Leptonic asymmetry in $\bar{t}t$ production at CDF

Stefano Camarda$^{1,a}$

$^1$DESY - Hamburg

Abstract. The leptonic asymmetry in semileptonic $\bar{t}t$ decays is measured with the CDF detector using the full Tevatron Run II dataset, which corresponds to 9.4 fb$^{-1}$ of integrated luminosity. The measured asymmetry is extrapolated to the full kinematic range and the measured value of $A_{FB}^{lep} = 0.094^{+0.032}_{-0.025}$ is compared to the NLO prediction $A_{FB}^{lep} = 0.038 \pm 0.003$.

1 Introduction

The CDF and D0 experiments have measured the forward-backward asymmetry $A_{FB}$ for $\bar{t}t$ production in $p\bar{p}$ collisions $[1,2]$, the CDF measurement reports $A_{FB} = 0.164 \pm 0.045$, the D0 measurement $A_{FB} = 0.196 \pm 0.065$. Both results are higher than the prediction $A_{FB} = 0.088 \pm 0.006$ $[3]$, which includes both electroweak and QCD next-to-leading order (NLO) corrections. Much effort has been invested to improve the theoretical calculation of the asymmetry in the Standard Model, through the estimation of beyond NLO corrections and related uncertainties. Soft gluon resummation was found to give a negligible contribution $[4]$, electroweak corrections are of the order of 25% and are included in the current predictions $[3,5]$, a calculation based on the Principle of Maximum Conformality (PMC) for the scale setting reports a 40% enhancement, and finally a more realistic estimate of scale uncertainties at NLO of the order 30% should be considered $[3,6,7]$.

The leptonic asymmetry, defined as

$$A_{FB}^{lep} = \frac{N(qy_1 > 0) - N(qy_1 < 0)}{N(qy_1 > 0) + N(qy_1 < 0)}$$

where $q$ is the lepton charge and $y_1$ the lepton rapidity in the laboratory frame, is an observable related to $A_{FB}$ which can provide complementary information. The measurement of $A_{FB}^{lep}$ depends only on lepton charge and direction, and therefore can be measured very precisely. The D0 experiment reported measurements of the leptonic asymmetry in $\bar{t}t$ production both in the semileptonic and in the dilepton channels with about half of the full Tevatron Run II dataset, the combined result is $A_{FB}^{lep} = 0.118 \pm 0.032$ $[8]$.

There are two physical origins of leptonic asymmetry $A_{FB}^{lep}$, the $A_{FB}$ asymmetry, and the polarisation of the $t\bar{t}$ system. Leptons partially inherit the asymmetry of the parent tops, and in addition the V-A coupling of the weak interaction connects the direction of the top decay products to the polarisation of the top quarks. Top pairs are produced unpolarised in the Standard Model, an excess of right handed top pairs would enhance $A_{FB}^{lep}$, while left-handed pairs would induce a negative contribution.

The relationship between the top asymmetry, the $t\bar{t}$ polarisation and the leptonic asymmetry has been the subject of recent theoretical work in the context of possible explanations of the top asymmetry $A_{FB}$ $[9,10]$.

2 Physics models and expected asymmetry

In the measurement of $A_{FB}^{lep}$ several reference models and corresponding Monte Carlo samples are used, they are listed in table $[1]$.

All the Monte Carlo samples are showered with PYTHIA $[11]$ and processed with the full CDF detector simulation. ALPGEN $[12]$ is a LO matrix-element matched to PS generator which predicts no asymmetry, POWHEG $[13]$ is a NLO generator which predicts a small asymmetry, OCTET A, L and R are axigluon models simulated with MADGRAPH $[14]$ which predict $A_{FB}$ comparable to the measured values, but different $t\bar{t}$ polarisation and different values of $A_{FB}^{lep}$. The two polarised models, Octet L and Octet R, are light (200 GeV/c$^2$) and wide (50 GeV/c$^2$) axigluons. Octet L has a left-handed coupling and negative polarisation, while Octet R has a right-handed coupling and positive polarisation. Octet A is a massive (2.0 TeV/c$^2$) and narrow axigluon with unpolarised couplings.

A Standard Model NLO QCD fixed order calculation of $A_{FB}^{lep}$ including electroweak corrections reports 0.038 $\pm$ 0.003 $[3]$. When comparing the NLO fixed order result to the prediction from a NLO generator interfaced to parton shower, an important difference has to be considered. The first non trivial orders for the numerator and denominator of equation $[1]$ are respectively O($a_\ell^2$) and O($a_\ell^2$), for this reason in the fixed order calculation the O($a_\ell^2$) result of the inclusive $t\bar{t}$ cross section is used in the denominator of the $A_{FB}^{lep}$ asymmetry. In a NLO Monte Carlo generator like POWHEG, both numerator and denominator of equa-
A data-driven estimation of $A_{lep}^FB$ within the Standard Model can be done dividing the $A_{lep}^FB$ measured at CDF by the ratio $\frac{A_{lep}^FB}{A_{lep}^{FB}} = 2.17$ as predicted by Powheg. With this assumption the expected $A_{lep}^FB$ is 0.076.

3 Event selection and sample composition

The full CDF Run II dataset, corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 9.4 fb$^{-1}$ is used to measure $A_{lep}^FB$. The $t\bar{t}$ semileptonic events are selected with high-pT electron or muon and large missing $E_T$ triggers. Jets are reconstructed with the jetclu cone algorithm in a radius $R = 0.4$. Events are selected with exactly one lepton with $p_T > 20$ GeV/c and $|y_l| < 1.25$, missing $E_T > 20$ GeV, at least 4 jets with $|\eta| < 2.0$, at least 3 jets with $E_T > 20$ GeV, at least one jet with $E_T > 12$ GeV, at least 1 b-tagged jet, and $H_T > 220$ GeV. After the event selection the sample is mainly composed by $t\bar{t}$ events, with the main background coming from $W$+jets events.

Background processes are expected to contribute a nonzero asymmetry, in particular the largest background, namely $W$+jets, is asymmetric for a combination of electroweak and PDF effects. In order to validate the modelling of the leptonic asymmetry in the background simulation a background-enhanced control region is defined requiring that none of the jets is identified as a b-tagged jet. Figure 1 shows the signed rapidity distribution $q_{y_l}$ in the control region, where the $W$+jets background is simulated with the alpgen+pythia Monte Carlo. The observed leptonic asymmetry of 0.076 in the background-enhanced region is in good agreement with the expected value of 0.062.

4 Extrapolation to the full kinematic region

The signed rapidity distribution $q_{y_l}$ is measured in the limited range $|y_l| < 1.25$, which corresponds to the detector acceptance. In order to extrapolate the measurement to the full kinematic space, $N(q_{y_l})$ is decomposed into symmetric and asymmetric components:

\[ S(q_{y_l}) = \frac{N(q_{y_l}) + N(-q_{y_l})}{2} \]

\[ A(q_{y_l}) = \frac{N(q_{y_l}) - N(-q_{y_l})}{N(q_{y_l}) + N(-q_{y_l})} \]

The symmetric part is the same in all the considered models of table 1 while the asymmetric part capture the difference between the models, as shown in figure 2.

The measured $A(q_{y_l})$ is unfolded to the parton level, fitted with a hyperbolic tangent function

\[ F(q_{y_l}) = a \cdot \tanh\left(\frac{1}{2}q_{y_l}\right) \]

and convoluted with the symmetric component $S(q_{y_l})$ evaluated with the powheg Monte Carlo to extract the measured leptonic asymmetry:

\[ A_{lep}^FB = \frac{\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dq_{y_l}[A(q_{y_l}) \times S(q_{y_l})]}{\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dq_{y_l}S(q_{y_l})} \]

5 Results

The largest systematic uncertainty on $A_{lep}^FB$ is associated to the background subtraction. The background uncertainty is evaluated with a pseudo-experiment technique which accounts simultaneously for the uncertainty on the normalisation of the backgrounds and for the uncertainty on the shape due to limited statistics of the Monte Carlo samples.

Another important source of uncertainty comes from the modelling of the $t\bar{t}$ recoil due to QCD radiation. The presence of radiated jets is strongly correlated with both $A_{lep}$ and the $p_T$ of the $t\bar{t}$ system. Colour predominantly flows from an initiating light quark to an outgoing top-quark and from an anti-quark to an anti-top. As a consequence, events with larger difference between initial state quark and top directions are associated with harder QCD
radiation. Events with more radiation have a larger acceptance because can more easily pass the high \( p_T \) selection requirements. The uncertainty on the recoil modelling is estimated comparing the acceptance of the nominal POWHEG Monte Carlo with two other models, namely PYTHIA and ALPGEN+PYTHIA. The recoil spectra of both PYTHIA and ALPGEN+PYTHIA are harder than POWHEG and give larger results for \( A_{FB}^{lep} \), the uncertainty is therefore single-sided. An additional uncertainty related to the recoil model may arise from the initial-state radiation model in the PYTHIA parton shower. The uncertainty is estimated performing variations of the initial and final state radiation parameters (IFSR), the effect is found to be small.

Other QCD and jets related sources of uncertainties like colour reconnection, parton shower model, and jet-energy-scale, have been estimated. They give a small contribution to the \( A_{FB}^{lep} \) uncertainty because hadronic jets are used in the measurement only to select the event sample. PDF uncertainties largely cancel between the numerator and denominator in the definition of \( A_{FB}^{lep} \). The uncertainties on \( A_{FB}^{lep} \) are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Uncertainties of the \( A_{FB}^{lep} \) measurement.

| Source             | Uncertainty |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Backgrounds        | 0.015       |
| Recoil modelling   | +0.003      |
| Colour reconnection| 0.0067      |
| Parton shower      | 0.0027      |
| PDF                | 0.0025      |
| Jet-energy-scale   | 0.0022      |
| IFSR               | 0.0018      |
| Total systematic   | +0.0022     |
| Statistical uncertainty | 0.024 |
| Total uncertainty  | +0.0052     |

Figure 2 shows the parton level unfolded \( A(q_y) \) measured in the data, compared to the \textsc{powheg} prediction, and the result of fits to both data and Monte Carlo with equation (4). After the convolution of equation (5) with \( S(q_y) \) as estimated from \textsc{powheg}, the measured parton level leptonic asymmetry in the full kinematic region is \( A_{FB}^{lep} = 0.094_+0.024^-0.017 \).

To check the consistency of the measured \( A_{FB}^{lep} \), the sample is divided in positive and negative charged leptons, and in the electrons and muons channels. \( A_{FB}^{lep} \) is measured separately in all the four sub-samples using the same procedure as for the combined measurement. The results, shown in Table 3, are all consistent with the measured value in the combined sample.

Figure 3. Asymmetric component \( A(q_y) \) of the signed rapidity distribution \( q_y \), as measured in the data (black points) and compared to the \textsc{powheg} prediction (green). A hyperbolic tangent fit to the data and to the prediction is shown as a smooth curve of same colours. The dark (light) grey bands shows the statistical (total) uncertainty on the fit result.

Table 3. Measurement of \( A_{FB}^{lep} \) in \( t^+t^- \), electrons and muons sub-samples.

| Sub-sample | measured \( A_{FB}^{lep} \) |
|------------|---------------------------|
| Positive   | 0.125_+0.054^-0.048       |
| Negative   | 0.063_+0.049^-0.042       |
| Electrons  | 0.062_+0.052^-0.049       |
| Muons      | 0.119_+0.019^-0.017       |
The measured value of $A_{FB}^{lep}$ is in good agreement with the D0 measurement $A_{FB}^{lep} = 0.118 \pm 0.032$, and can be compared to the fixed order NLO QCD+EW prediction $0.038 \pm 0.003$ [3].

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