

# Social Network Optimization Algorithm for Tubular Permanent Magnet Generator in vehicle energy harvesting

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## Abstract—

## Index Terms—

## I. INTRODUCTION

The recent development in computational capability and the parallel improvement of multi-physic simulation tools has shifted interest towards the modeling and optimization of engineering systems. The optimization of electrical machines, has been one of the hot topics of research in recent years. On one hand the algorithms have become increasingly effective and with a complexity that has grown together with computing capabilities. On the other hand, the availability of complex models for the definition of the objective function, able to assess accurate phenomena. The optimisation procedures range from geometric and performance optimisation up to joint optimizations involving also the economic aspect. Among all those involving multiple goals are the most interesting because they allow to have an overview of the final object, but at the same time are the most complex ones because they give rise to objective functions with sub optimal solutions often equivalent among themselves. The involvement of objectives, often disagreeing among themselves, makes it necessary to identify appropriate methodologies for the construction of objective functions to cater to the most of the requirements. In this context, advanced computational intelligence algorithms can be used to find out the optimized design, involving a large number of physical and geometric parameters, and to maximize the performance of electrical machines and energy-harvesting devices. These procedures are population-based iterative techniques which basically perform an indirect synthesis by evolving the parameters of interest to identify on optimal solution in the design space, through properly defined single and multi-objective fitness functions. The most popular evolutionary algorithms, i.e. genetic algorithm (GA) [1] and particle swarm optimization (PSO) [2] have been combined in the last decade with a broad range of other soft computing

techniques, like artificial neural networks [3], fuzzy systems [4], giving birth to a large discipline of hybrid methods which constitute the so-called Computational Intelligence.

Most of these techniques have been used to ottimizzazione more or less complex of electric motors and generators, giving origin to a particularly broad and detailed literature [5]–[12]. All these methods are mainly based on iterative procedures with a strong stochastic base, and their performance must be evaluated in terms of speed of convergence and computational burden. In fact, these techniques are suitable when the device structure is complex, as is the case of electrical machine design, which often requires time-consuming and non-linear FEM simulations. To address this issue, surrogate models are used to speed-up global evolutionary search [13]–[15]. A special attention is paid to the study of linear machines and in particular the optimization of Tubular Linear Generator (TLG), which are taking place in many energy harvesting applications [16]–[18]. In this type of problem becomes stringent optimization of the power produced and the reduction of dynamic phenomena, such as end effects and the cogging. The problem requires the solution of different physical domains coupled between them.

In this paper a new population based metaheuristic, named Social Network Optimization (SNO), is proposed for the optimization of an electrical linear generator excited through permanent magnets (PMs), in order to guarantee an effective and faster exploration of the solution domain with respect of traditional techniques.

In the first section, the algorithm, which is quite new in this scenario, will be described and will be validated with a benchmark case showing its effectiveness. Subsequently the optimization problem will be formulated reporting its main equations and then the main results obtained will be analyzed.

## II. SOCIAL NETWORK OPTIMIZATION

SNO is a population-based evolutionary algorithm [19]. The aim of this algorithm is to emulate the main characteristics of Social Networks, as shown in Fig. 1.

The population of SNO (candidate solutions of the problem) represent a set of people. Each person lives a real life, in which he lives situations and then these situations are shared on the Social Network.

The real life of each person is also characterized by his character, considered as an inclination to make choices.

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1: Initialize a random population
2: Create an empty memory
3: while not termination criterion do
4:   Create the new memory
5:   for all the population do
6:     if Is an explorer then
7:       Random change of the character
8:     else
9:       Creation of group of friend
10:      Creation of peer group
11:      Selection of the influencers
12:      Interaction between people
13:    end if
14:    Change of the situation
15:    Evaluation of the cost
16:  end for
17: end while

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Fig. 1. Pseudo-code of SNO

The Social Network is the virtual space in which people interact informing the other individual on his status and commenting ("evaluating") the performance of the others. The evaluation of a situation is divided in two parts: the first one is the evaluation by the person that lived the situation, the second one is by some of the other members of the social.

Some people of the Social Network are called explorers, because they are not attracted by other people and their attraction capability is much higher than the one of the average person.

The first iteration population of SNO is initialized randomly: both characters and situations are generated using a uniform distribution of probability in their domain.

The iterative process is limited by a termination criterion chosen among the fitness evaluation of the solution, the stagnation of the algorithm or the number of benchmark function calls.

In the loop, the first process is the creation of a new memory, recalling that the most of lived situations are stored in the memory of the Social Network. The choice of which situation store and which not, is firstly based on the evaluation given to that situation. The second criterion to decide is the "age" of the post. Posts shared in past are more suitably substituted by new posts.

The second loop is the heart of the algorithm: the process of group division, influencer selection and interaction.

People, in SNO, interact in groups: friends groups and peers groups. Groups of friends collect people that have similar situations. The actual situation of a person is compared with the situations memorized in the memory. If these are similar, the situation memorized can influence the person, and so this person and the person who has lived the situation memorized are considered friends. Each person has a group of friends that is different from groups of friends of other people. The similarity between two situations is evaluated as a distance in the space of the candidate solutions.

Groups of peers collect people with the same most predominant feature of the character. Similarly for friends' groups, for

peers' groups are compared the actual character of a person with the character of a person who has lived a situation contained in the memory.

All groups change during time: actual situations and characters of people change so also solutions contained in the memory change.

The probability that a person can be chosen as influencer depends on the position in the ranking of the group. In fact, in all groups a ranking is created, where people are ranked by the evaluation of their situation.

Each person has a probability greater than zero to be chosen as influencer. This probability is based with a non-linear relation with the rank of each person in the groups.

After having selected some influencers, people interact with them : the interaction takes into account the tendency of a person to maintain his character, the influence of the influencer and the type of groups from which the influencer is chosen.

The interaction between a person and his influencers can be expressed as:

$$\bar{c}(t+1) = \alpha \cdot \bar{c}(t) + \beta \cdot b \cdot (\overline{s_f} - \overline{s(t)}) + \gamma \cdot c \cdot (\overline{s_p} - \overline{s(t)}) \quad (1)$$

where  $\bar{c}$  is the character of the person,  $\bar{s}$  is the actual situation of this person,  $\alpha$  is his inertia,  $\overline{s_f}$  is the situation of the influencer of the friends' group and  $\beta$  is his influence,  $\overline{s_p}$  is the situation of the influencer of peers' groups and  $\gamma$  is his influence and  $b$  and  $c$  are two parameters that make a difference between the interaction into peers' groups and in friends' groups.

#### A. Performance evaluation using TEAM 25 benchmark

The TEAM Problem 25 [20] has been chosen as preliminary benchmark optimization problem in order to compare the performances of SNO with other algorithms. Two of them are standard algorithms: the Genetic Algorithm (GA) [21], and the Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) [22]. The last algorithm used for the comparison, is a hybrid algorithm [23]: the Genetic Swarm Optimization (GSO) [24].

The problem consists in a model of die press with electro-magnet for orientation of magnetic powder. The aim of this test problem is to optimize some geometric parameters to obtain a suitable flux distribution.

As described in [15] the model is assumed as two-dimensional; therefore the cost function to be minimized is:

$$C = \sum_{i=1}^N \left\{ (B_{xpi} - B_{x0i})^2 + (B_{ypi} - B_{y0i})^2 \right\}; \quad (2)$$

where  $B_{xp}$  and  $B_{yp}$  are the components of flux density computed on  $N$  sampling points, while the specified values are, respectively:

$$B_{x0} = 0.35 \cdot \sin \theta; \quad (3)$$

$$B_{y0} = 0.35 \cdot \sin \theta; \quad (4)$$

The four algorithms has been tested on this problem, that is evaluated by means of Finite Element simulator [17].

To make possible and fair the comparison between the algorithms, the termination criterion of all the algorithms has

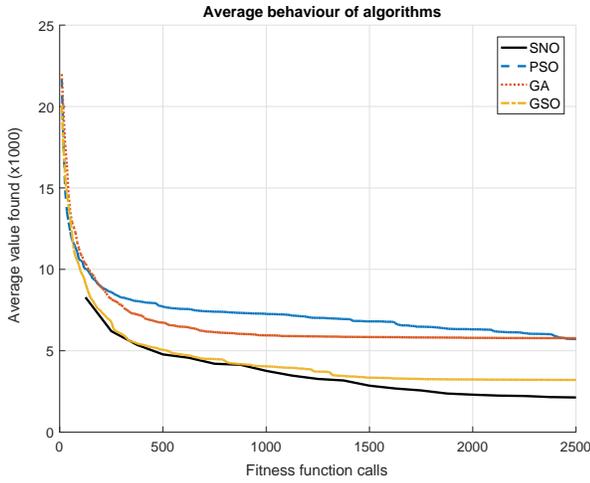


Fig. 2. Comparison between SNO, PSO, GA, GSO on Problem TEAM 25. Average algorithm behaviour

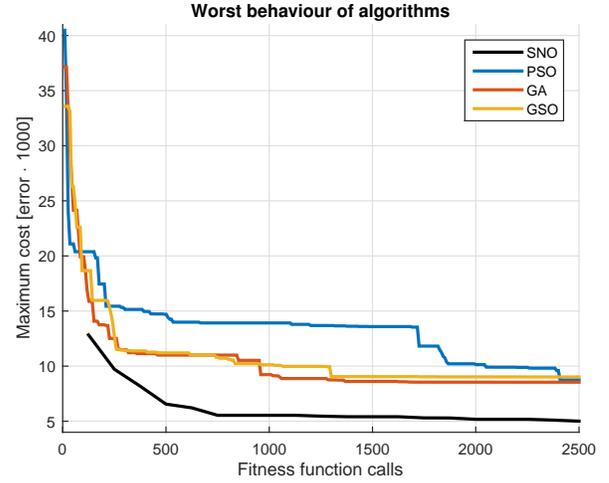


Fig. 4. Comparison between SNO, PSO, GA, GSO on Problem TEAM 25. Worst algorithm behaviour

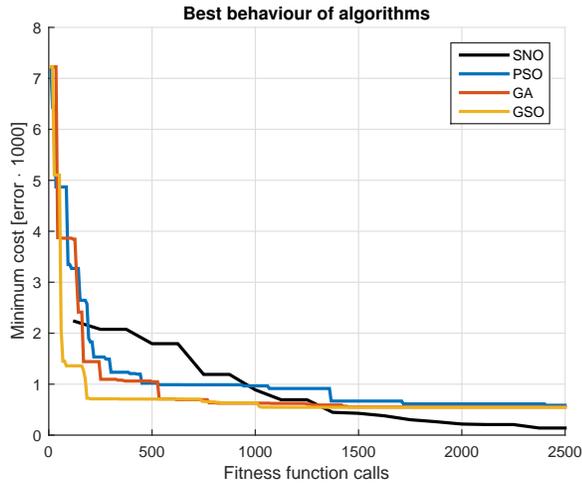


Fig. 3. Comparison between SNO, PSO, GA, GSO on Problem TEAM 25. Best algorithm behaviour

been set to be the total number of fitness function calls. This parameter indicates the computational time allowed for the optimization because, compared to the computational cost of the electromagnetic simulation, the overhead time of the algorithms is negligible. Table I shows the working parameters of the algorithms in terms of population size, iterations and fitness function calls.

TABLE I  
WORKING PARAMETER OF THE FOUR ALGORITHMS

Parameter	GA	PSO	GA	SNO
Population size	10	10	10	125
Iterations	250	250	250	20
Fitness function calls	2500	2500	2500	2500

In order to have reliable data, 48 independent trials has been done. The average among the 48 trails cost function values are reported in Figure 2, while in figures 3, and 4 are shown the behaviour of the best and the worst trial.

### III. APPLICATION TO TUBULAR PERMANENT MAGNET GENERATOR IN VEHICLE ENERGY HARVESTING

This work focuses on the design of a tubular linear permanent magnet generator, in literature named as “TLPMG”.

Tubular electric generators are electromechanical devices that exploit the relative linear motion between two components (stator and slider) to generate an electromotive force [25] [26].

The main advantages of this kind of electrical machine, is the high power density, compactness and the absence of excitation circuit, which make them an attractive candidate for applications in which performance and reliability are crucial.

In contrast with the advantages exhibited by the permanent magnet machine, it is useful to point out also the drawbacks, that actually represent the limits of such a device in terms of efficiency and working aspects. One of the most relevant downside is represented by the cogging force, a phenomenon that has an high impact on the performances of the device.

A tubular linear permanent magnet generator is made of two main parts: a translator (or prime mover) where magnets are installed, and a stator in which coils are placed. Both can have different structures, implying several differences between them in terms of performances and characteristics. However, in addition to stator and translator, other parts are present in a TPMLG. As reported in Fig. 5 the geometrical dimensions are summarized in two tables: table II shows the free variables (design variable of the optimization problem) and table III shows the dependent variables.

- $Sh_L$ , Shaft length;
- $Sh_R$ , Shaft radius, it is the radius of the shaft to which the slider is connected;
- $St_R$ , Stator outer radius;
- $Ag_m$ , half air gap.

Concerning the preliminary design, firstly we will focus on the design of a periodic machine unit. This unit can be repeated along the axial length depending on the performances we want to achieve.

TABLE II  
FREE DESIGN VARIABLES AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Free variables	Symbol	unit of measure	Lower bound value	Upper bound value
Number of stator moduli	$St_N$	[ ]	2	25
Number of slider moduli	$Sl_N$	[ ]	4	25
Windings height	$Wn_H$	[% $Sh_L/St_N$ ]	0.1	0.9
Stator tooth height	$StT_H$	[% $Sh_L/St_N$ ]	0.1	0.9
Magnet height	$Mg_H$	[% $Sh_L/Sl_N$ ]	0.1	0.9
Slider tooth height	$StT_H$	[% $Sh_L/Sl_N$ ]	0.1	0.9
Half of air gap	$Ag_m$	[mm]	0.1	0.9
Stator thickness	$St_T$	[% $St_R$ ]	0.4	0.6
Armature thickness	$Ar_T$	[% $St_T$ ]	0.01	0.5
Stator tooth thickness	$StT_T$	[% $St_T$ ]	0.01	0.5
Magnet thickness	$Mg_T$	[% $SlC_T$ ]	0.1	0.9
Slider tooth thickness	$SlT_T$	[% $SlC_T$ ]	0.3	0.9
Winding thickness	$Wn_T$	[% $St_T - Ar_T - StT_T$ ]	0.1	0.9

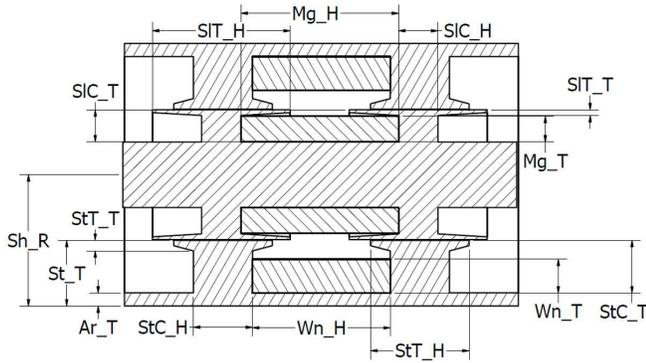


Fig. 5. TPMLG geometry

TABLE III  
DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Dependent variables	Symbol	Expression
Stator core thickness	$StC_T$	$Sh_L/St_N - Wn_H$
Slider core thickness	$SlC_T$	$St_T - Ar_T - StT_T$
Slider radius	$Sl_R$	$St_R - St_T - Ag_m - Sh_R$
Slider core height	$SlC_H$	$Sh_L/Sl_N - Mg_H$

La macchina elettrica ? trifase, monofase? From an electrical point of view, the machine is a single phase electric generator.

#### A. Vehicle and road model

In this section the vehicle and the road model used to simulate the vehicle behaviour are described. It is possible to approach the problem of the vehicle comfort using models with different levels of precision [27].

The model here used have three degrees of freedom related to the carbody (the pitch rotation,  $\theta_b$ , the roll rotation,  $\phi_b$ , and rigid vertical translation of the carbody  $z_b$ ) and one degrees of freedom for each wheel ( $z_{fl}$ ,  $z_{fr}$ ,  $z_{rl}$ , and  $z_{rr}$ ). The problem will be solved using a multibody approach [28], [29].

Piu' che definire le equazioni del modello strada veicolo, che metterei come reference mi focalizzerei su come sono state accoppiate le equazioni meccaniche con quelle elettriche.

For the vehicle simulation, each electric generator can be modelled as an external force field. The force depends on the

slip speed and on the relative position between the stator and the slider.

This external force is taken onto consideration in the Lagrange equation in the virtual work of external forces.

The force produced by the generator can be calculated using a power balance: the electrical power is related to the mechanical one by a proper efficiency.

So, for each of the four generators:

$$F = \frac{V \cdot I}{\eta \dot{x}_{slide}} \quad (5)$$

where  $I$  is the current flowing in the circuit,  $V$  is the potential generated by the generator and  $\eta$  is the efficiency.

The road irregularities has been modeled accordingly to standard ISO8608 [30] that defined the Power Spectral Density (PSD) of the road irregularities.:

$$G_d(n) = G_d(n_0) \cdot (n/n_0)^{-w_i} \quad (6)$$

where  $G_d$  is the displacement PSD,  $n$  is the spatial frequency,  $n_0$  is the reference spatial frequency and  $w_i$  is the exponent of the fitted PSD.

Changing the value of  $G_d(n_0)$ , it is possible to represent different level of irregularities. Roads are classified by their values of  $G_d(n_0)$  in standard ISO8608. Given the PSD, it is possible to find the equation of the displacements [31] [32]. In this optimization process, in order to make the result more robust, two different road irregularities levels have been used.

esiste un grafico di una simulazione elettro meccanica che dice come e' fatta la potenza elettrica?

An example of the electrical output of the simulation is shown in Fig. 6

#### B. Objective function definition

It is possible to define four benchmark for this multi-objective optimization problem.

Three of them are the standard objectives used to evaluate the suspension performances of the vehicle and the fourth is an index related with the produced power.

The comfort index (CI) is the root mean square (RMS) of the carbody vertical acceleration  $\ddot{z}_b$ :

$$CI = RMS(\ddot{z}_b) \quad (7)$$

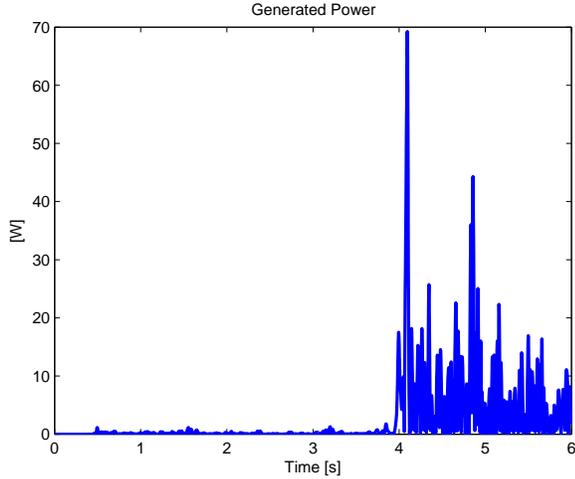


Fig. 6. Example of produced power

The road holding (RH) is the RMS of force exchanged between the wheel and the ground:

$$RH = RMS([K_{cc}] \cdot \bar{x}_c) \quad (8)$$

where  $K_{cc}$  is the partition of the stiffness matrix related to the imposed motion and  $\bar{x}_c$  is the vector containing the imposed motion.

The working space index (WS) is the RMS of the variation of length of the springs:

$$WS = L_{k-susp} \cdot \bar{x}_l \quad (9)$$

where  $L_{k-susp}$  is the partition of the stiffness Jacobian related to the suspension stroke.

For all these indexes the best value is the lower.

Another important performance index in this optimization problem is the power produced by the LiG. In order to have a minimization problem, it has been defined as:

$$PI = \frac{1}{RMS(I \cdot V) + 0.1} \quad (10)$$

where  $I$  is the current flowing in the circuit and  $V$  is the potential generated by the generator. CIRCUITO EQUIVALENTE? ...O FIGURA DA FEM...

A scalarization approach has been used to face with the multiobjective problem. The scalarization used is the following:

$$c = 4 \cdot \frac{CI}{CI_{base}} + \frac{RH}{RH_{base}} + \frac{WS}{WS_{base}} + 4 \cdot \frac{PI}{PI_{base}} \quad (11)$$

where the values of  $(\cdot)_{base}$  are some references values.

### C. Optimization procedure

#### AN - Cambiata ed approfondita

The optimization process is an iterative process in which the optimizer, SNO, selects some candidate solutions.

For each candidate solution, the value of the objective functions have to be evaluated.

The objective function evaluator converts all the candidate solutions into a specific set of geometric values for the

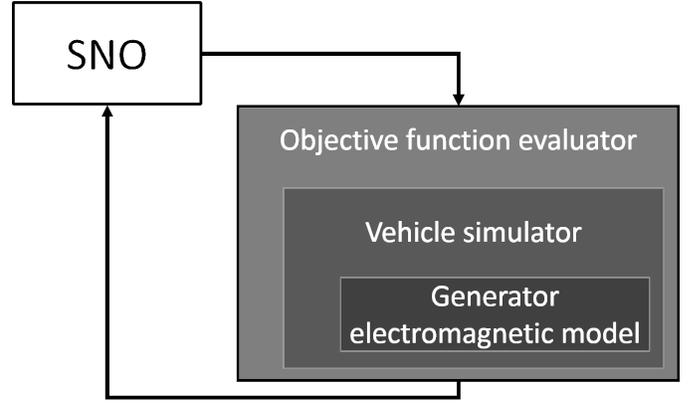


Fig. 7. Optimization process representation

generator. This conversion has been done in order to reduce the number of infeasible geometries that the optimizer can find: these solutions reduce the optimization capability of the algorithm.

After having de-coded the candidate solution, a FEM model of the TMPLG is created using a numeric electromagnetic simulator (FEMM4.2). This model will be used in the time simulation of the vehicle to evaluate the linked flux to the coil useful to calculate the electromotive force and consequently the mechanical force.

Having created a model of the generator, it is possible to start the integration of the equations of motion of the vehicle. The equations are non-linear due to the presence of the TMPLG, so it is needed a numerical simulation.

At each time step, the numerical simulation takes as input the road irregularities and the forces generated by the TMPLGs.

The total output of the simulation are the acceleration of the carbody, the positions of the wheels in time and the produced power.

With these data, it is possible to calculate the performance indexes.

The evaluation is summarized in figure 7.

## IV. SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

**Servono molti piu' risultati, ache dal punto di vista elettrico. Serve una tabella dei dati ottimizzati etc.**

Before starting the optimization process, a sensitivity analysis has been performed on the design variables of the TPMLG.

This analysis is aimed to understand which are the most influencing parameters and if there are some non influencing parameters. These parameters can be eliminated from the optimization process. However, the elimination of the parameters can hide some coupling effects that they can have with the other parameters. Moreover the optimization performance are lightly influenced by the number of parameters.

The sensitivity analysis has been performed changing all the variables one at time taking 30 uniformly distributed samples inside the domain of each variable.

From figure 8 it is possible to see the influence of all the parameters obtained from the sensitivity analysis.

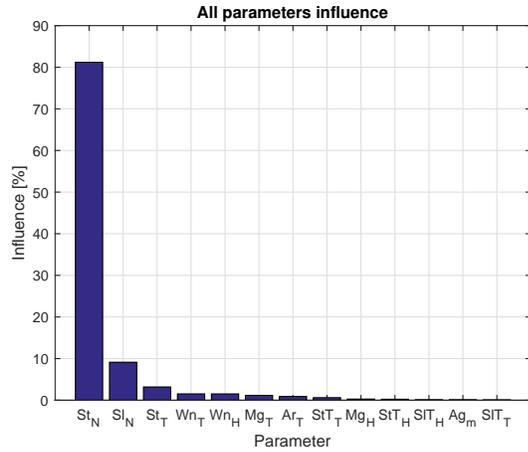


Fig. 8. Parameters influence obtained from the sensitivity analysis

It is possible to see that the number of stator caves is the most influencing parameter (80%) and the second most influencing parameter is the slider number of caves (9%).

These results are expected because almost all the other dimensions are expressed as percentage of these two parameters.

Figure 9 shows the influence of all the other parameters.

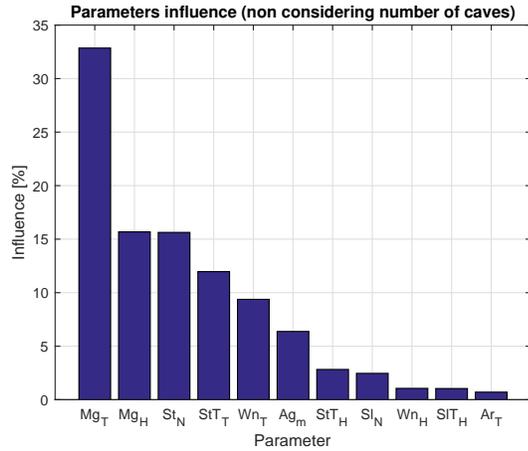


Fig. 9. Some parameters influence obtained from the sensitivity analysis

The convergence curve of SNO is shown in figure 10.

The scaled drawing of the optimized generator is shown in figure 11.

Figure 12 shows the fluxes concatenated to all the windings as a function of the slider position.

The optimal values of the free variables are shown in table IV

From figure 10 it is possible to do some considerations:

- It is possible to see that the complete model is much more difficult to be optimized with respect to the simplified model: this is due to the fact that the complete model has more design variables and the fitness function is much more non-linear
- The optimizer is able at least to improve the initial guess (the random one) and to continue to optimize till the end of the time.

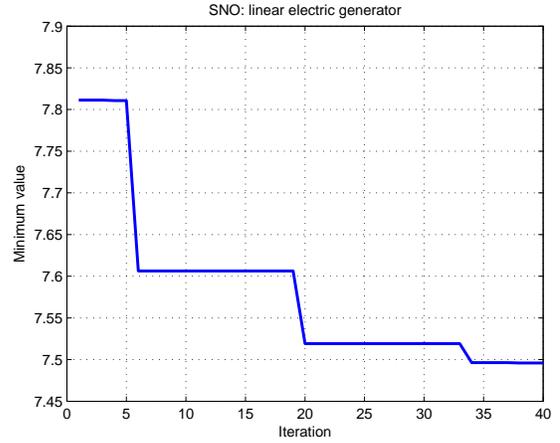


Fig. 10. Convergence curve of SNO on the problem with the complete model of the generator

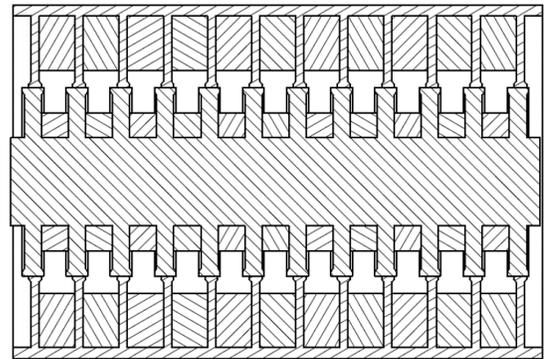


Fig. 11. Scaled optimized generator.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Bla bla bla

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TABLE IV  
FREE DESIGN VARIABLES OPTIMAL VALUES

Free variables	Symbol	Optimal value
Number of stator moduli	$St_N$	12
Number of slider moduli	$Sl_N$	12
Windings height	$Wn_H$	0.81
Stator tooth height	$StT_H$	0.10
Magnet height	$Mg_H$	0.10
Slider tooth height	$SlT_H$	0.61
Half of air gap	$Ag_m$	0.21
Stator thickness	$St_T$	0.83
Armature thickness	$Ar_T$	0.082
Stator tooth thickness	$StT_T$	0.13
Magnet thickness	$Mg_T$	0.50
Slider tooth thickness	$SlT_T$	0.30
Winding thickness	$Wn_T$	0.46

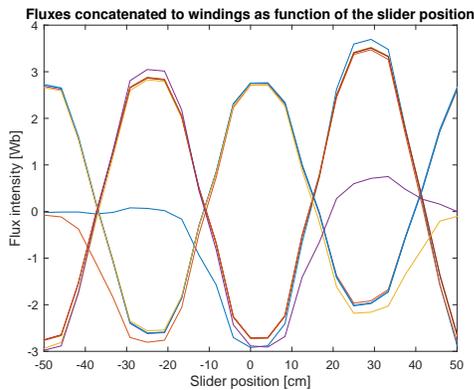


Fig. 12. Fluxes concatenated to windings.

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