Exploiting Bounded Staleness to Speed up Big Data Analytics

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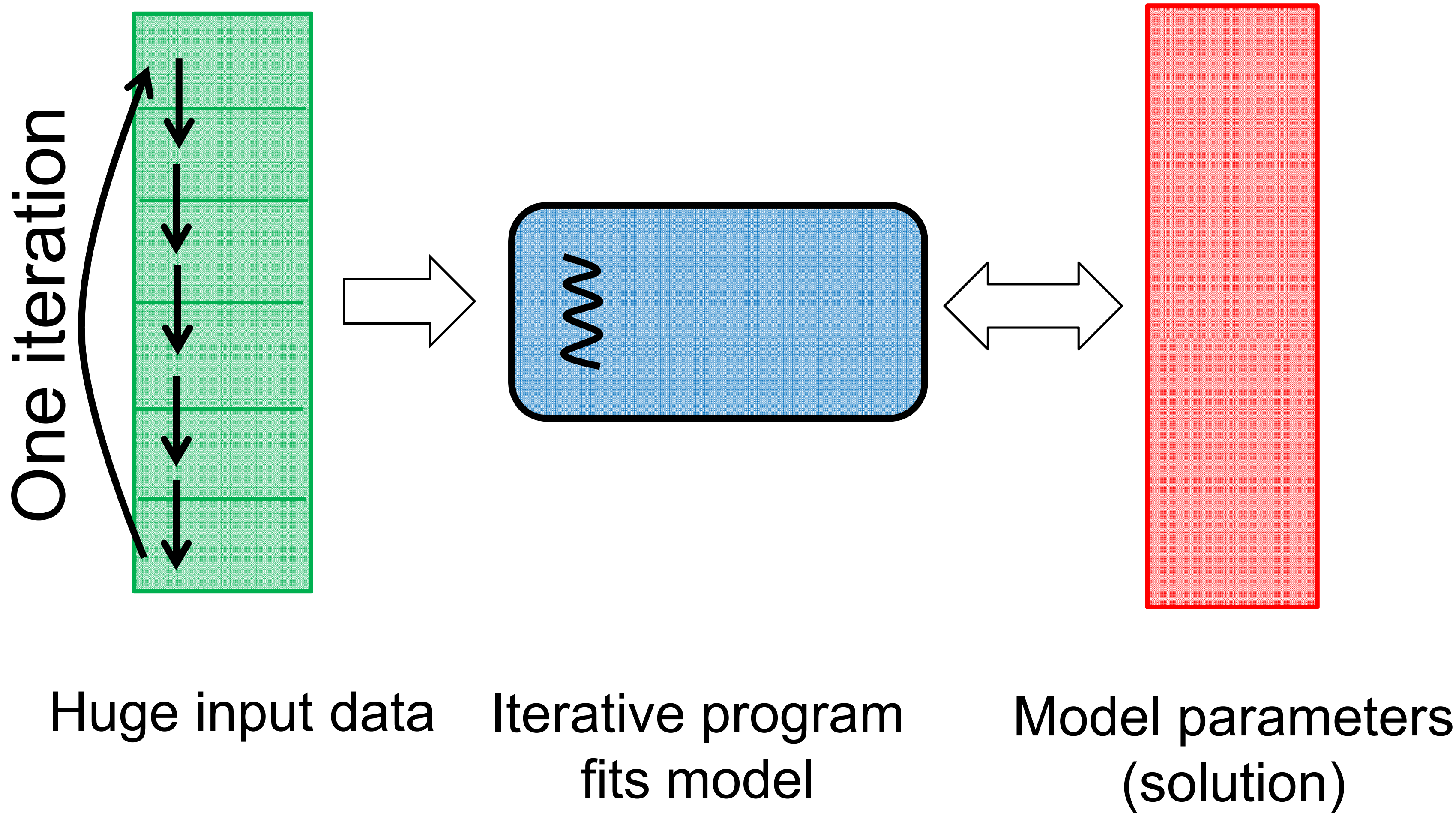
Big Data Analytics Overview



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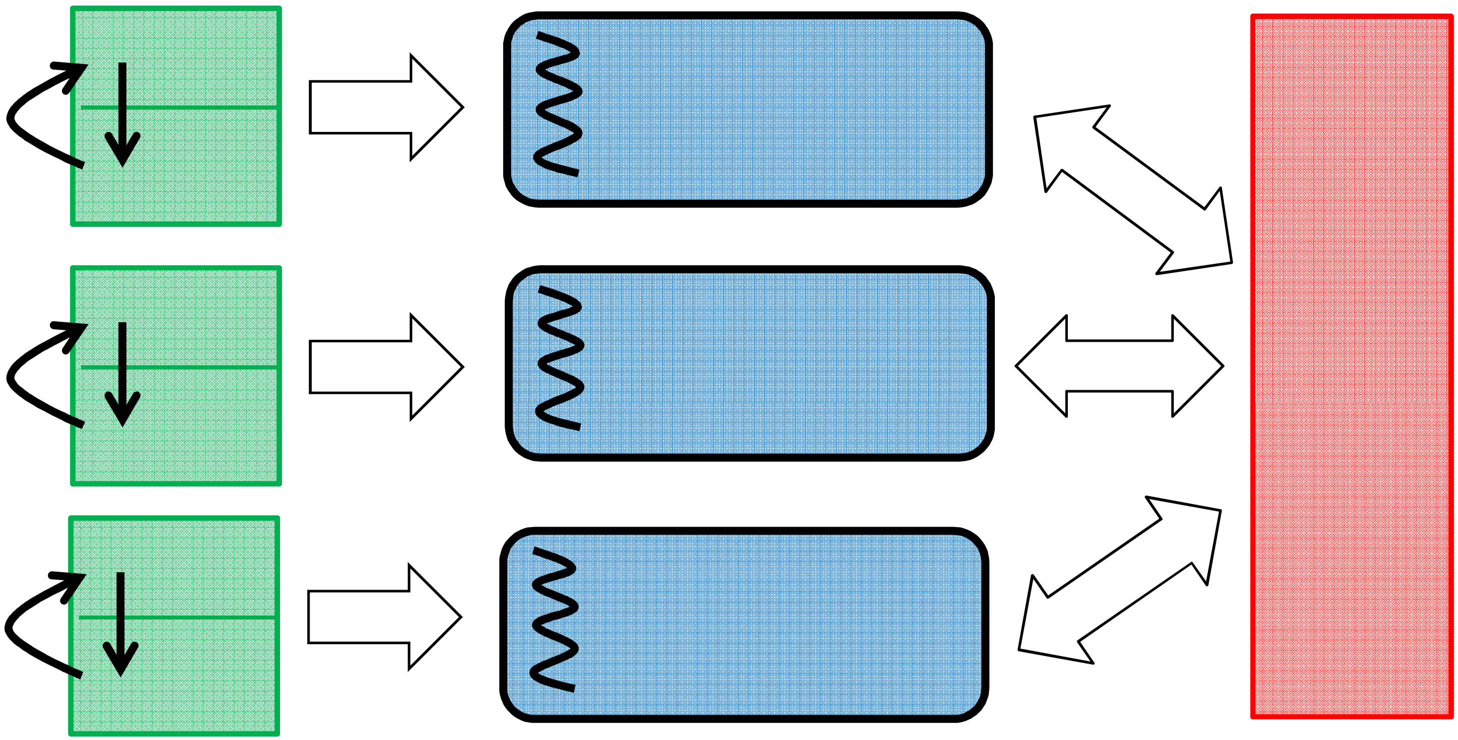
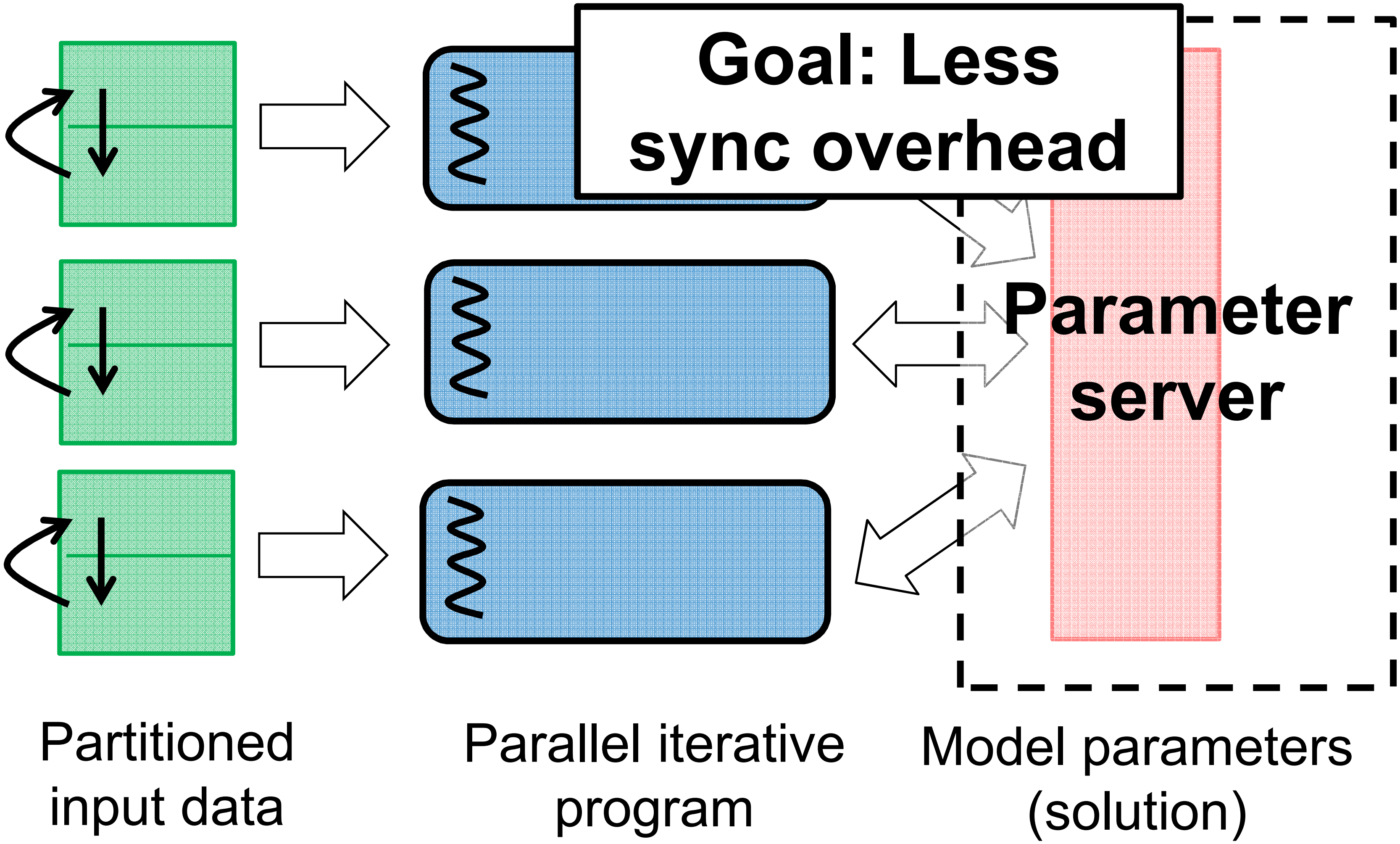


Partitioned input data

Parallel iterative program

Model parameters (solution)

Big Data Analytics Overview



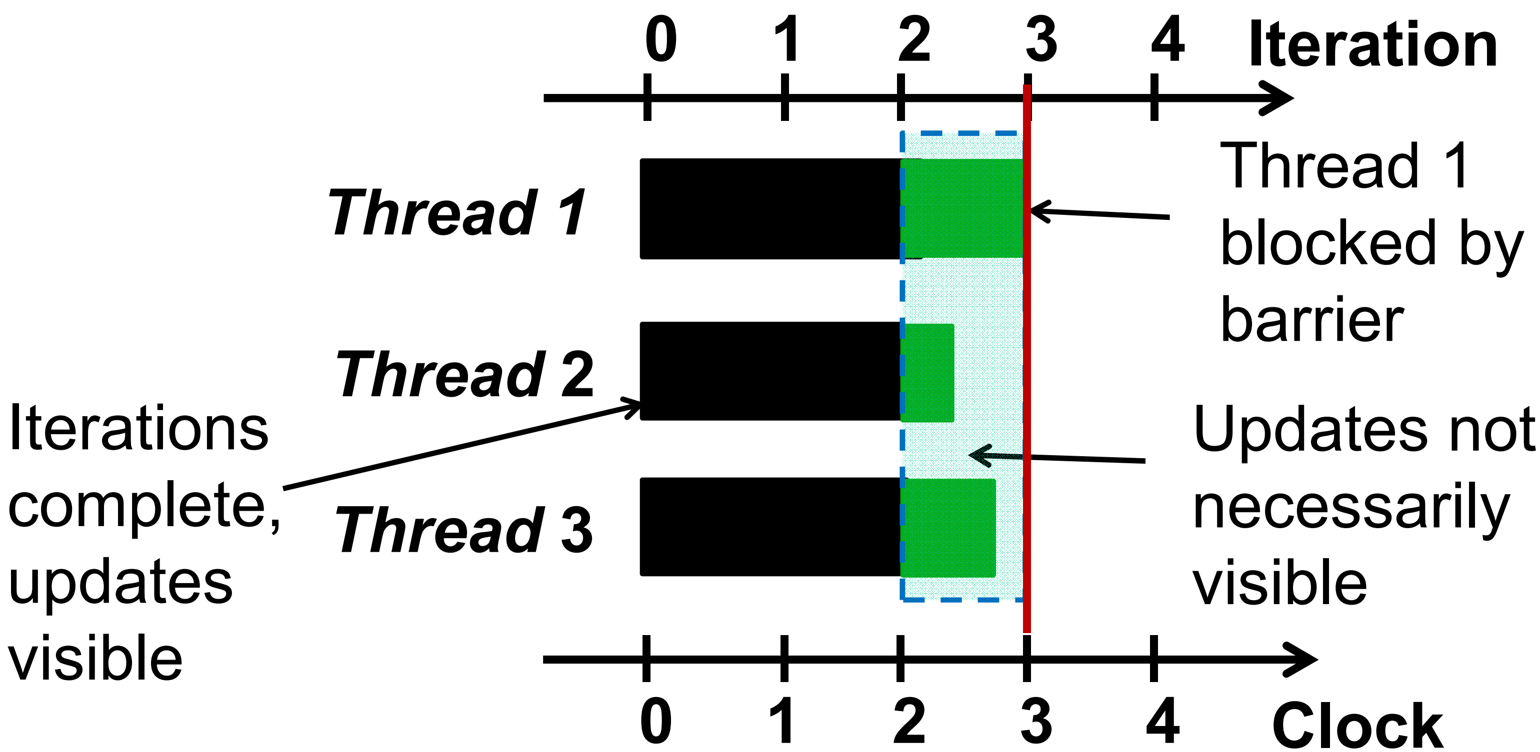
Outline

- Two novel synchronization approaches
  - Arbitrarily-sized Bulk Synchronous Parallel (A-BSP)
  - Stale Synchronous Parallel (SSP)
- LazyTable architecture overview
- Taste of experimental results

Bulk Synchronous Parallel

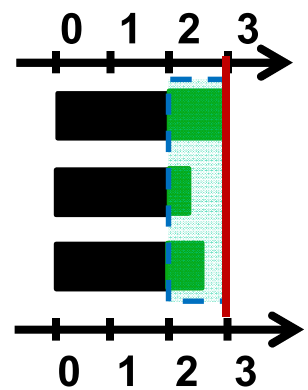
- A barrier every **clock** (a.k.a. epoch)
  - In ML apps, often one iteration over input data

Thread progress illustration:



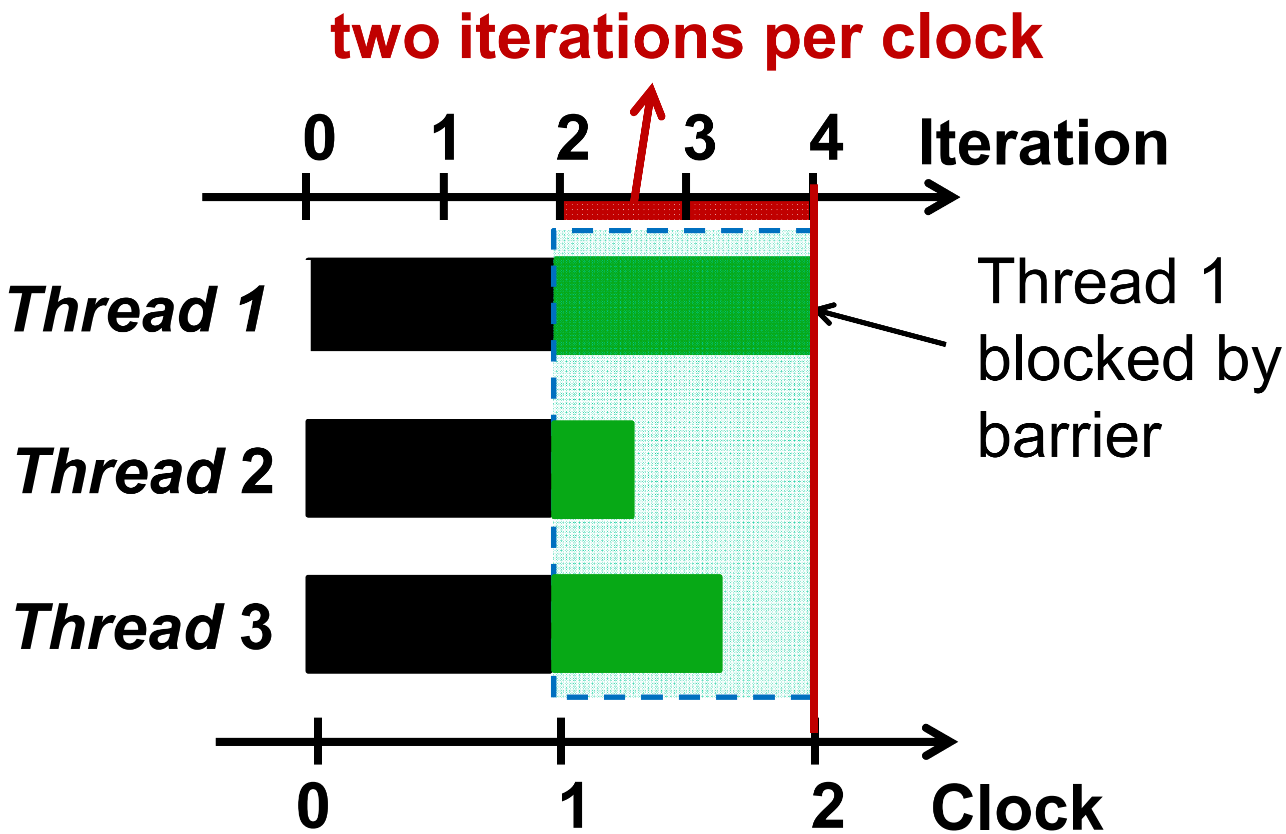
Data Staleness

- In BSP, threads can see "out-of-date" values
  - May not see others' updates right away
  - Convergent apps usually tolerate that
- Allowing more staleness for speed
  - Less synchronizing among threads
  - More using cached values
  - More delaying and batching of updates
- But, too much staleness hurts convergence
  - Important to have staleness bound
  - **Staleness should be tunable**



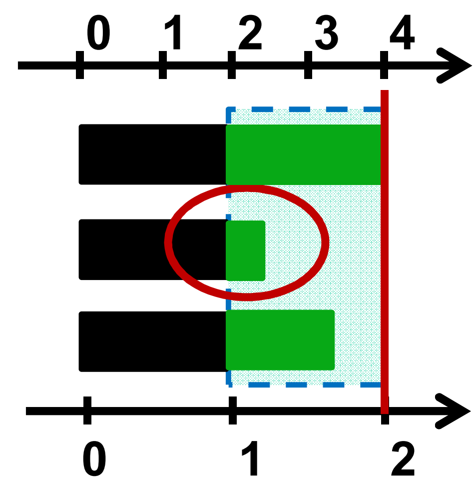
Arbitrarily-sized BSP (A-BSP)

- Work in each clock can be more than one iteration
  - Less synchronization overhead



Problem of (A-)BSP: Stragglers

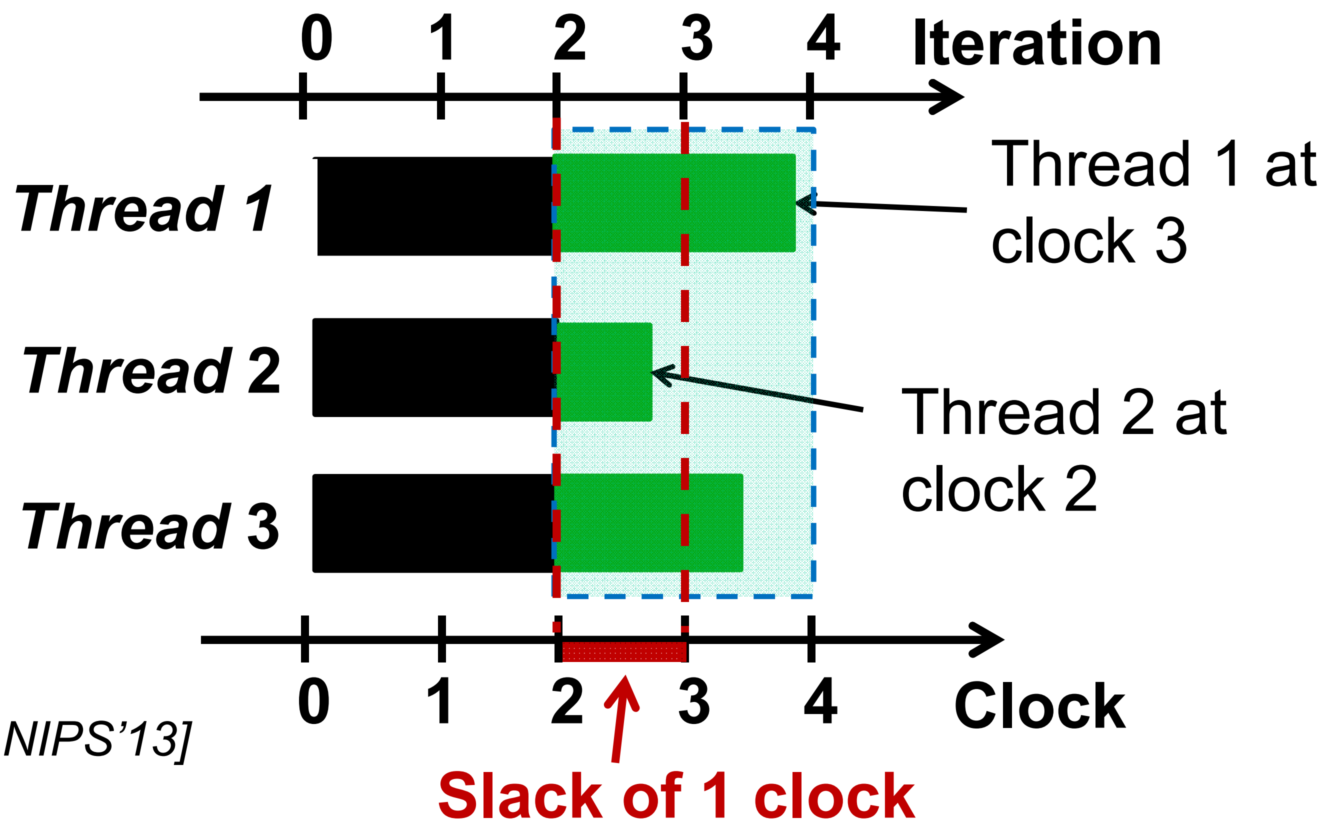
- A-BSP still has the straggler problem
  - A slow thread will slow down all
  - Stragglers are common in large systems



- Many reasons for stragglers
  - Hardware: lost packets, SSD cleaning, disk resets
  - Software: garbage collection, virtualization
  - Algorithmic: calculating objectives and stopping conditions

Stale Synchronous Parallel (SSP)

- Threads are allowed to be **slack** clocks ahead of the slowest thread

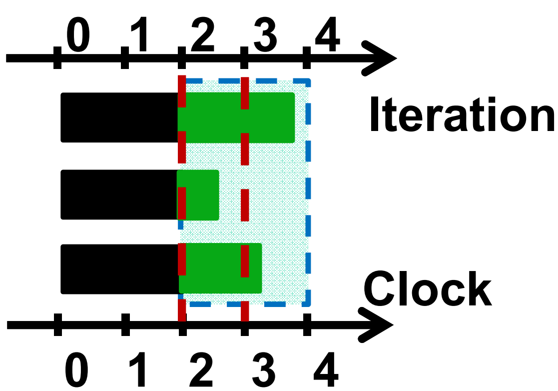


[HotOS'13, NIPS'13]

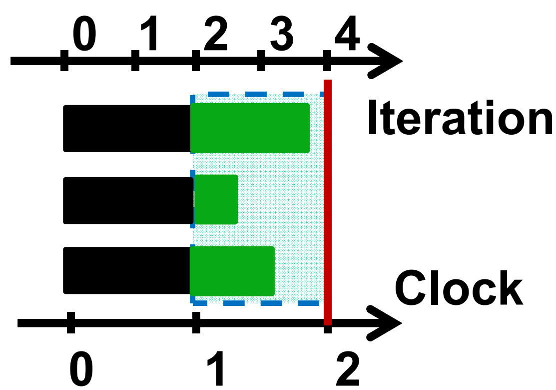
Two Dimensional Config. Space

- Iters-per-clock and slack are both tunable
  - A-BSP is SSP with a slack of zero
  - Every SSP config. has an A-BSP counterpart with the same data staleness bound

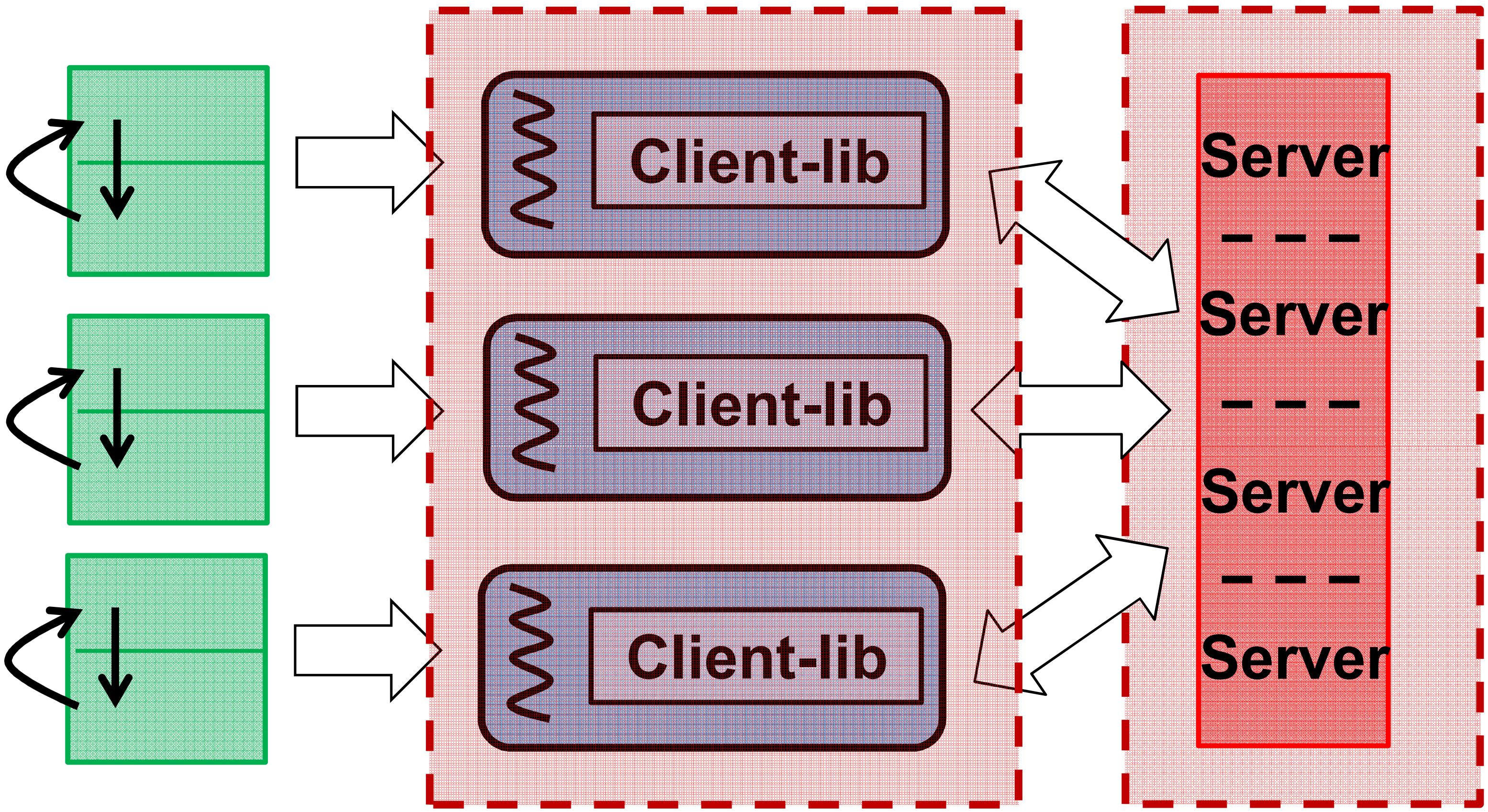
SSP (iters-per-clock=1, slack=1):



A-BSP (iters-per-clock=2, slack=0):



LazyTable Architecture

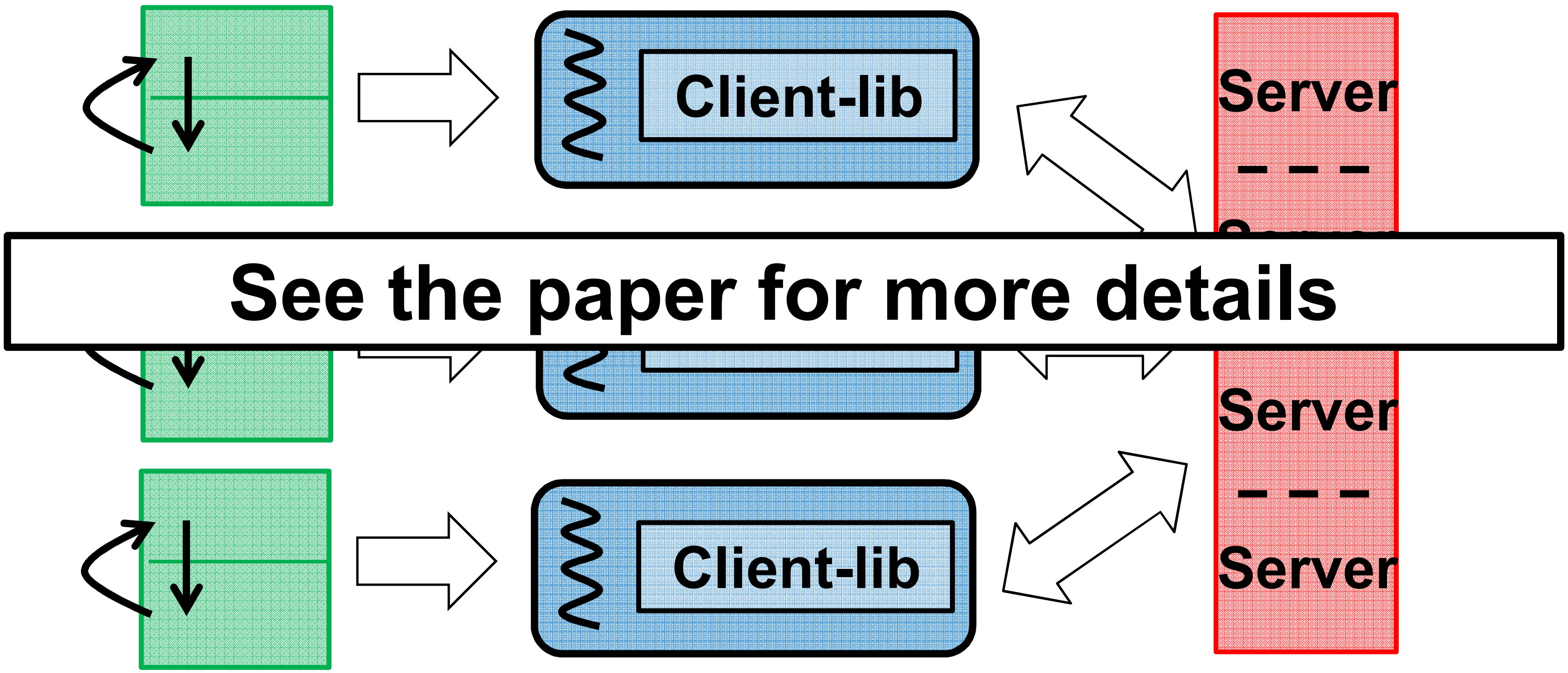


Partitioned input data

Parallel iterative program on LazyTable

Model parameters (sharded)

LazyTable Architecture



Partitioned input data

Parallel iterative program on LazyTable

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Primary Experimental Setup

- Hardware information
  - 8 machines, each with 64 cores & 128GB RAM
- Basic configuration
  - One client & tablet server per machine
  - One computation thread per core

Application Benchmark #1

- Topic Modeling
  - Algorithm: Gibbs Sampling on LDA
  - Input: *NY Times* dataset
    - 300k docs, 100m words, 100k vocabulary
  - Solution quality criterion: Loglikelihood
    - How likely the model generates observed data
    - Becomes higher as the algorithm converges
    - A larger value indicates better quality

More apps described and used in paper

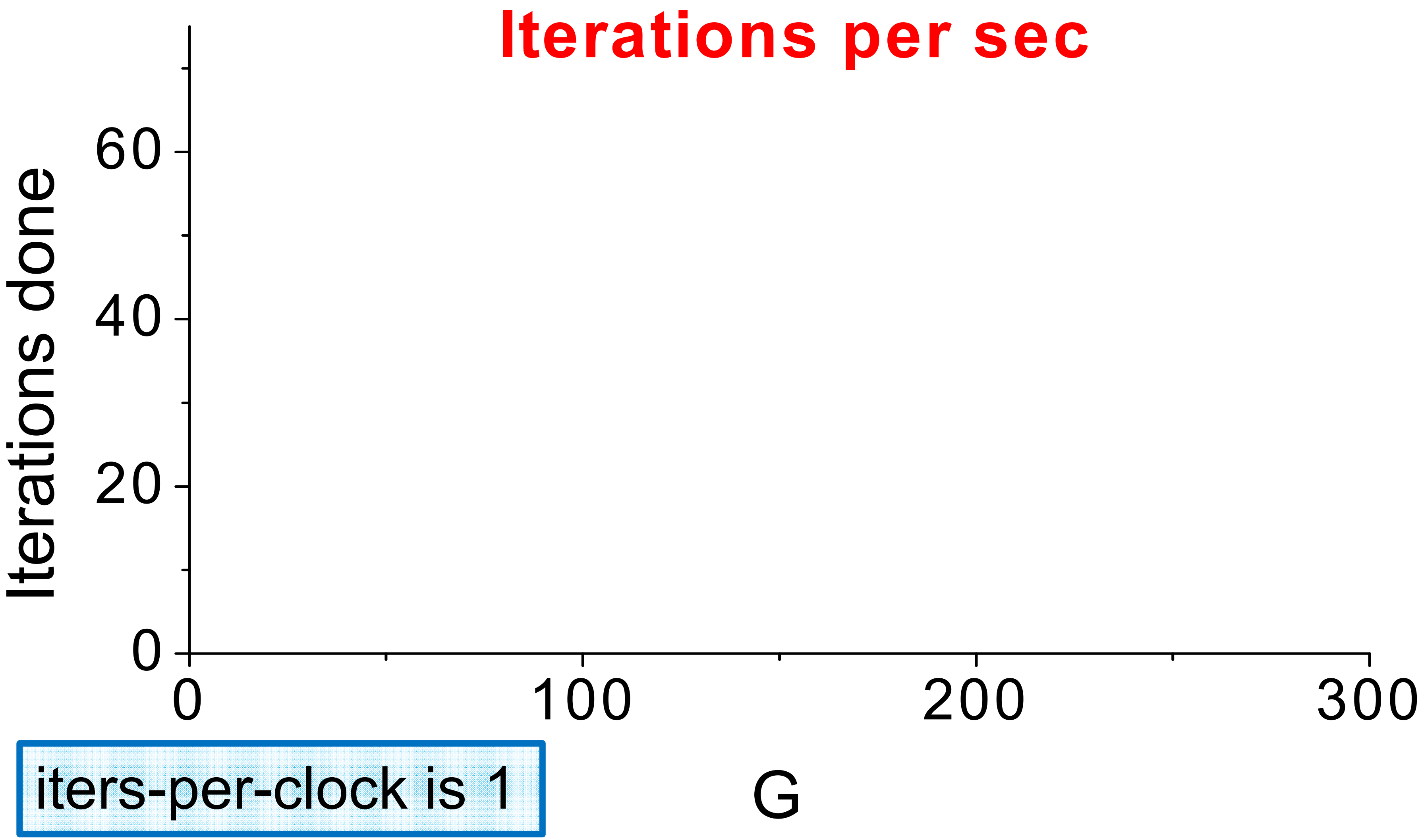
Controlling Data Staleness

- SSP
  - Larger slack -> more staleness

- A-BSP
  - Larger iterations-per-clock -> more staleness

- The tradeoffs with increased staleness

Staleness Increases Iters/sec



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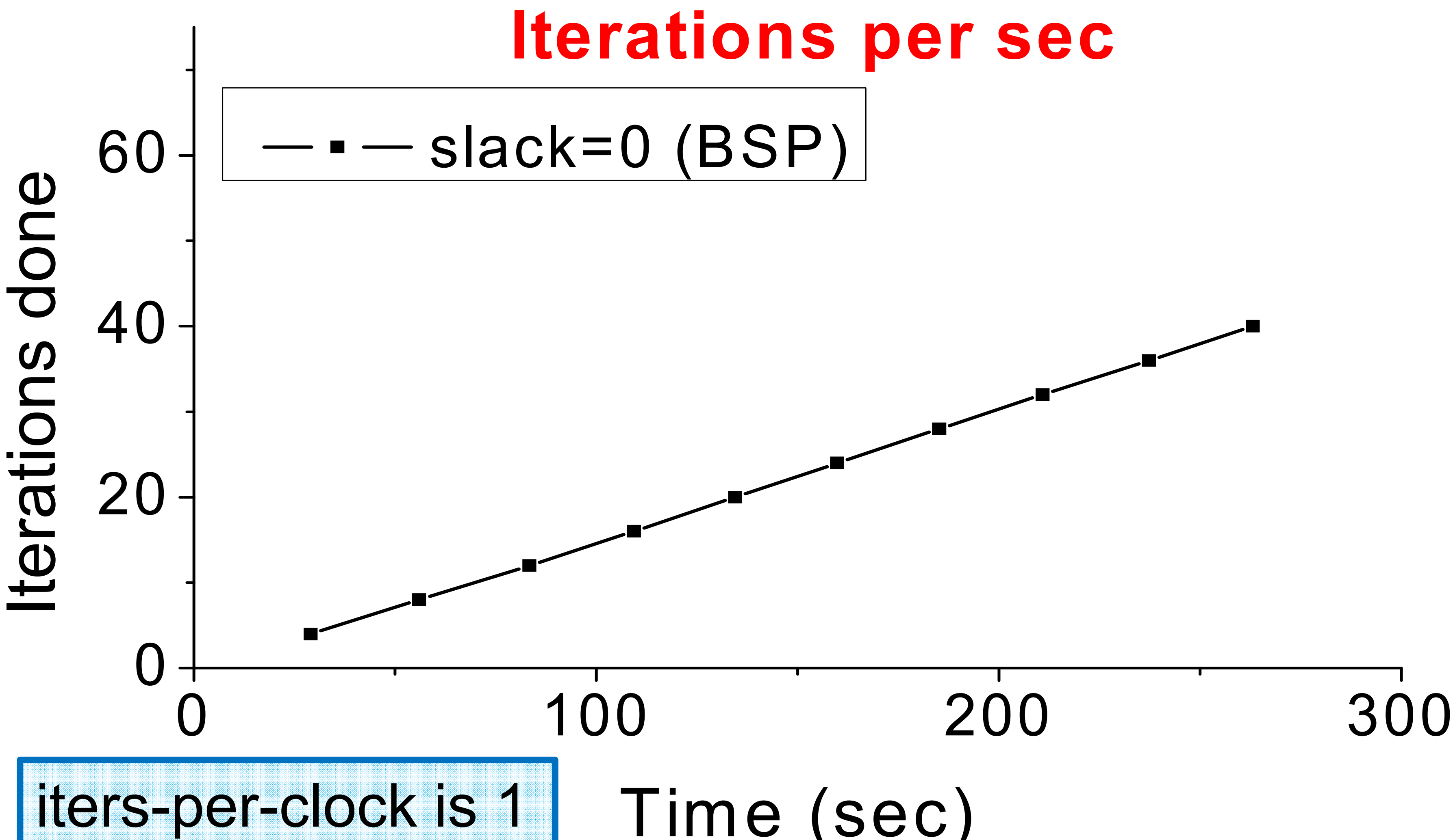

iters-per-clock is 1

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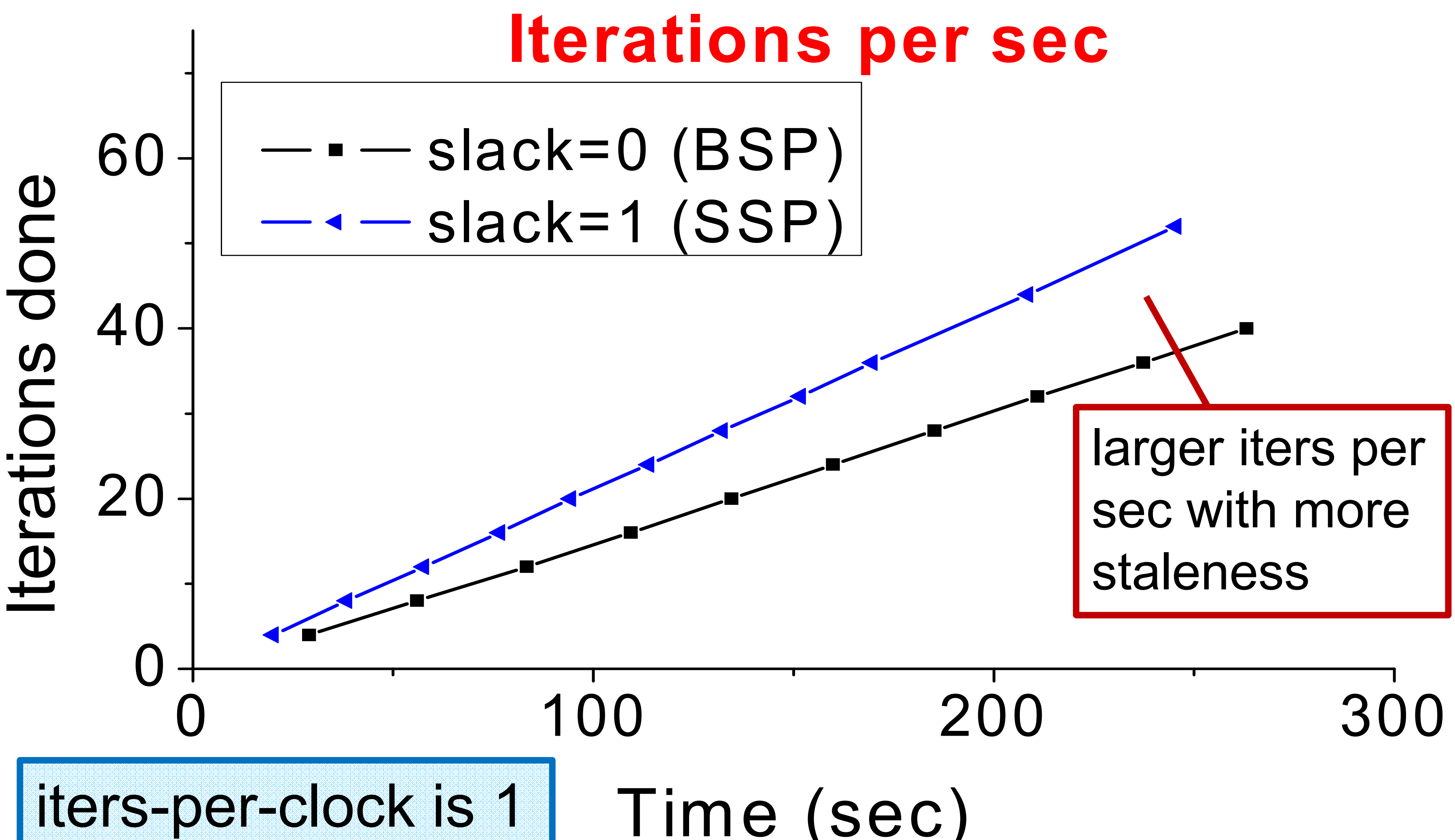

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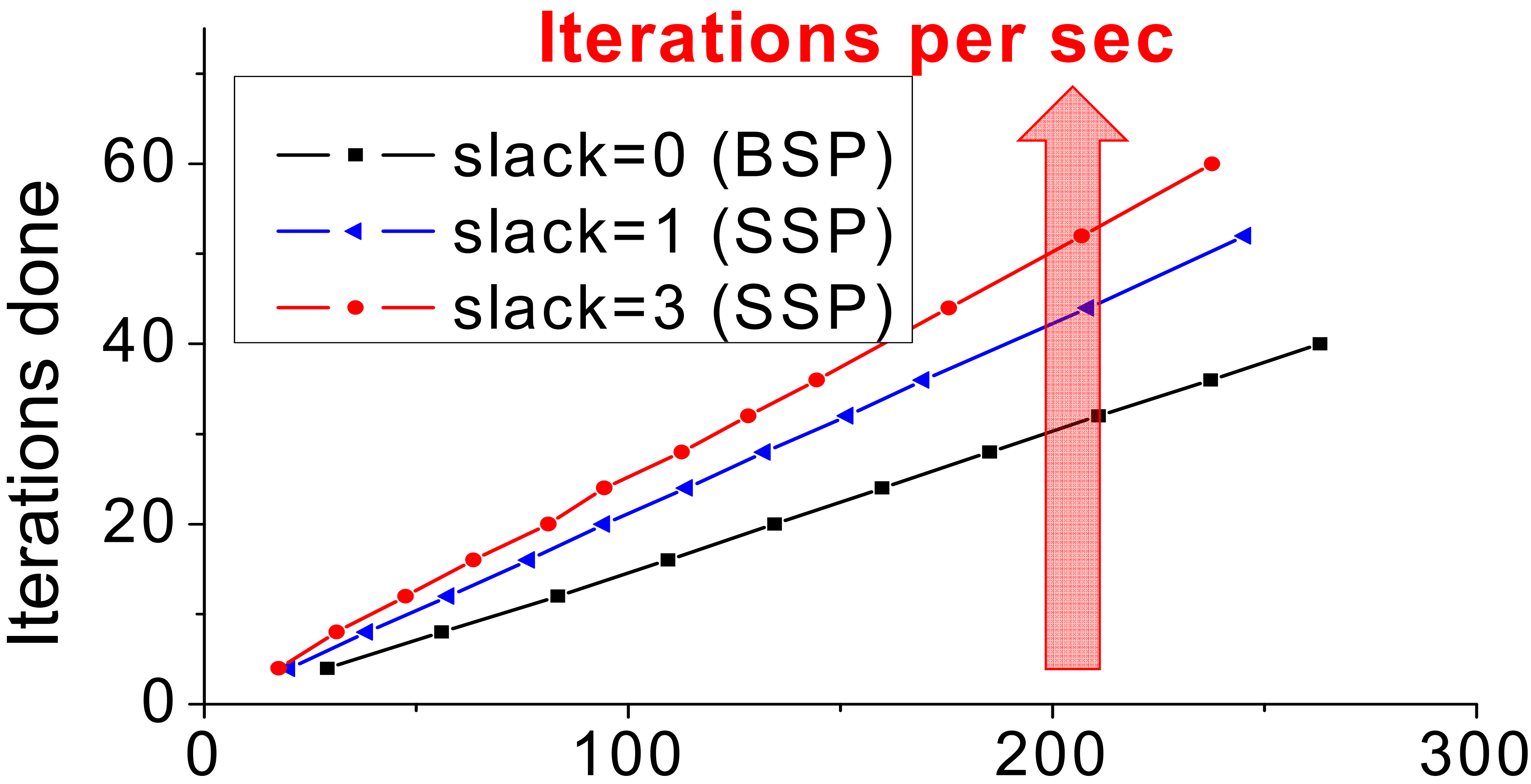

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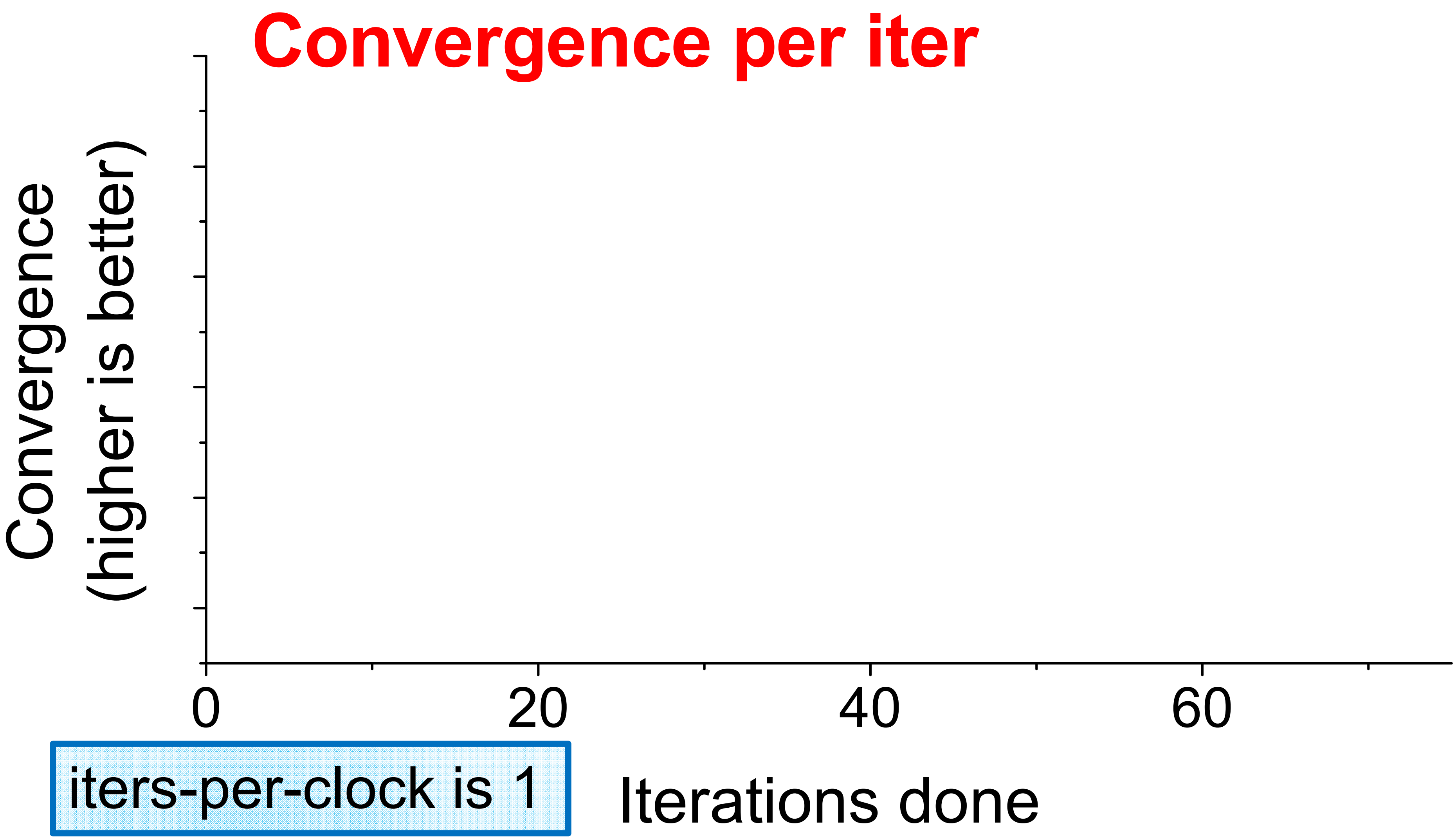
Staleness Reduces Converge/iter



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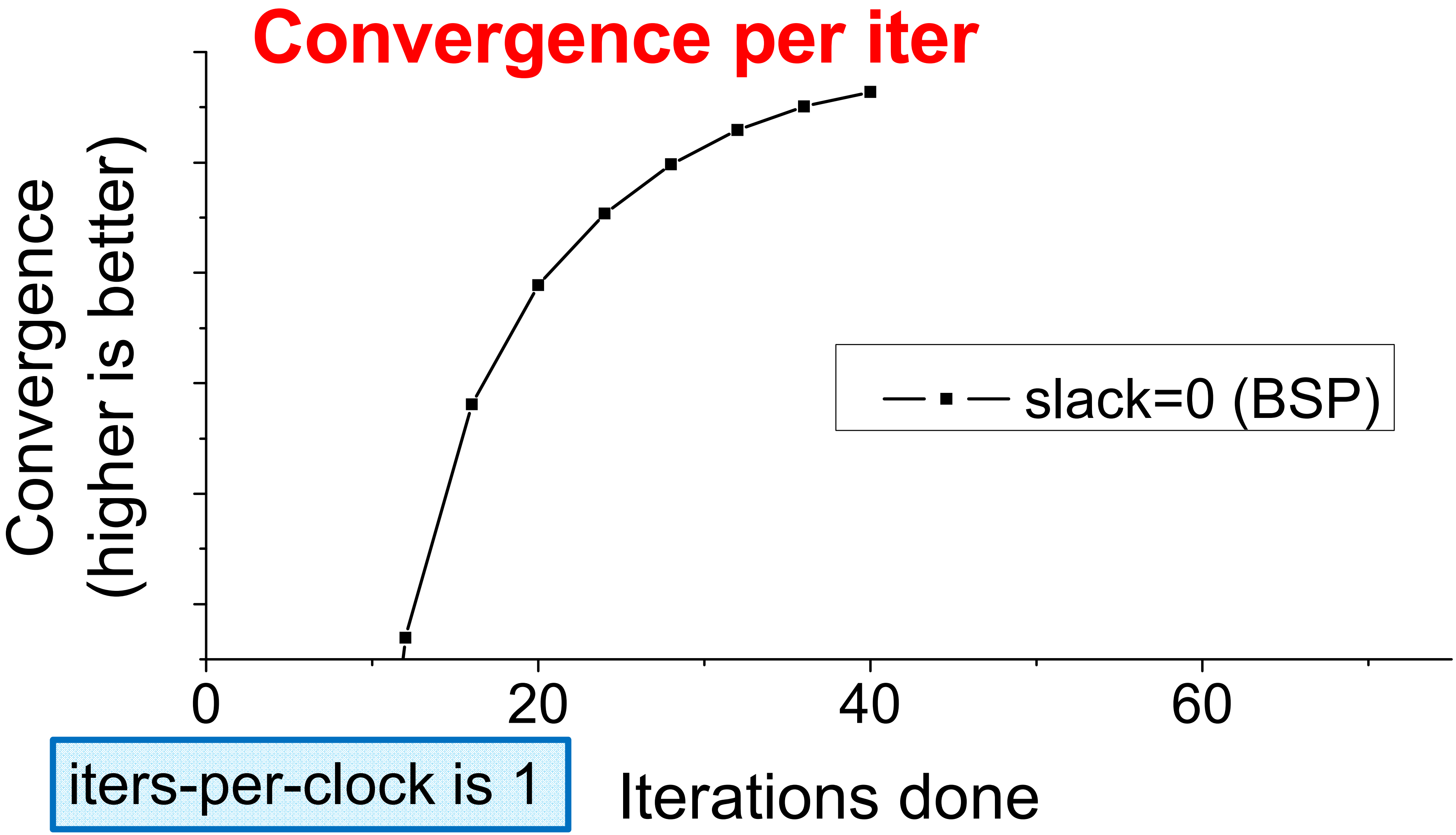

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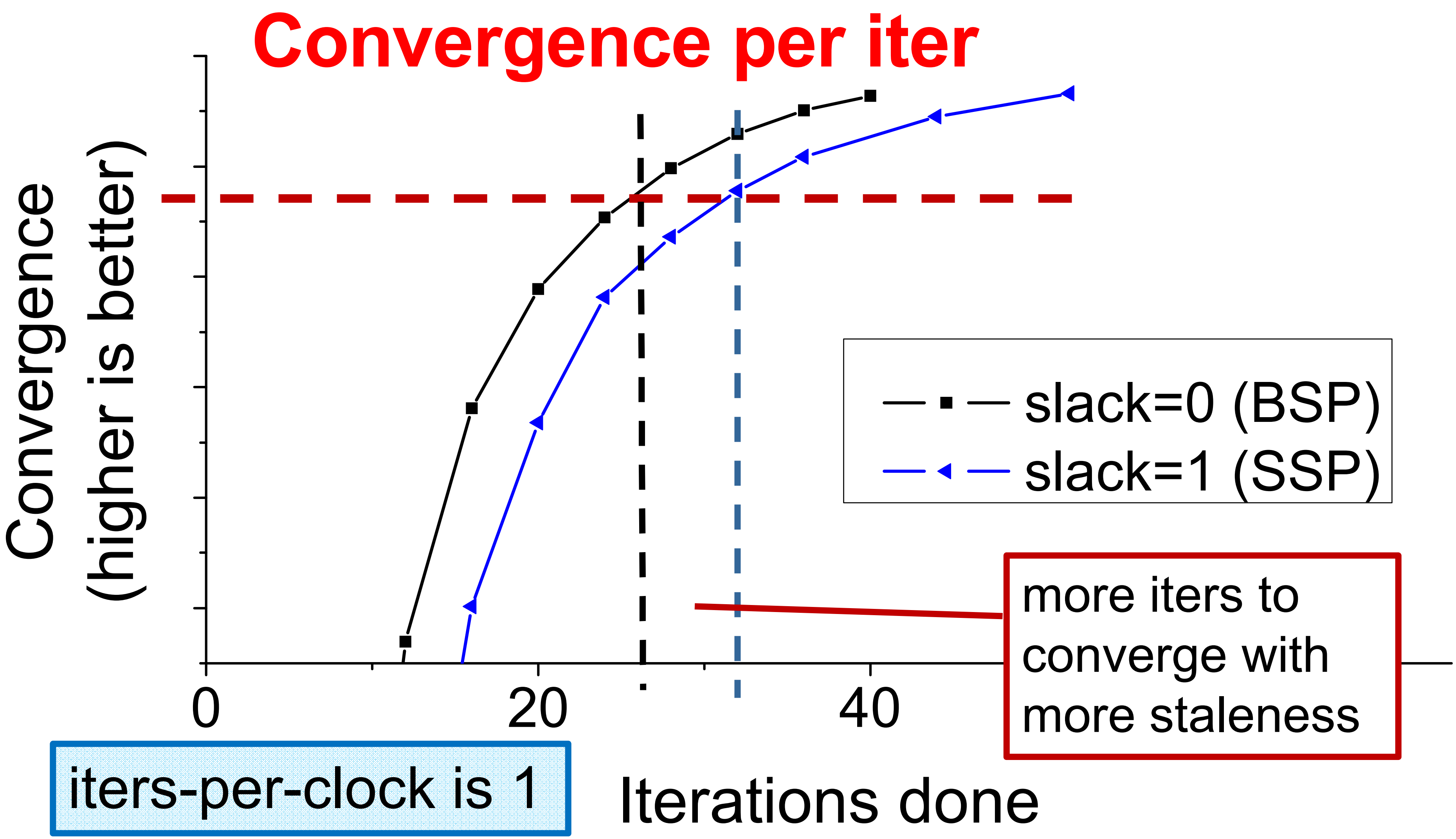

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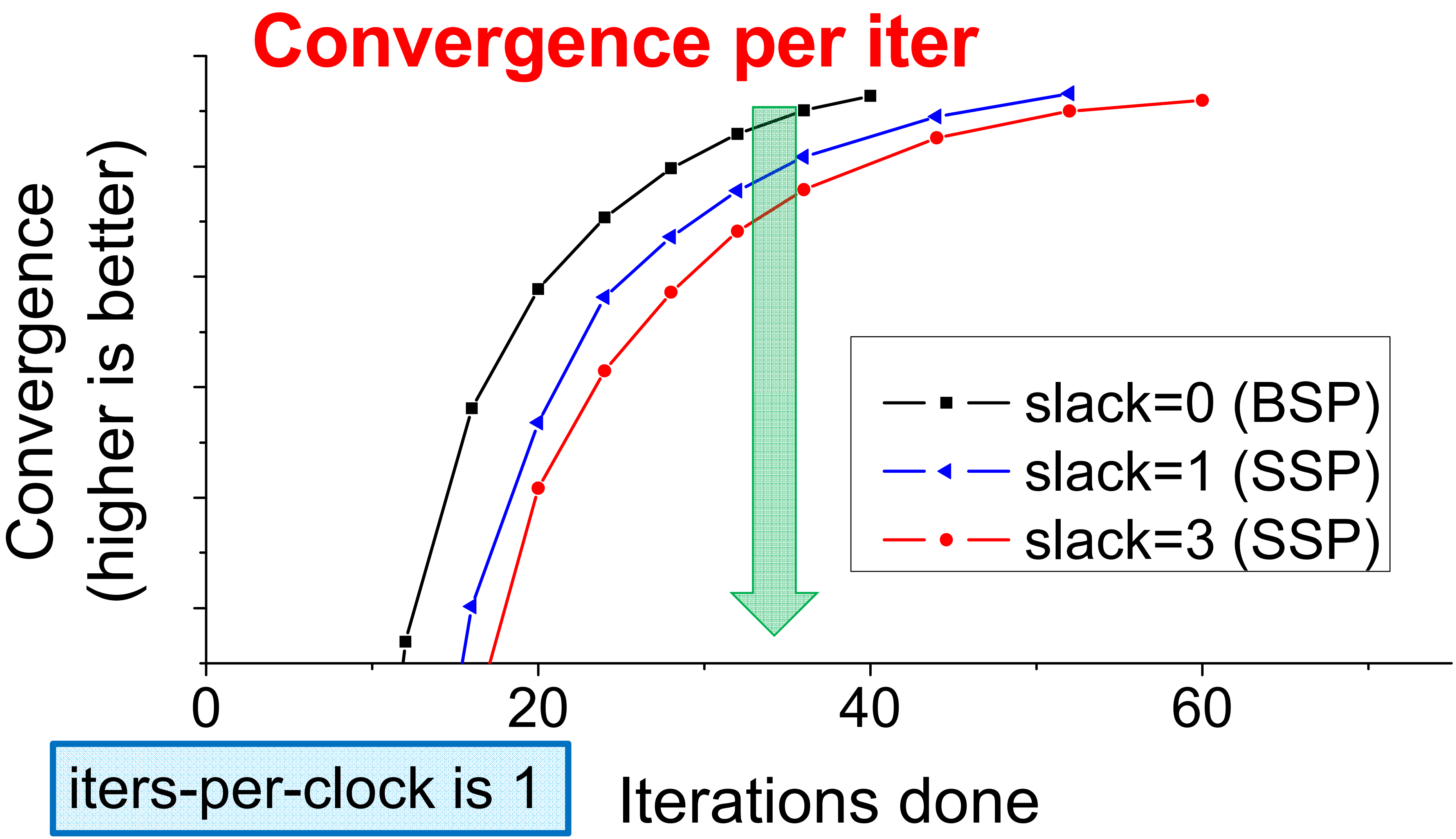
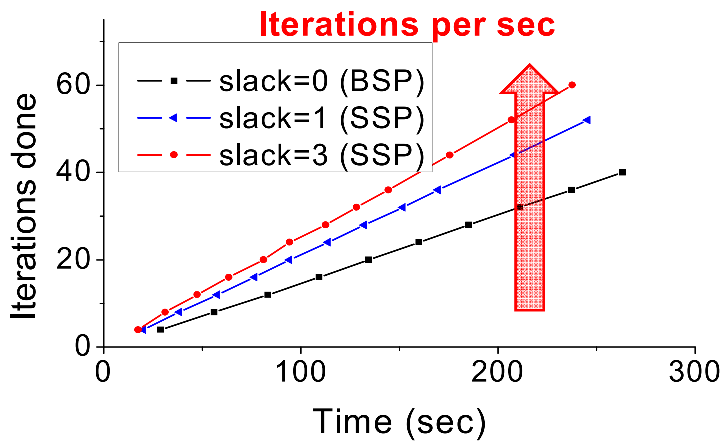
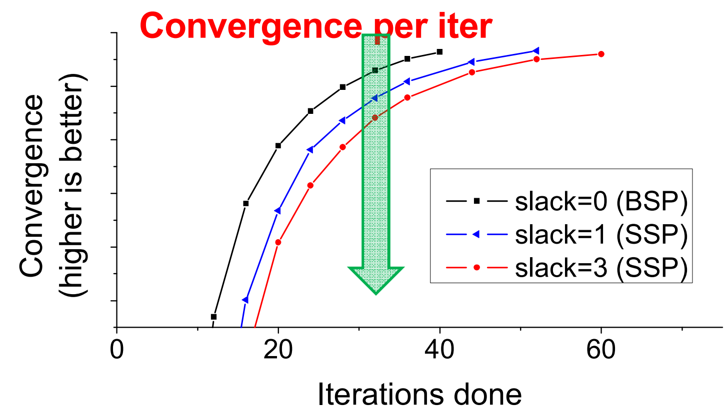
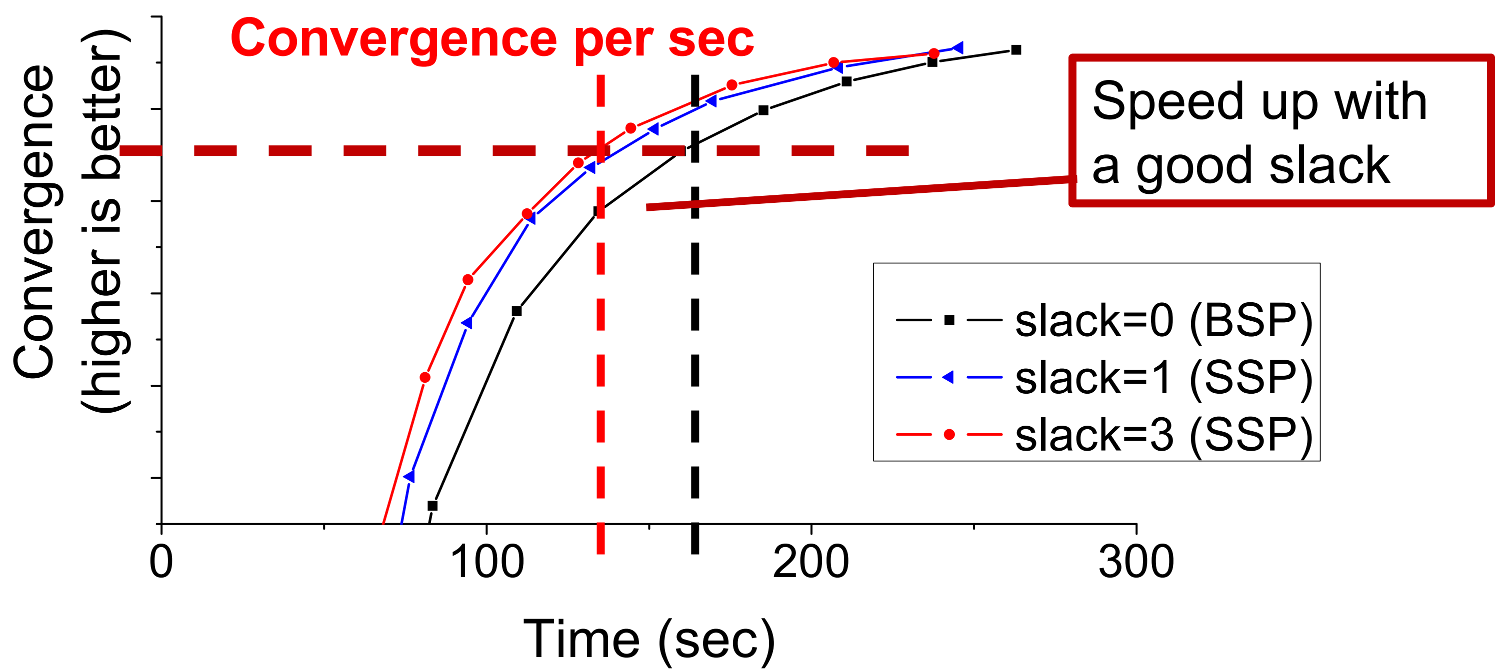


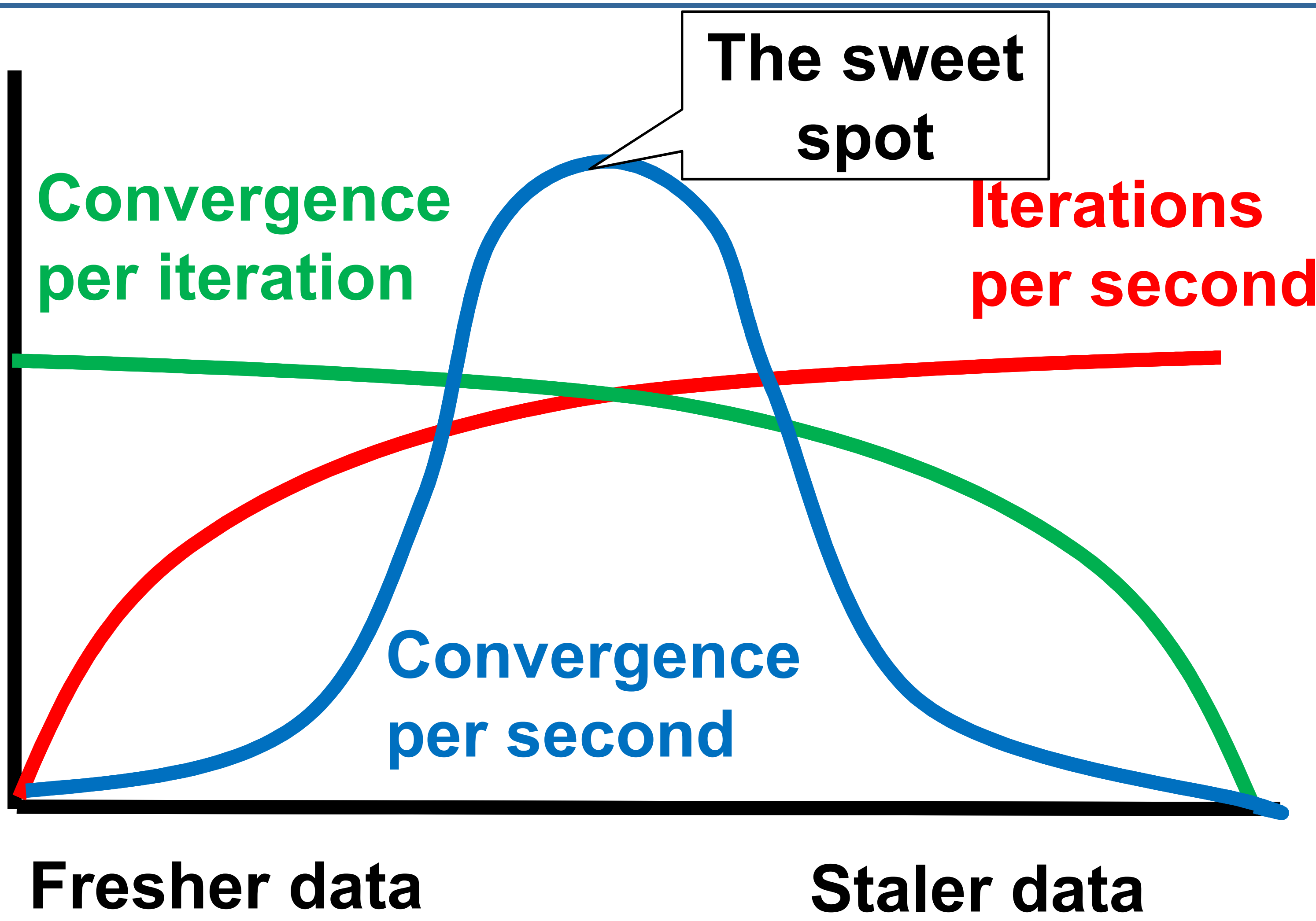
Sweet Spot Balances the Two







Key Takeaway Insight #1



SSP vs A-BSP

- Similar performance
  - In the absence of stragglers

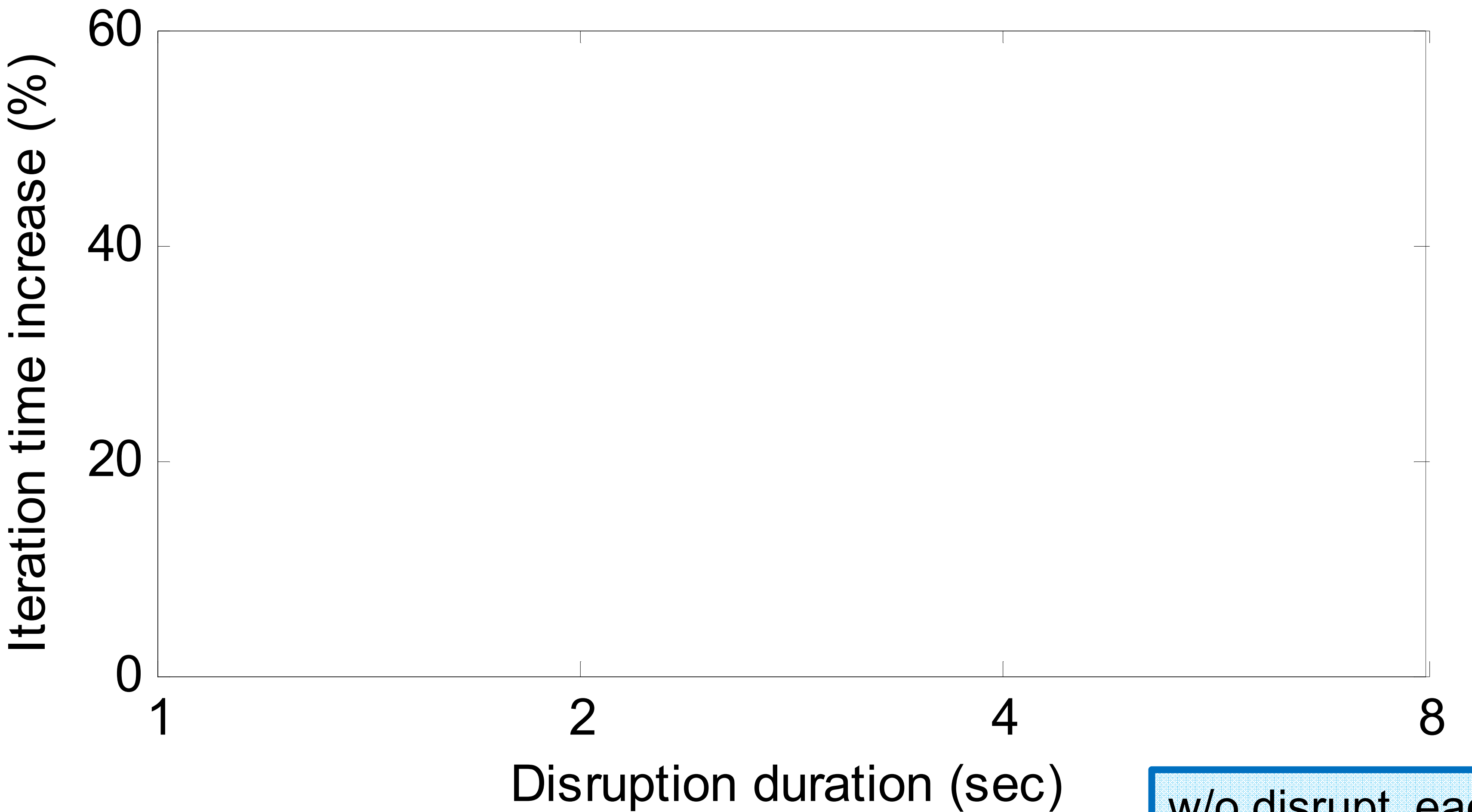
What about environment with stragglers?

Straggler Experiment #1

- Stragglers caused by background disruption
  - Fairly common in large, shared clusters
- Experiment setup
  - One disrupter process per machine
    - Uses 50% of CPU cycles
  - Work (disrupt) or sleep randomly for t seconds
    - 10% work, 90% sleep

More straggler experiments in the paper

Straggler Results #1



w/o disrupt, each iter takes 4.2 sec

Carnegie Mellon
Parallel Data Laboratory

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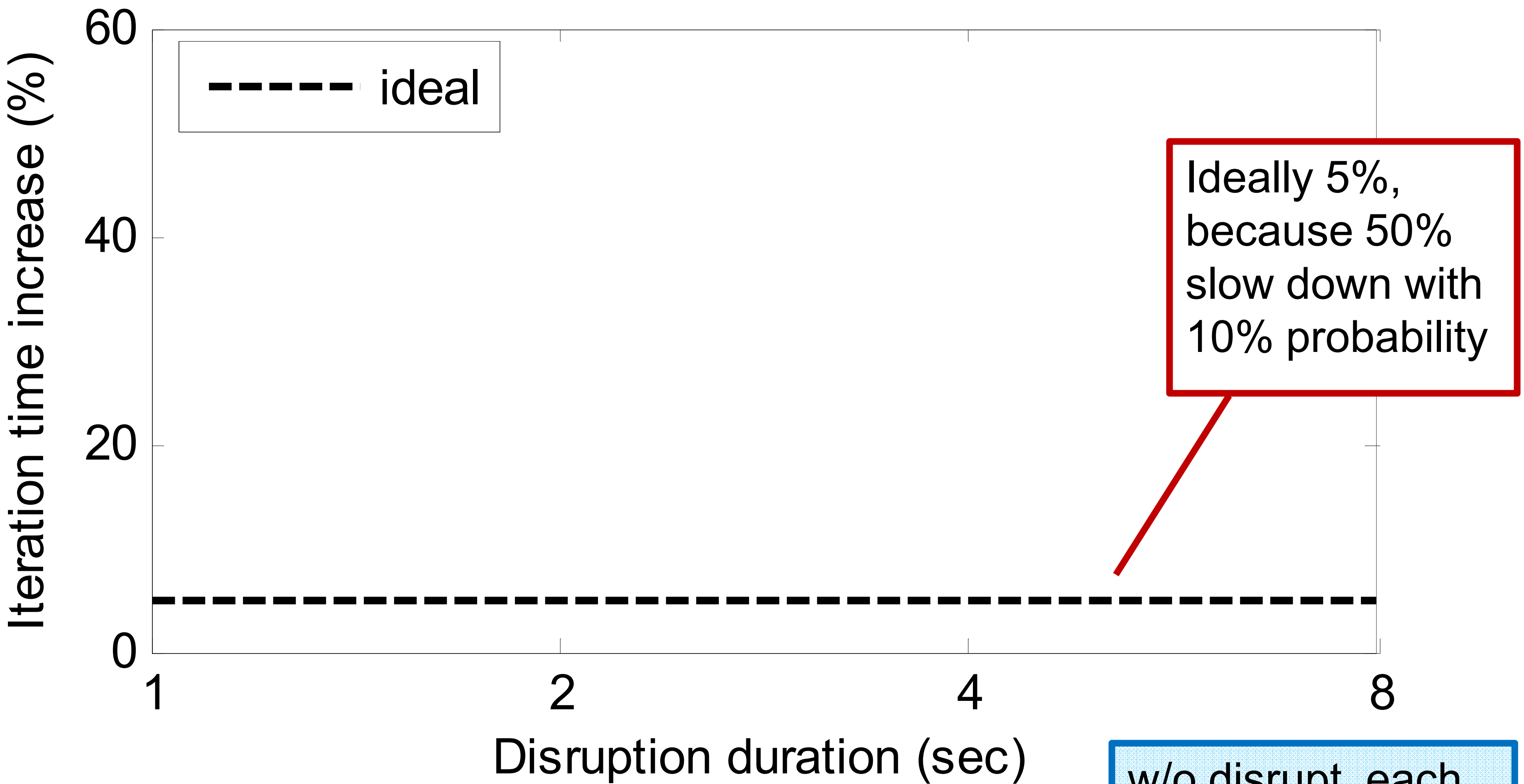

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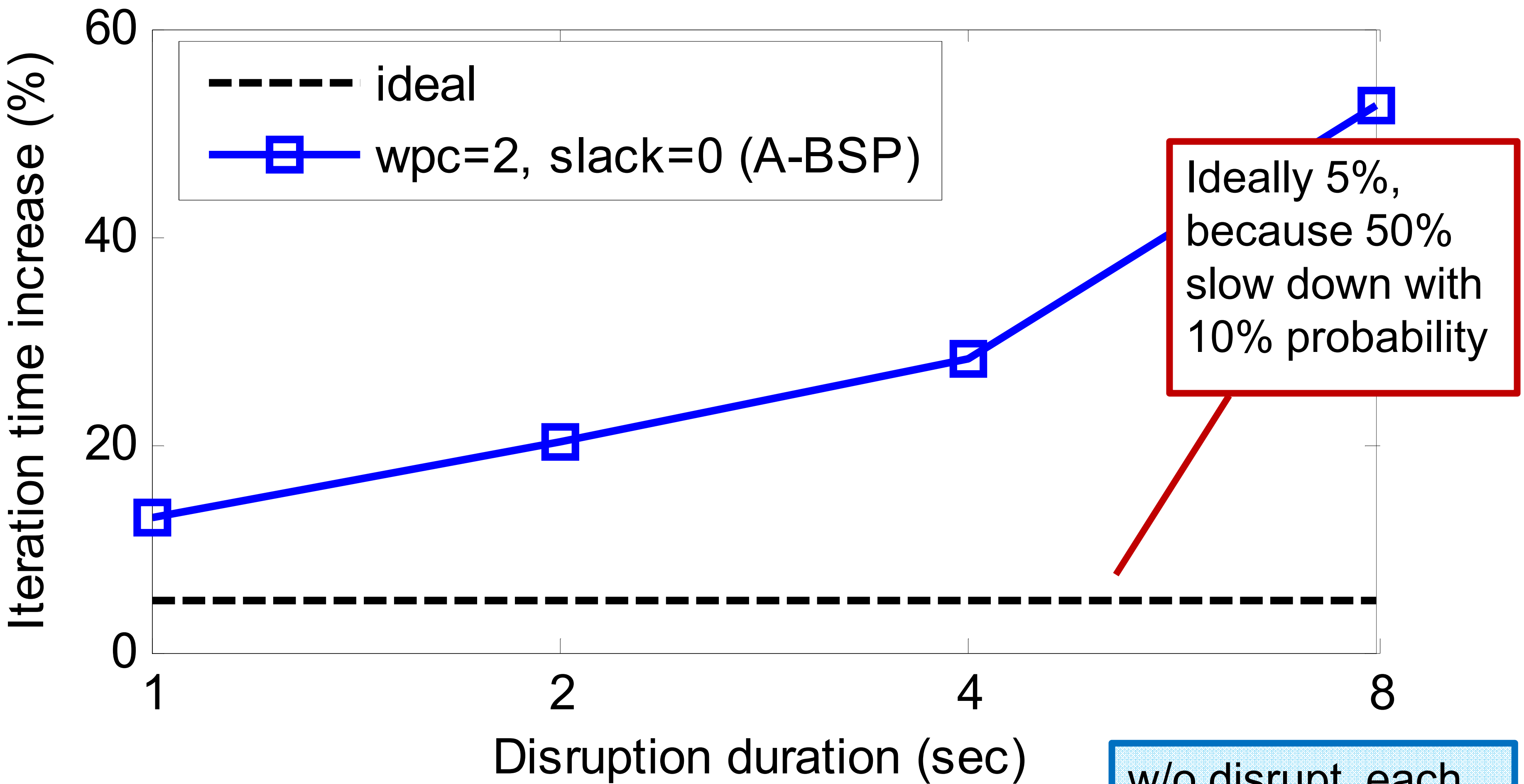

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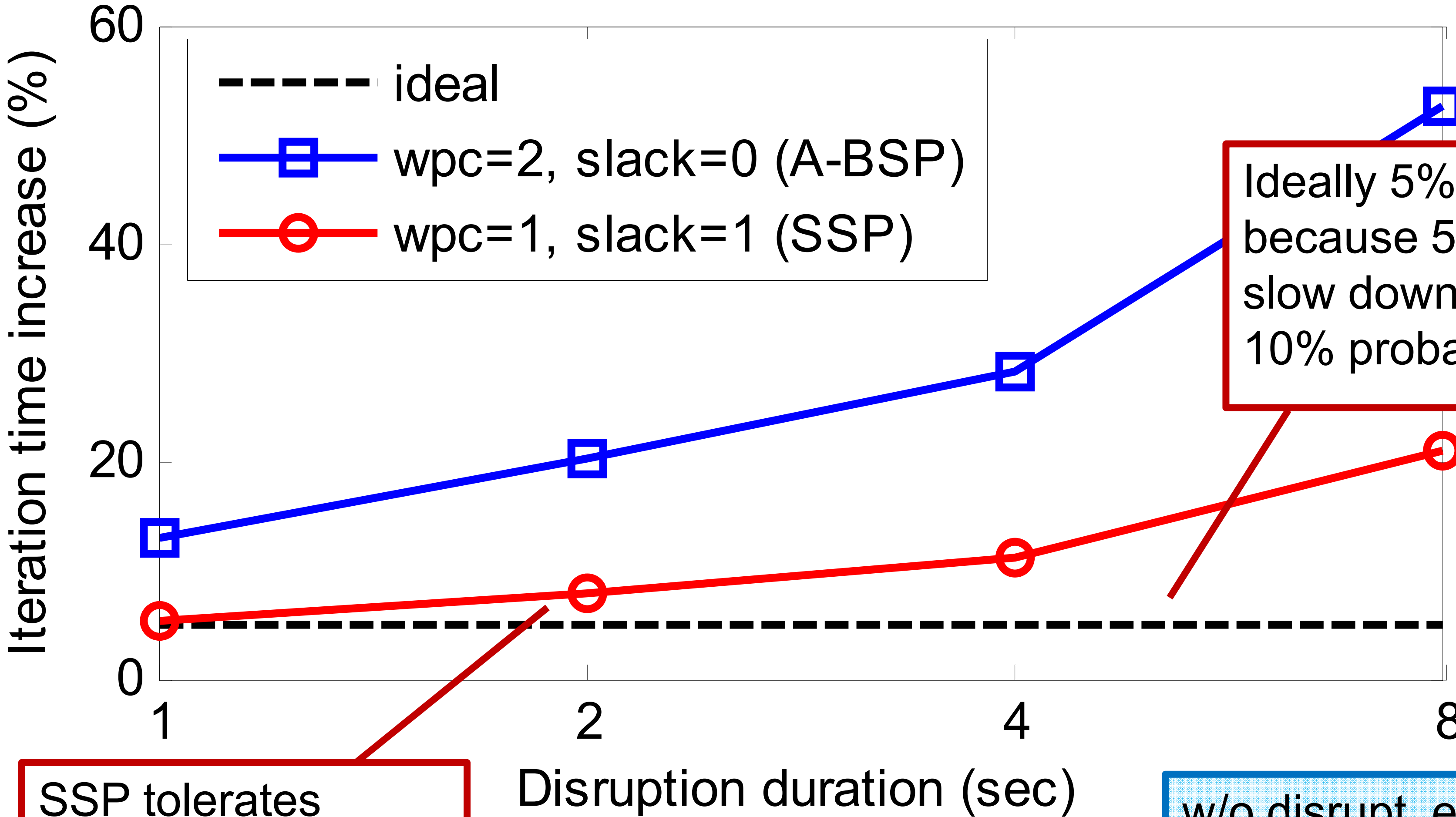

Ideally 5%, because 50% slow down with 10% probability

SSP tolerates transient stragglers

w/o disrupt, each iter takes 4.2 sec

Conclusion

- Staleness should be tuned
  - By iters-per-clock and/or slack
- LazyTable implements SSP and A-BSP
  - See paper for details
- Key results from experiments
  - Both SSP and A-BSP are able to exploit the staleness sweet-spot for faster convergence
  - SSP is tolerant of small transient stragglers
  - But SSP incurs more communication traffic

References

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- J. Cipar, Q. Ho, J. K. Kim, S. Lee, G. R. Ganger, G. Gibson, K. Keeton, and E. Xing. Solving the straggler problem with bounded staleness. HotOS'13.
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