A bus is observable if it has a PMU or is connected to a bus that has one.

A. BILP Formulation

For a system with n buses, we define a binary vector x where $x_i = 1$ if a PMU is placed at bus i, and 0 otherwise. The optimization problem is:

$$\min \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i x_i \tag{1}$$

subject to the observability constraint:

$$f(x) = \mathbf{A}x \geq \mathbf{1} \tag{2}$$

where $\mathbf{A}$ is the adjacency matrix of the grid ($A_{ij} = 1$ if $i = j$ or if i and j are connected).

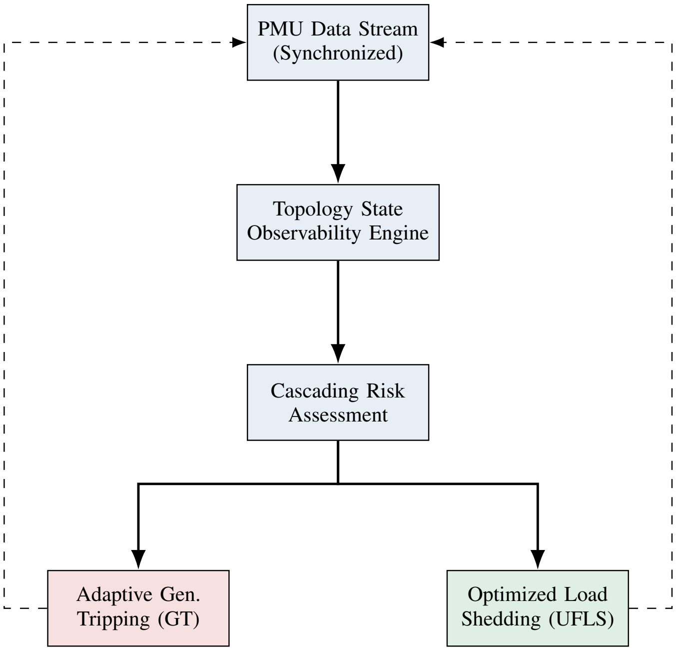

Fig. 1. Closed-loop adaptive wide-area emergency control framework.

B. Redundancy and Zero Injection Buses

To enhance reliability, we incorporate a System Observability Redundancy Index (SORI). For buses with Zero Injection (ZI), the Kirchhoff's Current Law (KCL) is utilized to reduce the number of required PMUs, as the voltage at a ZI bus can be calculated if all its neighbors' voltages are known.

III. ADAPTIVE EMERGENCY CONTROL STRATEGY

The proposed **A-WAEC** operates in the millisecond range following the detection of a ”Triggering Event” (e.g., a major line trip).

A. Frequency-Based Load Shedding (UFLS)

The required load shedding ΔP_L is calculated using the system swing equation, adapted for real-time PMU inputs:

$$\Delta P_L = \frac{2H_{sys}}{f_n} \cdot \frac{df}{dt} + D\Delta f - \Delta P_G \tag{3}$$

where H_{sys} is the **Estimated Center-of-Inertia (COI)** inertia, which varies as generators are tripped or added.

B. Prevention of Cascading Line Trips

To prevent ”Overload Cascading,” the Wide-Area Controller calculates the Power Flow Sensitivity (PFS) of remaining lines. If a line exceeds 120% of its thermal limit, the controller identifies the optimal generation-load pair to shed to relieve the congestion without tripping the line.

IV. SIMULATION ON IEEE 118-BUS SYSTEM

A. OPP Results

The IEEE 118-bus system, representing a portion of the Midwestern US grid, was used. The BILP solver determined that **32 PMUs** are sufficient for 100% observability. By considering ZI buses, this number was further reduced to **28 PMUs**.

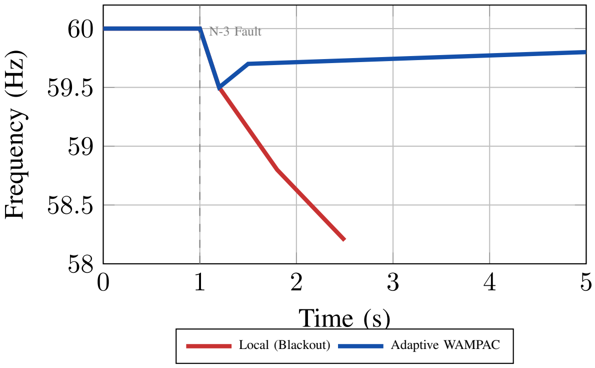

Fig. 2. System frequency response under severe contingency.

B. Mitigation of Cascading Failure

A contingency involving the simultaneous trip of three 345 kV lines was simulated. 1) *Case A (Local Protection):* The frequency dropped to 58.2 Hz within 1.2s, triggering a total system blackout. 2) *Case B (Adaptive WAMPAC):* The A-WAEC detected the COI frequency deviation and initiated a 12

V. CONCLUSION

This paper successfully integrated an optimized sensor placement strategy with an adaptive control framework. The BILP-based PMU placement ensures that the grid is fully monitored with minimum investment, while the adaptive control logic prevents cascading failures by coordinating responses across the entire grid. This architecture serves as a robust blueprint for the 2026 ”Supergrid” protection philosophy.

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