

# Fault Tolerant Decoders

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## Abstract

In this talk we introduce a novel class of fault-tolerant decoders for low-density parity check codes, based on bit-flipping decoding algorithm. Presented decoding algorithm is not only superior to other decoding algorithms of this type, but also robust to logic gate failures.

**Key words:** Bit flipping, Fault tolerance, Iterative decoders, Low density parity check codes

## Synopsis

According to new design paradigm for Very Large Scale Integration (VLSI) technologies, due to lower supply voltages and variations in technological process, fully reliable operations are not guaranteed in nano-scale devices [1]. A hardware component is assumed to be unreliable if it is subject to so-called transient faults, i.e. faults that manifest themselves at particular time instants but do not necessarily persist for later times [2]. An integral part of many such systems, designed for communications or computing, is error-control coding whose role is to maintain the data integrity. Thus, analysis of different decoding algorithms for low density parity check (LDPC) codes under unreliable hardware is meaningful. The density evolution analysis of sum-product algorithm (SPA) [3] and Gallager B algorithm [4] demonstrate robustness of these algorithms to the transient failures.

The reliable storage of data in a memory built from unreliable logic gates under transient failures can be achieved by employing LDPC codes and simple bit-flipping (BF) decoding [5]. In this talk we focus on modifications of BF algorithms that are suitable if only bit hard decisions are available. Although the performances of BF decoder are typically inferior when compared to the Gallager-B algorithm, we report the decoding algorithm based on BF with significant performance improvement, that has large immunity to the gate failures.

## Fault tolerant decoders for BSC

We start by a overview of hard decision decoders based on BF and Gallager A/B algorithms. The structure of variable node processors will be explained and implementation of these decoders in unreliable hardware will be considered. Further, we will explain Gradient Descent Bit Flipping (GDBF) algorithm [6], where the inverse function is represented in the form that is more suitable for BSC. In this algorithm, the most critical value of the inverse function determines the bits that should be flipped in the current iteration. This algorithm is suitable for hardware implementation as it can be designed by using XOR and ML gates. Then, we propose version of GDBF decoder where the probabilistic mechanism is incorporated in the decoder structure by using generator of uniform random numbers. In this algorithm, the most critical value of the modified function represents only necessary condition for flipping.

We will show that the logic gate failures can improve performances of GDBF decoder, in contrary to classical BF decoders. By using the knowledge about trapping sets, we optimize the probabilistic mechanism to improve the performance of GDBF decoder realized in faulty hardware. It will be shown that the proposed solution outperforms Gallager-B algorithm and have performances compared to more complex message passing algorithms. This is a hard-decision algorithm with the best known performances in the water-fall region on BSC, robust to the failures in logic gates.

## Acknowledgment

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# Fault Tolerant Decoders



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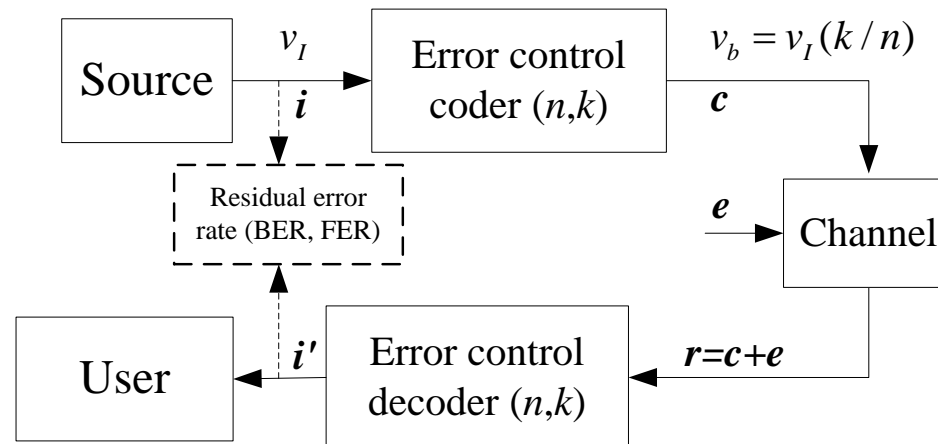
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# Why faulty decoders?

- The Second Shannon theorem - the reliable transmission can be provided if the code rate  $R=k/n$  is smaller than the transmitted information  $I(X,Y)$  for a given channel.
- Increased integration factor of integrated circuits, stringent energy-efficiency constraints -> a new design paradigm for Very Large Scale Integration (VLSI) technology.
- Fully reliable operation of hardware components is not guaranteed!

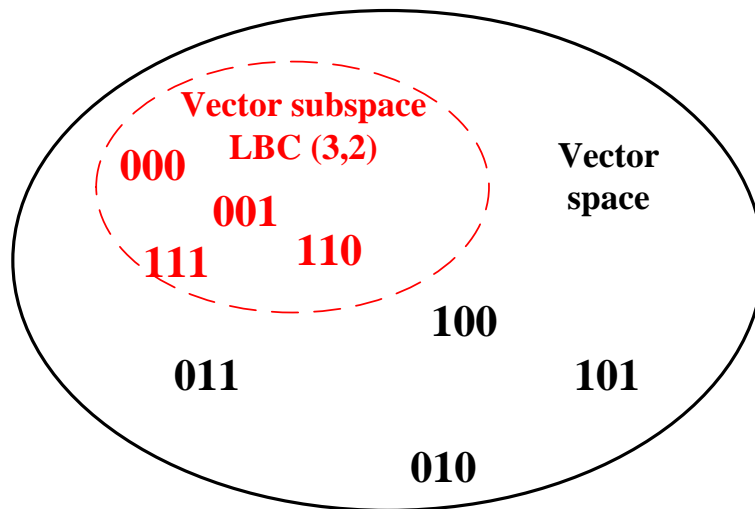


# Overview

- **Linear block codes, LDPC codes**
- **Gallager-B algorithm**
- **Performance evaluation of QC-LDPC codes with Gallager-B decoding with transient failures**
- **Faulty bit-flipping algorithm**
- **Faulty gradient descent bit flipping (GDBF)**
- **Faulty Probabilistic GDBF**

# Linear block codes

- (3,2) code, field GF(2)



$$\mathbf{G} = \begin{bmatrix} g_{11} & g_{12} & \cdots & g_{1n} \\ g_{21} & g_{22} & \cdots & g_{2n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ g_{k1} & g_{k2} & \cdots & g_{kn} \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{c} = \mathbf{iG}.$$

$$\mathbf{H} = \begin{bmatrix} h_{1,1} & h_{1,2} & \cdots & g_{1,n} \\ h_{2,1} & h_{2,2} & \cdots & g_{2,n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ h_{n-k,1} & h_{n-k,2} & \cdots & g_{n-k,n} \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{S} = \mathbf{rH}^T.$$

- Vector space with  $2^n$  elements with length  $n=3$ .
- Vector subspace with  $2^k$  elements with length  $n=3$ . This vector subspace (set of codewords) is linear block code (3,2).

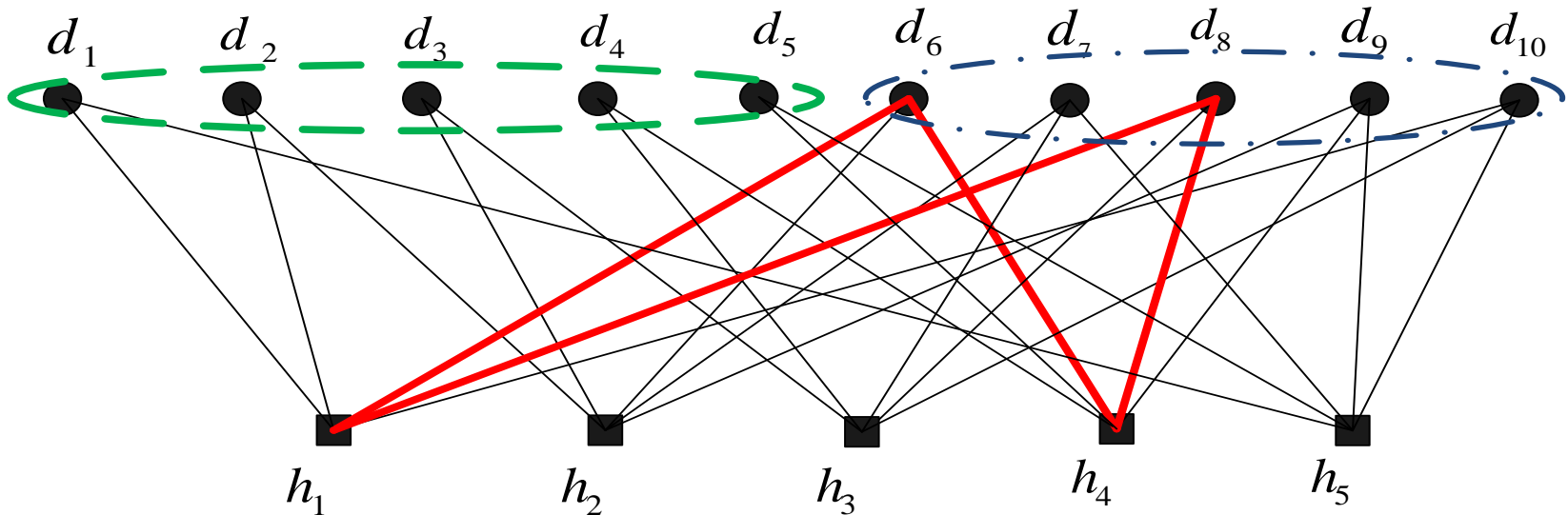
# LDPC codes - properties

- Completely defined by parity check matrix  $\mathbf{H}$ .
- Regular or irregular (fixed or variable number of ones per row/column)
- *Sparse* matrix (low density of binary one in matrix  $\mathbf{H}$ )

$$\mathbf{H} = \begin{bmatrix} & 1 & & & & \\ & & 1 & & & \\ & & & 1 & & \\ & & & & 1 & \\ & & & & & 1 \\ 1 & & & & & \\ & 1 & & & & \\ & & 1 & & & \\ & & & 1 & & \\ & & & & 1 & \end{bmatrix}$$

# Tanner bipartite graph

- QC LDPC – suitable for hardware implementation



- Regular code with girth equal to 4!



# Gallager-B, iterative decoding

- The simplest message-passing algorithm

*Initialization* ( $i=1$ ): For each variable node  $v$ , and each set  $E(v)$ , messages sent to check nodes are computed as follows

$$m_1(e) = r(v). \quad (2)$$

*Step (i) (check-node update)*: For each parity check node  $c$  and each set  $E(c)$ , update rule for  $i$ -th iteration,  $i > 1$ , is defined as follows

$$m'_i(e) = \left( \sum_{e' \in E(c) \setminus \{e\}} m_{i-1}(e') \right) \bmod 2. \quad (3)$$

*Step (ii) (variable-node update)*: For each variable node  $v$  and each set  $E(v)$ , update rule for  $i$ -th iteration,  $i > 1$ , is defined as follows

$$m_i(e) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } \sum_{e' \in E(v) \setminus \{e\}} m'_i(e') \geq \lceil d_v / 2 \rceil \\ 0, & \text{if } \sum_{e' \in E(v) \setminus \{e\}} m'_i(e') \leq d_v - 1 - \lceil d_v / 2 \rceil, \\ r(v), & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

# An example

- Regular Euclidean geometry LDPC code with:

- $\rho=4$  (weight of check node - number of ones in every row),
- $\gamma=4$  (weight of variable node - number of ones in every column)

H =

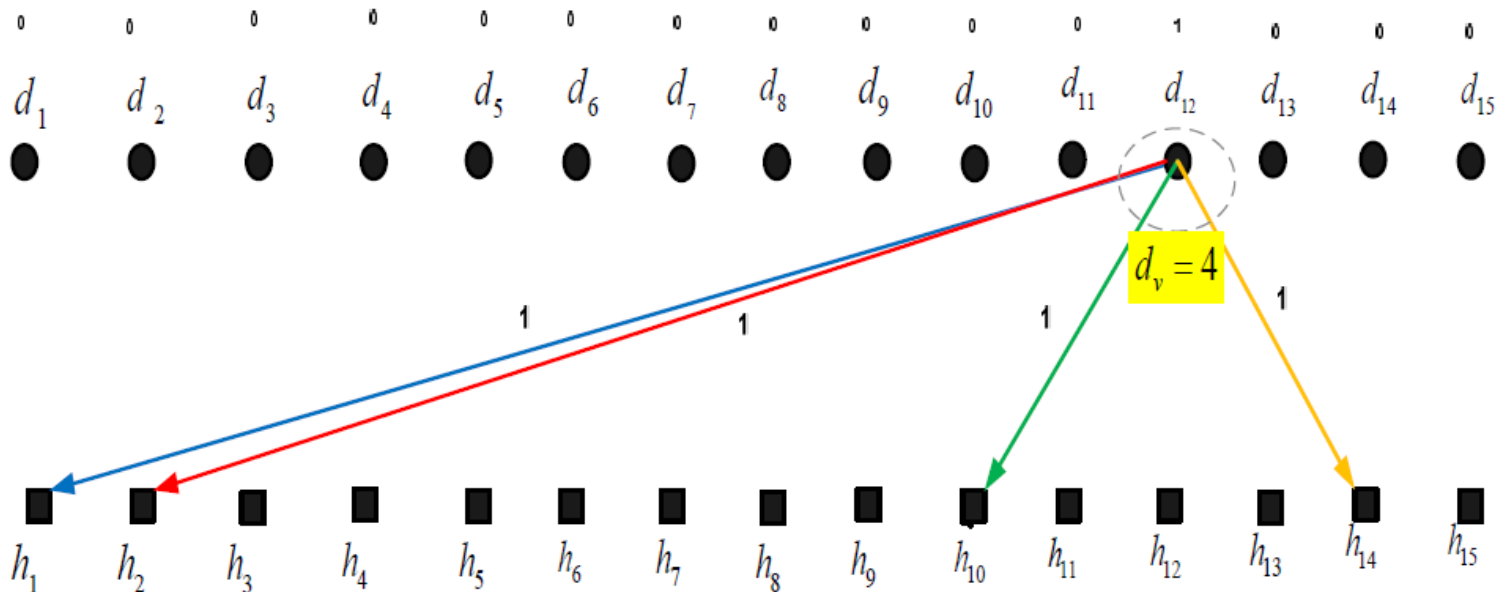
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	2
3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
5	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
6	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
7	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
8	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
9	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	9
10	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	10
11	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	11
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	12
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	13
14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	14
15	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	15

# Gallager-B, initialization

- For variable node  $d_{12}$  incident edges are  $d_{12} \rightarrow h_1$ ,  $d_{12} \rightarrow h_2$ ,  $d_{12} \rightarrow h_{10}$  and  $d_{12} \rightarrow h_{14}$  and messages that are initially sent are:

$$m_1(d_{12} \rightarrow h_1) = m_1(d_{12} \rightarrow h_2) = m_1(d_{12} \rightarrow h_{10}) = m_1(d_{12} \rightarrow h_{14}) = r(12) = 1,$$

and the messages sent over all other edges are equal to binary zero (as the other bits in received vector are equal to zero).



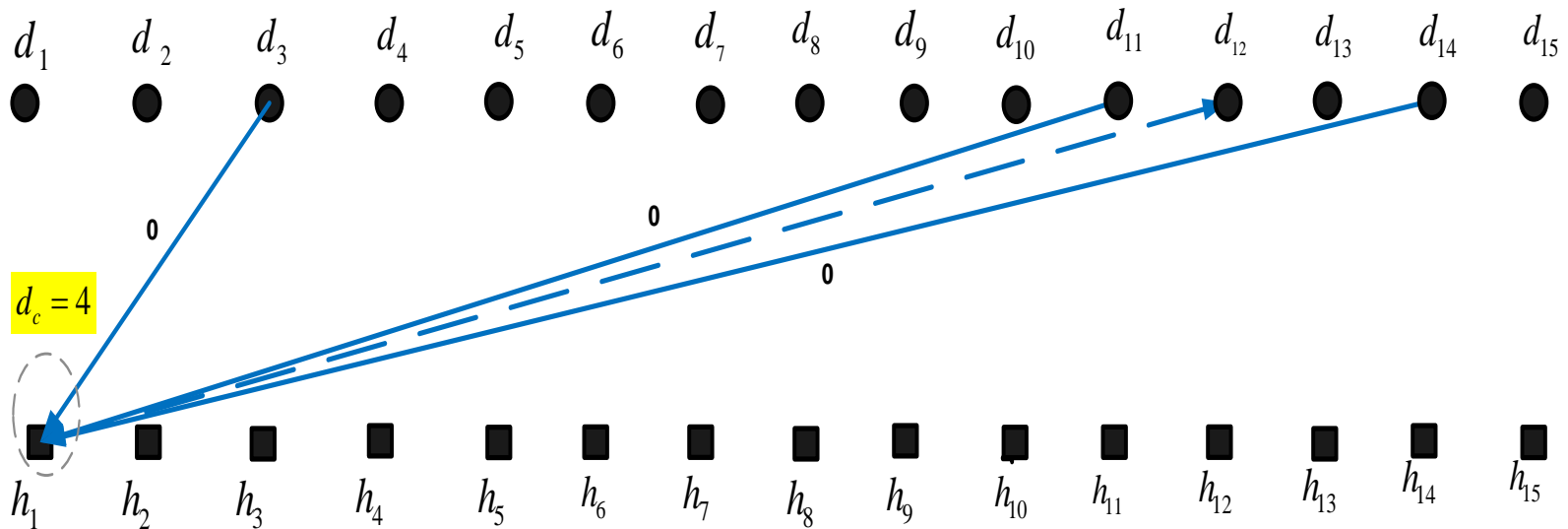
# Gallager-B,

## *step (i)- check-node update*

- Update for check node 1:

$$m'_2(h_1 \rightarrow d_{12}) = (m_1(d_3 \rightarrow h_1) + m_1(d_{11} \rightarrow h_1) + m_1(d_{14} \rightarrow h_1)) \bmod 2$$

$$= (0 + 0 + 0) \bmod 2 = 0.$$

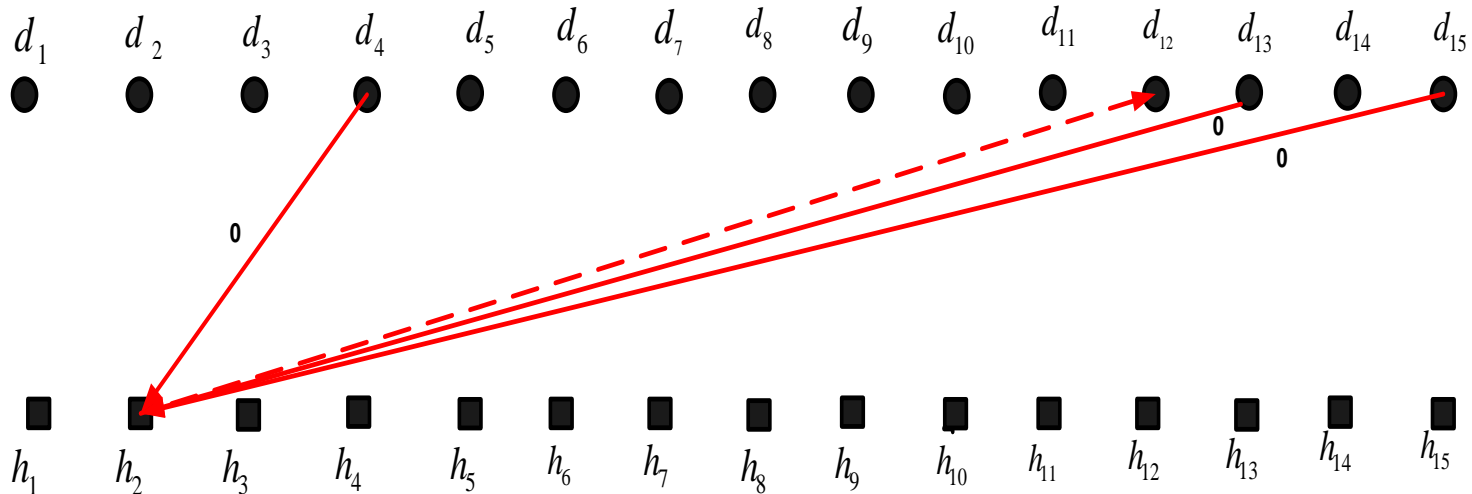


# Gallager-B,

## *step (i)- check-node update*

- Update for check node 2:

$$\begin{aligned} m'_2(h_2 \rightarrow d_{12}) &= (m_1(d_4 \rightarrow h_2) + m_1(d_{13} \rightarrow h_1) + m_1(d_{15} \rightarrow h_1)) \bmod 2 \\ &= (0 + 0 + 0) \bmod 2 = 0. \end{aligned}$$

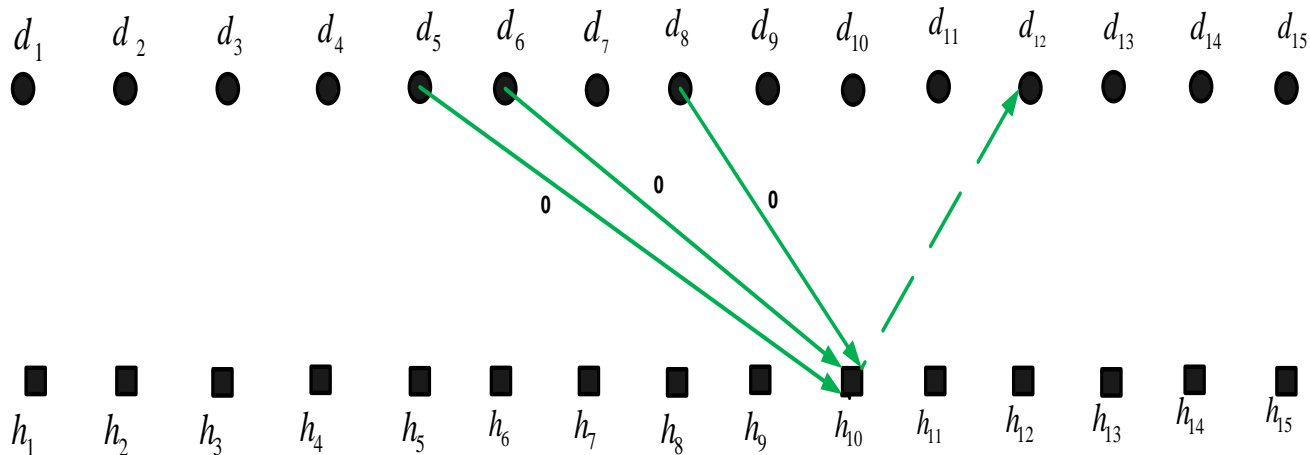


# Gallager-B,

## *step (i)- check-node update*

- Update for check node 10:

$$\begin{aligned} m'_2(h_{10} \rightarrow d_{12}) &= (m_1(d_5 \rightarrow h_{10}) + m_1(d_6 \rightarrow h_{10}) + m_1(d_8 \rightarrow h_{10})) \bmod 2 \\ &= (0 + 0 + 0) \bmod 2 = 0. \end{aligned}$$

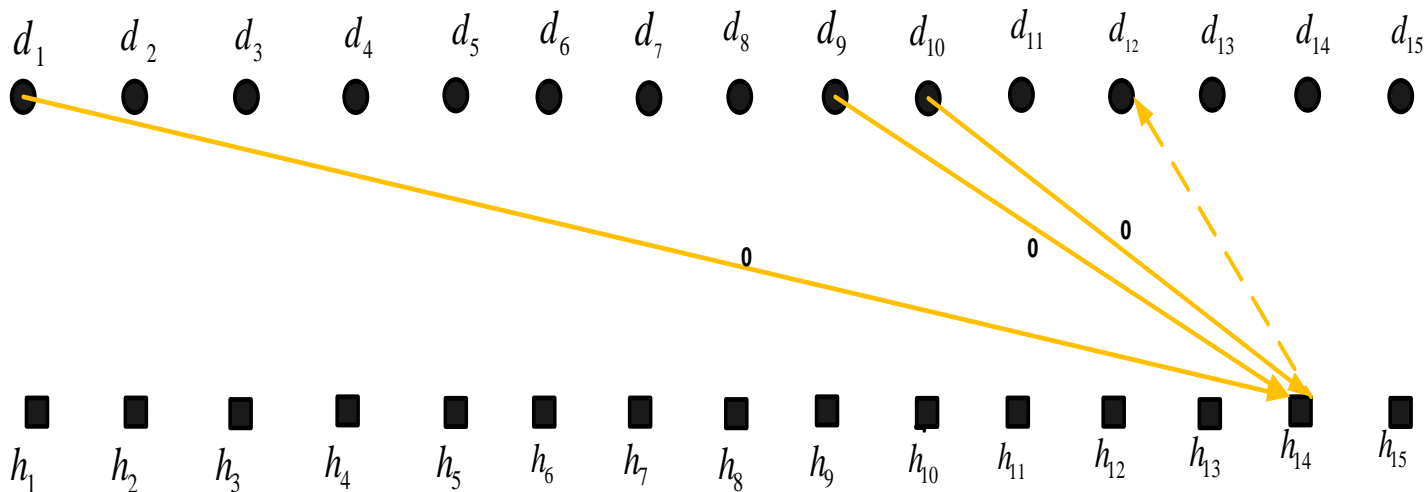


# Gallager-B, *step (i)- check-node update*

- Update for check node 14:

$$m'_2(h_{14} \rightarrow d_{12}) = (m_1(d_1 \rightarrow h_{14}) + m_1(d_9 \rightarrow h_{14}) + m_1(d_{10} \rightarrow h_{14})) \bmod 2$$

$$= (0 + 0 + 0) \bmod 2 = 0.$$



# Gallager-B,

## step (ii)- variable-node update

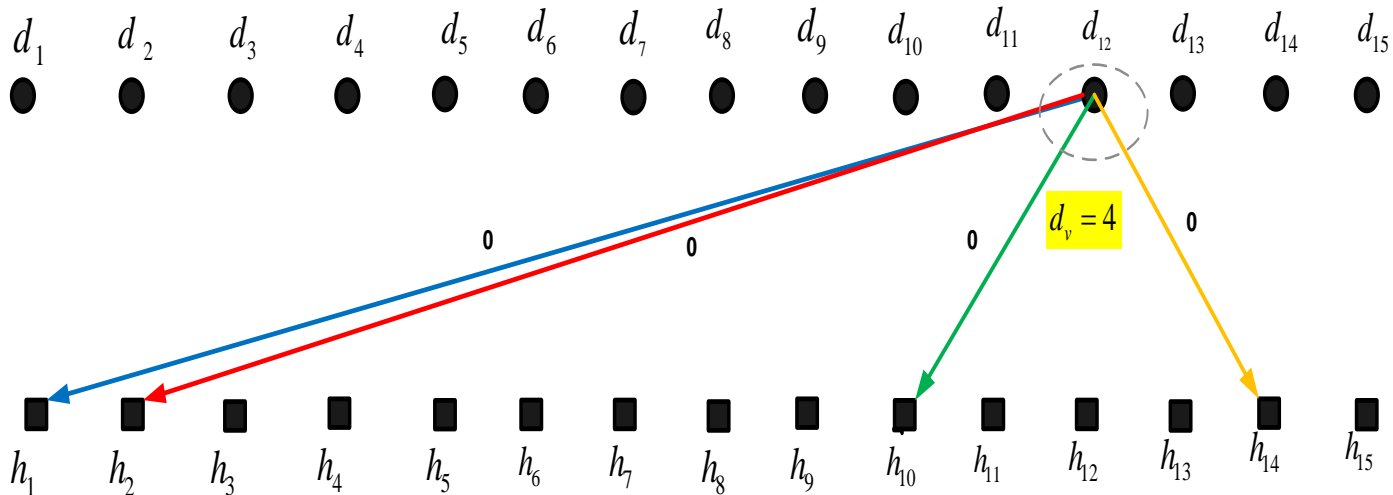
For variable node  $v=12$  and set  $E(12)=\{h_1 \rightarrow d_{12}, h_2 \rightarrow d_{12}, h_{10} \rightarrow d_{12} \text{ and } h_{14} \rightarrow d_{12}\}$  we obtain

$$\sum_{e' \in E(12) \setminus \{d_{12} \rightarrow h_1\}} m'_2(e') = m'_2(h_2 \rightarrow d_{12}) + m'_2(h_{10} \rightarrow d_{12}) + m'_2(h_{14} \rightarrow d_{12}) = 0 \Rightarrow m_2(d_{12} \rightarrow h_1) = 0$$

$$\sum_{e' \in E(12) \setminus \{d_{12} \rightarrow h_2\}} m'_2(e') = m'_2(h_1 \rightarrow d_{12}) + m'_2(h_{10} \rightarrow d_{12}) + m'_2(h_{14} \rightarrow d_{12}) = 0 \Rightarrow m_2(d_{12} \rightarrow h_2) = 0$$

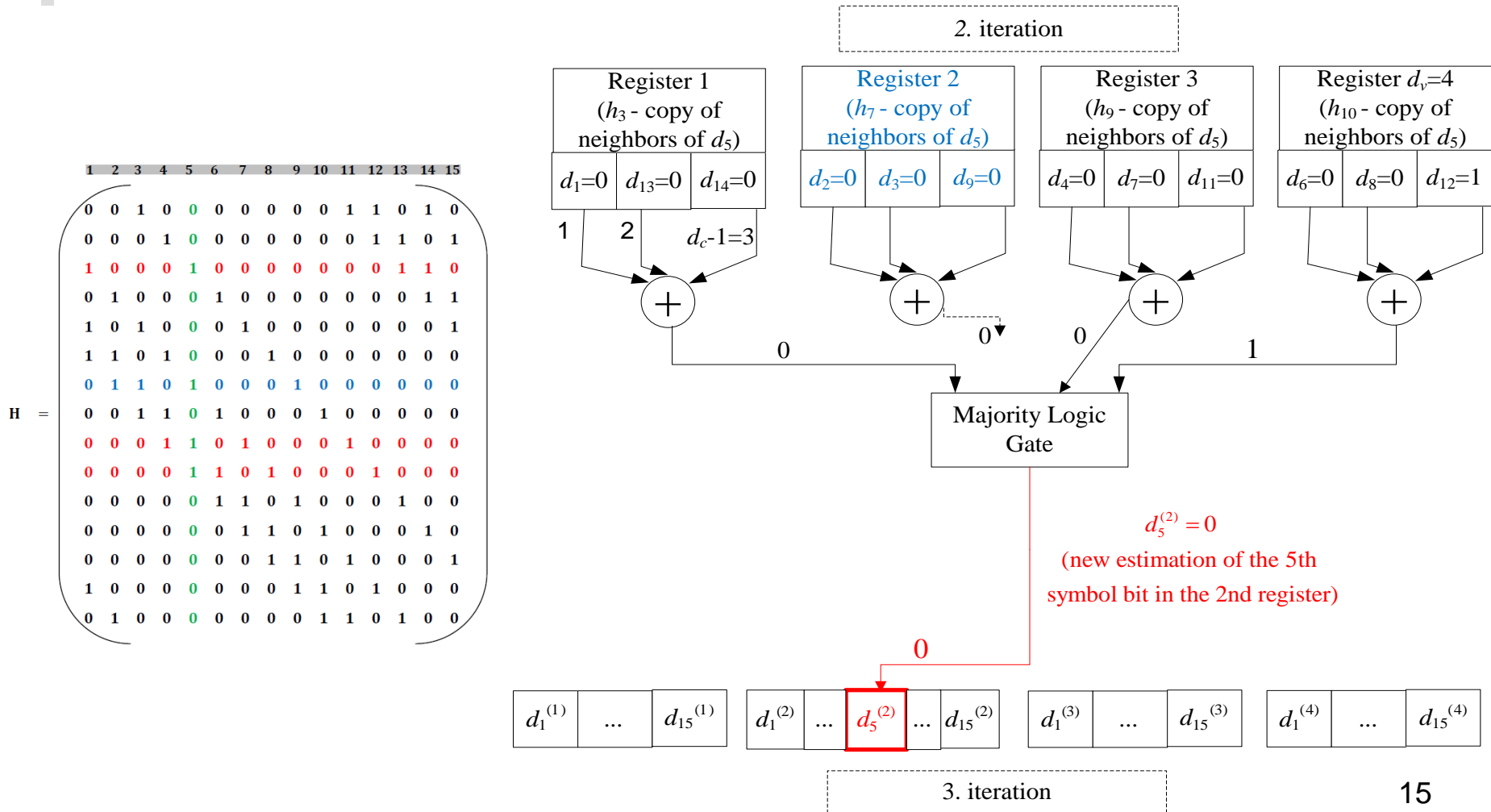
$$\sum_{e' \in E(12) \setminus \{d_{12} \rightarrow h_{10}\}} m'_2(e') = m'_2(h_1 \rightarrow d_{12}) + m'_2(h_2 \rightarrow d_{12}) + m'_2(h_{14} \rightarrow d_{12}) = 0 \Rightarrow m_2(d_{12} \rightarrow h_{10}) = 0$$

$$\sum_{e' \in E(12) \setminus \{d_{12} \rightarrow h_{14}\}} m'_2(e') = m'_2(h_1 \rightarrow d_{12}) + m'_2(h_2 \rightarrow d_{12}) + m'_2(h_{10} \rightarrow d_{12}) = 0 \Rightarrow m_2(d_{12} \rightarrow h_{14}) = 0$$

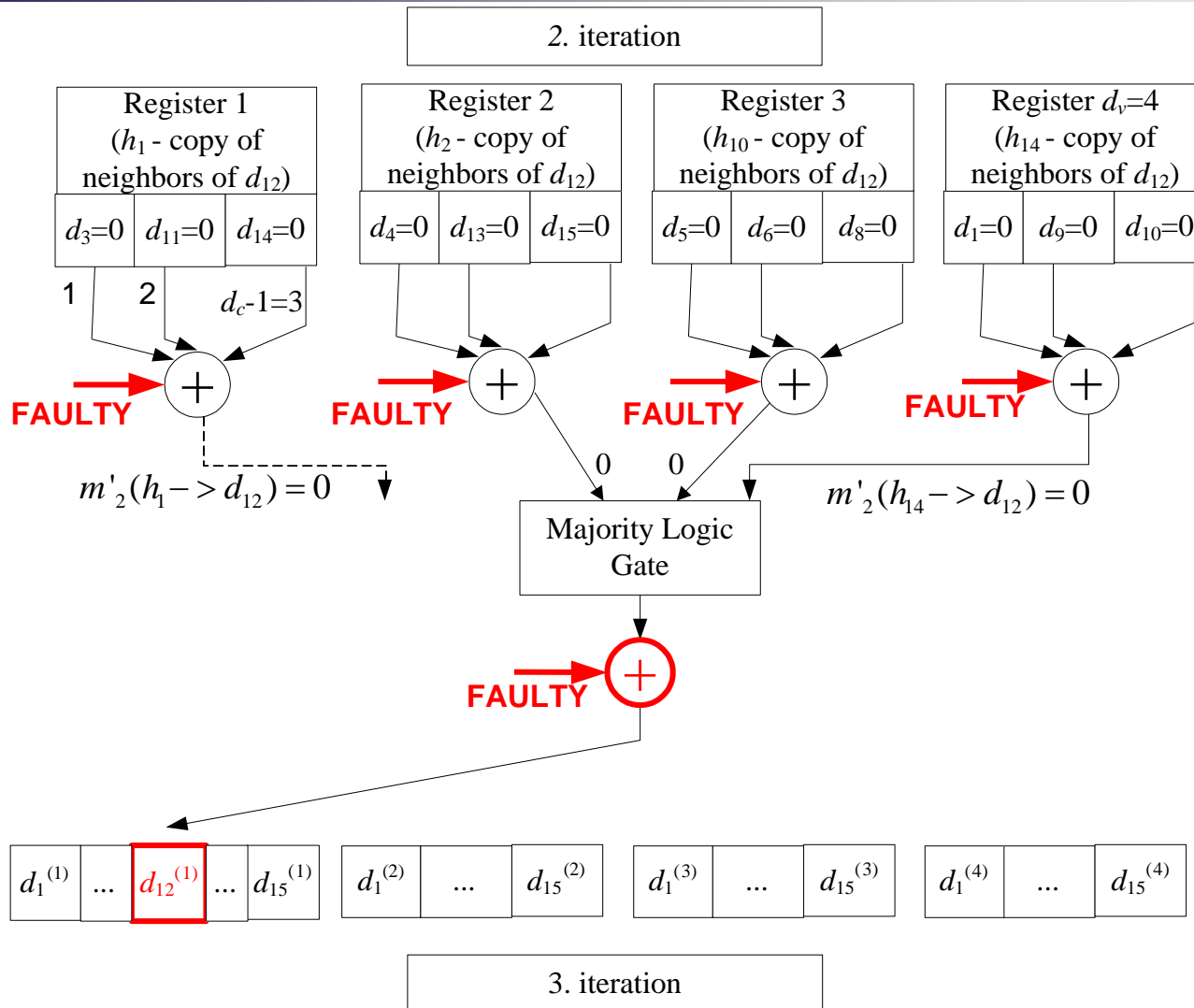




# Taylor-Kuznetsov memory – updating bit 5 in the second register

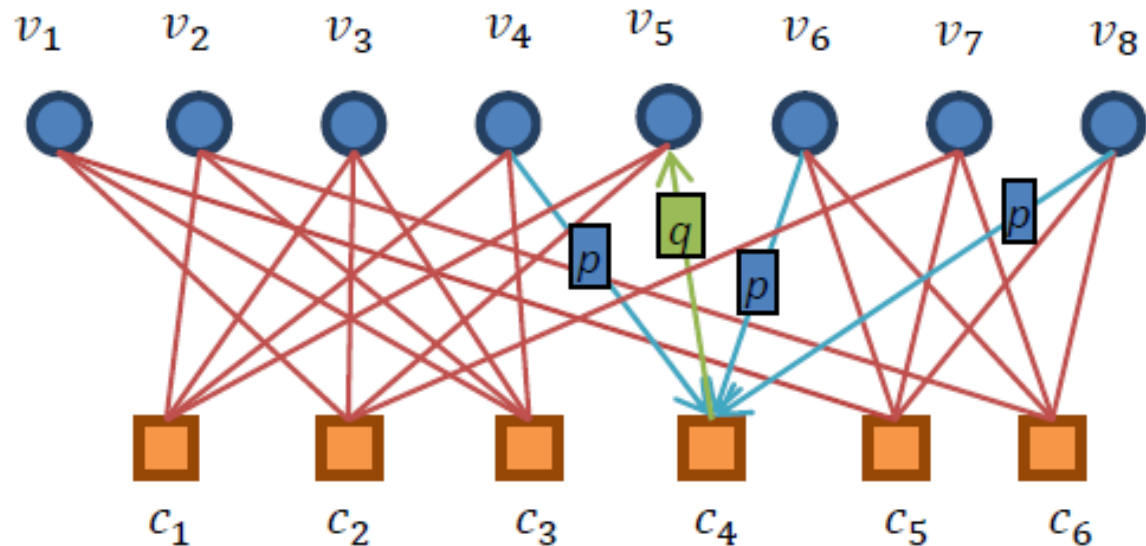
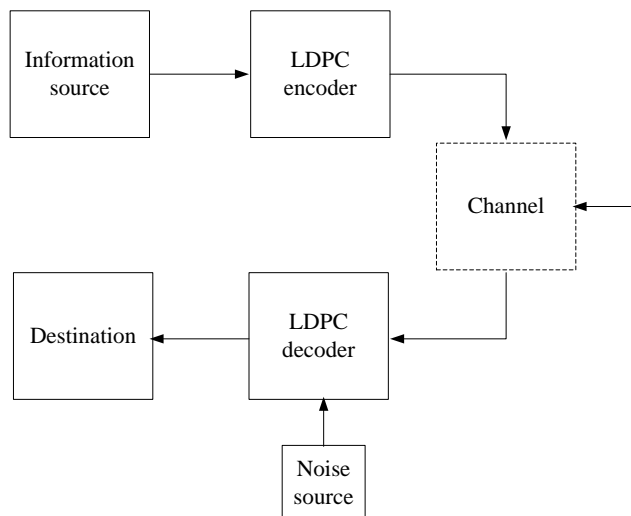


# Taylor-Kuznetsov memory architecture with failures



# Faulty Gallager-B

- Transient failures due to the noise or timing errors
- Decisions made in variable nodes and parity check nodes are unreliable (variable node is faulty with probability  $p$ , parity check node is faulty with probability  $q$ ).

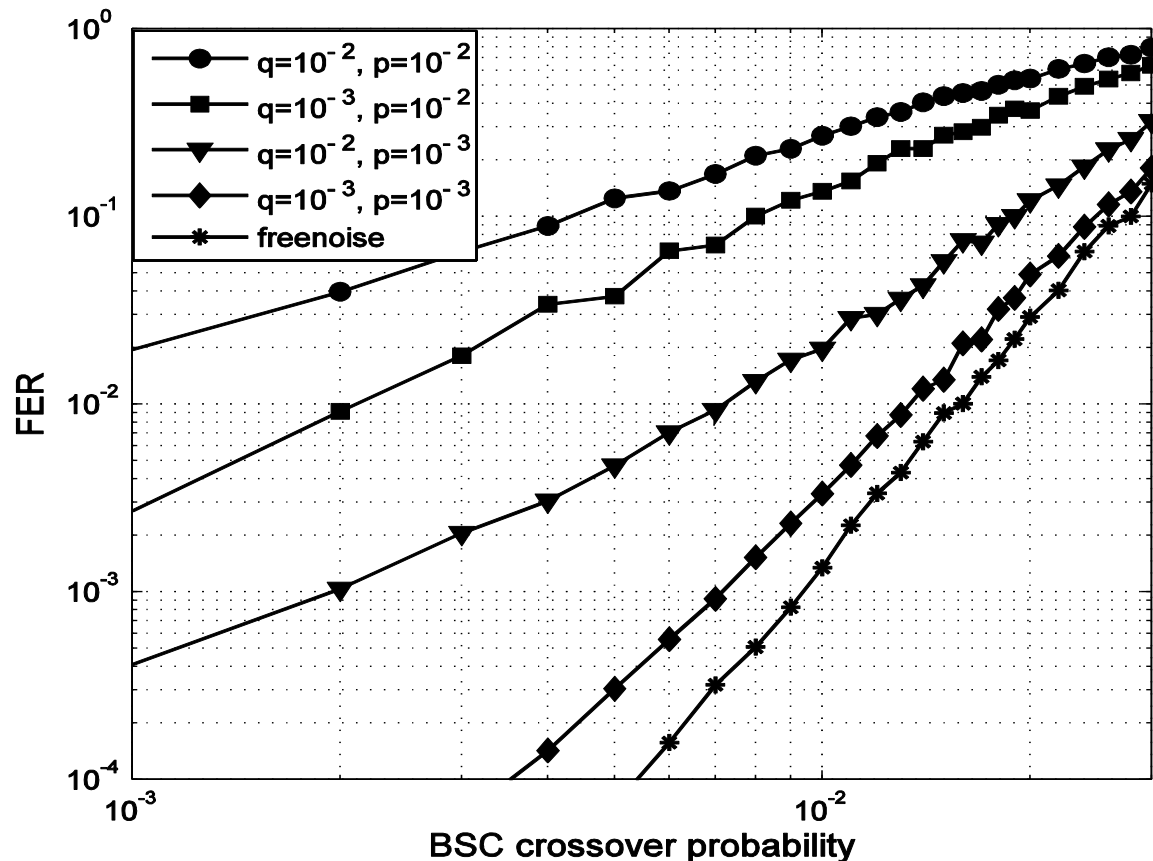


# Faulty Gallager-B

- Let the failures are uncorrelated and data independent.
- Rate of number of incorrectly decoded codewords and number of transmitted codewords (frame error rate – FER) is determined for
  - variable crossover probability in BSC channel (or memory)
  - fixed probability of faulty in variable node,  $p$
  - fixed probability of faulty in check node,  $q$
  - fixed number of iterations during the decoding process
  - various QC codes are considered:
    - Tanner code (155,64) with  $n=155$ ,  $\rho=5$  and  $\gamma=3$ ,
    - QC code with  $n=305$ ,  $\rho=5$  and  $\gamma=3$ ,
    - QC code with  $n=155$ ,  $\rho=5$  and  $\gamma=4$ ,

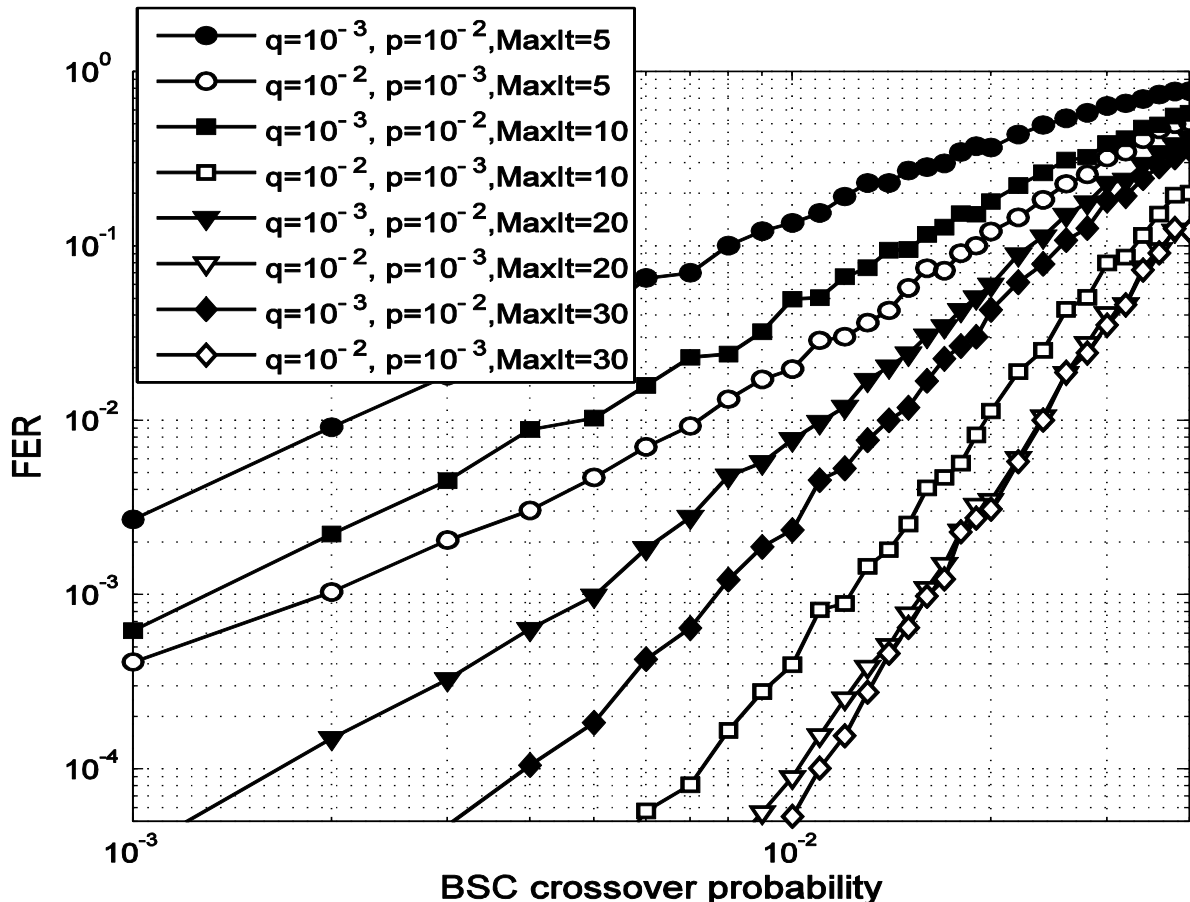
# Faulty Gallager-B, Tanner (155,64), MaxIt=5

- Variable nodes are much more sensitive to processing noise and they should be realized by using more reliable hardware.



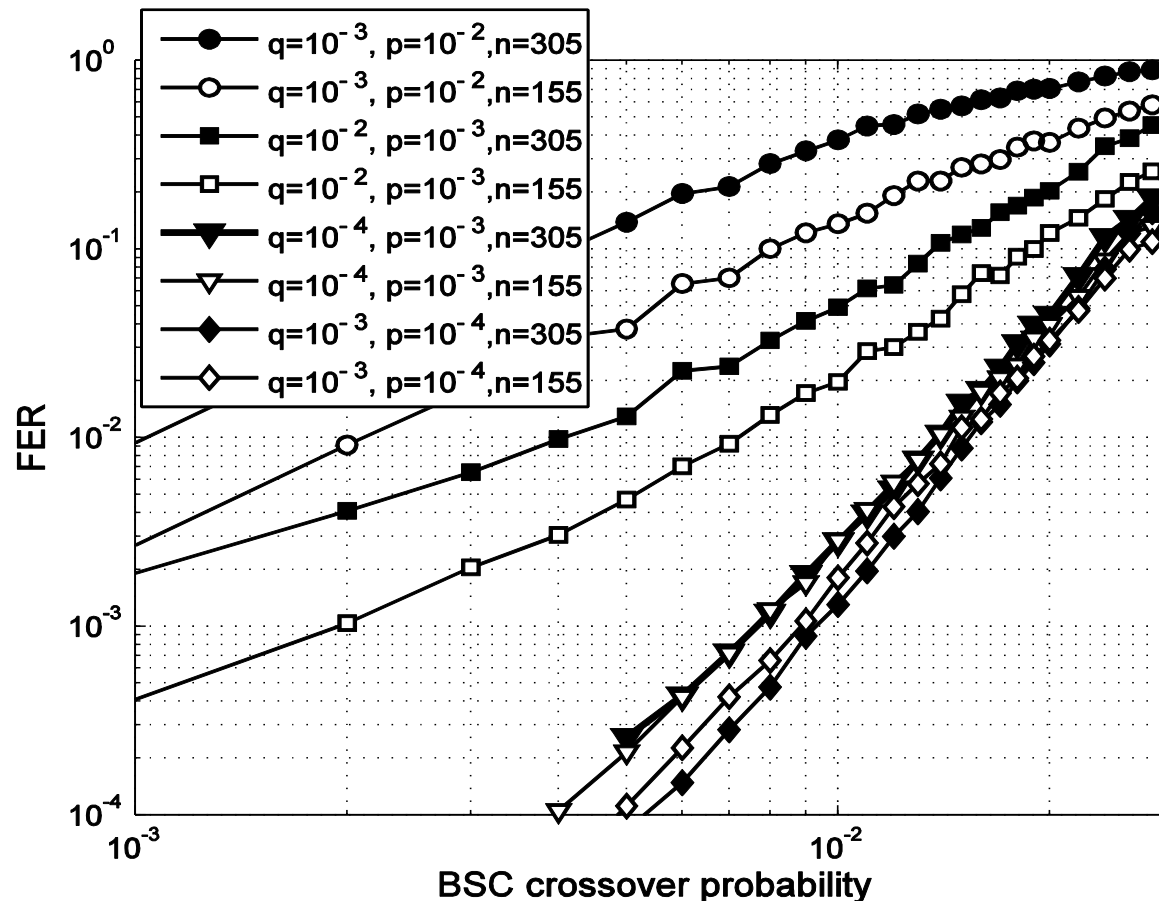
# Faulty Gallager-B, iterations

- Performances can be improved by increasing the number of iterations, but variable nodes are still more critical.



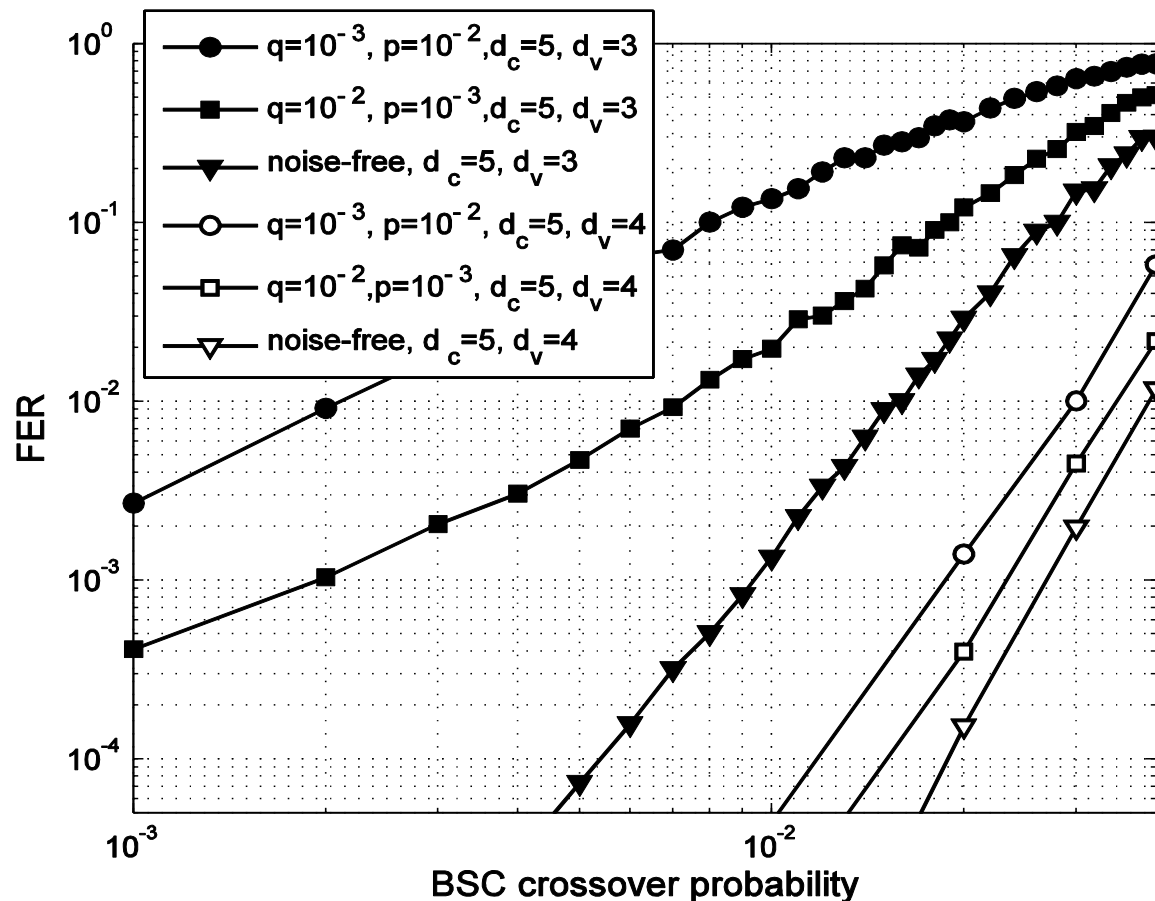
# Faulty Gallager-B, codeword length

- Although the code with longer codewords has better correcting capabilities, it is also more prone to processing errors.



# Faulty Gallager-B, impact of $\gamma$

- It is interesting to notice that performance of code with lower code rate are less degraded by decoder failures.





# Parallel BF decoder

## BSC

The channel output (as well as the input) has two levels.

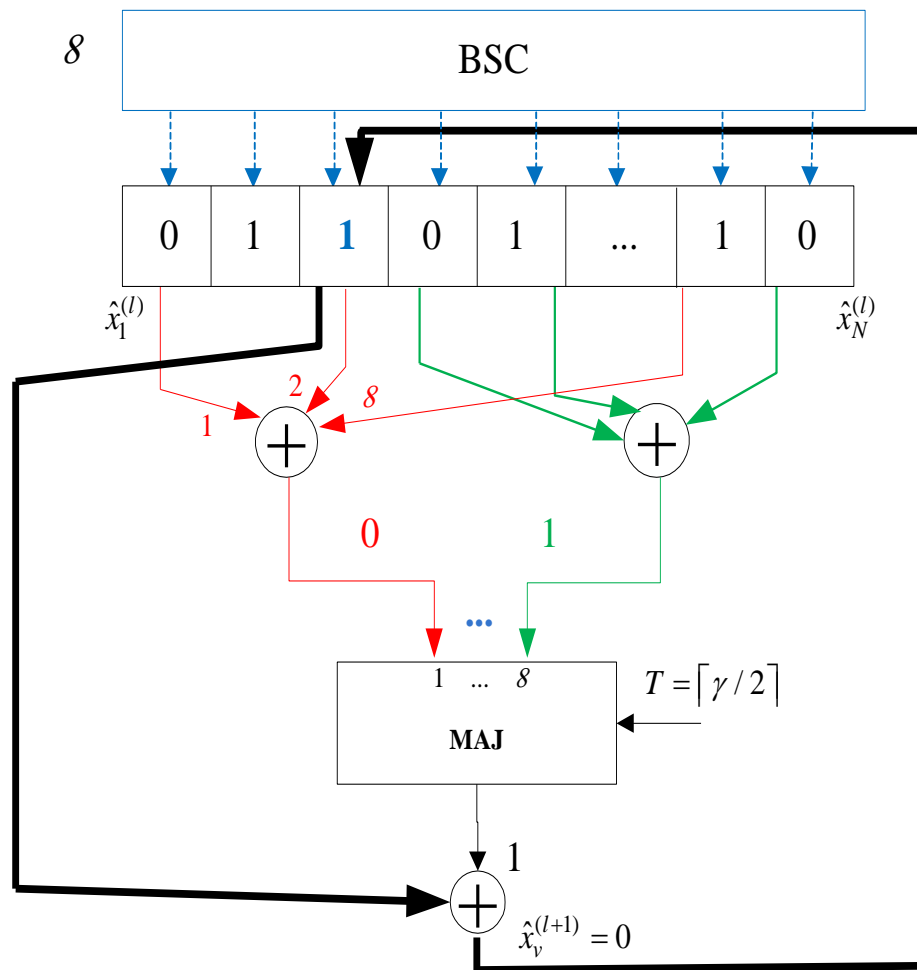
Crossover probability  $\alpha$ .

*For every variable node we check if it is satisfied:*

$$\sum_{c \in N_v} \bigotimes_{u \in N_c} \hat{x}_v^{(l)} \leq \lceil \gamma / 2 \rceil$$

*Valid codeword:*

$$\sum_{c \in N_v} \bigotimes_{u \in N_c} \hat{x}_v^{(l)} = 0$$



# GDBF for BSC

*GBDF designed for AWGN*

$$\chi_v^{(l)} = \chi_v^{(l)} \eta_v + \sum_{v \in N_v} \prod_{u \in N_c} \chi_u^{(l)}$$

*Substitution:*

$$\chi_v^{(l)} = 1 - 2\hat{x}_v^{(l)}, \quad \eta_v = 1 - 2y_v$$

$$\chi_v^{(l)}(d) = 2 - 2(\hat{x}_v^{(l)} \oplus y_v) + \gamma_v - 2 \sum_{c \in N_v} \bigotimes_{u \in N_c} \hat{x}_u^{(l)} \rightarrow \min$$

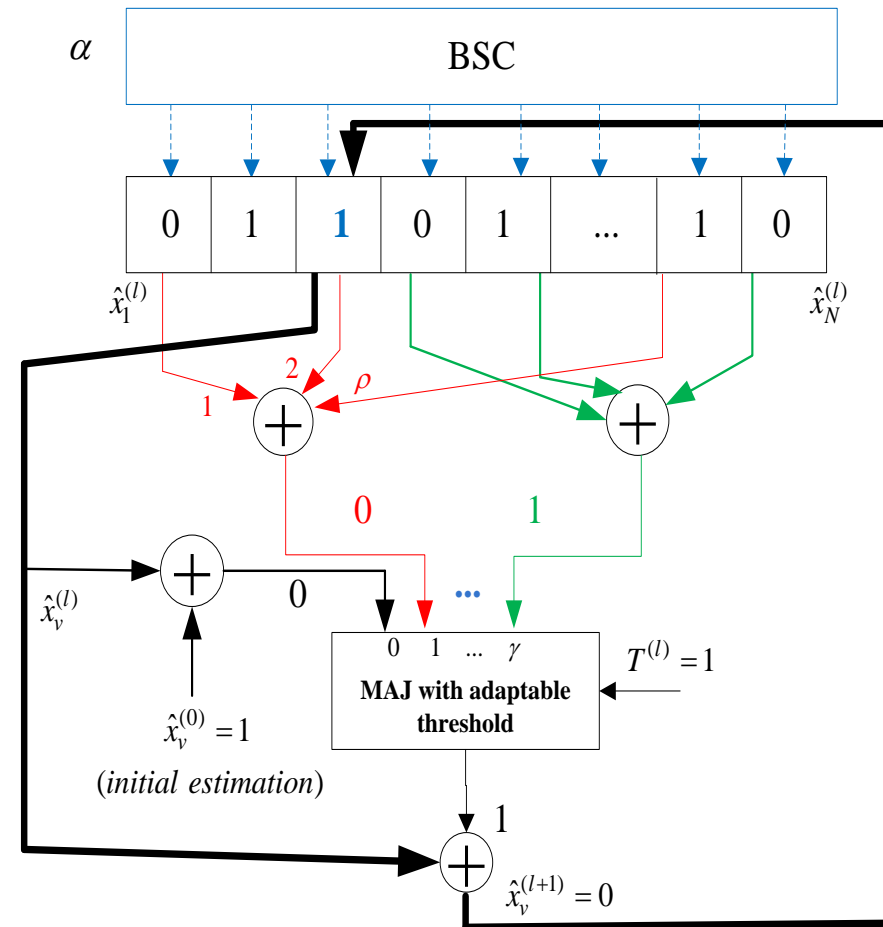
*Modified inverse function*

*Irregular:*

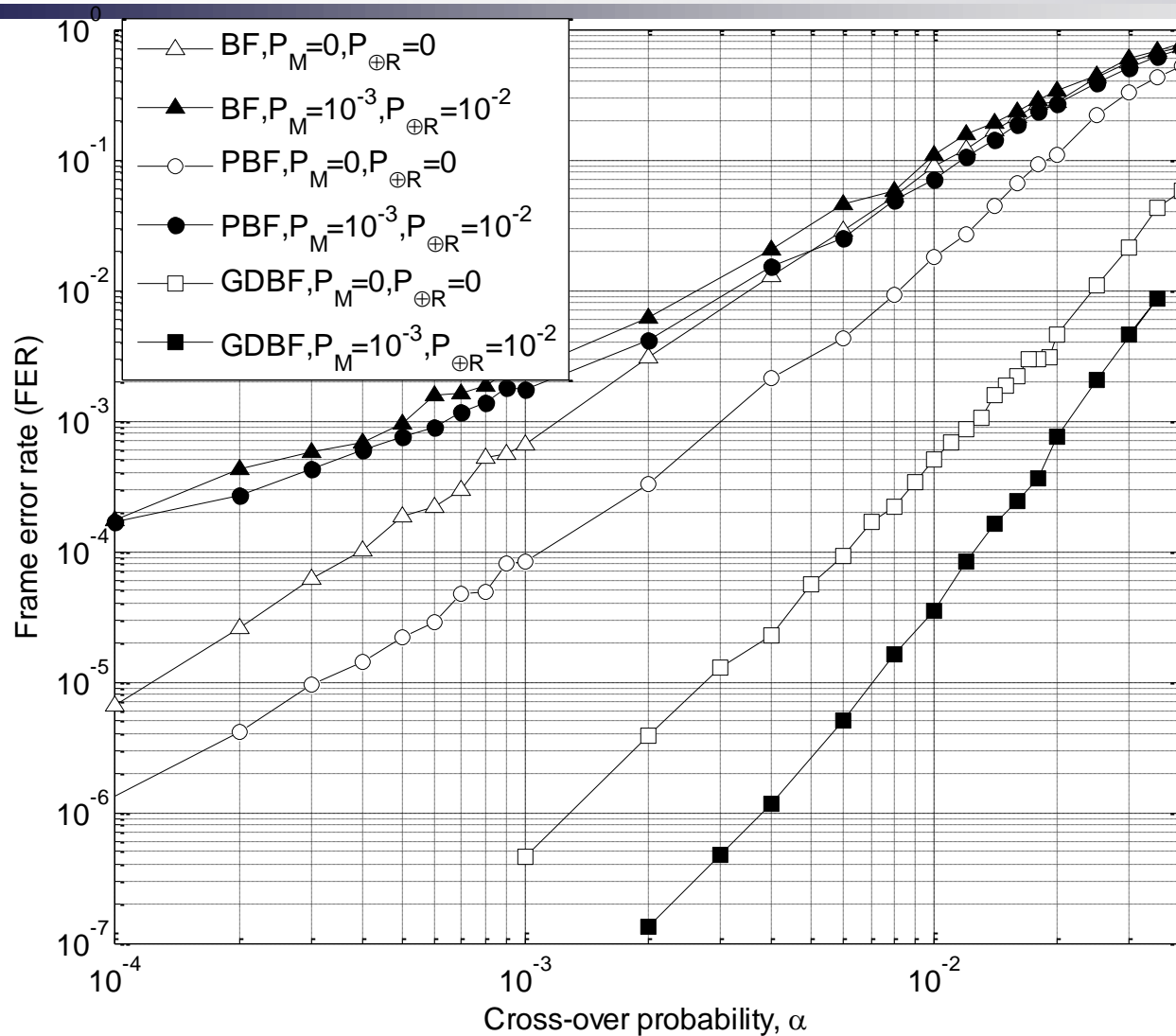
$$\begin{aligned} \Lambda_v^{(l)} &= 1 - 0.5\Delta_v^{(l)} \\ &= \hat{x}_v^{(l)} \oplus y_v + \sum_{c \in N_v} \bigotimes_{u \in N_c} \hat{x}_u^{(l)} - 0.5\gamma_v \end{aligned}$$

*Regular:*

$$\Lambda_v^{(l)} = \hat{x}_v^{(l)} \oplus y_v + \sum_{c \in N_v} \bigotimes_{u \in N_c} \hat{x}_v^{(l)}$$



# Tanner (155,64), faulty BF/PBF/GDBF



# PGDBF for BSC, faulty decoder (memory, XOR, ML)

*Parallel bit-flipping:*

$$\Lambda_v^{(l)}(\mathbf{d}) = \sum_{c \in N_v} \bigotimes_{u \in N_c} \hat{x}_v^{(l)}$$

*Valid codeword:*

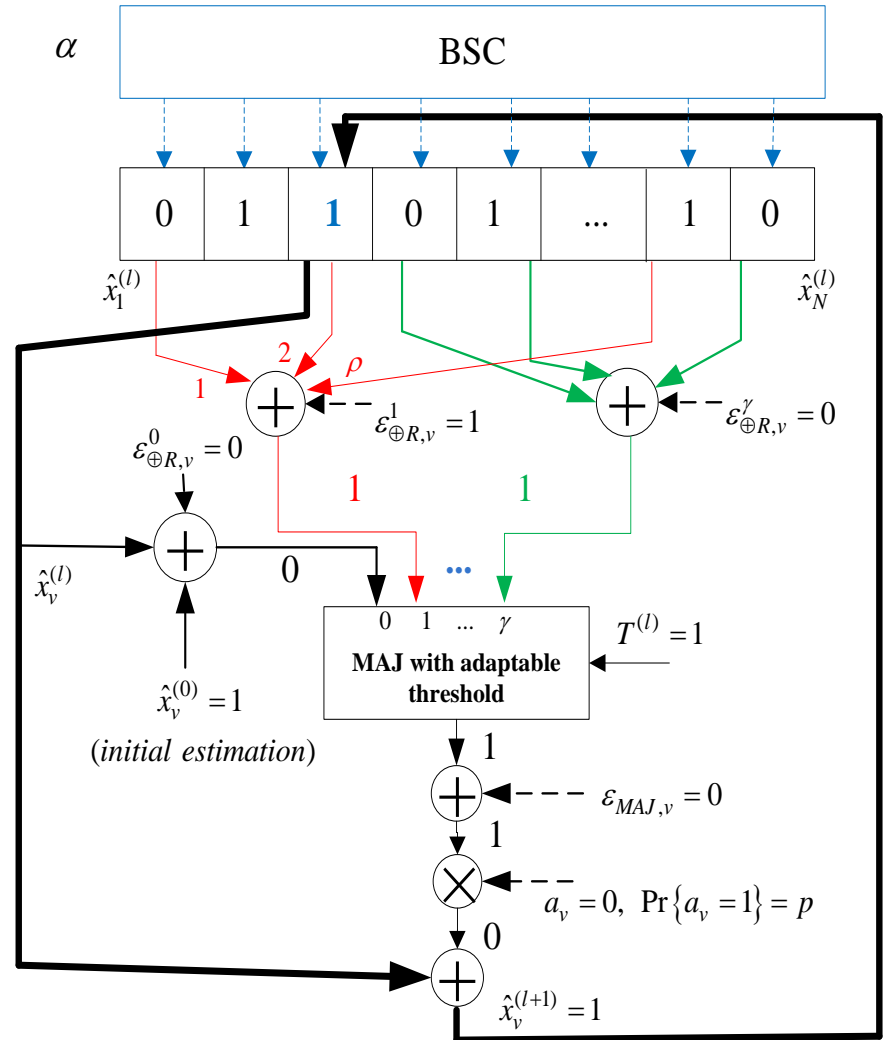
$$\sum_{c \in N_v} \bigotimes_{u \in N_c} \hat{x}_v^{(l)} = 0$$

*Probabilistic GDBF (PGDBF):*

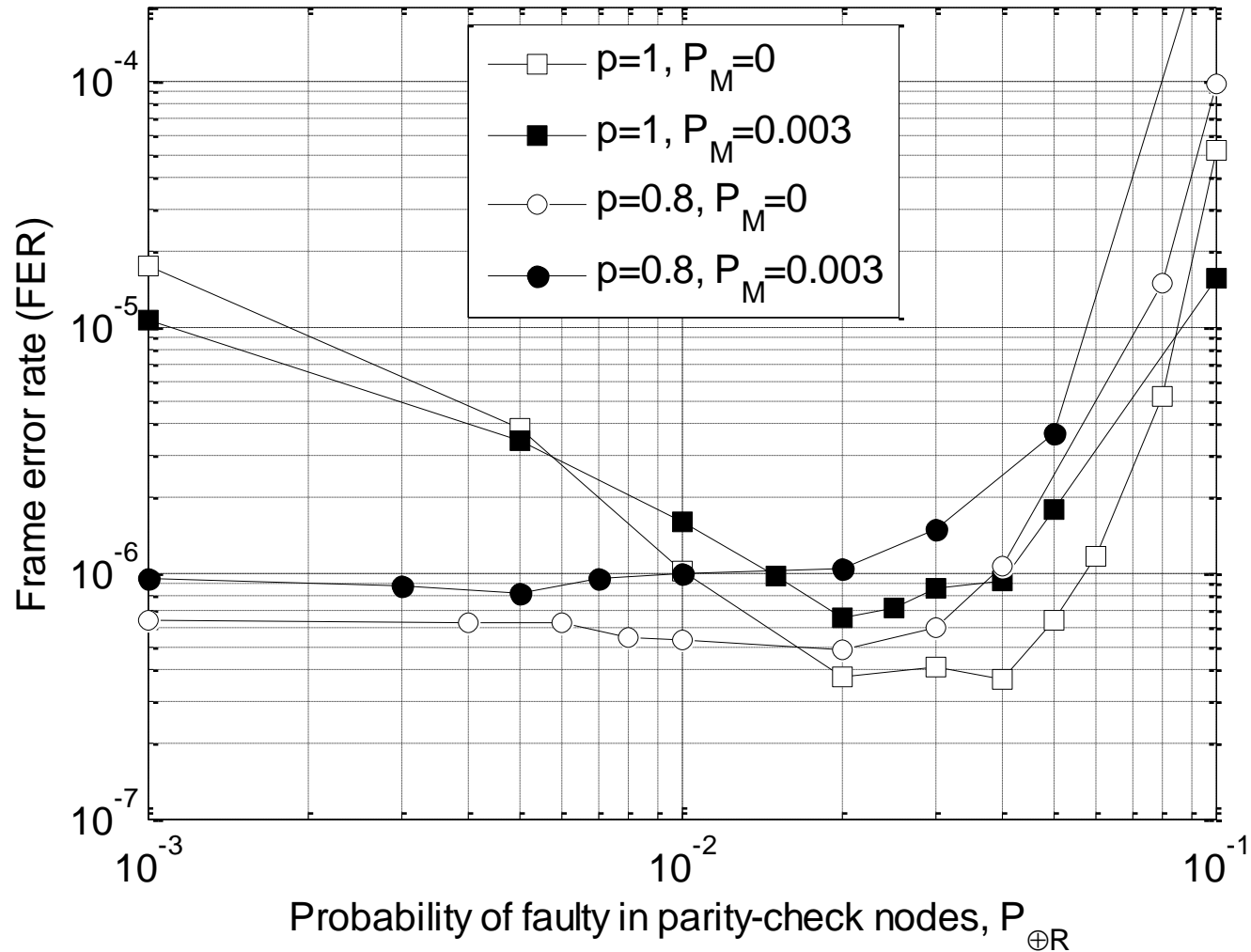
- Necessary condition for flipping  
 $\Lambda_v^{(l)}(\mathbf{d}) \geq T^{(l)}$
- One additional two-input AND gate
- Additional random number generator

*Special cases:*

- Parallel BF, probabilistic BF,  
GDBF for BSC ( $p=1$ )

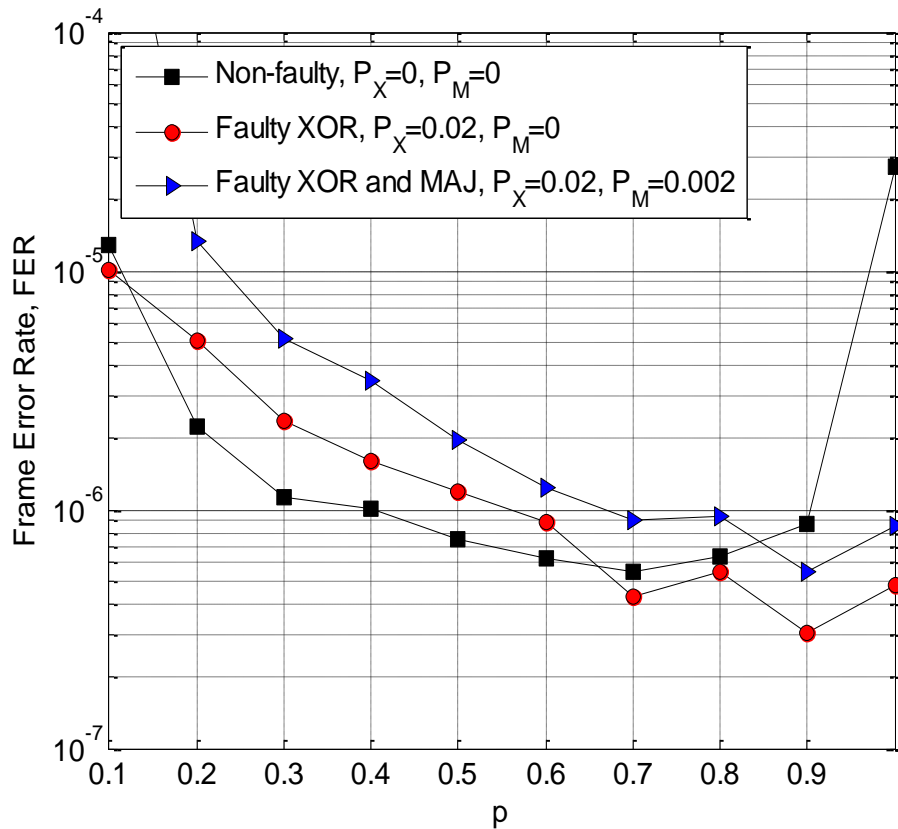


# Faulty XOR and memory, the impact of probabilism

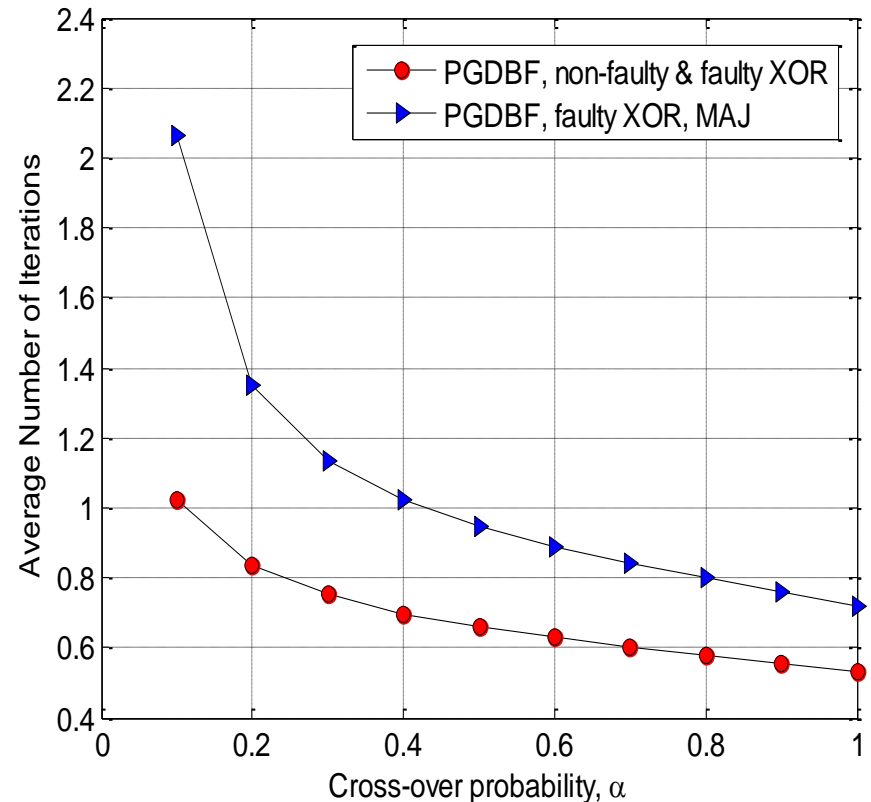


# Tanner (155,64), faulty PGDBF, the impact of parameter $p$ for $\alpha=4\times 10^{-3}$

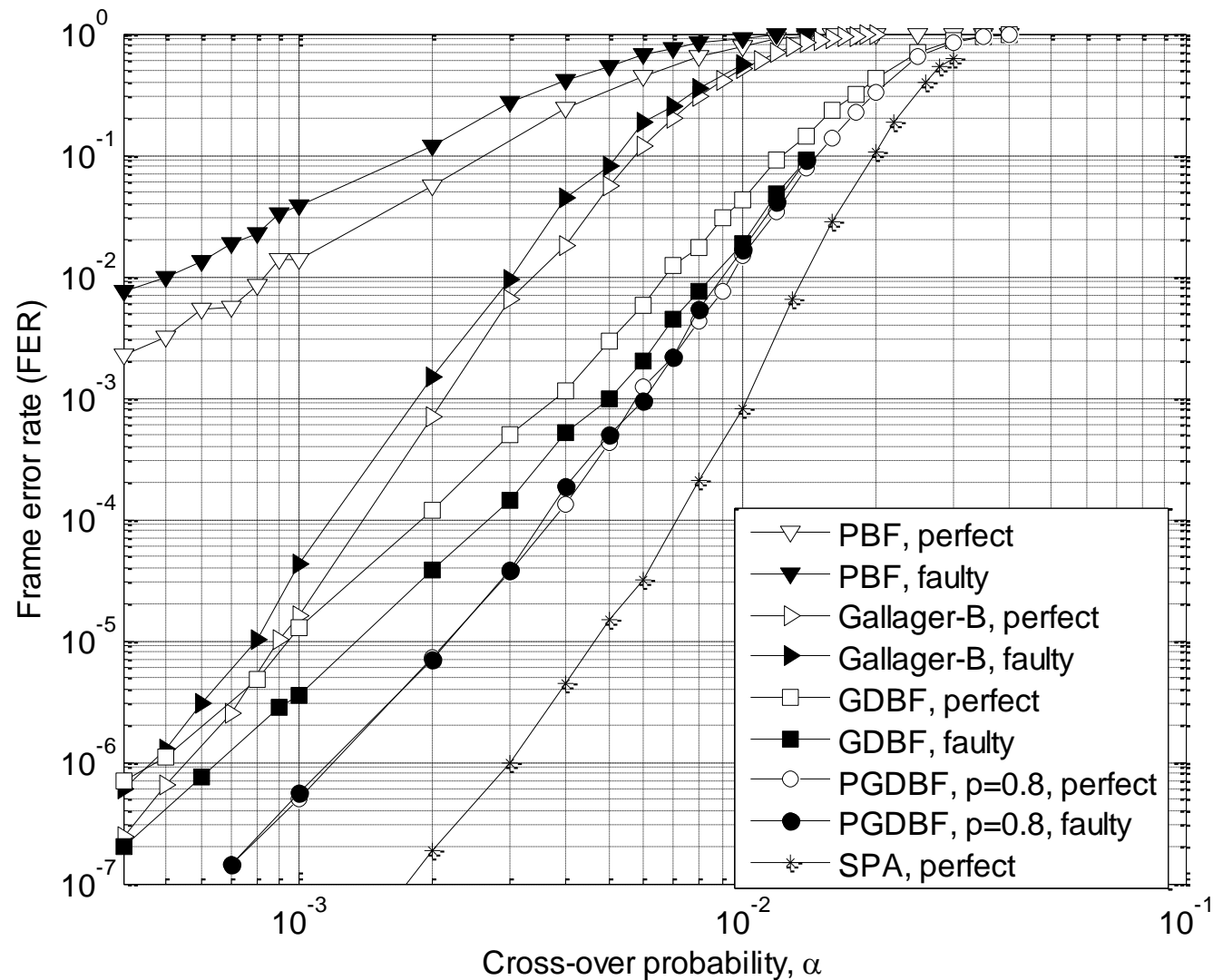
*Frame Error Rate:*



*Average number of iterations:*



# QC-732, BF/PBF/GDBF/PGDBF/SPA



# Conclusion

- **We considered:**
  - uncorrelated errors (von-Noyman type), different probability of injected failures in
    - check nodes (XOR gates), denoted by  $q$
    - variable nodes (ML gates), denoted by  $p$
  - data dependent failures – what if probability of injected failures depend of current (and previous) inputs of XOR gates and ML gates?
- **Hard decision decoders:**
  - Variable nodes are more critical than parity check nodes. Values of  $q=1/n$ ,  $p=q/10$  can be tolerated.
  - Gallager-B decoder outperforms BF algorithm and it is more immune to hardware failures.
  - In some cases GDBF work better in the presence of transient failures!
  - PGDBF has large immunity to hardware failures.





**THANK YOU!**