Improved Direct Measurement of the Parity-Violation Parameter $A_b$ Using a Mass Tag and Momentum-Weighted Track Charge

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Abstract

We present an improved direct measurement of the parity-violation parameter $A_b$ in the $Z$ boson–$b$ quark coupling using a self-calibrating track-charge technique applied to a sample enriched in $Z \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ events via the topological reconstruction of the $B$ hadron mass. Manipulation of the SLC electron-beam polarization permits the measurement of $A_b$ to be made independently of other $Z$-pole coupling parameters. From the 1996-98 sample of 400,000 hadronic $Z$ decays, produced with an average beam polarization of 73.4%, we find $A_b = 0.906 \pm 0.022\text{(stat.)} \pm 0.023\text{(syst.)}$.

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Measurements of $b$ quark production asymmetries at the $Z^0$ pole determine the extent of parity violation in the $Zb\bar{b}$ coupling. At Born level, the differential cross section for the process $e^+e^- \rightarrow Z^0 \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ can be expressed as a function of the polar angle $\theta$ of the $b$ quark relative to the electron beam direction,

$$\sigma^b(\cos \theta) \equiv d\sigma_b / d\cos \theta \propto (1 - A_e P_e)(1 + \cos^2 \theta) + 2A_b(A_e - P_e) \cos \theta,$$

where $P_e$ is the longitudinal polarization of the electron beam ($P_e > 0$ for predominantly right-handed polarized beam). The parameter $A_f = 2v_f a_f/(v_f^2 + a_f^2)$, where $v_f$ ($a_f$) is the vector (axial vector) coupling of the fermion $f$ to the $Z^0$ boson, with $f = e$ or $b$, expresses the extent of parity violation in the $Zf\bar{f}$ coupling.

From the conventional forward-backward asymmetries formed with an unpolarized electron beam ($P_e = 0$), such as that used by the CERN Large Electron-Positron Collider (LEP) experiments, only the product $A_eA_b$ of parity-violation parameters can be measured [1]. With a longitudinally polarized electron beam, however, it is possible to measure $A_b$ independently of $A_e$ by fitting simultaneously to the differential cross sections of Eq. (1) formed separately for predominantly left- and right-handed beam. The resulting direct measurement of $A_b$ is largely independent of propagator effects that modify the effective weak mixing angle, and thus is complementary to other electroweak asymmetry measurements performed at the $Z^0$ pole.

In this Letter, we present a measurement of $A_b$ based on the use of an inclusive vertex mass tag (improved relative to that of previous publications due to the use of an upgraded vertex detector) to select $Z \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ events, and the net momentum-weighted track charge [2] to identify the charge of the underlying quark. This result, incorporating data collected during the 1996-98 runs of the Stanford Linear Collider (SLC), is over twice as precise as that of our previous publication [4], which was based on data from 1993-95.

The operation of the SLC with a polarized electron beam has been described elsewhere [5]. During the 1996-98 run, the SLC Large Detector (SLD) [6] recorded an integrated luminosity of 14.0 pb$^{-1}$, at a mean center-of-mass energy of 91.24 GeV, and with a luminosity-weighted mean electron-beam polarization of $|P_e| = 0.734 \pm 0.004$ [3]. The 1996-98 run of the SLD detector incorporated the upgraded VXD3 CCD pixel vertex detector [7], which featured a greater coverage in $\cos \theta$, as well as a larger outer radius and substantially less material per layer, than that of the VXD2 vertex detector [8] in place from 1993-95.

The SLD measures charged particle tracks with the Central Drift Chamber (CDC), which is immersed in a uniform axial magnetic field of 0.6T. The VXD3 vertex detector provides an accurate measure of particle trajectories close to the beam axis. For the 1996-98 data, the combined $r\phi$ ($rz$) impact parameter resolution of the CDC and VXD3 is 7.7 (9.6) $\mu$m at high momentum, and 34 (34) $\mu$m at $p_{\perp} \sqrt{\sin \theta} = 1$ GeV/c, where $p_{\perp}$ is the momentum transverse to the beam direction, and $r$ ($z$) is the coordinate perpendicular (parallel) to the beam axis. The combined momentum resolution in the plane perpendicular to the beam axis is $\delta p_{\perp}/p_{\perp} = \sqrt{(0.01)^2 + (0.0026 p_{\perp} / \text{GeV/c})^2}$. The thrust axis is reconstructed using the Liquid Argon Calorimeter, which covers the angular range $|\cos \theta| < 0.98$.

The details of the analysis procedure are similar to those of the 1993-95 sample analysis. Events are classified as hadronic $Z^0$ decays if they: (1) contain at least seven well-measured tracks (as described in Ref. [6]); (2) exhibit a visible charged energy of at least 20 GeV; and (3) have a thrust axis polar angle satisfying $|\cos \theta_{\text{thrust}}| < 0.7$. The resulting hadronic
sample from the 1996-98 data consists of 245,048 events with a non-hadronic background estimated to be < 0.1%.

We select against multi-jet events in order to reduce the dependence of the measured value of $A_b$ on the effects of gluon radiation and inter-hemisphere correlation. Events are discarded if they are found to have four or more jets by the JADE jet-finding algorithm with $y_{cut} = 0.02$ [9], using reconstructed charged tracks as input. In addition, any event found to have three or more jets with $y_{cut} = 0.1$ is discarded.

To increase the $Z^0 \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ content of the sample, a tagging procedure based on the invariant mass of 3-dimensional topologically reconstructed secondary decay vertices is applied [10]. The mass of the reconstructed vertex is corrected for missing transverse momentum relative to the reconstructed $B$ hadron flight direction in order to partially account for neutral particles. The requirement that the event contain at least one secondary vertex with mass greater than 2 GeV/c$^2$ results in a sample of 36,936 candidate $Z^0 \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ decays. The purity (97%) and efficiency (77%) of this sample are calculated from the data by comparing the rates for finding a high mass vertex in either a single or both hemispheres, where the two hemispheres are defined relative to the plane perpendicular to the thrust axis. This procedure assumes a-priori knowledge of the small $udsc$ tagging efficiency, as well as the size of inter-hemisphere correlations, both of which are taken from Monte Carlo (MC) simulation. This procedure also assumes knowledge of the $Z \rightarrow c\bar{c}$ and $Z \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ branching fractions, which are assigned their Standard Model values of 0.172 and 0.216, respectively.

We construct a signed thrust axis $\hat{T}$, which provides an estimate of the direction of the negatively-charged $b$ quark, as follows. Using all track-charge quality tracks, as defined in Ref. [11], we form the track-direction-signed ($Q$) and unsigned ($Q_+$) momentum-weighted track-charge sums

$$Q = \sum_{\text{tracks}} q_j \cdot \text{sgn}(\vec{p}_j \cdot \hat{T})|(\vec{p}_j \cdot \hat{T})|^{\kappa},$$

$$Q_+ = \sum_{\text{tracks}} q_j |(\vec{p}_j \cdot \hat{T})|^{\kappa},$$

where $q_j$ and $\vec{p}_j$ are the charge and momentum of track $j$, respectively. $\hat{T}$ is chosen as the unit vector parallel to the thrust axis that renders $Q > 0$. We use $\kappa = 0.5$ to maximize the analyzing power of the track-charge algorithm for $Z^0 \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ events, resulting in a correct-assignment probability of 70%. Fig. 1 shows the $T_z = \cos \theta_{\text{thrust}}$ distribution of the $b$-enriched sample separately for left- and right-handed electron beams. Clear forward-backward asymmetries are observed, with respective signs as expected from the cross-section formula in Eq. 1.

The value of $A_b$ is extracted via a maximum likelihood fit to the differential cross section (see Eq. 1)

$$\rho^i(A_b) = (1 - A_e P_e^i)(1 + (T_z^i)^2) + 2(A_e - P_e^i)T_z^i[A_b f_b^i(2p_b^i - 1)(1 - \Delta_{QCD,b}) + A_c f_c^i(2p_c^i - 1)(1 - \Delta_{QCD,c}) + A_{bckg}(1 - f_b^i - f_c^i)(2p_{bckg}^i - 1)],$$

where $P_e^i$ is the signed polarization of the electron beam for event $i$, $f_{b(c)}^i$ the probability that the event is a $Z^0 \rightarrow b\bar{b}(c\bar{c})$ decay (parameterized as a function of the secondary vertex mass),
and $\Delta_{QCD,b,c}$ are final-state QCD corrections, to be discussed below. $A_{bckg}$ is the estimated asymmetry of residual $u\bar{u}, d\bar{d}$, and $s\bar{s}$ final states. The parameters $p$ are estimates of the probability that the sign of $Q$ accurately reflects the charge of the respective underlying quark, and are functions of $|Q|$, as well as the secondary vertex mass and $|T_z|$.

As in our previous publication [4], we measure $p_b$ directly from the data [12]. Defining $Q_b$ ($Q_{\bar{b}}$) to be the track-direction-unsigned momentum-weighted track charge sum for the thrust hemisphere containing the $b$ ($\bar{b}$) quark, the quantities

$$Q_{sum} = Q_b + Q_{\bar{b}}, \quad Q_{dif} = Q_b - Q_{\bar{b}},$$

may be related to the experimental observables defined in Eqs. 2 and 3 respectively: $|Q_{dif}| = |Q|$ and $Q_{sum} = Q_+$. Our MC simulation indicates that the $Q_b$ and $Q_{\bar{b}}$ distributions are approximately Gaussian. In this limit [12],

$$p_b(|Q|) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-\alpha_b|Q|}},$$

with

$$\alpha_b = \frac{2q_{dif}^0}{\sigma_{dif}^2} = \frac{2\sqrt{\langle|Q_{dif}|^2\rangle - \sigma_{dif}^2}}{\sigma_{dif}^2},$$

where $q_{dif}^0$ and $\sigma_{dif}$ are the mean and width, respectively, of the Gaussian $Q_{dif}$ distribution. The parameter $\alpha_b$, whose magnitude depends upon the separation between the $b$ and $\bar{b}$ track-sum distributions via the observable $\langle|Q_{dif}|^2\rangle$, provides a measure of the analyzing power of the $b$-quark direction estimator $\hat{T}$. Figure 2 compares the distributions of the observable combinations $|Q_{dif}|$ and $Q_+$ between data and MC.

In the absence of a correlation between $Q_b$ and $Q_{\bar{b}}$, $\sigma_{dif} = \sigma_{sum}$, where $\sigma_{sum}$ is the observed width of the $Q_+$ distribution. Thus $\alpha_b$ can be derived from experimental observables. In the presence of a correlation, $\sigma_{dif} = (1 + \lambda)\sigma_{sum}$, where $\lambda$ characterizes the strength of the correlation, which can be determined from the MC simulation. For JETSET 7.4 [13] with parton shower evolution, string fragmentation, and full detector simulation, $\lambda$ is found to be 0.040. The effects of light flavor contamination are taken into account by adjusting the observed widths $\sigma_{sum}^2$ and $\langle|Q_{dif}|^2\rangle$, using the magnitude and width of the light-flavor and $c\bar{c}$ contributions estimated from the MC. This correction increases the value of $\alpha_b$ by 2% to 0.2944 ± 0.0078, bringing it into good agreement with the value of 0.2949 ± 0.0007 extracted from the $Z \to b\bar{b}$ simulation.

Final-state gluon radiation reduces the observed asymmetry from its Born-level value. This effect is incorporated in our analysis by applying a correction $\Delta_{QCD}(|\cos \theta|)$ to the likelihood function (Eq. 4). Calculation of the quantity $\Delta_{QCD}$ has been performed by several groups [14].

For an unbiased sample of $b\bar{b}$ events, correcting for final-state gluon radiation increases the measured asymmetry by $\sim 3\%$. However, QCD radiative effects are mitigated by the use of the thrust axis to estimate the $b$-quark direction, the $Z^0 \to b\bar{b}$ enrichment algorithm, the self-calibration procedure, and the cut on the number of jets. An MC simulation of the analysis chain indicates that these effects can be represented by a $\cos \theta$-independent suppression factor, $x_{QCD} = 0.074$, such that $\Delta_{QCD} = x_{QCD}\Delta_{QCD}^{TH}$. 


Effects due to gluon splitting to $b\bar{b}$ and $c\bar{c}$ have been estimated by rescaling the JETSET simulation production of such quark pairs to current world-average gluon splitting measurements [15], leading to a correction of +0.3% on the value of $A_b$. Additional radiative effects, such as those due to initial-state radiation and $\gamma/Z$ interference, lead to a further correction of −0.2% to the measured value of $A_b$.

While, as described above, the overall tagging efficiency is derived from data, the dependence of the $b$-tagging efficiency upon the secondary vertex mass must be estimated from the MC simulation, as must be the charm correct-signing probability $p_c$. The value of $A_c$ is set to its Standard Model value of 0.67, with an uncertainty commensurate with that of [16]. The value of $A_{bckg}$ is set to zero, with an uncertainty corresponding to the full physical range $|A_{bckg}| < 1$. The resulting value of $A_b$ extracted from the fit is $A_b = 0.907 \pm 0.022$ (stat).

This result is found to be insensitive to the value of the $b$-tag mass cut, and the value of weighting exponent $\kappa$ used in the definition (2) and (3) of the momentum-weighted track charge sum.

We have investigated a number of systematic effects which can change the measured value of $A_b$; these are summarized in Table I. The uncertainty in $\alpha_b$ due to the statistical uncertainties in $\langle |Q_{dif}|^2 \rangle$ and $\sigma_{sum}^2$ corresponds to a 1.6% uncertainty in $A_b$. The uncertainty in the hemisphere correlation parameter $\lambda$ is estimated by varying fragmentation parameters within JETSET 7.4, and by comparison with the HERWIG 5.7 [17] fragmentation model. The resulting uncertainty in $A_b$ is 1.4%. The sensitivity of the result to the shape of the underlying $Q_b$ distribution is tested by generating various triangular distributions as well as double Gaussian distributions with offset means. The test distributions are constrained to yield a $Q_{sum}$ distribution consistent with data, and the total uncertainty is found to be 0.8%. In addition, while the mean value of the self-calibration parameter $\alpha_b$ is constrained by the data, it has a $\cos \theta$ dependence due to the fall-off of the tracking efficiency at high $|\cos \theta|$ which must be estimated using the simulation, leading to a 0.4% uncertainty in $A_b$.

The extracted value of $A_b$ is sensitive to our estimate of the $Z^0 \rightarrow c\bar{c}$ background, which tends to reduce the observed asymmetry due to the positive charge of the underlying $c$ quark. The uncertainty in the purity estimate of $96.9 \pm 0.3\%$ is dominated by the uncertainties in the charm tagging efficiency ($\epsilon_c = 0.0218 \pm 0.0004$) and the statistical uncertainty of the bottom tagging efficiency determined from data, leading to a 0.5% uncertainty in $A_b$. An outline of the charmed quark efficiency uncertainty determination can be found in Ref. [18]; the uncertainty is dominated by empirical constraints on charmed hadron production rates and on $K^0$ production in the decay of charmed mesons. Uncertainties in the measured values of $R_b$ and $R_c$ contribute, through the tag purity, to uncertainties in $A_b$ of 0.1% and 0.0%, respectively.

Agreement between the data and MC simulation charged track multiplicity distributions is obtained only after the inclusion of additional ad-hoc tracking inefficiency. This random inefficiency was parameterized as a function of total track momentum, and averages 0.4 charged tracks per event, leading to an overall change of +1.3% in $A_b$. As a check, we employ an alternative approach, matching the efficiency of the linking of the independent CDC and VXD3 track segments between data and MC simulation. This yields a change of +0.5% in $A_b$; we take the difference of 0.8% as an estimate of the systematic error on the modeling of the tracking efficiency. Combining all systematic uncertainties in quadrature yields a total relative systematic uncertainty of 2.6%.
The extracted value of $A_b$ depends on a number of model parameters, as follows. Increases by 0.01 in the values of $A_c$, $R_b$, $R_c$, and the per-event rate of $b\bar{b}$ production via gluon splitting, lead to changes in $A_b$ of +0.0002, -0.0055, +0.0002, and +0.0110, respectively.

In conclusion, we have exploited the highly polarized SLC electron beam and precise vertexing capabilities of the SLD detector to perform a direct measurement of $A_b = 0.906 \pm 0.022\text{(stat)} \pm 0.023\text{(syst)}$, from the 1996-98 SLD data sample. Combined with our previously published result [4] based on the 1993-95 data sample, we find

$$A_b = 0.907 \pm 0.020\text{(stat)} \pm 0.024\text{(syst)},$$

for the full 1993-98 data sample. This result is in good agreement with the Standard Model prediction of 0.935, and represents an improvement of over a factor of two in the precision of the determination of $A_b$ via the use of momentum-weighted track charge.

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FIG. 1. Polar angle distributions for track-charge-signed $Z \to b\bar{b}$ candidates, separately for left- and right-handed electron beam. The shaded histogram represents the contribution from non-$b\bar{b}$ background, estimated as described in the text. The analysis employs a cut of $|\cos \theta| < 0.7$. 
FIG. 2. Comparison between data (points) and MC (histogram) for the observables $|Q_{\text{sum}}|$ and $|Q_{\text{dif}}|$ (see text), for $Z \rightarrow b \bar{b}$ candidates.
TABLES

| Error Source                  | Variation               | $\delta A_b/A_b$ |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| **Self-Calibration**         |                         |                  |
| $\alpha_b$ statistics        | $\pm 1\sigma$           | 1.6%             |
| $\lambda_b$ Correlation      | JETSET, HERWIG          | 1.4%             |
| $P(Q_b)$ shape               | Different shapes         | 0.8%             |
| $\cos \theta$ shape of $\alpha_b$ | MC Shape vs Flat     | 0.4%             |
| Light Flavor                 | 50% of correction       | 0.2%             |
| **Analysis**                 |                         |                  |
| Tag Composition              | Procedure from [18]     | 0.5%             |
| Detector Modeling            | Compare tracking eff. corrections | 0.8% |
| Beam Polarization            | $\pm 0.5\%$             | 0.5%             |
| QCD                          | Full correction         | 0.3%             |
| Gluon Splitting              | Full Correction         | 0.1%             |
| $A_c$                        | $0.67 \pm 0.04$         | 0.1%             |
| $A_{bckg}$                   | $0 \pm 0.50$            | 0.2%             |
| **Total**                    |                         | 2.6%             |

**TABLE I.** Relative systematic errors on the measurement of $A_b$.

List of Figures

1 Polar angle distributions for track-charge-signed $Z \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ candidates, separately for left- and right-handed electron beam. The shaded histogram represents the contribution from non-$b\bar{b}$ background, estimated as described in the text. The analysis employs a cut of $|\cos \theta| < 0.7$. ....................... 8

2 Comparison between data (points) and MC (histogram) for the observables $|Q_{sum}|$ and $|Q_{dif}|$ (see text), for $Z \rightarrow b\bar{b}$ candidates. ....................... 9

List of Tables

I Relative systematic errors on the measurement of $A_b$. ....................... 10
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