

CERN-EP/2016-118  
2016/05/31

CMS-TOP-13-008

# Measurement of the W boson helicity fractions in the decays of top quark pairs to lepton+jets final states produced in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV

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## Abstract

The W boson helicity fractions from top quark decays in  $t\bar{t}$  events are measured using data from proton-proton collisions at a centre-of-mass energy of 8 TeV. The data were collected in 2012 with the CMS detector at the LHC, corresponding to an integrated luminosity of  $19.8 \text{ fb}^{-1}$ . Events are reconstructed with either one muon or one electron, along with four jets in the final state, with two of the jets being identified as originating from b quarks. The measured helicity fractions from both channels are combined, yielding  $F_0 = 0.681 \pm 0.012$  (stat)  $\pm 0.023$  (syst),  $F_L = 0.323 \pm 0.008$  (stat)  $\pm 0.014$  (syst), and  $F_R = -0.004 \pm 0.005$  (stat)  $\pm 0.014$  (syst) for the longitudinal, left-, and right-handed components of the helicity, respectively. These measurements of the W boson helicity fractions are the most accurate to date and they agree with the predictions from the standard model.

*Submitted to Physics Letters B*



## 1 Introduction

The data from proton-proton (pp) collisions produced at the CERN LHC provide an excellent environment to investigate properties of the top quark, in the context of its production and decay, with unprecedented precision. Such measurements enable rigorous tests of the standard model (SM), and deviations from the SM predictions would indicate signs of possible new physics [1–4].

In particular, the W boson helicity fractions in top quark decays are very sensitive to the Wtb vertex structure. The W boson helicity fractions are defined as the partial decay rate for a given helicity state divided by the total decay rate:  $F_{L,R,0} \equiv \Gamma_{L,R,0}/\Gamma$ , where  $F_L$ ,  $F_R$ , and  $F_0$  are the left-handed, right-handed, and longitudinal helicity fractions, respectively. The helicity fractions are expected to be  $F_0 = 0.687 \pm 0.005$ ,  $F_L = 0.311 \pm 0.005$ , and  $F_R = 0.0017 \pm 0.0001$  at next-to-next-to-leading order (NNLO) in the SM, including electroweak effects, for a top quark mass  $m_t = 172.8 \pm 1.3 \text{ GeV}$  [5]. Anomalous Wtb couplings, i.e. those that do not arise in the SM, would alter these values.

Experimentally, the W boson helicity can be measured through the study of angular distributions of the top quark decay products. The helicity angle  $\theta^*$  is defined as the angle between the direction of the down-type fermion arising from the W boson decay and the reversed direction of the top quark, both in the rest frame of the W boson. The distribution for the cosine of the helicity angle depends on the helicity fractions in the following way,

$$\frac{1}{\Gamma} \frac{d\Gamma}{d \cos \theta^*} = \frac{3}{8} (1 - \cos \theta^*)^2 F_L + \frac{3}{4} (\sin \theta^*)^2 F_0 + \frac{3}{8} (1 + \cos \theta^*)^2 F_R. \quad (1)$$

The helicity fractions of W bosons in top quark decays have been previously measured at the LHC, using samples containing  $t\bar{t}$  events obtained in pp collisions at 7 TeV, and having either one [6, 7] or two [6] charged leptons in the final state. The CMS Collaboration also reported measurements using event topologies that contain one single reconstructed top quark [8], in pp collisions at 8 TeV.

This Letter describes a measurement of the W boson helicity fractions in  $t\bar{t}$  events involving one lepton and multiple jets,  $t\bar{t} \rightarrow (W^+b)(W^-\bar{b}) \rightarrow (\ell^+ \nu_\ell b)(q\bar{q}'\bar{b})$ , and its charge conjugate, where  $\ell$  is an electron or a muon. Final states corresponding to such processes are referred to as lepton+jets. The measurement is performed using pp collisions at centre-of-mass energy of 8 TeV, corresponding to an integrated luminosity of  $19.8 \text{ fb}^{-1}$ , collected during 2012 by the CMS detector.

## 2 The CMS detector

The CMS detector is a multipurpose apparatus of cylindrical design with respect to the proton beams. The main features of the detector relevant for this analysis are briefly described here. Charged particle trajectories are measured by a silicon pixel and strip tracker, covering the pseudorapidity range  $|\eta| < 2.5$ . The inner tracker is immersed in a 3.8 T magnetic field provided by a superconducting solenoid of 6 m in diameter that also encompasses several calorimeters. A lead tungstate crystal electromagnetic calorimeter (ECAL), and a brass and scintillator hadronic calorimeter surround the tracking volume and cover the region  $|\eta| < 3$ . Quartz fibre and steel hadron forward calorimeters extend the coverage to  $|\eta| \leq 5$ . Muons are identified in gas ionization detectors embedded in the steel return yoke of the magnet. The data for this analysis are recorded using a two-level trigger system. A more detailed description of

the CMS detector, together with a definition of the coordinate system used and the relevant kinematic variables, can be found in Ref. [9].

### 3 Data and simulated samples

Signal events corresponding to top quark pairs that decay to lepton+jets final states are expected to contain one isolated lepton (electron or muon) together with at least four jets, two of which originate from b quark fragmentation. Such events are referred to separately as e+jets or  $\mu$ +jets, respectively, or when combined as  $\ell$ +jets. Background events containing a single isolated lepton and four reconstructed jets arise mainly from processes that produce events containing a single top quark, processes that produce multijet events in association with a W boson that decays leptonically (W+jets), or Drell–Yan processes accompanied by multiple jets (DY+jets) when one of the leptons is misidentified as a jet or goes undetected. Multijet processes can also mimic lepton+jets final states, if a jet is reconstructed as an electromagnetic shower or, more unlikely, if a nonprompt muon from a hadron decay in flight fulfils all identification criteria of a prompt muon.

The Monte Carlo (MC) simulated samples are used to account for detector resolution and acceptance effects, as well as to estimate the contribution from background processes that have characteristics similar to lepton+jets final states in  $t\bar{t}$  decays. A signal  $t\bar{t}$  sample, which also provides a reference for the SM, is simulated using MADGRAPH v5.1.3.30 [10] with matrix elements having up to three extra partons in the final state. The parton distribution function (PDF) set CTEQ6L1 [11] is used when simulating the reference  $t\bar{t}$  sample. The MADGRAPH generator is interfaced with PYTHIA v6.426 [12], tune Z2\* [13], to simulate hadronisation and parton fragmentation, and also with TAUOLA v27.121.5 [14] to simulate  $\tau$  lepton decays. This SM reference  $t\bar{t}$  sample is simulated assuming  $m_t = 172.5$  GeV, which results in the following leading-order (LO) W boson helicity fractions for that sample:

$$F_0^{\text{SM}} = 0.6902, \quad F_L^{\text{SM}} = 0.3089, \quad F_R^{\text{SM}} = 0.0009. \quad (2)$$

Single top quark events in the  $s$ ,  $t$ , and  $tW$  channels are generated using POWHEG v1.0 [15] and PYTHIA interfaced with TAUOLA, with the PDF set CTEQ6M [11]. Background W+jets and DY+jets processes are simulated using MADGRAPH with the PDF set CTEQ6L1, followed by PYTHIA for fragmentation and hadronisation. Finally, background multijet processes are simulated using the PYTHIA event generator.

Corrections are applied to the simulated samples so that resolutions, energy scales, and efficiencies as functions of  $p_T$  and  $\eta$  of jets [16] and leptons [17] measured in data are well described. The effect of multiple pp collisions occurring in the same bunch crossing (pileup) is also taken into account in the simulation.

The data samples selected for this measurement were recorded using inclusive single-lepton triggers, which require at least one isolated electron (muon) with  $p_T > 27$  (24) GeV, used to define the e+jets ( $\mu$ +jets) data sample.

The decay products of candidate top quarks are reconstructed using the CMS particle-flow (PF) algorithm, described in detail elsewhere [18, 19]. Individual charged particles identified as coming from pileup interactions are removed from the event. Effects of neutral particles from pileup interactions are mitigated by applying corrections based on event properties. Leptons are required to originate from the primary vertex of the event [20]. A lepton is determined to be isolated using the variable  $I_{\text{rel}}$ , computed as the total transverse momentum of all particles (except the lepton itself) contained within a cone of radius 0.4, centred on the lepton

direction, relative to the transverse momentum of the lepton. Electrons are identified by using a multivariate analysis (MVA) [21] based on information from the inner tracker and the ECAL. Events are selected for the e+jets data sample if the identified electron has an MVA discriminant value greater than 0.9, is determined to be isolated with  $I_{\text{rel}} < 0.10$ , has  $p_T > 30$  GeV, and  $|\eta| < 2.5$ . Muons are identified by matching information from the inner tracker and the muon spectrometer [22]. Events are selected for the  $\mu$ +jets data sample if they contain an isolated muon with  $I_{\text{rel}} < 0.12$ ,  $p_T > 26$  GeV, and  $|\eta| < 2.1$ . Events with at least one additional isolated electron or muon are vetoed to reject backgrounds from dileptonic decay modes of  $t\bar{t}$  and DY+jets processes. Jets are reconstructed [16] using the anti- $k_T$  clustering algorithm [23], with a distance parameter of 0.5. The selected or vetoed leptons described above are not allowed to be clustered into jets, to avoid ambiguities.

The event selection requires at least four reconstructed jets having  $|\eta| < 2.4$ , of which the four most energetic jets are required to have  $p_T$  higher than 55, 45, 35, and 20 GeV. The transverse momentum imbalance of the event  $\vec{p}_T^{\text{miss}}$  is determined by summing the negative transverse momentum over all reconstructed particles, excluding those charged particles not associated with the primary vertex.

The transverse mass of the W boson is defined as  $M_T = \sqrt{2p_T^\ell p_T^{\text{miss}}(1 - \cos(\Delta\phi))}$ , where  $p_T^\ell$  is the transverse momentum of the lepton,  $p_T^{\text{miss}}$  is the magnitude of  $\vec{p}_T^{\text{miss}}$ , and  $\Delta\phi$  is the angle in the  $(x, y)$  plane between the direction of the lepton and  $\vec{p}_T^{\text{miss}}$ . To reduce the multijet background and suppress dilepton events from  $t\bar{t}$  processes, events are required to have  $30 < M_T < 200$  GeV. All backgrounds are further suppressed by requiring that at least two jets, each with  $p_T > 20$  GeV, be identified as originating from b quarks. The combined secondary vertex algorithm [24, 25] tags b quark jets with an efficiency of about 70% and mistags jets originating from gluons, u, d, or s quarks with a probability of about 1%. The residual multijet backgrounds, already strongly suppressed by the b tagging requirement described above, are estimated by normalizing simulated event samples to yields in control data samples. The control samples are defined by selection criteria which are similar to those for the signal, but which have no b tagging requirement, and have  $M_T < 30$  GeV for the  $\mu$ +jets channel or have an electron MVA discriminant value smaller than 0.5 for the e+jets channel. The estimated amount of multijet events is  $\approx 2\%$  of the e+jets sample, and less than 1% of the  $\mu$ +jets sample. The contributions of all other residual backgrounds are determined using simulation.

## 4 Reconstruction of the $t\bar{t}$ system and reweighting method

The reconstruction of the  $t\bar{t}$  system, described in detail in Ref. [7], relies on testing the selected lepton, the measured  $\vec{p}_T^{\text{miss}}$ , and all selected jets for their compatibility with the top quark decay products from the leptonic ( $t \rightarrow bW \rightarrow b\ell\nu$ ) and hadronic ( $t \rightarrow bW \rightarrow bq\bar{q}'$ ) branches. The unmeasured component of the neutrino momentum  $p_z^\nu$  is determined by requiring the  $t\bar{t}$  system to be consistent with the invariant masses of two top quarks and two W bosons. With this requirement, b jets are correctly assigned to the leptonic (hadronic) branch in about 74% (71%) of signal events. A constrained kinematic fit is then performed, where the momenta of the measured jets and lepton are allowed to vary within their resolutions to better comply with the mass constraints, leading to an improved determination of  $p_z^\nu$  and a more accurate reconstruction of the  $t\bar{t}$  system. In about 5–7% of the selected events, the fit fails to find a solution that is compatible with the constraints and such events are discarded. The number of data events passing all selection criteria, including the fit convergence, is 71 458 in the e+jets sample and 70 986 in the  $\mu$ +jets sample. A study using simulations normalised to the most precise theoretical cross sections available to date [26–29] indicates that the final sample composition

is largely dominated by  $t\bar{t}$  events, with about 82% of events from the  $\ell$ +jets decay mode,  $\approx 10\%$  from other decay modes (including  $\tau$  leptons), and  $\approx 3.5\%$  of the events from single top quark processes. The remaining events come from backgrounds not containing top quarks in the final state.

The method [7] employed to measure the W boson helicity fractions  $(F_L, F_0, F_R) \equiv \vec{F}$  consists of maximising a binned Poisson likelihood function constructed using the number of observed events in data  $N_{\text{data}}(i)$  and expected events from MC simulation  $N_{\text{MC}}(i; \vec{F})$ , in each bin  $i$  of the reconstructed  $\cos \theta_{\text{rec}}^*$  distribution,

$$\mathcal{L}(\vec{F}) = \prod_i \frac{N_{\text{MC}}(i; \vec{F})^{N_{\text{data}}(i)}}{[N_{\text{data}}(i)]!} \exp[-N_{\text{MC}}(i; \vec{F})]. \quad (3)$$

While the down-type fermion in the leptonic branch of  $t\bar{t}$  decays is easily identified as a charged lepton, the down-type jet arising from the W boson decay in the hadronic branch of  $t\bar{t}$  decays can not be experimentally distinguished from the up-type jet. Due to this ambiguity, only the absolute value  $|\cos \theta_{\text{rec}}^*|$  can be reconstructed for the hadronic branch. Hence, only the leptonic branch measurement of  $\cos \theta_{\text{rec}}^*$  is used in this analysis. The expected numbers of events from background processes,  $N_{W+\text{jets}}(i)$ ,  $N_{\text{DY}+\text{jets}}(i)$ , and  $N_{\text{multijet}}(i)$  represent W boson production in association with multiple jets, Drell-Yan production in association with multiple jets, and production of multiple jets, which do not depend on the W boson helicity fractions. For the processes containing top quarks, the number of expected events in a given bin  $i$  is modified by reweighting each event in that bin by a factor  $w$ , defined for each decaying branch as

$$w_{\text{lep/had/single-t}}(\cos \theta_{\text{gen}}^*; \vec{F}) \equiv \frac{\frac{3}{8}F_L(1 - \cos \theta_{\text{gen}}^*)^2 + \frac{3}{4}F_0 \sin^2 \theta_{\text{gen}}^* + \frac{3}{8}F_R(1 + \cos \theta_{\text{gen}}^*)^2}{\frac{3}{8}F_L^{\text{SM}}(1 - \cos \theta_{\text{gen}}^*)^2 + \frac{3}{4}F_0^{\text{SM}} \sin^2 \theta_{\text{gen}}^* + \frac{3}{8}F_R^{\text{SM}}(1 + \cos \theta_{\text{gen}}^*)^2}, \quad (4)$$

where  $\theta_{\text{gen}}^*$  is the helicity angle (specified at matrix element level) of a particular decay branch, and  $F_L^{\text{SM}}, F_0^{\text{SM}}, F_R^{\text{SM}}$  are given in Eq. (2). Therefore, the number of expected events, as a function of the helicity fractions to be measured, is

$$N_{\text{MC}}(i; \vec{F}) = N_{t\bar{t}}(i; \vec{F}) + N_{\text{single-t}}(i; \vec{F}) + N_{W+\text{jets}}(i) + N_{\text{DY}+\text{jets}}(i) + N_{\text{multijet}}(i), \quad (5)$$

where

$$N_{t\bar{t}}(i; \vec{F}) = \mathcal{F}_{t\bar{t}} \left[ \sum_{t\bar{t} \text{ events}} w_{\text{lep}}(\cos \theta_{\text{gen}}^*(i); \vec{F}) \times w_{\text{had}}(\cos \theta_{\text{gen}}^*(i); \vec{F}) \right], \quad (6)$$

$$N_{\text{single-t}}(i; \vec{F}) = \sum_{\text{single-t events}} w_{\text{single-t}}(\cos \theta_{\text{gen}}^*(i); \vec{F}) \quad (7)$$

represent the expected number of events for processes involving top quark pair and single top quark production, respectively. The normalisation factor  $\mathcal{F}_{t\bar{t}}$  for the  $t\bar{t}$  sample is a single free parameter in the fit across all bins. The expected cross section for the simulated reference  $t\bar{t}$  sample is  $252.9_{-14.5}^{+13.3}$  pb, calculated at NNLO and next-to-next-to-leading-log (NNLL) accuracy [26, 27], and describes the data well. The fitted values of  $\mathcal{F}_{t\bar{t}}$  in both e+jets and  $\mu$ +jets channels are compatible with 1.00 within 3%. The overall normalisation factor for simulated single top quark events is not modified in the fit and the uncertainty in the assumed cross section is considered as a source of systematic uncertainty. Finally, the unitarity constraint ( $F_L + F_0 + F_R = 1$ ) is imposed, so that one of the helicity fractions, namely  $F_R$ , is bound by the measurement of the other two.

Table 1: Measurements of the W boson helicity fractions from lepton+jets final states in  $t\bar{t}$  decays, together with a breakdown of systematic uncertainties. The helicity fractions  $F_0$  and  $F_L$  are measured simultaneously and are strongly anti-correlated, as indicated by a correlation coefficient  $\rho_{0,L}$ , because  $F_R$  is derived from the unitarity condition.

	e+jets			$\mu$ +jets			$\ell$ +jets		
	W boson helicity fractions								
	$F_0$	$F_L$	$F_R$	$F_0$	$F_L$	$F_R$	$F_0$	$F_L$	$F_R$
Value	0.705	0.304	-0.009	0.685	0.328	-0.013	0.681	0.323	-0.004
$\rho_{0,L}$	-0.950			-0.957			-0.959		
	Uncertainties								
	$\pm \Delta F_0$	$\pm \Delta F_L$	$\pm \Delta F_R$	$\pm \Delta F_0$	$\pm \Delta F_L$	$\pm \Delta F_R$	$\pm \Delta F_0$	$\pm \Delta F_L$	$\pm \Delta F_R$
Statistical	0.013	0.009	0.005	0.013	0.009	0.005	0.012	0.008	0.005
Systematic	0.037	0.020	0.021	0.024	0.014	0.017	0.023	0.014	0.014
Total	0.039	0.022	0.022	0.027	0.016	0.017	0.026	0.016	0.014
	Breakdown of systematic uncertainties								
	$\pm \Delta F_0$	$\pm \Delta F_L$		$\pm \Delta F_0$	$\pm \Delta F_L$		$\pm \Delta F_0$	$\pm \Delta F_L$	
JES	0.004	0.003		0.005	0.003		0.005	0.003	
JER	0.001	0.002		0.004	0.003		0.003	0.003	
b tagging eff.	0.001	$<10^{-3}$		0.001	$<10^{-3}$		0.001	$<10^{-3}$	
Lepton eff.	0.001	0.002		0.001	0.001		0.001	0.001	
Single top normal.	0.002	$<10^{-3}$		0.003	0.001		0.003	0.001	
W +jets bkg.	0.008	0.001		0.007	0.001		0.007	0.001	
DY+jets bkg.	0.002	$<10^{-3}$		0.001	$<10^{-3}$		0.001	$<10^{-3}$	
Multijet bkg.	0.023	0.007		0.007	0.003		0.008	0.001	
Top quark mass	0.012	0.008		0.010	0.008		0.010	0.007	
$t\bar{t}$ scales	0.011	0.008		0.014	0.007		0.012	0.007	
$t\bar{t}$ match. scale	0.011	0.007		0.010	0.007		0.009	0.007	
Hadronisation	0.015	0.009		0.005	0.003		0.006	0.004	
Limited MC size	0.002	0.001		0.002	0.001		0.002	0.001	
Pileup	0.001	0.001		$<10^{-3}$	$<10^{-3}$		0.001	$<10^{-3}$	
$t\bar{t}$ $p_T$ reweight	0.011	0.010		$<10^{-3}$	0.001		$<10^{-3}$	0.002	
PDF	0.004	0.001		0.002	0.001		0.002	0.001	

## 5 Systematic uncertainties

Systematic effects which could potentially bias the measurement of the W boson helicity fractions have been investigated and their corresponding uncertainties determined, as presented in Table 1.

Residual corrections are applied in simulation to the jet energy scale (JES), to account for differences between data and simulation. The momenta of the jets in simulation are also smeared so that the jet energy resolution (JER) in simulation agrees with that in data. These corrections and smearings are propagated into  $\vec{p}_T^{\text{miss}}$  to correct its momentum scale. The uncertainties [16] associated with the JES and JER corrections are also propagated to  $\vec{p}_T^{\text{miss}}$ , and the full analysis, including the  $t\bar{t}$  reconstruction and the resulting measurements of the W boson helicity fractions, is repeated. Scale factors are used to correct the b tagging efficiency in simulation, where those corrections are shifted by their estimated uncertainties, and the full analysis repeated. Scale factors are also used to correct leptons for their identification, isolation and trigger efficiencies, which are varied within their uncertainties so as to maximize potential shape variations of the

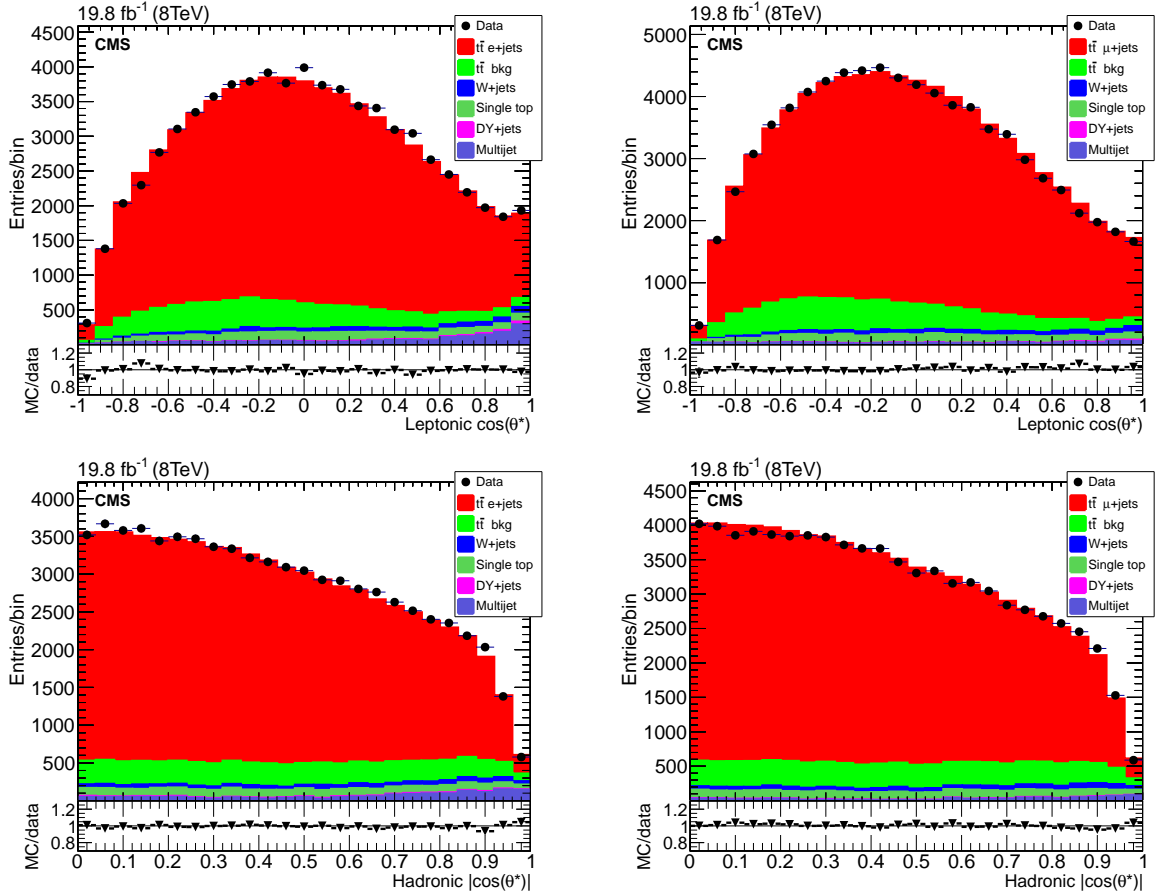


Figure 1: Distributions for the cosine of the helicity angle in the leptonic (upper row) and hadronic (lower row) branches, for the  $e$ +jets (left) and  $\mu$ +jets (right) decay channels. The combined  $\ell$ +jets post-fit measurement of the helicity fractions were used in the simulation of  $t\bar{t}$  and single top quark events. The data are displayed as solid points, simulated samples of  $t\bar{t}$  (signal) processes and the contribution from background processes as histograms. At the bottom of each plot, the ratio between MC simulation and data is displayed. The error bars correspond to the statistical uncertainties.

predicted  $\cos\theta^*$  distributions.

To account for any possible bias of the W boson helicity measurements due to uncertainties in the normalisation of simulated backgrounds, the assumed cross section for each sample is varied individually [7]. An uncertainty of 30% is used for the normalisation of DY+jets, single top quark, and W boson production in association with light-quark or gluon jet production. Since the modelling of the simulated heavy-flavour content of the W +jets sample is known to be inaccurate, an uncertainty of  $^{+100\%}_{-50\%}$  is assumed for simulated events involving a W boson produced in association with b quark jets. The impact of the W +jets and DY+jets normalisation uncertainties in the analysis is small, since they correspond to only a few percent of the sample composition. The normalisation of the multijet background is estimated from control samples and results in an uncertainty of  $^{+50\%}_{-50\%}$  in the  $e$ +jets channel and  $^{+40\%}_{-50\%}$  in the  $\mu$ +jets channel.

Several uncertainties from possible systematic effects related to theoretical modelling of the signal are estimated by replacing the default SM  $t\bar{t}$  samples with alternative  $t\bar{t}$  samples and repeating the entire analysis. Specifically, for the MADGRAPH interfaced with PYTHIA event generation, the default  $m_t$  value of 172.5 GeV is shifted up and down by 1 GeV; the renormal-



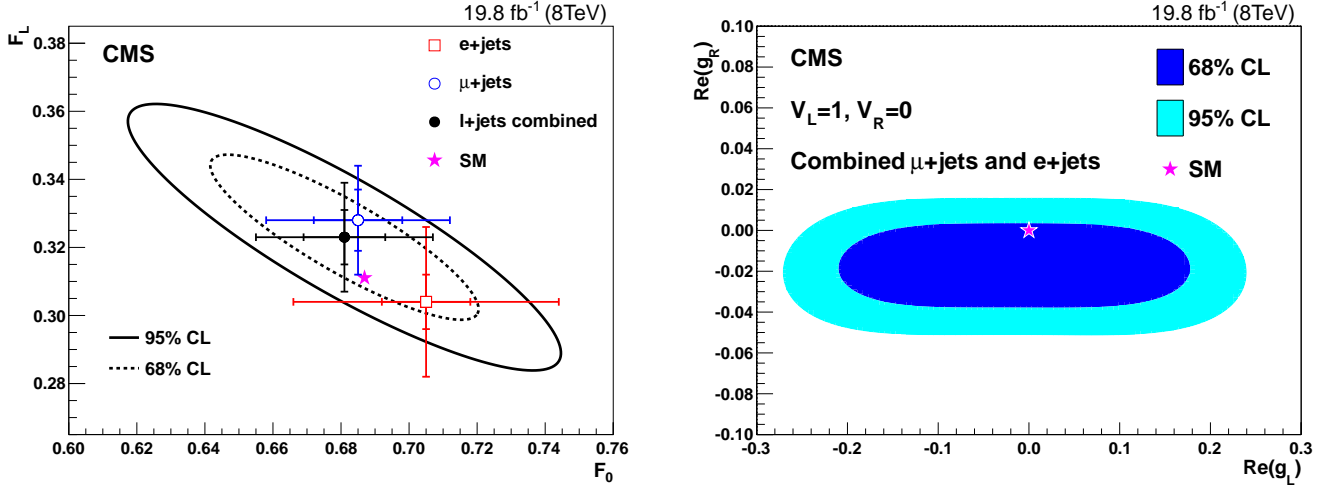


Figure 2: Left: the measured  $W$  boson helicity fractions in the  $(F_0, F_L)$  plane. The dashed and solid ellipses enclose the allowed two-dimensional 68% and 95% CL regions, for the combined  $\ell$ +jets measurement, taking into account the correlations on the total (including systematic) uncertainties. The error bars give the one-dimensional 68% CL interval for the separate  $F_0$  and  $F_L$  measurements, with the inner-tick (outer-tick) mark representing the statistical (total) uncertainty. Right: the corresponding allowed regions for the real components of the anomalous couplings  $g_L$  and  $g_R$  at 68% and 95% CL, for  $V_L = 1$  and  $V_R = 0$ . The SM predictions are shown as stars.

isation and factorisation scales are varied down (up) by a factor of 0.5 (2); the kinematic scale used to match jets to partons (matching threshold) is varied down (up) by factor of 0.5 (2); finally, the parton shower and hadronisation modelling is studied in a  $t\bar{t}$  sample simulated with MC@NLO v3.41 [30] using the PDF set CTEQ6M and interfaced with HERWIG v6.520 [31].

Uncertainties in the helicity fractions arising from the limited size of the simulated  $t\bar{t}$  samples are taken into account, both in the main analysis and in the determination of the modelling uncertainties. In the former case, these effects are added as a separate source of uncertainty. In the latter case, the systematic uncertainties in the  $W$  boson helicity are assigned to be the larger of either (i) the statistical precision of the limited sample size or (ii) the systematic shift of the central value with respect to the reference  $t\bar{t}$  sample.

The shape of the  $p_T$  spectrum for top quarks, as measured by the differential cross section for top quark pairs [17, 32], has been found to be softer than the predictions from MADGRAPH simulation. The effect of this mismodelling is estimated by reweighting the simulated  $t\bar{t}$  sample to describe the data. Further, the systematic effects due to the PDFs used to simulate the signal and background samples are estimated [7] according to the prescriptions described in [33, 34]. Finally, uncertainties related to the modelling of the pileup in simulated events are also taken into account.

The total systematic uncertainty is given by the sum in quadrature of all uncertainties described above.

## 6 Results

The measurements of the W boson helicity fractions, using  $\cos\theta^*$  from the leptonic branch of  $t\bar{t}$  events that decay into e+jets or  $\mu$ +jets, including the full combination of these two measurements, are shown in Table 1. Within an individual channel, the helicity parameters  $F_0$  and  $F_L$  are fit simultaneously, but they are strongly anti-correlated due to the unitarity constraint  $F_L + F_0 + F_R = 1$ , as indicated by the statistical correlation coefficient  $\rho_{0,L}$  given in the table. The separate helicity measurements from the e+jets and  $\mu$ +jets channels are combined into a single  $\ell$ +jets measurement using the BLUE method [35, 36], taking into account all uncertainties and their possible correlations. Uncertainties related to lepton efficiency, multijet background estimations, and statistical uncertainties are considered uncorrelated between the e+jets and  $\mu$ +jets analyses, while all other uncertainties are assumed to be fully correlated. The combined  $\ell$ +jets measurement of the helicity fractions is dominated by the  $\mu$ +jets channel, while the measurement uncertainties are dominated by systematic effects that are correlated between both the e+jets and  $\mu$ +jets channels. The combined  $F_0$  and  $F_L$  values are anti-correlated with a statistical correlation coefficient  $\rho_{0,L} = -0.959$ . The total correlation coefficient, considering both statistical and systematic uncertainties, is found to be  $-0.870$ . The measured helicity fractions presented in Table 1 are consistent with the SM predictions given at NNLO accuracy [5]. Figure 1 shows, separately for the e+jets and  $\mu$ +jets channels, the distributions for the cosine of the helicity angles from the leptonic branch, which are used in the helicity measurements, and the distributions of the corresponding absolute values from the hadronic branch, for comparison purposes. The simulated samples involving top quarks used in the figure were produced using the measured values for the W boson helicity fractions, as determined from the combined  $\ell$ +jets fit.

The measurement of the W boson helicity is sensitive to the presence of non-SM couplings between the W boson, the top quark, and the bottom quark. A general parametrisation of the Wtb vertex can be expressed as [1, 37]

$$\mathcal{L}_{Wtb} = -\frac{g}{\sqrt{2}}\bar{b}\gamma^\mu(V_L P_L + V_R P_R)tW_\mu^- - \frac{g}{\sqrt{2}}\bar{b}\frac{i\sigma^{\mu\nu}q_\nu}{M_W}(g_L P_L + g_R P_R)tW_\mu^- + \text{h.c.}, \quad (8)$$

where  $V_L$ ,  $V_R$ ,  $g_L$ ,  $g_R$  are vector and tensor couplings (complex constants),  $q = p_t - pb$ , and  $p_t$  ( $pb$ ) is the four-momentum of the top quark (b quark),  $P_L$  ( $P_R$ ) is the left (right) projection operator, and h.c. denotes the Hermitian conjugate. Hermiticity conditions on the possible dimension-six Lagrangian terms also impose  $\text{Im}(V_L) = 0$  [38]. In the SM and at tree level,  $V_L = V_{tb}$ , where  $V_{tb} \approx 1$  is the Cabibbo–Kobayashi–Maskawa matrix element connecting the top and the bottom quarks and  $V_R = g_L = g_R = 0$ . Limits on anomalous couplings are obtained by fixing the two vector couplings to their SM values,  $V_L = 1$  and  $V_R = 0$ , and choosing the tensor couplings,  $\text{Re}(g_L)$  and  $\text{Re}(g_R)$ , as free parameters. The combined  $\ell$ +jets measurement of the W boson helicity fractions  $F_0$  and  $F_L$  is reinterpreted in terms of the tensor couplings,  $\text{Re}(g_L)$  and  $\text{Re}(g_R)$ , using the relationships between the W boson helicity fractions and the anomalous couplings including dependences on the b quark mass as given in Ref. [39]

The W boson helicity measurements are displayed in the  $(F_0, F_L)$  plane in Fig. 2 (left), together with their one-dimensional statistical (inner-tick mark) and total (outer-tick mark) error bars. The full two-dimensional confidence level (CL) contours corresponding to 68% (dashed line) and 95% (solid line) probabilities are also displayed for the combined measurement. The SM prediction is shown as a star and lies within the 68% CL contour. The corresponding regions in the  $(\text{Re}(g_L), \text{Re}(g_R))$  plane, allowed at 68% (dark contour) and 95% CL (light contour), are shown in Fig. 2 (right), together with the SM value. A region near  $\text{Re}(g_L) = 0$  and  $\text{Re}(g_R) \gg 0$ , allowed by the fit but excluded by the CMS single top quark production measurement [40], is

not shown.

## 7 Summary

A measurement of the W boson helicity fractions in top quark pair events decaying in the  $e$ +jets and  $\mu$ +jets channels has been presented, using proton-proton collision data at  $\sqrt{s} = 8$  TeV, and corresponding to an integrated luminosity of  $19.8 \text{ fb}^{-1}$ . The helicity fractions  $F_0$  and  $F_L$  are measured with a precision of better than 5%, yielding the most accurate experimental determination of the W boson helicity fractions in  $t\bar{t}$  processes to date. The measured W boson helicity fractions are  $F_0 = 0.681 \pm 0.012$  (stat)  $\pm 0.023$  (syst),  $F_L = 0.323 \pm 0.008$  (stat)  $\pm 0.014$  (syst), and  $F_R = -0.004 \pm 0.005$  (stat)  $\pm 0.014$  (syst), with a correlation coefficient of  $-0.87$  between  $F_0$  and  $F_L$ , and they are consistent with the expectations from the standard model.

## Acknowledgments

We congratulate our colleagues in the CERN accelerator departments for the excellent performance of the LHC and thank the technical and administrative staffs at CERN and at other CMS institutes for their contributions to the success of the CMS effort. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge the computing centres and personnel of the Worldwide LHC Computing Grid for delivering so effectively the computing infrastructure essential to our analyses. Finally, we acknowledge the enduring support for the construction and operation of the LHC and the CMS detector provided by the following funding agencies: BMWFW and FWF (Austria); FNRS and FWO (Belgium); CNPq, CAPES, FAPERJ, and FAPESP (Brazil); MES (Bulgaria); CERN; CAS, MoST, and NSFC (China); COLCIENCIAS (Colombia); MSES and CSF (Croatia); RPF (Cyprus); MoER, ERC IUT and ERDF (Estonia); Academy of Finland, MEC, and HIP (Finland); CEA and CNRS/IN2P3 (France); BMBF, DFG, and HGF (Germany); GSRT (Greece); OTKA and NIH (Hungary); DAE and DST (India); IPM (Iran); SFI (Ireland); INFN (Italy); MSIP and NRF (Republic of Korea); LAS (Lithuania); MOE and UM (Malaysia); BUAP, CINVESTAV, CONACYT, LNS, SEP, and UASLP-FAI (Mexico); MBIE (New Zealand); PAEC (Pakistan); MSHE and NSC (Poland); FCT (Portugal); JINR (Dubna); MON, RosAtom, RAS and RFBR (Russia); MESTD (Serbia); SEIDI and CPAN (Spain); Swiss Funding Agencies (Switzerland); MST (Taipei); ThEP-Center, IPST, STAR and NSTDA (Thailand); TUBITAK and TAEK (Turkey); NASU and SFFR (Ukraine); STFC (United Kingdom); DOE and NSF (USA).

Individuals have received support from the Marie-Curie programme and the European Research Council and EPLANET (European Union); the Leventis Foundation; the A. P. Sloan Foundation; the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation; the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office; the Fonds pour la Formation à la Recherche dans l'Industrie et dans l'Agriculture (FRIA-Belgium); the Agentschap voor Innovatie door Wetenschap en Technologie (IWT-Belgium); the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) of the Czech Republic; the Council of Science and Industrial Research, India; the HOMING PLUS programme of the Foundation for Polish Science, cofinanced from European Union, Regional Development Fund; the Mobility Plus programme of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Poland); the OPUS programme of the National Science Center (Poland); the Thalís and Aristeia programmes cofinanced by EU-ESF and the Greek NSRF; the National Priorities Research Program by Qatar National Research Fund; the Programa Clarín-COFUND del Principado de Asturias; the Rachadapisek Sompot Fund for Postdoctoral Fellowship, Chulalongkorn University (Thailand); the Chulalongkorn Academic into Its 2nd Century Project Advancement Project (Thailand); and the Welch Foundation, contract C-1845.

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3: Also at Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien, Université de Strasbourg, Université de Haute Alsace Mulhouse, CNRS/IN2P3, Strasbourg, France

4: Also at Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, Brazil

5: Also at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) - IN2P3, Paris, France

6: Also at Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium

7: Also at Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany

8: Also at Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia

9: Also at Suez University, Suez, Egypt

- 10: Now at British University in Egypt, Cairo, Egypt
- 11: Also at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt
- 12: Also at Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt
- 13: Now at Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt
- 14: Also at Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse, France
- 15: Also at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland
- 16: Also at Skobeltsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
- 17: Also at Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
- 18: Also at RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany
- 19: Also at University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany
- 20: Also at Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany
- 21: Also at Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary
- 22: Also at MTA-ELTE Lendület CMS Particle and Nuclear Physics Group, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
- 23: Also at University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary
- 24: Also at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal, India
- 25: Also at Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar, India
- 26: Also at University of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India
- 27: Also at University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka
- 28: Also at Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran
- 29: Also at University of Tehran, Department of Engineering Science, Tehran, Iran
- 30: Also at Plasma Physics Research Center, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
- 31: Also at Università degli Studi di Siena, Siena, Italy
- 32: Also at Purdue University, West Lafayette, USA
- 33: Also at International Islamic University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 34: Also at Malaysian Nuclear Agency, MOSTI, Kajang, Malaysia
- 35: Also at Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, Mexico city, Mexico
- 36: Also at Warsaw University of Technology, Institute of Electronic Systems, Warsaw, Poland
- 37: Also at Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia
- 38: Now at National Research Nuclear University 'Moscow Engineering Physics Institute' (MEPhI), Moscow, Russia
- 39: Also at St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, St. Petersburg, Russia
- 40: Also at University of Florida, Gainesville, USA
- 41: Also at P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russia
- 42: Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA
- 43: Also at Faculty of Physics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
- 44: Also at INFN Sezione di Roma; Università di Roma, Roma, Italy
- 45: Also at National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece
- 46: Also at Scuola Normale e Sezione dell'INFN, Pisa, Italy
- 47: Also at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece
- 48: Also at Riga Technical University, Riga, Latvia
- 49: Also at Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia
- 50: Also at Albert Einstein Center for Fundamental Physics, Bern, Switzerland
- 51: Also at Gaziosmanpasa University, Tokat, Turkey
- 52: Also at Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey
- 53: Also at Cag University, Mersin, Turkey
- 54: Also at Piri Reis University, Istanbul, Turkey

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- 55: Also at Adiyaman University, Adiyaman, Turkey  
56: Also at Ozyegin University, Istanbul, Turkey  
57: Also at Izmir Institute of Technology, Izmir, Turkey  
58: Also at Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey  
59: Also at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey  
60: Also at Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey  
61: Also at Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey  
62: Also at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey  
63: Also at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom  
64: Also at School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom  
65: Also at Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias, La Laguna, Spain  
66: Also at Utah Valley University, Orem, USA  
67: Also at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia  
68: Also at Facoltà Ingegneria, Università di Roma, Roma, Italy  
69: Also at Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, USA  
70: Also at Erzincan University, Erzincan, Turkey  
71: Also at Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul, Istanbul, Turkey  
72: Also at Texas A&M University at Qatar, Doha, Qatar  
73: Also at Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea