

(19) **DANMARK**



Patent- og
Varemærkestyrelsen

(12)

Oversættelse af europæisk patentskrift

(10) **DK/EP 3624302 T3**

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- (51) Int.Cl.: **H 02 J 9/06 (2006.01)** **G 01 R 31/64 (2020.01)** **H 01 G 11/10 (2013.01)**
H 02 J 3/38 (2006.01) **H 02 J 7/00 (2006.01)** **H 02 J 11/00 (2006.01)**
- (45) Oversættelsen bekendtgjort den: **2023-01-30**
- (80) Dato for Den Europæiske Patentmyndigheds
bekendtgørelse om meddelelse af patentet: **2022-11-02**
- (86) Europæisk ansøgning nr.: **19197317.1**
- (86) Europæisk indleveringsdag: **2019-09-13**
- (87) Den europæiske ansøgnings publiceringsdag: **2020-03-18**
- (30) Prioritet: **2018-09-14 US 201816131607**
- (84) Designerede stater: **AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV
MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR**
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- (74) Fuldmægtig i Danmark: **COPA COPENHAGEN PATENTS K/S, Rosenørns Allé 1, 2. sal, 1970 Frederiksberg C, Danmark**
- (54) Benævnelse: **SYSTEM OG FREMGANGSMÅDE TIL OVERVÅGNING AF ULTRAKAPACITORER**
- (56) Fremdragne publikationer:
US-A1- 2011 181 045
US-A1- 2013 088 010

DESCRIPTION

FIELD

[0001] The present disclosure relates generally to monitoring a bank of ultracapacitors for fault conditions indicative of an inability of the ultracapacitors to power a pitch drive system of a wind power system during an adverse condition, such as grid loss.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Ultracapacitors can be used to provide power in a variety of different applications. An ultracapacitor can lose the ability to provide sufficient voltage to power a load as the ultracapacitor ages. For instance, as an ultracapacitor approaches end of life, an output voltage the ultracapacitor provides to a load can drop quickly. The inability of the ultracapacitor to provide a required output voltage to power a load in certain condition can pose many challenges. For instance, the inability of an ultracapacitor to power a load in a pitch drive system of a wind turbine system can result in an inability to pitch a wind turbine blade on a wind turbine, potentially leading to damage to the wind turbine. US 20110181045A1 concerns a wind energy installation, monitoring device, and method. An exemplary wind energy installation includes a rotor including at least one blade and a generator configured to be driven by the rotor to produce electrical energy. The installation also includes a pitch device configured to vary the at least one blade of the rotor. The pitch device includes a power supply unit with a battery, an actuating drive, a monitoring unit, and a load module configured to switch the actuating drive between an operating mode and a test mode. In the test mode, the actuating drive forms a preselectable defined load for the battery. US 20130088010A1 discloses a pitch system of a wind energy system includes an emergency energy store for moving a rotor blade into a safety position in the event of the failure of an external energy supply. The emergency energy store can be tested, for example to assess aging, by supplying electrical energy to an actuating device configured to set a pitch angle of a rotor blade even in a normal operating mode of the wind energy system temporarily exclusively from the emergency energy store. This configuration ensures reliable operation of a wind energy system. In none of the identified prior art documents US2011/181045A1 and US2013/088010A1, it is disclosed to charge ultracapacitors to a charging voltage that is greater than a nominal voltage of ultracapacitors by a predefined amount.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

[0003] Aspects and advantages of the invention will be set forth in part in the following description, or may be obvious from the description, or may be learned through practice of the invention.

[0004] The invention is defined by the features of the independent claims 1 and 12. Preferred embodiments are defined in the dependent claims

[0005] In one aspect, a method for monitoring a bank of ultracapacitors configured to power an alternating current (AC) pitch motor of a pitch system in a wind turbine is provided. The bank of ultracapacitors comprises a plurality of segments and each segment of the plurality of segments comprises one or more ultracapacitors. The method includes obtaining, by one or more control devices, data indicative of a voltage associated with the bank of ultracapacitors that comprises data indicative of a total voltage across the ultracapacitors. The method includes conducting, by the one or more control devices, a test operation of the bank of ultracapacitors at predetermined intervals of time to determine a capacitance associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. The test operation further comprises:

coupling the ultracapacitors to a charging circuit to charge the ultracapacitors to a charging voltage that is greater than a nominal voltage of the ultracapacitors by a predefined amount;

responsive to charging the ultracapacitors to the charging voltage, coupling the ultracapacitors to a resistive load such that the ultracapacitors discharge through the load;

obtaining, by the one or more control devices, data during discharge through the load, the data indicative of at least one of a rate of discharge of the ultracapacitors and a discharge current of the ultracapacitors; and

determining, by the one or more control devices, the capacitance associated with the ultracapacitors based, at least in part, on the data obtained during discharge through the load.

[0006] The method further includes performing, by the one or more control devices, one or more control actions based, at least in part, on the capacitance or the data indicative of the voltage.

[0007] In another aspect, a system for monitoring operation of a bank of ultracapacitors configured to power an AC pitch motor of a pitch system in a wind turbine is provided. The system includes a charging circuit configured to charge the ultracapacitors. The system includes a resistive load to which the ultracapacitors can be coupled. The system includes a current sensor configured to measure a discharge current of the ultracapacitors. The system includes a control device configured to perform operations. The operations include coupling the ultracapacitors to the charging circuit to charge the ultracapacitors to a charging voltage that is greater than a nominal voltage of the ultracapacitors by a predefined amount. Once the ultracapacitors have been charged to the charging voltage, the operations include coupling the ultracapacitors to the resistive load to discharge through the load. While the ultracapacitors are coupled to the resistive load, the operations include obtaining, via the current sensor, data indicative of a discharge current of the ultracapacitors. The operations include determining a capacitance of the ultracapacitors based, at least in part, on the discharge current. The

operations include performing one or more control actions based, at least in part, on the capacitance.

[0008] These and other features, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with reference to the following description and appended claims. The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] A full and enabling disclosure of the present invention, including the best mode thereof, directed to one of ordinary skill in the art, is set forth in the specification, which makes reference to the appended figures, in which:

FIG. 1 depicts a perspective view of a wind turbine according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 depicts a perspective, internal view of a nacelle of a wind turbine according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 3 depicts a schematic diagram of one embodiment of suitable components that may be included in a wind turbine control device according to the present disclosure;

FIG. 4 depicts a schematic diagram of one embodiment of a pitch system of a wind turbine according to the present disclosure;

FIG. 5 depicts a schematic diagram of one embodiment of a primary power converter of a wind turbine according to example embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 6 depicts a schematic diagram of a bank of ultracapacitors according to example embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 7 depicts a system for monitoring operation of a bank of ultracapacitors according to example embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 8 depicts sensors of the system of FIG. 7 configured to monitor voltages associated with the bank of ultracapacitors according to example embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 9 depicts a flow diagram of an example method for monitoring a bank of ultracapacitors according to example embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 10 depicts a flow diagram of a test operation to perform on a bank of ultracapacitors according to example embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 11 depicts a flow diagram of an example method according to example embodiments of

the present disclosure;

FIG. 12 depicts a flow diagram of an example method according to example embodiments of the present disclosure; and

FIG. 13 depicts a flow diagram of another test operation to perform on a bank of ultracapacitors according to example embodiments of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] Reference now will be made in detail to embodiments of the invention, one or more examples of which are illustrated in the drawings. Each example is provided by way of explanation of the invention, not limitation of the invention. In fact, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made in the present invention without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention. For instance, features illustrated or described as part of one embodiment can be used with another embodiment to yield a still further embodiment.

[0011] Example aspects of the present disclosure are directed to a method for monitoring a bank of ultracapacitors used to power an alternating current (AC) motor of a pitch system in a wind turbine. The method includes obtaining data indicative of a voltage associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. In example embodiments, the data indicative of the voltage can comprise data indicative of a total voltage across the bank of ultracapacitors. Alternatively and/or additionally, the data indicative of the voltage can comprise data indicative of a voltage associated with one or more segments of a plurality of segments of the bank of ultracapacitors. For example, the bank of ultracapacitors can be divided into eight segments, and each of the eight segments can include one or more ultracapacitors. As will be discussed below in more detail, one or more control devices (e.g., a pitch controller) of the wind turbine can be configured to perform one or more control actions based, at least in part, on the data indicative of the voltage.

[0012] When the total voltage is less than a first threshold voltage indicative of a voltage needed to operate the AC pitch motor of the pitch system, the one or more control devices can perform a control action associated with providing a notification indicative of a fault condition (e.g., under voltage) associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. Additionally and/or alternatively, the control device can perform a control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine. In this manner, potential harm to the bank of ultracapacitors or the wind turbine itself can be avoided.

[0013] When the total voltage is greater than the first threshold voltage but less than a second threshold voltage indicative of the bank of ultracapacitors being fully-charged, the one or more control devices can be configured to perform a control action associated with coupling the bank

of ultracapacitors to a charging circuit via operation of one or more switching elements. In example embodiments, the bank of ultracapacitors can remain coupled to the charging circuit until the total voltage is equal to the threshold voltage. Once the bank of ultracapacitors is fully charged, the one or more control devices can be configured to decouple the bank of ultracapacitors from the charging circuit. In this manner, the control devices can control charging of the bank of ultracapacitors based, at least in part, on the total voltage.

[0014] When the total voltage is greater than a threshold voltage indicative of a rated voltage of the bank of ultracapacitors, the one or more control devices can be configured to perform a control action associated with providing a notification indicative of a fault condition (e.g., overvoltage) associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. Additionally and/or alternatively, the one or more control devices can perform a control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine. In this manner, potential harm to the bank of ultracapacitors or the wind turbine itself can be avoided.

[0015] In example embodiments, the method for monitoring the bank of ultracapacitors can include conducting a test operation of the bank of ultracapacitors to determine a capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors. For example, the test operation can be initiated by coupling the bank of ultracapacitors to a charging circuit to charge the bank of ultracapacitors to a charging voltage that is greater than a nominal voltage by a predetermined amount (e.g., 10 Volts). Once the bank of ultracapacitors is charged to the charging voltage, the bank of ultracapacitors can be coupled to a resistive load such that the bank of ultracapacitors can discharge through the resistive load. While the bank of ultracapacitors discharge through the resistive load, data indicative of a discharge current associated with the bank of ultracapacitors can be obtained. Additionally and/or alternatively, data indicative of a rate of discharge of the bank of ultracapacitors can be obtained.

[0016] In some embodiments, one or more control devices implementing the test operation can be configured to determine whether the bank of ultracapacitors returns to the nominal voltage within a predetermined amount of time (e.g., two seconds) after coupling the bank of ultracapacitors to the resistive load. If the bank of ultracapacitors do not return to the nominal voltage within the predetermined amount, the one or more control devices can perform a control action associated with providing a notification indicative of a fault condition (e.g., loss of capacitance) associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. Additionally and/or alternatively, the one or more control device can perform a control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine.

[0017] If, however, the one or more control devices determine the bank of ultracapacitors does return to the nominal voltage within the predetermined amount of time, test operation can proceed. More specifically, the capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors can be determined based, at least in part, on the discharge current and the rate of discharge of the bank of ultracapacitors. In example embodiments, the capacitance determined during the test operation can be a total capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors. Alternatively and/or additionally, the capacitance can be a capacitance associated with one or more segments of

the plurality of segments of the bank of ultracapacitors. As will be discussed below in more detail, the method for monitoring the bank of ultracapacitors can include performing one or more control actions based, at least in part, on the capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors.

[0018] When the total capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors is less than a nominal capacitance indicative of a threshold capacitance needed to operate the AC motor of the pitch system, the one or more control devices can perform a control action associated with providing a notification or alert indicative of a need to perform a maintenance action (e.g., repair or replace) on the bank of ultracapacitors. In some embodiments, the one or more control devices can perform a control action associated with providing a notification indicative of a fault condition (e.g., loss of capacitance) associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. Alternatively and/or additionally, the one or more control devices can perform a control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine to avoid potential harm to the bank of ultracapacitors or the wind turbine itself.

[0019] The present disclosure provides numerous technical benefits. For instance, the one or more control devices implementing the method of the present disclosure can detect one or more fault conditions indicative of degraded performance of the bank of ultracapacitors. For instance, the one or more control devices of the present disclosure can determine one or more fault conditions (e.g., under voltage and overvoltage) based, at least in part, on the voltage of the bank of ultracapacitors. Additionally, the one or more control devices can determine fault conditions (e.g., loss of capacitance) based, at least in part, on the capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors. In this manner, the one or more control devices can take precautionary actions (e.g., shut down) based on detected fault conditions and avoid potential harm to the bank of ultracapacitors and the wind turbine.

[0020] As used herein the use of the term "about" in conjunction with a numerical value is intended to refer to within 20% of the stated amount. The use of the term "obtaining" or "obtain" can include receiving, determining, calculating, accessing, reading or otherwise obtaining data.

[0021] Aspects of the present disclosure are discussed with reference to a capacitor used to power a pitch system in a wind turbine.

[0022] Referring now to the drawings, FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of one embodiment of a wind turbine 10 according to example aspects of the present disclosure. As shown, the wind turbine 10 includes a tower 12 extending from a support surface 14, a nacelle 16 mounted on the tower 12, and a rotor 18 coupled to the nacelle 16. The rotor 18 includes a rotatable hub 20 and at least one rotor blade 22 coupled to and extending outwardly from the hub 20. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, the rotor 18 includes three rotor blades 22. However, in an alternative embodiment, the rotor 18 may include more or less than three rotor blades 22. Each rotor blade 22 may be spaced about the hub 20 to facilitate rotating the rotor 18 to enable kinetic energy to be transferred from the wind into usable mechanical energy, and subsequently, electrical energy. For instance, the hub 20 may be rotatably coupled

to an electric generator 24 (FIG. 2) positioned within the nacelle 16 to permit electrical energy to be produced.

[0023] Referring now to FIG. 2, a simplified, internal view of one embodiment of the nacelle 16 of the wind turbine 10 is illustrated. As shown, a generator 24 may be disposed within the nacelle 16. The generator 24 may be coupled to the rotor 18 of the wind turbine 10. In this manner, rotational energy generated by the rotor 18 can be converted into electrical power. In example embodiments, the rotor 18 may include a main shaft 40 coupled to the hub 20 for rotation therewith. The generator 24 may then be coupled to the main shaft 40 such that rotation of the main shaft 40 drives the generator 24. For instance, in the illustrated embodiment, the generator 24 includes a generator shaft 42 rotatably coupled to the main shaft 40 through a gearbox 44. However, in other embodiments, it should be appreciated that the generator shaft 42 may be rotatably coupled directly to the main shaft 40. Alternatively, the generator 24 may be directly rotatably coupled to the main shaft 40.

[0024] It should be appreciated that the main shaft 40 may generally be supported within the nacelle 16 by a support frame or bedplate 46 positioned atop the wind turbine tower 12. For example, the main shaft 40 may be supported by the bedplate 46 via a pair of pillow blocks 48 mounted to the bedplate 46.

[0025] As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the wind turbine 10 may also include a turbine control system or a turbine controller 26 within the nacelle 16. For example, as shown in FIG. 2, the turbine controller 26 is disposed within a control cabinet 52 mounted to a portion of the nacelle 16. However, it should be appreciated that the turbine controller 26 may be disposed at any location on or in the wind turbine 10, at any location on the support surface 14 or generally at any other location. The turbine controller 26 may generally be configured to control the various operating modes (e.g., start-up or shut-down sequences) and/or components of the wind turbine 10.

[0026] Each rotor blade 22 may also include a pitch adjustment mechanism 32 configured to rotate each rotor blade 22 about its pitch axis 34. Further, each pitch adjustment mechanism 32 may include a pitch drive motor 33 (e.g., any suitable electric, hydraulic, or pneumatic motor), a pitch drive gearbox 35, and a pitch drive pinion 37. In such embodiments, the pitch drive motor 33 may be coupled to the pitch drive gearbox 35 so that the pitch drive motor 33 imparts mechanical force to the pitch drive gearbox 35. Similarly, the pitch drive gearbox 35 may be coupled to the pitch drive pinion 37 for rotation therewith. The pitch drive pinion 37 may, in turn, be in rotational engagement with a pitch bearing 54 coupled between the hub 20 and a corresponding rotor blade 22 such that rotation of the pitch drive pinion 37 causes rotation of the pitch bearing 54. Thus, in such embodiments, rotation of the pitch drive motor 33 drives the pitch drive gearbox 35 and the pitch drive pinion 37, thereby rotating the pitch bearing 54 and the rotor blade 22 about the pitch axis 34. Similarly, the wind turbine 10 may include one or more yaw drive mechanisms 38 communicatively coupled to the turbine controller 26, with each yaw drive mechanism(s) 38 being configured to change the angle of the nacelle 16 relative to the wind (e.g., by engaging a yaw bearing 56 of the wind turbine 10).

[0027] Further, the turbine controller 26 may also be communicatively coupled to each pitch adjustment mechanism 32 of the wind turbine 10 (one of which is shown) through a separate or integral pitch controller 30 (FIG. 1) for controlling and/or altering the pitch angle of the rotor blades 22 (i.e., an angle that determines a perspective of the rotor blades 22 with respect to the direction 28 of the wind).

[0028] In addition, as shown in FIG. 2, one or more sensors 57, 58, 59 may be provided on the wind turbine 10. More specifically, as shown, a blade sensor 57 may be configured with one or more of the rotor blades 22 to monitor the rotor blades 22. Further, as shown, a wind sensor 58 may be provided on the wind turbine 10. For example, the wind sensor 58 may be a wind vane, an anemometer, a LIDAR sensor, or another suitable sensor that measures wind speed and/or direction. In addition, a pitch sensor 59 may be configured with each of the pitch drive mechanism(s) 32, e.g. with a bank of ultracapacitors associated with the pitch drive motors 33 thereof, which will be discussed in more detail below. As such, the sensors 57, 58, 59 may further be in communication with the pitch controller 30, and may provide related information to the pitch controller 30. Additional sensors (not illustrated) can include voltage and current sensors used as part of a test system for conducting test operations of a bank of ultracapacitors to determine a capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors.

[0029] Referring now to FIG. 3, a block diagram of an example control device 60 is provided according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. In general, the control device 60 corresponds to any suitable processor-based device, including one or more computing devices. For instance, FIG. 3 illustrates one embodiment of suitable components that may be included within the control device 60. As shown in FIG. 3, the control device 60 can include a processor 62 and associated memory 64 configured to perform a variety of computer-implemented functions (e.g., performing the methods, steps, calculations and the like disclosed herein). As used herein, the term "processor" refers not only to integrated circuits referred to in the art as being included in a computer, but also refers to a controller, microcontroller, a microcomputer, a programmable logic controller (PLC), an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), a Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA), and other programmable circuits. Additionally, the memory 64 may generally include memory element(s) including, but not limited to, computer readable medium (e.g., random access memory (RAM)), computer readable non-volatile medium (e.g., flash memory), a compact disc-read only memory (CD-ROM), a magneto-optical disk (MOD), a digital versatile disc (DVD) and/or other suitable memory elements or combinations thereof.

[0030] Additionally, as shown in FIG. 3, the control device 60 can include a communications module 66 to facilitate communication between the control device 60 and various components of the wind turbine 10 (FIG. 1). For instance, the control device 60 can send control signals via the communications module 66 to switching elements (e.g., relays to couple ultracapacitors to resistive loads and/or a charging circuit).

[0031] Further, the communications module 66 can include a sensor interface 68 (e.g., one or

more analog-to-digital converters) to permit signals transmitted from one or more sensors 57, 58, 59 to be converted into signals that can be understood and processed by the control device 60. It should be appreciated that the sensors 57, 58, 59 can be communicatively coupled to the communications module 66 using any suitable means. For example, as shown in FIG. 3, the sensors 57, 58, 59 are coupled to the sensor interface 68 via a wired connection. However, in other embodiments, the sensors 57, 58, 59 may be coupled to the sensor interface 68 via a wireless connection, such as by using any suitable wireless communications protocol known in the art.

[0032] Other sensors can be in communication with the control device 60. For instance, one or more voltage sensors 158 can be in communication with the control device 60. The one or more voltage sensors 158 can be part of the system for monitoring operation of the bank of ultracapacitors used to power a pitch adjustment mechanism of a wind turbine. As will be discussed below in more detail, the one or more voltage sensor 158 can be configured to measure an output voltage at various locations on the bank of ultracapacitors.

[0033] Alternatively and/or additionally, a current sensor 159 can be in communication with the control device 60. The current sensor 159 can be part of the system for monitoring operation of a bank of ultracapacitors. In example embodiments, the current sensor 159 can be configured to measure an output current (e.g., discharge current) of the bank of ultracapacitors when the bank of ultracapacitors is coupled to the resistive load.

[0034] Referring now to FIG. 4, a schematic diagram of one embodiment of a pitch system 70 for the wind turbine 10 (FIG. 1) is provided. More specifically, as shown, the pitch system 70 includes a plurality of pitch drive mechanisms 32, i.e. one for each pitch axis 34 (FIG. 2). Further, as shown, each of the pitch drive mechanisms 32 may be communicatively coupled to a power grid 45 as well as a bank of ultracapacitors 72. More specifically, as shown, a bank of ultracapacitors 72 associated with each pitch drive mechanism 32 can be stored in a cabinet 74. In some embodiments, the cabinet 74 can be a thermally isolated container.

[0035] During normal operation of the wind turbine 10, a primary power converter 76 of the wind turbine 10 (FIG. 1) receives alternating current (AC) power from the power grid 45 and converts the AC power to AC power suitable for driving the pitch drive motors 33 (e.g., AC motors) of each pitch drive mechanism 32. Additionally, the primary power converter 76 can convert AC power received from the power grid 45 into direct current (DC) power suitable for charging the bank ultracapacitors 72. As will be discussed below in more detail, in some instances (e.g., adverse grid event or grid loss), the pitch drive motors 33 may be driven by the bank of ultracapacitors 72.

[0036] When pitching of the rotor blades 22 relies on the bank of ultracapacitors 72 (i.e. due to a grid loss), it is important to ensure that the bank of ultracapacitors 72 are capable of operating when needed. Thus, as will be discussed below in more detail, the control device 60 (FIG. 3) is configured to implement a control strategy to monitor the bank of ultracapacitors 72 to reduce or eliminate the potential for damaging loads occurring during an adverse grid event

of the wind turbine 10 or any other scenario where the bank of ultracapacitors is used to pitch the rotor blades 22.

[0037] FIG. 5 depicts an example embodiment of the primary power converter 76 according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. The primary power converter 76 can include an AC rectifier 78 configured to receive AC power from the power grid 45 at a first AC voltage and convert the first AC voltage to DC power at a first DC voltage. Additionally, the AC rectifier 78 can be coupled to a power inverter 80 of the primary power converter 76. More specifically, the AC rectifier 78 can be coupled to the power inverter 80 via one or more conductors (e.g., wires). In this manner, the output (e.g., DC power at first DC voltage) of the AC rectifier 78 can be provided to the power inverter 80. As shown, the primary power converter 76 can include one or more capacitors 82 (e.g., electrolytic capacitors) coupled between the output of the AC rectifier 78 and the input of the power inverter 80. In example embodiments, the one or more capacitors 82 can be configured to reduce or eliminate noise associated with the DC power the AC rectifier 78 provides to the power inverter 80.

[0038] The power inverter 80 can be configured to convert the DC power at the first DC voltage to AC power at a second AC voltage. In example embodiments, the second AC voltage can be different (e.g., greater than or less than) than the first AC voltage associated with the AC power the AC rectifier 78 receives from the power grid 45. As shown, the output (e.g., AC power at the second AC voltage) can be provided to the pitch drive motor 33 of the pitch drive mechanisms 32 (FIG. 4).

[0039] The primary power converter 76 can include a DC to DC power converter 84. As shown, the power converter 84 can be coupled to one or more input terminals (e.g., leads) associated with the power inverter 80. In this manner, the power converter 84 can receive the DC power at the first DC voltage. Additionally, the power converter 84 can be coupled to the bank of ultracapacitors 72. In example embodiments, the power converter 84 can convert the DC power at the first DC voltage to DC power at a second DC voltage that is suitable for charging the bank of ultracapacitors 72. It should be appreciated that the second DC voltage can be different (e.g., less than or greater than) than the first DC voltage.

[0040] FIG. 6 depicts the bank of ultracapacitors 72 according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. As shown, the bank of ultracapacitors 72 can include a plurality of segments. For instance, the bank of capacitors 72 depicted in FIG. 6 include a first segment 90, a second segment 92, a third segment 94, a fourth segment 96, and a fifth segment 98. In other embodiments, the bank of ultracapacitors 72 can include more or fewer segments. For instance, in some embodiments, the bank of ultracapacitors 72 can include eight segments.

[0041] As shown, each segment of the plurality of segments can include a pair of ultracapacitors C arranged in a series configuration. In other embodiments, each segment can include more or fewer ultracapacitors C. Additionally, the ultracapacitors C within each segment can be arranged in any suitable configuration. For instance, in some embodiments, the ultracapacitors C included in each of the segments can be arranged in a parallel configuration.

[0042] In example embodiments, the plurality of segments can be coupled to one another in succession. For example, the first segment can be coupled to the DC/DC power converter 84 of the primary power converter 76 (FIG. 5); the second segment 92 can be coupled to the first segment 90; the third segment 94 can be coupled to the second segment 92; the fourth segment 96 can be coupled to the third segment 94; and the fifth segment 98 can be coupled to the fourth segment 96. In example embodiments, the fifth segment 98 can be coupled to a secondary power converter 88 of the wind turbine 10 (FIG. 1). As shown in FIG. 5, the secondary power converter 88 can be coupled between the bank of ultracapacitors 72 and the motor 33 (FIG. 4) of the pitch drive mechanism 32 (FIG. 4). In example embodiments, the secondary power converter 88 can receive DC power from the bank of ultracapacitors 72 and convert the DC power to AC power suitable for driving the motor 33 (FIG. 4).

[0043] FIG. 7 depicts an example system 100 for monitoring the bank of ultracapacitors 72 according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. The system 100 can include a first switching element 110, such as one or more relays, transistors, or other switching elements that can be controlled to be in a conducting state or non-conducting state. In example embodiments, a control device 60 of the system 100 can be configured to control operation of the first switching element 110 to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors 72 to a resistive load 120 of the system 100. In some embodiments, the resistive load 120 can be the secondary power converter 88 (FIG. 4) coupled between the bank of ultracapacitors 72 and the pitch motor 33 (FIG. 4) of the pitch drive mechanisms 32 (FIG. 4). When the bank of ultracapacitors 72 is coupled to the resistive load 120 via the first switching element 110, it should be appreciated that the bank of ultracapacitors 72 discharges electrical power (e.g. DC power) through the resistive load 120.

[0044] As shown, the system 100 can include a second switching element 112, such as one or more relays, transistors, or other switching elements that can be controlled to be in a conducting state or non-conducting state. In example embodiments, the control device 60 can be configured to control operation of the second switching element 112 to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors 72 to a charging circuit 130 of the system 100. In some embodiments, the charging circuit 130 can be the DC/DC power converter 84 (FIG. 5) of the primary power converter 76 (FIG. 5). When the bank of ultracapacitors 72 is coupled to the charging circuit 130, it should be appreciated that electrical power (e.g., DC power) can be delivered from the charging circuit 130 to the bank of ultracapacitors 72. In this manner, the bank of ultracapacitors 72 can be charged from a first voltage to a second voltage that is greater than the first voltage.

[0045] Referring now to FIGS. 7 and 8 in combination, the system 100 can include one or more voltage sensors 158. As shown, the one or more voltage sensors 158 can be configured to monitor various voltages associated with the bank of ultracapacitors 72. For instance, the one or more voltage sensors 158 can be configured to monitor a voltage associated with each segment of the plurality of segments (e.g., first segment 90, second segment 92, third segment 94, fourth segment 96, and fifth segment 98). More specifically, voltage sensors 158 can be

configured to monitor a first voltage V_{S1} associated with the first segment 90, a second voltage V_{S2} associated with the second segment 92, a third voltage V_{S3} associated with the third segment 94, a fourth voltage V_{S4} associated with the fourth segment 96, and a fifth voltage V_{S5} associated with the fifth segment 98. Alternatively and/or additionally, a voltage sensor 158 can be configured to monitor a total voltage V_{TOTAL} of the bank of ultracapacitors 72. In some embodiments, the total voltage V_{TOTAL} monitored by the voltage sensor 158 can correspond to the summation of the voltages associated with each of the segments.

[0046] As shown, the system 100 can include a current sensor 159 configured to monitor an output current/discharge current (I_L) of the bank of ultracapacitors 72 through the resistive load 120. Additionally, the one or more voltage sensors 158 can be configured monitor an output voltage/discharge voltage V_L of the bank of ultracapacitors 72 during discharge of the bank of ultracapacitors 72 through the resistive load 120. As will be discussed below in more detail, the control device 60 can be configured to determine a capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors 72 based, at least in part, on the discharge current I_L and a rate of discharge associated with the bank of ultracapacitors 72. For instance, the control device 60 can execute computer-readable instructions stored in a memory to perform operations to determine a capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors 72.

[0047] Referring now to FIG. 9, a flow diagram of a method 200 for monitoring a bank of ultracapacitors used to power a pitch system of a wind turbine is provided according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. It should be appreciated that the method 200 can be implemented using the any suitable control device (e.g., pitch controller) of the wind turbine discussed above with reference to FIGS. 1-3 . FIG. 9 depicts steps performed in a particular order for purposes of illustration and discussion. Those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will understand that various steps of the method 200 may be adapted, modified, rearranged, performed simultaneously without deviating from the scope of the present disclosure.

[0048] At (202), the method 200 includes obtaining, by one or more control devices, data indicative of a voltage associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. In example embodiments, the data can be indicative of a total voltage V_{TOTAL} (FIG. 8) of the bank of ultracapacitors. Alternatively and/or additionally, the data can be indicative of a voltage (e.g., V_{S1} , V_{S2} , V_{S3} , V_{S4} , V_{S5} of FIG. 8) associated with one or more segments of the plurality of segments included in the bank of ultracapacitors.

[0049] At (204), the method 200 includes conducting, by the one or more control devices, a test operation of the bank of ultracapacitors to determine a capacitance associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. The test operation can be conducted using, for instance, the system discussed above with reference to FIGS. 7 and 8. In some embodiments, the one or more control devices can be configured to conduct the test operation at predefined intervals of time.

[0050] At (206), the method 200 includes performing, by the one or more control devices, one

or more control actions based on the voltage obtained at (202) or the capacitance determined at (204).

[0051] Referring now to FIG. 10, a flow diagram illustrating an example embodiment of the test operation performed at (204) of FIG. 9 is provided according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. It should be appreciated that any suitable control device (e.g., pitch controller) of the wind turbine discussed above with reference to FIGS. 1-3 can be configured to implement the test operation. It should also be appreciated that the system described above with reference to FIGS. 7 and 8 can be configured to implement the test operation.

[0052] At (302), the test operation includes coupling the bank of ultracapacitors to a charging circuit to charge the bank of ultracapacitors to a charging voltage V_{CHG} that is greater than a nominal voltage V_{NOM} by a predetermined amount (e.g., about 10 Volts). The nominal voltage V_{NOM} can, in some embodiments, correspond to a voltage needed to operate the AC pitch motor of the pitch system. In example embodiments, the one or more control devices can be configured to perform a control action associated with controlling operation of a switching element used to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors to the charging circuit.

[0053] At (304), the test operation includes coupling the bank of ultracapacitors to a resistive load. In example embodiments, the one or more control devices can perform a control action associated with controlling operation of a switching element used to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors to the resistive load. When the bank of ultracapacitors is coupled to the resistive load, it should be appreciated that the bank of ultracapacitors can discharge through the resistive load.

[0054] At (306), the test operation includes obtaining, by the one or more control devices, data indicative of a discharge current of the bank of ultracapacitors during discharge through the load at (304). In example embodiments, the data indicative of the discharge current can be obtained from one or more current sensors of the system described above with reference to FIGS. 7 and 8.

[0055] At (308), the test operation includes obtaining, by the one or more control devices, data indicative of a rate of discharge of the bank of ultracapacitors during discharge through the load at (304). It should be appreciated that the rate of discharge of the bank of ultracapacitors can be a function of at least the resistive load.

[0056] At (310), the test operation includes determining, by the one or more control devices, whether the voltage of the bank of ultracapacitors returns to the nominal voltage V_{NOM} within a predetermined amount of time after coupling the bank of ultracapacitors to the resistive load at (306). In example embodiments, the predetermined amount of time can be about 2 seconds. If the voltage of the bank of ultracapacitors does not return to the nominal voltage V_{NOM} within the predetermined amount of time, the test operation proceeds to (312). Otherwise, the test operation proceeds to (314).

[0057] At (312), the test operation 300 includes performing, by the one or more control devices, a control action associated with providing a notification indicative of a fault condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the fault condition can indicate occurrence of a loss of capacitance requiring shutdown of the wind turbine. In such embodiments, the one or more control devices can be configured to perform an additional control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine. In this manner, potential harm to the bank of ultracapacitors or other components of the wind turbine can be avoided.

[0058] At (314), the test operation includes determining, by the one or more control devices, a capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors based, at least in part, on the data indicative of the discharge current obtained at (306) and the data indicative of the rate of discharge of the bank of capacitors obtained at (308). In example embodiments, the capacitance can include a total capacitance C_{TOTAL} of the bank of ultracapacitors. Alternatively and/or additionally, the capacitance can include a capacitance associated with each segment of the plurality of segments included in the bank of ultracapacitors. Upon determining the capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors, the test operation concludes, and the one or more control devices can perform one or more control actions based, at least in part, on the capacitance determined at (314).

[0059] As an example, if the total capacitance C_{TOTAL} determined at (314) is less than a first threshold value (e.g., about 82 percent of a nominal capacitance C_{NOM} associated with the bank of ultracapacitors), then the one or more control actions performed at (206) of FIG. 9 can include a control action associated with providing a notification or alert indicating a loss of capacitance associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. In some embodiments, the notification or alert can indicate a maintenance action (e.g., repair or replace) needs to be performed on the bank of ultracapacitors.

[0060] As another example, if the total capacitance C_{TOTAL} determined at (314) is less than a second threshold value (e.g., about 80 percent of the nominal capacitance C_{NOM}), then the one or more control actions performed at (206) can include a first control action associated with providing a notification indicating a fault condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the fault condition can correspond to a loss of capacitance fault condition requiring shutdown of the wind turbine. In addition, the one or more control actions performed at (206) can include a second control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine.

[0061] As yet another example, if, at (314), the capacitance determined for one or more segments of the plurality of segments of the bank of ultracapacitors is less than about 20 percent of the nominal capacitance, then the one or more control actions performed at (206) can include a first control action associated with providing a notification indicating a fault condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the fault condition can correspond to a loss of capacitance fault condition requiring shutdown of the wind turbine. In addition, the one or more control actions performed at (206) can include a second control

action associated with shutting down the wind turbine.

[0062] Referring now to FIG. 11, a flow diagram of a method for determining one or more control actions to perform at (206) of FIG. 9 is provided according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. It should be appreciated that any suitable control device (e.g., pitch controller) of the wind turbine discussed above with reference to FIGS. 1-3 can implement the one or more control action depicted in FIG. 11.

[0063] At (402), the method includes determining, by the one or more control devices, whether the total voltage V_{TOTAL} obtained at (202) of FIG. 9 is less than a first threshold voltage V_1 indicative of performance of the bank of ultracapacitors. In example embodiments, the first threshold voltage V_1 can correspond to a voltage needed to operate a pitch motor of the pitch system. For instance, the first threshold voltage can be about 470 Volts. If the total voltage V_{TOTAL} is less than the first threshold voltage V_1 , the method proceeds to (404). Otherwise, the method proceeds to (406).

[0064] At (404), the method includes performing, by the one or more control devices, a first control action associated with providing a notification indicative of a fault condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the fault condition can indicate occurrence of an under-voltage condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. Additionally, the method includes performing a second control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine to avoid potential harm to the bank of ultracapacitors. After performing these control actions, the method continues at (418).

[0065] At (406), the method includes determining, by the one or more control devices, whether the total voltage V_{TOTAL} is less a second threshold voltage V_2 that is greater than the first threshold voltage V_1 . In example embodiments, the second threshold voltage V_2 can be about 478 volts. If the total voltage V_{TOTAL} is less than the second threshold voltage V_2 , the flow diagram proceeds to (408). Otherwise, the method proceeds to (410).

[0066] At (408), the method includes performing, by the one or more control devices, a control action associated with charging the bank of ultracapacitors. In example embodiments, the control action can be associated with controlling operation of a switching element used to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors to the charging circuit. In this manner, the charging circuit can deliver electrical power (e.g., DC power) to the bank of ultracapacitors. Once the bank of ultracapacitors is coupled to the charging circuit, the flow diagram reverts to (202) of FIG. 9 to obtain additional voltage readings.

[0067] At (410), the method includes determining, by the one or more control devices, whether the total voltage V_{TOTAL} is less than a third threshold voltage V_3 that is greater than the second threshold voltage V_2 . In example embodiments, the third threshold voltage V_3 can indicate the bank of ultracapacitors is fully charged. For instance, the third threshold voltage V_3 can be about 482 Volts. If the total voltage V_{TOTAL} is less than the third threshold voltage V_3 , the flow

diagram reverts to (202) of FIG. 9. It should be appreciated that the bank of ultracapacitors can remain coupled to the charging circuit until the total voltage V_{TOTAL} of the bank of ultracapacitors is at least greater than the third threshold voltage V_3 .

[0068] At (412), the method includes determining, by the one or more control devices, whether the total voltage V_{TOTAL} is greater than a fourth threshold voltage that is greater than the third threshold voltage V_3 . In example embodiments, the fourth threshold voltage V_4 can correspond to a design voltage for the bank of ultracapacitors. For instance, in some embodiments, the fourth threshold voltage V_4 can be about 520 Volts. In example embodiments, the design voltage can be less than a rated voltage of the bank of ultracapacitors. If the total voltage V_{TOTAL} is not greater than the fourth threshold voltage V_4 , the method proceeds to (414). Otherwise the method proceeds to (416).

[0069] At (414), the method includes performing, by the one or more control devices, a control action associated with decoupling the bank of ultracapacitors from the charging circuit. In example embodiments, the control action can be associated with controlling operation of a switching element (e.g., second switching element of FIG. 7) used to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors to the charging circuit. Once the bank of ultracapacitors are decoupled from the charging circuit via operation of the switching element, the method proceeds to (418).

[0070] At (416), the method includes performing, by the one or more devices, a first control action associated with providing a notification indicative of a fault condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the fault condition can indicate occurrence of an overvoltage condition requiring the wind turbine be shutdown. As such, the method can further include performing a second control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine to avoid potential harm to the bank of ultracapacitors. After performing these notifications at (416), the method continues at (418).

[0071] At (418), the method may continue. For instance, the method may revert to (402) after a predetermined amount of time lapses. In this manner, the method can be conducted multiple times to reduce or eliminate scenarios in which a grid loss occurs and the bank of ultracapacitors is unable to pitch the blades as needed.

[0072] Referring now to FIG. 12, a flow diagram of a method for determining one or more control actions to perform at (206) of FIG. 9 is provided according to example embodiments of the present disclosure. It should be appreciated that the method can be implemented using the any suitable control device (e.g., pitch controller) of the wind turbine discussed above with reference to FIGS. 1-3 .

[0073] At (502), the method includes obtaining, by the one or more control devices, a voltage associated with one or more segments of the plurality of segments included in the bank of ultracapacitors. In example embodiments, the voltage associated with each of the plurality of segments can be obtained via the voltage sensors of the system described above with

reference to FIGS. 7 and 8.

[0074] At (504), the method includes determining, by the one or more control devices, a reference voltage V_{REF} based, at least in part, on the total voltage V_{TOTAL} of the bank of ultracapacitors and the total number of segments N included in the bank of ultracapacitors. For instance, the reference voltage can be calculated as shown below in Equation 1:

$$V_{REF} = \frac{V_{TOTAL}}{N} \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

[0075] At (506), the method includes determining, by the one or more control devices, whether any of the voltages obtained at (502) for each of the plurality of segments differs from the reference voltage by more than a predefined amount. In example embodiments, the predefined amount can be about 10 percent. If any of the voltages differ from the reference voltage by more than the predefined amount, the method proceeds to (508). Otherwise, the method proceeds to (510).

[0076] At (508), the method includes performing, by the one or more devices, a control action associated with providing a notification indicative of a fault condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. In some embodiments, the notification can indicate a maintenance action (e.g., repair or replace) needs to be performed on the bank of ultracapacitors. In alternative embodiments, the fault condition can correspond to a loss of capacitance fault condition requiring shutdown of the wind turbine. In such embodiments, the method includes performing an additional control action associated with shutting the wind turbine down to avoid potential harm to the bank of ultracapacitors. After performing the one or more control actions, the method continues at (510).

[0077] At (510), the method may continue. For example, the method may revert to (502) after a predetermined amount of time lapses. In this manner, the method can be conducted multiple times to reduce or eliminate scenarios in which a grid loss occurs and the bank of ultracapacitors is unable to pitch the blades as needed.

[0078] Referring now to FIG. 13, a flow diagram of another example embodiment of the test operation performed at (204) of FIG. 9 is provided according to the present disclosure. It should be appreciated that any suitable control device (e.g., pitch controller) of the wind turbine discussed above with reference to FIGS. 1-3 can be configured to implement the test operation of FIG. 13. It should also be appreciated that the system described above with reference to FIGS. 7 and 8 can be used to implement the test operation. Also, although FIG. 13 depicts steps performed in a particular order for purposes of illustration and discussion, those of ordinary skill in the art, using the disclosures provided herein, will understand that various steps of the test operation may be adapted, modified, rearranged, performed simultaneously or modified in various ways.

[0079] At (602), the test operation includes coupling the bank of ultracapacitors to a charging circuit to charge the bank of ultracapacitors to a charging voltage V_{CHG} . In example

embodiments, the charging voltage V_{CHG} can be greater than a nominal voltage V_{NOM} by a predetermined amount (e.g., about 10 Volts). The nominal voltage V_{NOM} can, in some embodiments, correspond to a voltage needed operate a pitch motor of the pitch system. In example embodiments, the one or more control devices can be configured to generate a control action associated with controlling operation of a switching element used to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors to the charging circuit. In this manner, the bank of ultracapacitors can be coupled to the charging circuit via the switching element. After the bank of ultracapacitors is charged to the charging voltage V_{CHG} , the test operation proceeds to (604).

[0080] At (604), the test operation includes obtaining data indicative of an initial voltage V_i associated with the ultracapacitor. In example embodiments, the initial voltage V_i can correspond to a total voltage (e.g., V_{TOTAL} of FIG. 8) of the bank of ultracapacitors. Alternatively and/or additionally, the data can be indicative of a voltage (e.g., V_{S1} , V_{S2} , V_{S3} , V_{S4} , V_{S5} of FIG. 8) associated with one or more segments of the plurality of segments included in the bank of ultracapacitors. Upon obtaining the data indicative of the initial voltage V_i , the test operation proceeds to (606).

[0081] At (606), the test operation includes decoupling the bank of ultracapacitors from the charging circuit. In example embodiments, the one or more control devices can be configured to generate a control action associated with control operation of the switching element (e.g., second switch 112 of FIG. 7) used to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors to the charging circuit. In this manner, the bank of ultracapacitors can be decoupled from the charging circuit.

[0082] At (608), the test operation includes coupling the bank of ultracapacitors to the resistive load for a predetermined amount of time. In example embodiments, the one or more control devices can generate a control action associated with controlling operation of a switching element (e.g., first switch 110 of FIG. 7) used to selectively couple the bank of ultracapacitors to the resistive load. In this manner, the bank of ultracapacitors can be coupled to the resistive load via the switching element. When the bank of ultracapacitors is coupled to the resistive load via the switching element, it should be appreciated that the bank of ultracapacitors discharges through the resistive load.

[0083] At (610), the test operation includes obtaining data indicative of an average discharge current I_{AVG} of the bank of ultracapacitors during discharge through the resistive load. In example embodiments, the one or more control devices can obtain the data indicative of the average discharge current I_{AVG} via one or more current sensors (e.g., current sensor 159 of FIG. 7). After the bank of ultracapacitors has been coupled to the resistive load for the predetermined amount of time, the test operation proceeds to (612).

[0084] At (612), the test operation includes obtaining data indicative of a final voltage V_f

associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. In example embodiments, the data indicative of the final voltage V_F can correspond to the total voltage (e.g., V_{TOTAL} of FIG. 8) of the bank of ultracapacitors. Alternatively and/or additionally, the data indicative of the final voltage V_F can correspond to a voltage (e.g., V_{Si} , V_{S2} , V_{S3} , V_{S4} , V_{S5} , of FIG. 8) associated with one or more segments of the plurality of segments included in the bank of ultracapacitors. Upon obtaining the data indicative of the final voltage V_F , the test operation proceeds to (614).

[0085] At (614), the test operation includes determining a capacitance of the bank of ultracapacitors. For example, the capacitance can be indicative of a total capacitance C_{TOTAL} of the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the total capacitance can be determined as shown below in Equation 2:

$$C_{TOTAL} = \frac{t \cdot I_{AVG}}{V_{TF} - V_{TI}} \quad \text{Equation 2}$$

where t corresponds to the predetermined amount of time the bank of ultracapacitors is coupled to the resistive load, I_{AVG} corresponds to the average discharge current of the bank of ultracapacitors during discharge through the resistive load, V_{TF} corresponds to the final total voltage obtained at (612), and V_{TI} corresponds to the initial total voltage obtained at (604).

[0086] Alternatively and/or additionally, the capacitance determined at (614) can be indicative of a capacitance C_S associated with one or more segments of the plurality of segments included in the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the capacitance C_S for a segment S of the bank of ultracapacitors can be determined as shown below in Equation 3:

$$C_S = \frac{t \cdot I_{AVG}}{V_{SF} - V_{SI}} \quad \text{Equation 3}$$

where V_{SF} corresponds to the final voltage obtained for the segment S at (612), and V_{SI} corresponds to the initial voltage obtained for the segment S at (604). After determining the capacitance (e.g., C_{TOTAL} and/or C_S) at (614), the test operation concludes, and the one or more control devices can perform one or more control actions based, at least in part, on the capacitance determined at (614). Alternatively and/or additionally, the test operation can revert to (602).

[0087] As an example, if the total capacitance C_{TOTAL} determined at (614) is less than a first threshold value (e.g., about 82 percent of a nominal capacitance C_{NOM} associated with the bank of ultracapacitors), then the one or more control actions performed at (206) of FIG. 9 can include a control action associated with providing a notification or alert indicating a loss of capacitance associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. In some embodiments, the notification or alert can indicate a maintenance action (e.g., repair or replace) needs to be performed on the bank of ultracapacitors.

[0088] As another example, if the total capacitance C_{TOTAL} determined at (614) is less than a second threshold value (e.g., about 80 percent of the nominal capacitance C_{NOM}), the one or more control actions performed at (206) can include a first control action associated with providing a notification indicating a fault condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the fault condition can correspond to a loss of capacitance fault condition

requiring shutdown of the wind turbine. In addition, the one or more control actions performed at (206) can include a second control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine.

[0089] As yet another example, if, at (614), the capacitance determined for one or more segments of the plurality of segments of the bank of ultracapacitors is less than about 20 percent of the nominal capacitance, the one or more control actions performed at (206) can include a first control action associated with providing a notification indicating a fault condition associated with the bank of ultracapacitors. More specifically, the fault condition can correspond to a loss of capacitance fault condition requiring shutdown of the wind turbine. In addition, the one or more control actions performed at (206) can include a second control action associated with shutting down the wind turbine.

[0090] This written description uses examples to disclose aspects of the invention, defined by the appended claims, including the best mode, and also to enable any person skilled in the art to practice the invention, including making and using any devices or systems and performing any incorporated methods.

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

Cited references

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Patent documents cited in the description

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KRAV

1. Fremgangsmåde (200) til overvågning af en gruppe af ultrakondensatorer, der er indrettet til at drive en vekselstrøm-(AC)-pitchmotor i et pitchsystem i en vindmølle, hvor gruppen af ultrakondensatorer omfatter en flerhed af segmenter, hvor hvert segment af flerheden af segmenter omfatter én eller flere ultrakondensatorer, hvor fremgangsmåden omfatter at:
- (202) opnå, ved hjælp af én eller flere styreindretninger, data, som indikerer en spænding forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne, og som omfatter data der indikerer en total spænding over ultrakondensatorerne;
- (204) udføre, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, en testoperation af ultrakondensatorerne med forudbestemte tidsintervaller for at bestemme en kapacitans forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne; hvor testoperationen yderligere omfatter at:
- (302) koble ultrakondensatorerne til et opladningskredsløb for at oplade ultrakondensatorerne til en opladningsspænding, der er større end en nominel spænding af ultrakondensatorerne med en foruddefineret størrelse;
- (304) som reaktion på opladning af ultrakondensatorerne til opladningsspændingen, koble ultrakondensatorerne til en resistiv belastning, således at ultrakondensatorerne aflades ved hjælp af belastningen;
- (306, 308) opnå, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, data under afladning ved hjælp af belastningen, hvor dataene indikerer mindst én af en afladningshastighed for ultrakondensatorerne og en afladningsstrøm for ultrakondensatorerne; og at
- (314) bestemme, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, kapacitansen forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne baseret, i det mindste delvist, på dataene opnået under afladning ved hjælp af belastningen; og at
- (206) udføre, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, én eller flere styrehandlinger baseret, i det mindste delvist, på kapacitansen eller de data, der indikerer spændingen.
2. Fremgangsmåde (402,404) ifølge krav 1, som omfatter at, når den samlede spænding er mindre end en første tærskelspænding, der indikerer en spænding, som er nødvendig for at drive AC-pitchmotoren, udføre, baseret på den samlede spænding, én eller flere styrehandlinger, som omfatter at udføre mindst én af en første styrehandling og en anden styrehandling, hvor den første styrehandling er forbundet med at tilvejebringe en meddelelse, der indikerer en fejltilstand forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne, og hvor den anden styrehandling forbundet med nedlukning af vindmøllen.

3. Fremgangsmåde (406,408) ifølge krav 2, som omfatter at, når den samlede spænding er større end den første tærskelspænding men mindre end en anden tærskelspænding, der indikerer at gruppen af ultrakondensatorer er fuldt opladet, udføre, baseret på den samlede spænding, én eller flere styrehandlinger, der omfatter en styrehandling forbundet med at koble ultrakondensatorerne til et opladningskredsløb for at oplade ultrakondensatorerne.
4. Fremgangsmåde (200) ifølge et hvilket som helst af de foregående krav, som omfatter at, når den samlede spænding er større end en tærskelspænding, der indikerer en designspænding for ultrakondensatorerne, udføre, baseret på den samlede spænding, én eller flere styrehandlinger, der omfatter at udføre mindst én af en første styrehandling og en anden styrehandling, hvor den første styrehandling er forbundet med at tilvejebringe en meddelelse, der indikerer en fejltilstand forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne, og hvor den anden styrehandling forbundet med nedlukning af vindmøllen.
5. Fremgangsmåde (206) ifølge et hvilket som helst af de foregående krav, hvor dataene, der indikerer spændingen, yderligere omfatter data der indikerer en spænding forbundet med ét eller flere segmenter af flerheden af segmenter af gruppen af ultrakondensatorer.
6. Fremgangsmåde ifølge krav 5, hvor fremgangsmåden yderligere omfatter at:
- (504) bestemme, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreenheder, en referencespænding baseret, i det mindste delvist, på antallet af segmenter, som er inkluderet i gruppen af ultrakondensatorer, og den samlede spænding; og at
- (506) bestemme, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, hvorvidt spændingen forbundet med ét eller flere segmenter af flerheden af segmenter afviger fra referencespændingen med mere end den forudbestemte størrelse.
7. Fremgangsmåde (508) ifølge krav 6, som omfatter at, når spændingen forbundet med ét eller flere segmenter af flerheden af segmenter afviger fra referencespændingen med mere end den forudbestemte størrelse, udføre, baseret på spændingen forbundet med hvert segment af flerheden af segmenter, én eller flere styrehandlinger, der omfatter at udføre en styrehandling forbundet med tilvejebringelse af en meddelelse, der indikerer en fejltilstand forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne.
8. Fremgangsmåde (310) ifølge et hvilket som helst af de foregående krav, som yderligere omfatter at bestemme, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, om afladning af ultrakondensatorerne ved hjælp af belastningen reducerer en spænding af ultrakondensatorerne til

den nominelle spænding inden for en forudbestemt tidsperiode efter kobling af ultrakondensatorer til belastningen.

5 **9.** Fremgangsmåde (310) ifølge krav 8, hvor bestemmelsen af kapacitansen forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne sker som reaktion på bestemmelse af at spændingen af ultrakondensatorerne returnerer til den nominelle spænding inden for den forudbestemte tidsperiode.

10. Fremgangsmåde (204) ifølge et hvilket som helst af de foregående krav, hvor udførelse af testoperationen af ultrakondensatorerne omfatter at:

- 10 (602) koble ultrakondensatorerne til et opladningskredsløb for at oplade ultrakondensatorerne til en opladningsspænding;
- (604) som reaktion på opladning af ultrakondensatorerne til opladningsspændingen, opnå, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, data, der indikerer en startspænding forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne;
- 15 (608) som reaktion på at opnå de data, der indikerer den indledende spænding, koble ultrakondensatorerne til en resistiv belastning i en forudbestemt tidsperiode¹ således at ultrakondensatorerne aflades ved hjælp af den resistive belastning;
- (610) opnå, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, data under afladning ved hjælp af belastningen, hvor dataene indikerer en gennemsnitlig afladningsstrøm for ultrakondensatorerne;
- 20 (612) som reaktion på udløbet af den forudbestemte tidsperiode, opnå, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, data, der indikerer en slutspænding forbundet med ultrakondensatorerne, hvor slutspændingen er mindre end startspændingen; og at
- (614) bestemme, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, en kapacitans af ultrakondensatorerne baseret på startspændingen, den forudbestemte tidsperiode, den gennemsnitlige afladningsstrøm og slutspændingen.
- 25

11. Fremgangsmåde (204) ifølge krav 10, hvor udførelse af testoperationen af ultrakondensatorerne yderligere omfatter at udføre, ved hjælp af den ene eller flere styreindretninger, én eller flere
30 styrehandlinger baseret, i det mindste delvist, på kapacitansen af ultrakondensatorerne.

12. System (100) til overvågning af driften af en gruppe af ultrakondensatorer (72), der er indrettet til at drive en vekselstrøms-(AC)-motor i et pitchsystem (70) i en vindmølle, hvor ultrakondensatorerne (72) omfatter en flerhed af segmenter (90,92,94,96,98), hvor systemet (100)
35 omfatter:

et opladningskredsløb (130);

- en resistiv belastning (120);
en strømsensor (159), der er indrettet til at måle en afladningsstrøm fra ultrakondensatorerne (72); og
en styreindretning (60) med én eller flere processorer (62), der er indrettet til at udføre computerlæsbare instruktioner lagret i én eller flere hukommelsesenheder for at udføre operationer, hvor operationerne omfatter at:
- koble ultrakondensatorerne (72) til opladningskredsløbet (130) for at oplade ultrakondensatorerne (72) til en opladningsspænding, der er større end en nominel spænding af ultrakondensatorerne med en foruddefineret størrelse;
 - som reaktion på opladning af ultrakondensatorerne (72) til opladningsspændingen, koble ultrakondensatorerne (72) til den resistive belastning (120) for at aflade ultrakondensatorerne (72) ved hjælp af den resistive belastning (120);
 - opnå, via strømsensoren (159), data, der indikerer en afladningsstrøm fra ultrakondensatorerne (72) under afladning ved hjælp af belastningen;
 - bestemme en kapacitans af ultrakondensatorerne (72) baseret, i det mindste delvist, på afladningsstrømmen; og at
 - udføre én eller flere styrehandlinger baseret, i det mindste delvist, på kapacitansen.
- 13.** System (100) ifølge krav 12, hvor operationerne yderligere omfatter at opnå data, der indikerer en startspænding af ultrakondensatorerne (72) efter opladning af ultrakondensatorerne (72) til opladningsspændingen og før kobling af ultrakondensatorerne (72) til resistiv belastning (120).

DRAWINGS

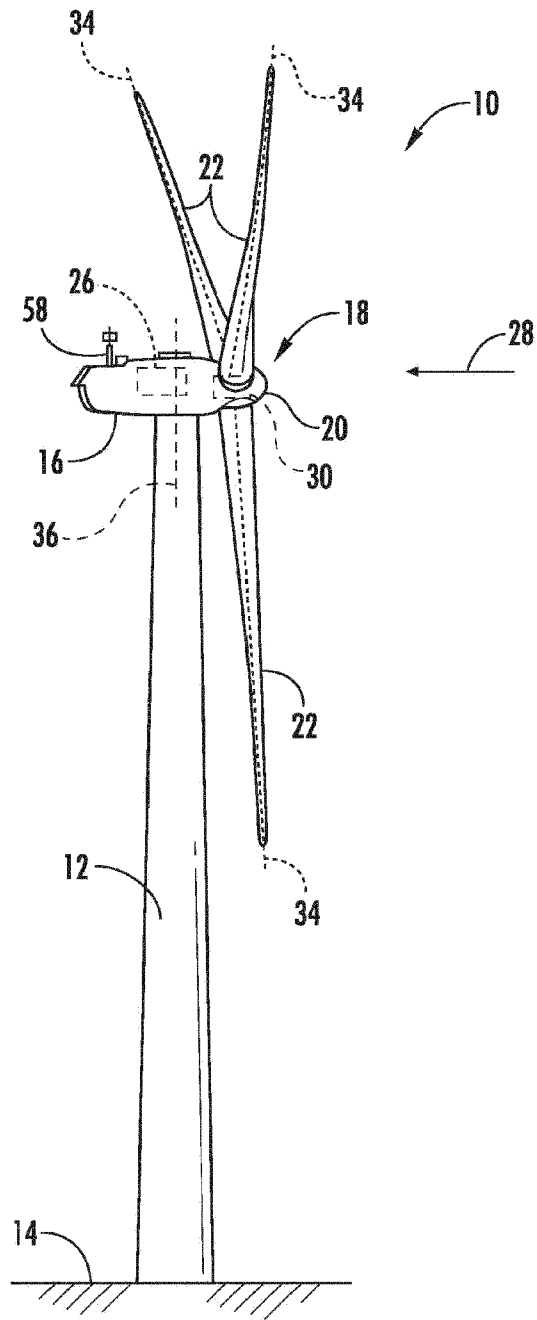


FIG. 1

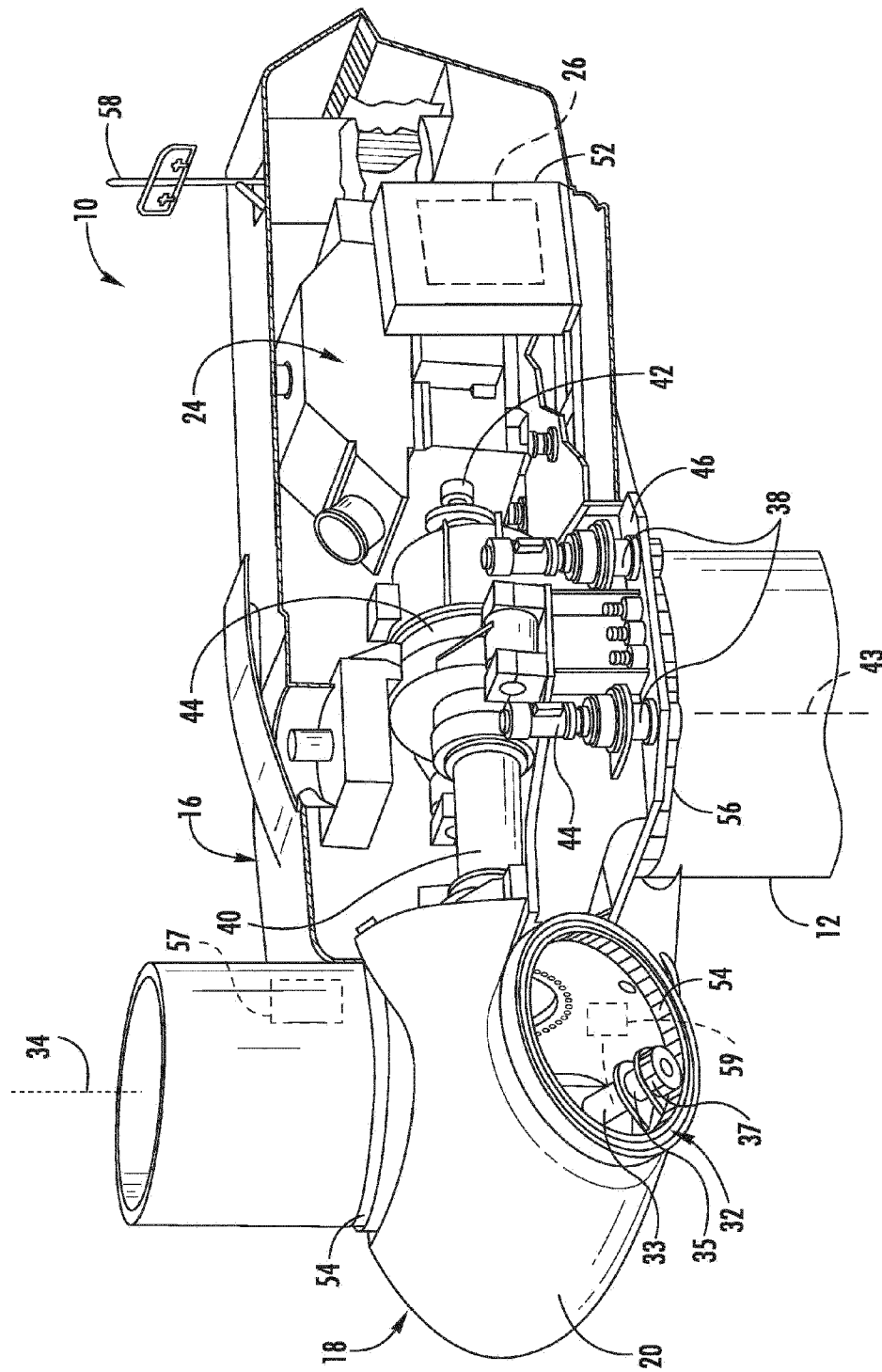


FIG. 2

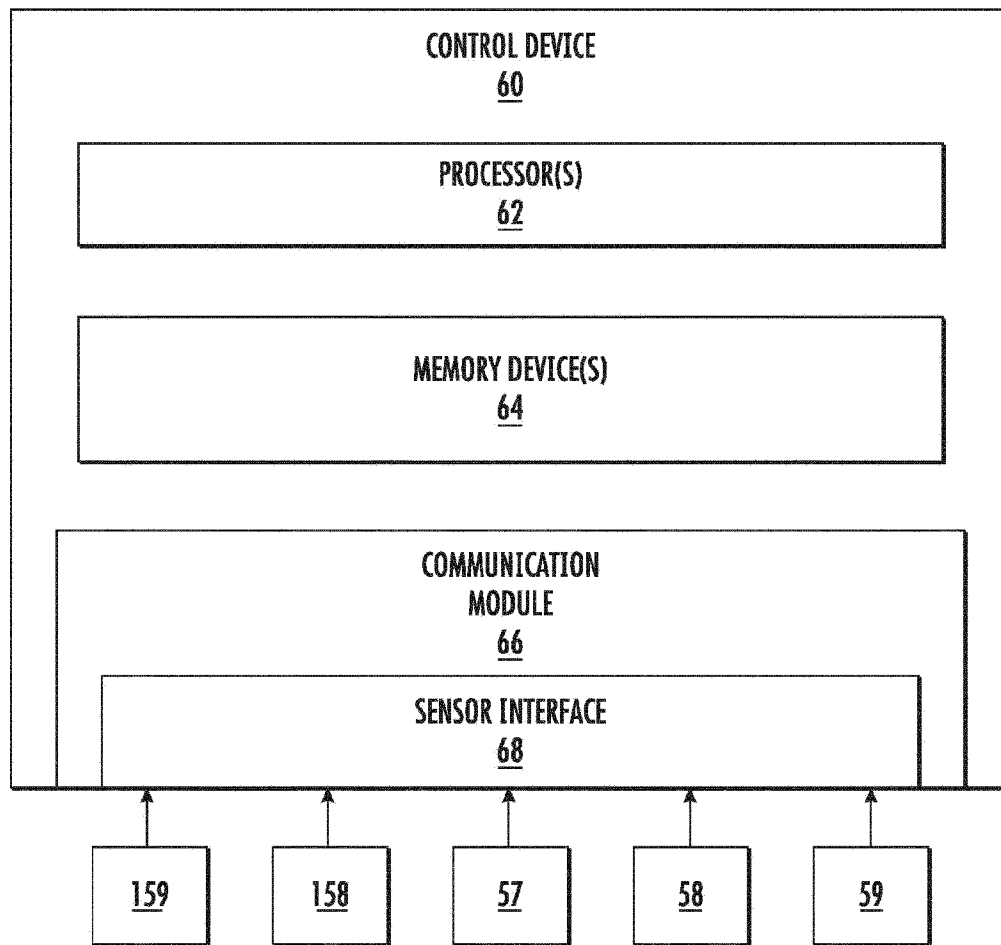


FIG. 3

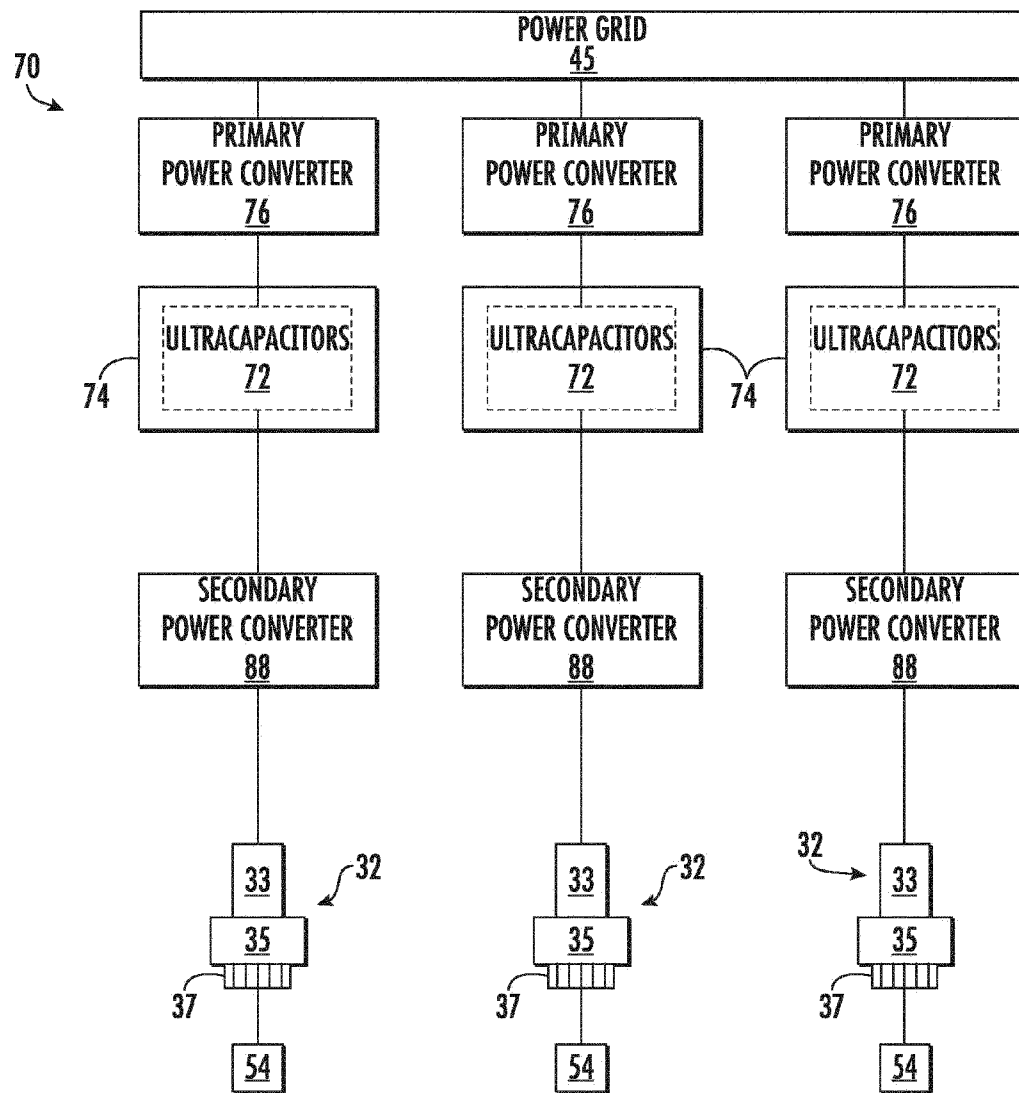


FIG. 4

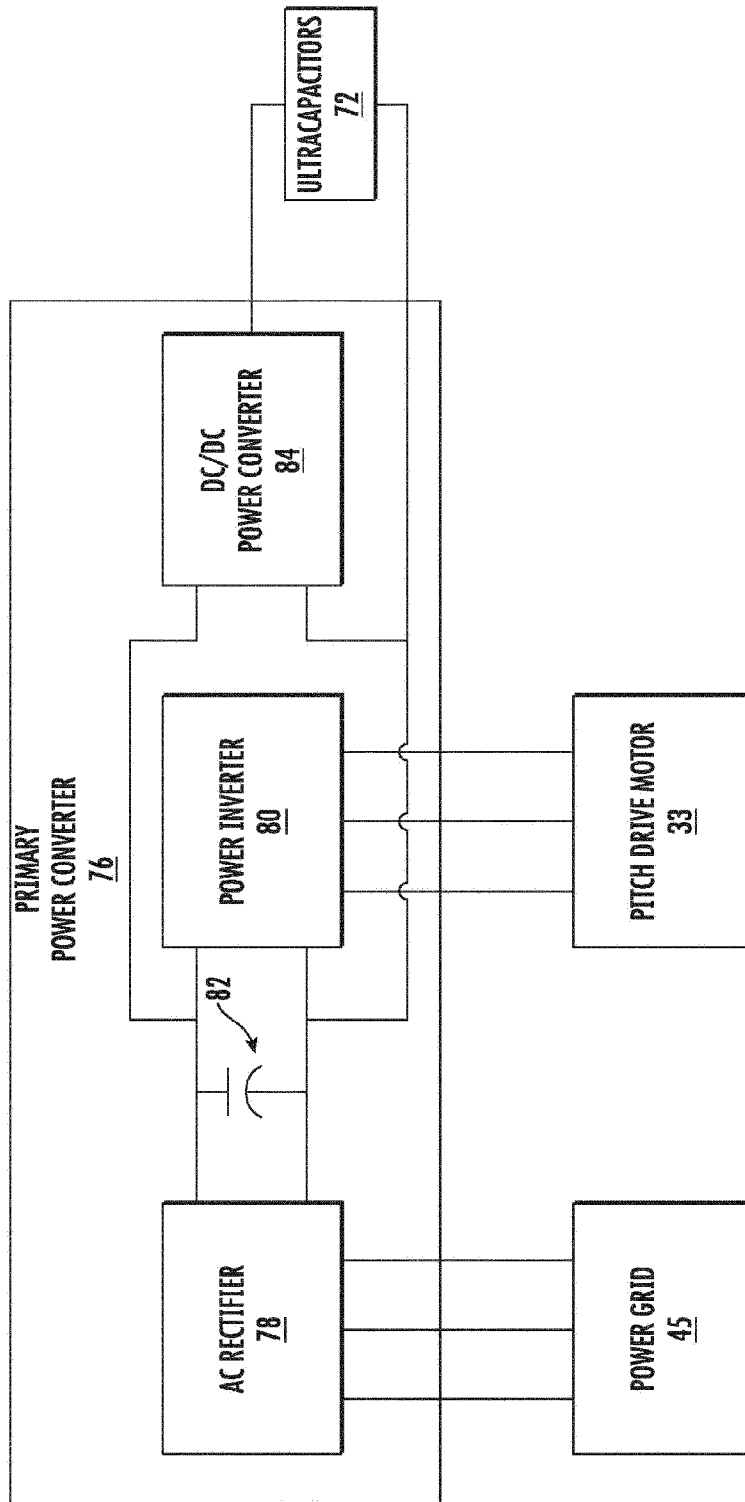


FIG. 5

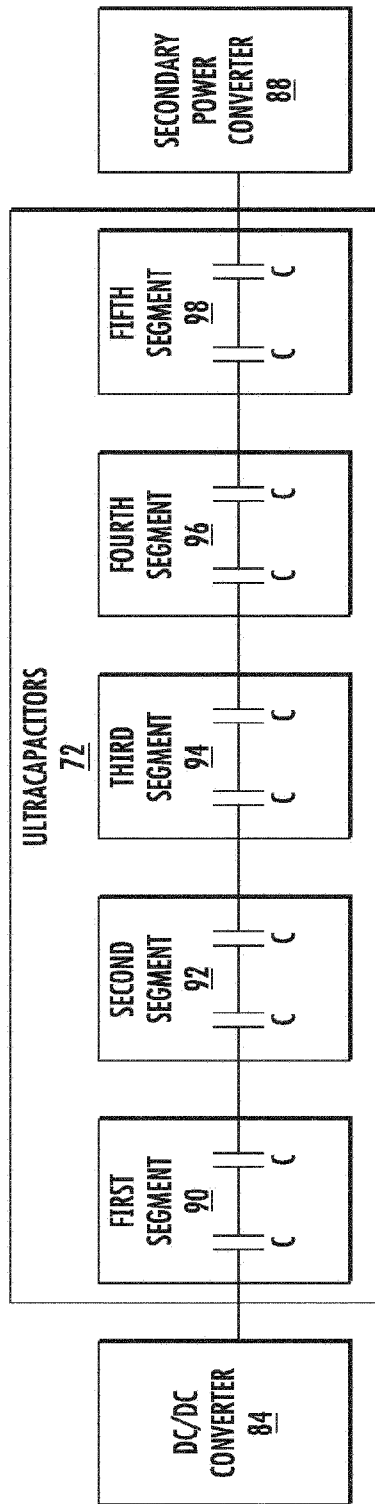


FIG. 6

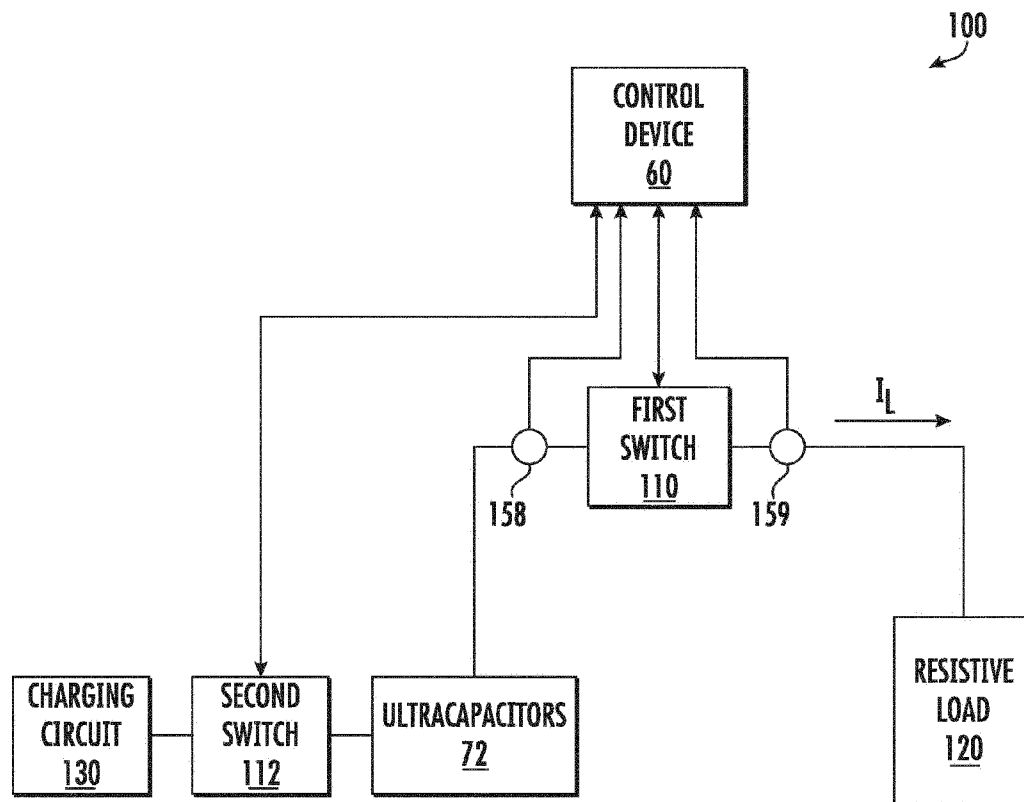


FIG. 7

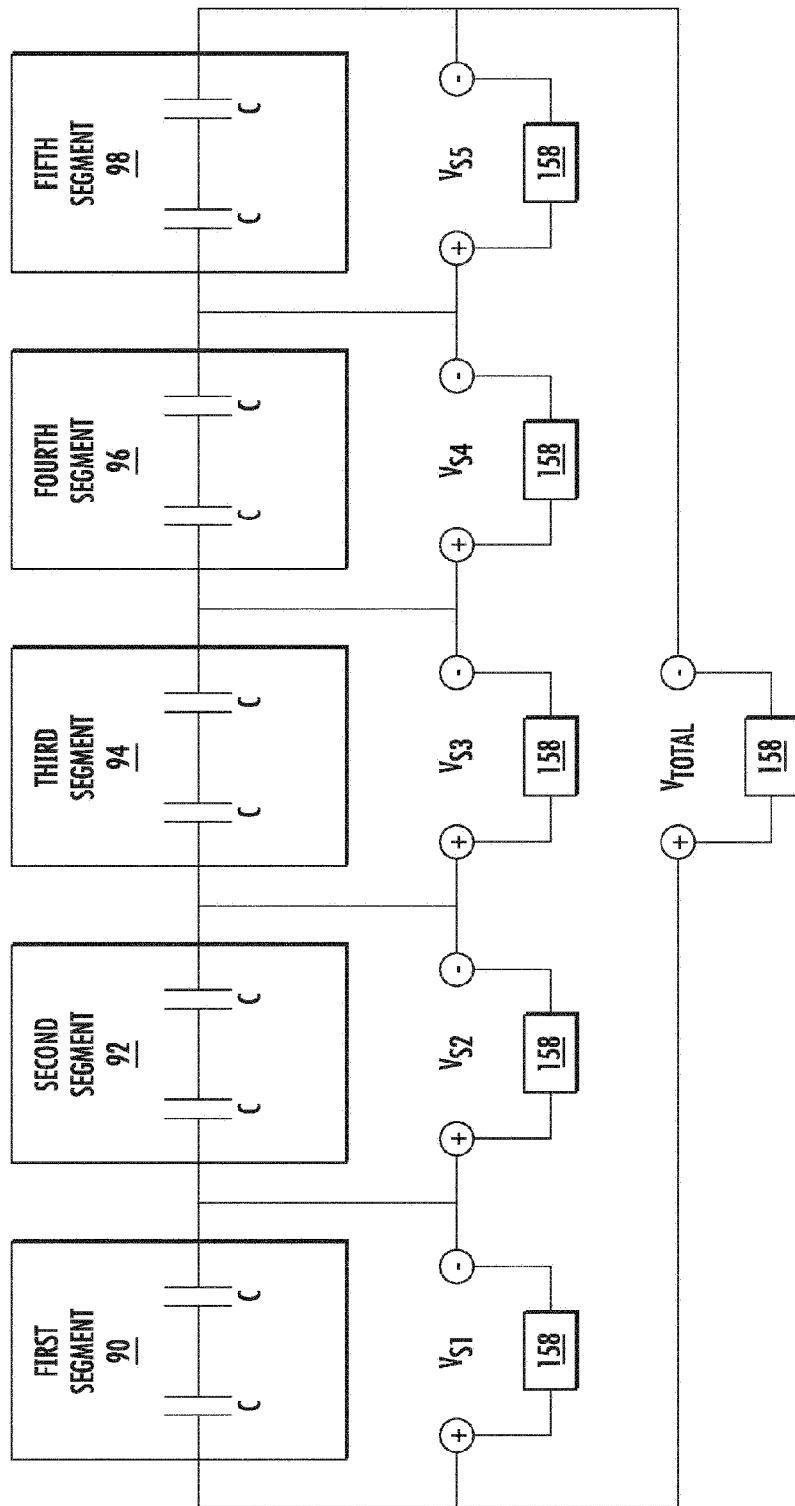


FIG. 8

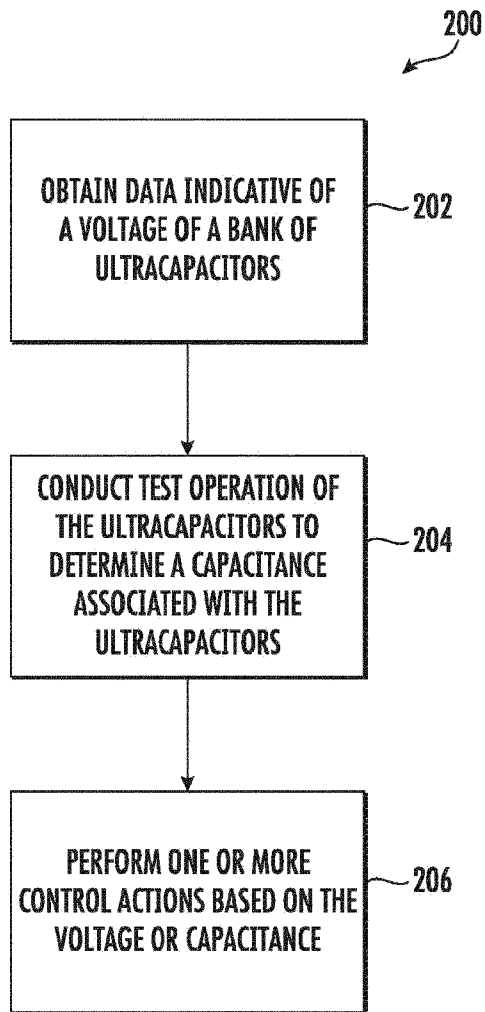


FIG. 9

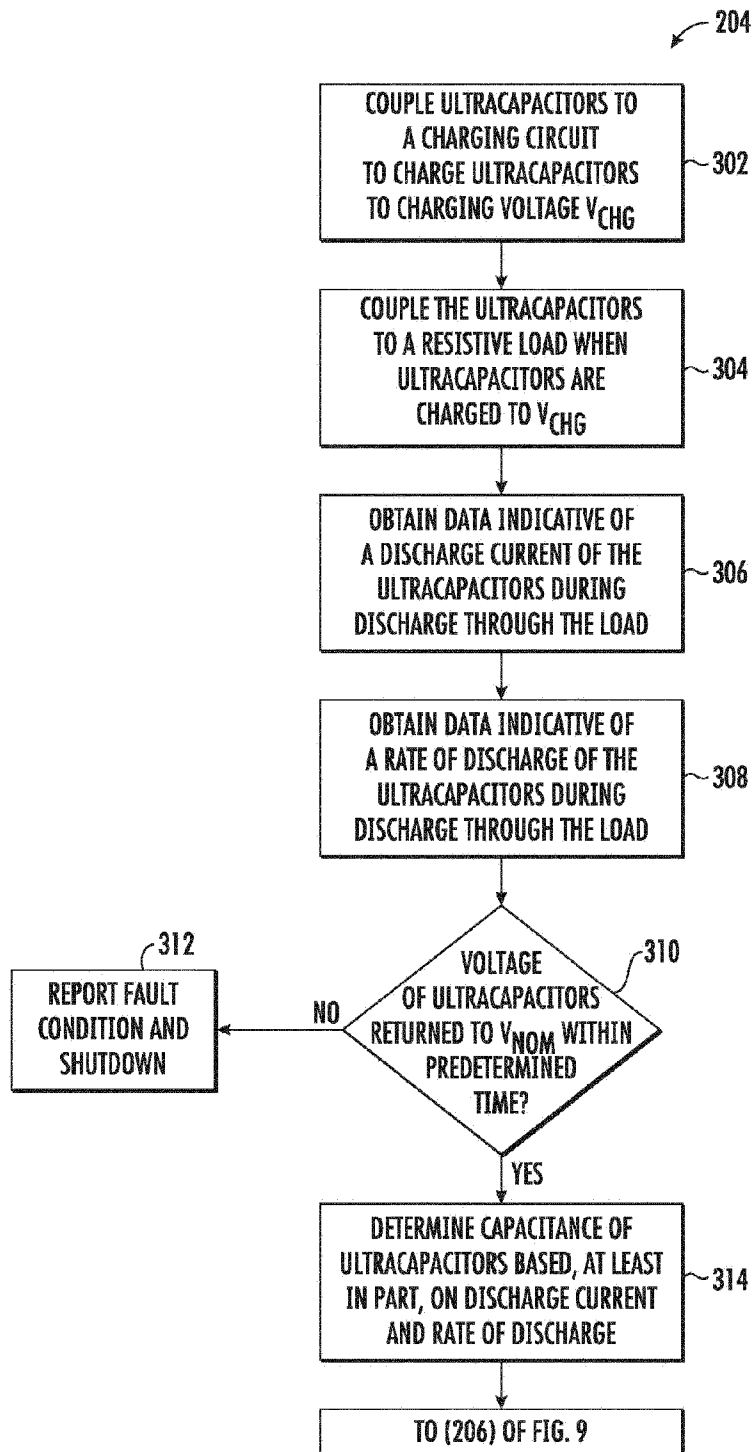


FIG. 10

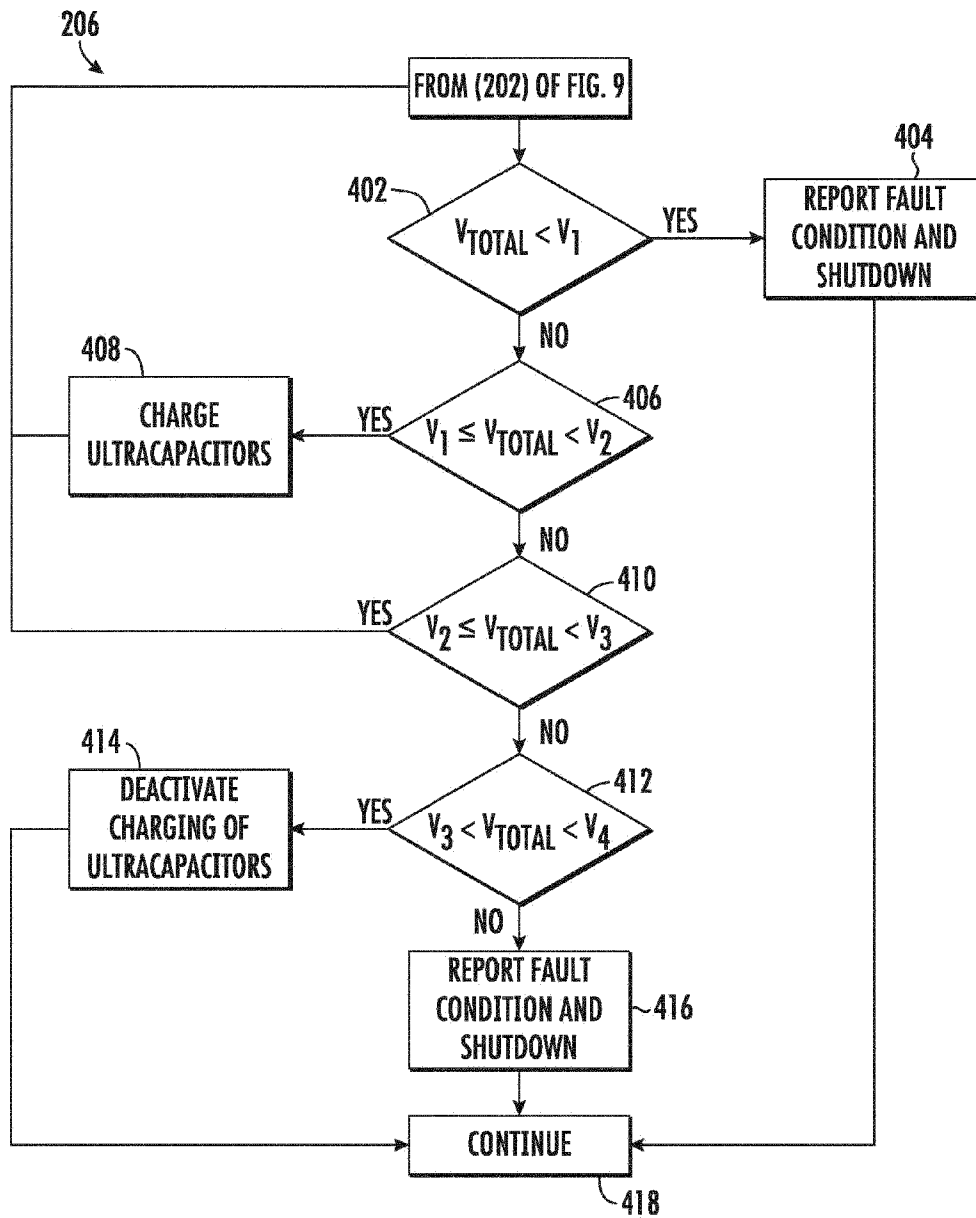


FIG. 11

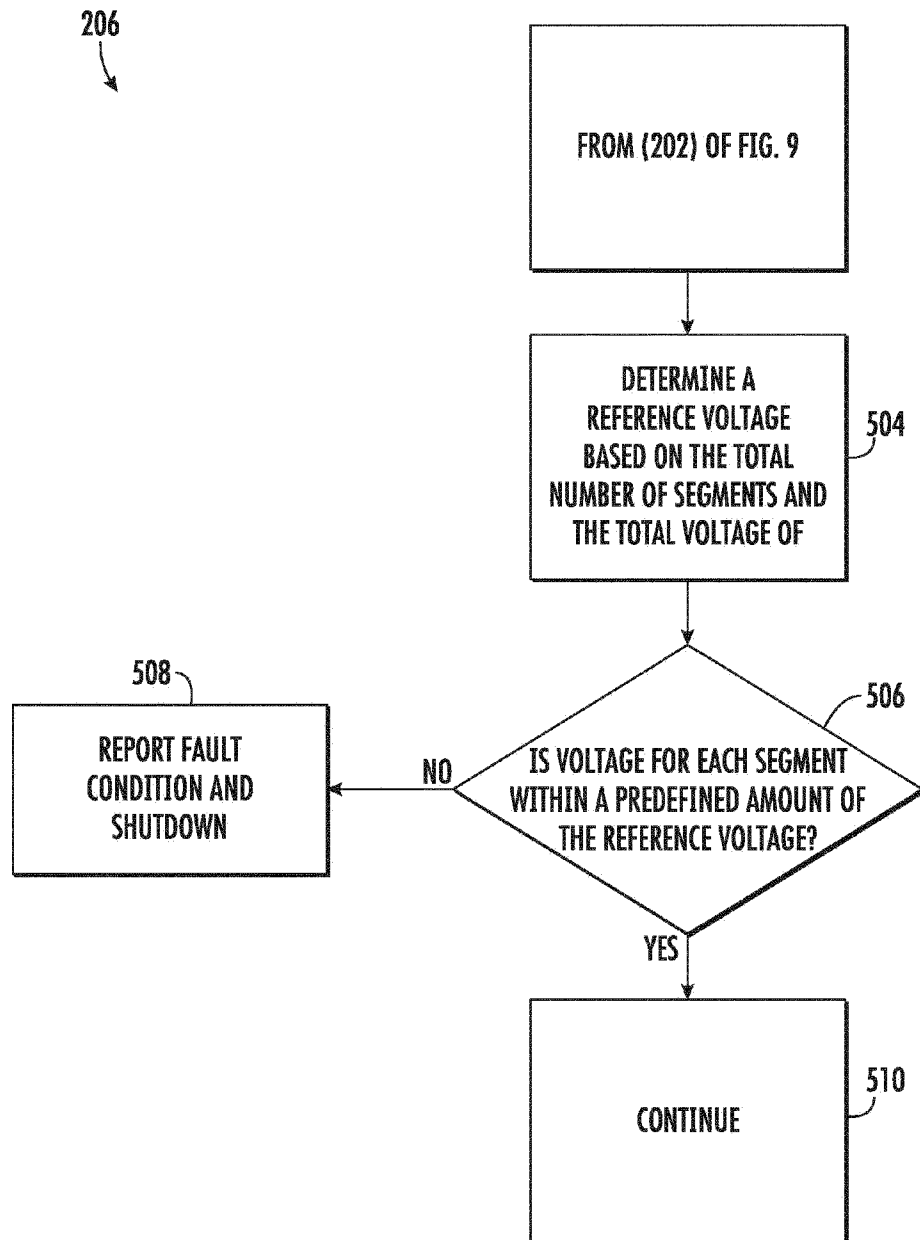


FIG. 12

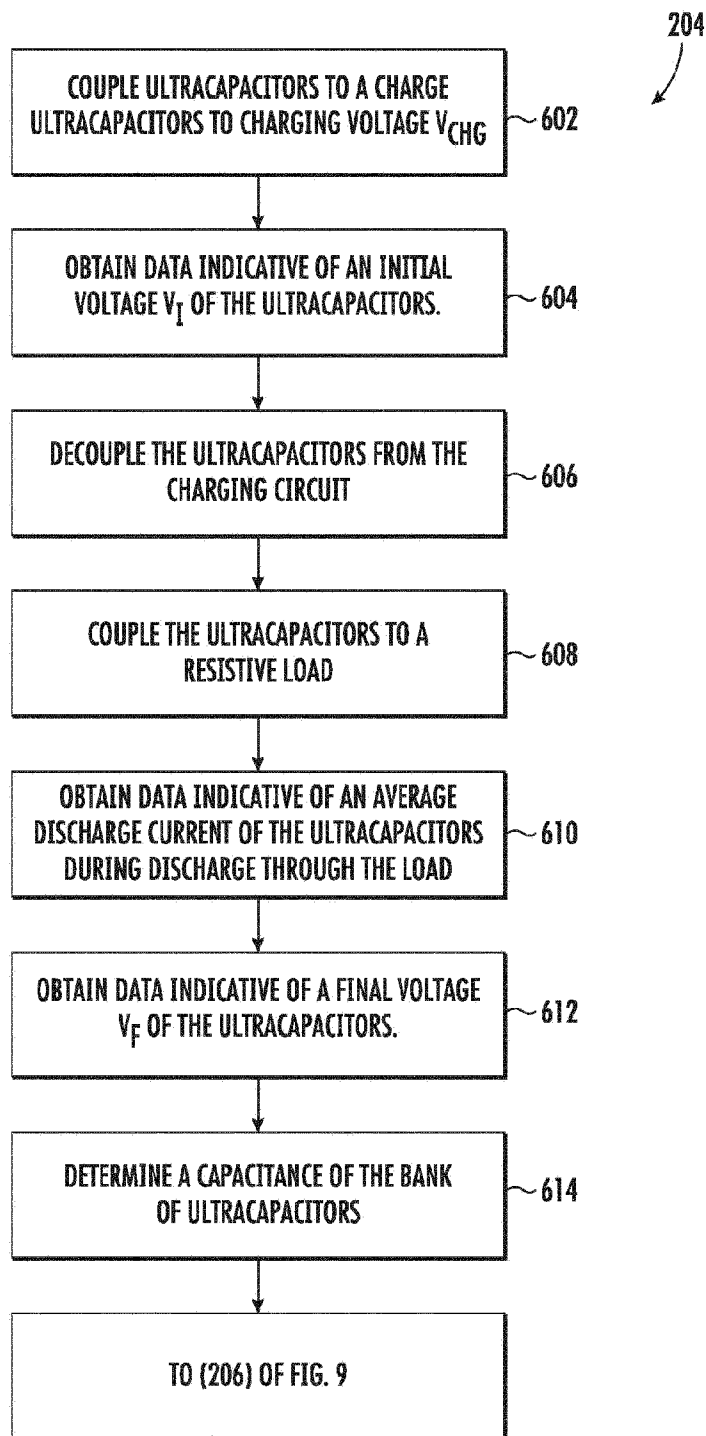


FIG. 13