Measurement of the correlation between the polar angles of leptons from top quark decays in the helicity basis at \(\sqrt{s} = 7\) TeV using the ATLAS detector

G. Aad et al.*

(ATLAS Collaboration)

(Received 27 October 2015; published 13 January 2016)

A measurement of the correlations between the polar angles of leptons from the decay of pair-produced \(t\) and \(\bar{t}\) quarks in the helicity basis is reported, using proton-proton collision data collected by the ATLAS detector at the LHC. The dataset corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 4.6 fb\(^{-1}\) at a center-of-mass energy of \(\sqrt{s} = 7\) TeV collected during 2011. Candidate events are selected in the dilepton topology with large missing transverse momentum and at least two jets. The angles \(\theta_1\) and \(\theta_2\) between the charged leptons and the direction of motion of the parent quarks in the \(t\bar{t}\) rest frame are sensitive to the spin information, and the distribution of \(\cos\theta_1 \cdot \cos\theta_2\) is sensitive to the spin correlation between the \(t\) and \(\bar{t}\) quarks. The distribution is unfolded to parton level and compared to the next-to-leading order prediction. A good agreement is observed.

DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevD.93.012002

I. INTRODUCTION

After the discovery of the top quark in 1995 at the Tevatron proton-antiproton collider [1,2], a new era of top quark precision measurements began in 2010 with the start of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN at \(\sqrt{s} = 7\) TeV. Due to its short lifetime the top quark decays before hadronization. This implies that top quarks can be studied as bare quarks and the spin information of the top quark can be deduced from the angular distributions of its decay products. At the LHC, \(t\bar{t}\) production is dominated by gluon fusion with a smaller contribution from \(q\bar{q}\) annihilation. However, many scenarios of physics beyond the Standard Model (SM) predict different spin correlations. For example, the measured spin correlation may differ from the SM if \(t\bar{t}\) production from \(q\bar{q}\) annihilation was enhanced by the top quark coupling to Higgs or extra gauge bosons [3–6], or if the top quark decayed into a scalar charged Higgs boson and a \(b\)-quark (\(t \to H^+ b\)) [7].

Both the CDF and D0 collaborations have performed measurements of the spin correlation [8–12] at the Tevatron where \(t\bar{t}\) production via \(q\bar{q}\) annihilation dominates. In addition, it has been measured at the LHC by both the ATLAS [13–15] and CMS experiments [16]. The different production mechanisms and center-of-mass energies make the measurements of the spin correlation at the two colliders complementary [17]. The results obtained from these analyses are all consistent with the SM prediction.

In this paper the decay \(t\bar{t} \to W^+W^-b\bar{b} \to \ell^+\nu\ell^-\bar{\nu}b\bar{b}\) is used to measure the following differential distribution, which is related to the spin correlation of the \(t\bar{t}\) system [18]:

\[
\frac{1}{N} \frac{d^2N}{d\cos\theta_1 d\cos\theta_2} = \frac{1}{4} (1 + B_1 \cos\theta_1 + B_2 \cos\theta_2 - C_{\text{helicity}} \cos\theta_1 \cdot \cos\theta_2),
\]

where \(\theta_1(\theta_2)\) is the angle between the momentum direction of the charged lepton from the \(t(\bar{t})\) decay in the \(t(\bar{t})\) rest frame and the \(t(\bar{t})\) momentum direction in the \(t\bar{t}\) center-of-mass frame. This is commonly referred to as the helicity basis. The helicity basis is not the only possibility and other bases are discussed in Ref. [17]. The top quark polarization parameters \(B_1\) and \(B_2\) are two orders of magnitude smaller than \(C_{\text{helicity}}\) at next-to-leading-order (NLO) [19]. In Ref. [20] the polarization is measured to be \(-0.035 \pm 0.040\) for the \(CP\)-conserving scenario, compatible with the measurement from CMS [16] and the SM expectation [21]. Consequently they are set to zero in this study. This analysis uses the measured distribution of \(\cos\theta_1 \cdot \cos\theta_2\); it can be shown [18] that the mean of the distribution is proportional to the coefficient \(C_{\text{helicity}}\) parametrizing the strength of the spin correlation.

Candidate events are selected with two isolated charged leptons and at least two jets in the final state, including a requirement to enhance the selection of jets originating from \(b\)-quarks. The \(t\) and \(\bar{t}\) are reconstructed using kinematic information from the event and invariant mass constraints. The distribution of \(\cos\theta_1 \cdot \cos\theta_2\) at reconstruction level is obtained. Building upon previous studies the non-\(t\bar{t}\) backgrounds are subtracted and the distribution is unfolded to parton level using an iterative

*Full author list given at the end of the article.
Bayesian technique. The parton-level distribution can be compared directly with the theoretical prediction without the need for templates derived from simulation.

II. ATLAS DETECTOR AND DATA SAMPLES

This analysis makes use of an integrated luminosity of 4.6 fb⁻¹ [22] of proton-proton collision data at a center-of-mass energy of 7 TeV, collected by the ATLAS detector at the LHC during 2011. The ATLAS detector [23,24] covers nearly the entire solid angle¹ around the collision point. It consists of an inner tracking detector (ID) covering |η| < 2.5, and comprising a silicon pixel detector, a silicon microstrip detector, and a transition radiation tracker. The ID is surrounded by a thin superconducting solenoid providing a 2 T magnetic field, followed by a liquid-argon electromagnetic sampling calorimeter (LAr) with high granularity. An iron/scintillator tile calorimeter provides hadronic energy measurements in the central region (|η| < 1.7). The endcap and forward regions are instrumented with LAr calorimeters for electromagnetic (EM) and hadronic energy measurements up to |η| = 4.9. The calorimeter system is surrounded by a muon spectrometer (MS) with high-precision tracking chambers covering |η| < 2.7 and separate trigger chambers covering |η| < 2.4. The magnetic field is provided by a barrel and two endcap superconducting toroid magnets. A three-level trigger system is used to select events with high-\(p_T\) leptons for this analysis [25].

Monte Carlo (MC) samples are produced for signal and background estimation. The SM \(\tau\) \(\tau\) signal events are modeled using the MC@NLO v4.01 generator [26]. Top quarks and the subsequent W bosons are decayed conserving the spin correlation information. The decay products are interfaced with Herwig v6.520 [27], which hadronizes the \(b\)-quarks and W boson decay products, and with Jimmy [28] to simulate multiparton interactions. The top quark mass is set to 172.5 GeV and the CT10 parton distribution (PDF) [29] are used. The \(t\bar{t}\) signal is normalized to \(\sigma_{\text{\(t\bar{t}\)}} = 177^{+10}_{-11}\) pb, calculated at next-to-next-to-leading-order (NNLO) in QCD including resummation of next-to-next-to-leading logarithmic soft gluon terms with top++ v2.0 [30–35]. The single-top-quark background arises from associated \(Wt\) production, when both the W boson from the top quark and the W boson from the hard interaction decay leptonically. Events are generated using the MC@NLO generator [36] and normalized to \(\sigma_{\text{\(Wt\)}} = 15.7 \pm 1.2\) pb from the approximate NNLO calculation in Ref. [37].

Drell-Yan Z + jets events are generated using the Alpgen v2.13 [38] generator including leading-order (LO) matrix elements with up to five additional partons. The MLM matching scheme is used to remove overlaps between the \(n\) and \(n + 1\) parton samples [38]. The CTEQ6L1 PDF [39,40] set is used and the cross-section is normalized to the NNLO prediction [41]. Parton showering and hadronization are modeled by herwig and the underlying event is simulated by jimmy. The diboson backgrounds (WW, WZ, ZZ) are generated using Alpgen interfaced to herwig, and make use of the MRST LO PDF set [42]. They are all normalized to the theoretical predictions at NLO [43].

All MC samples use a GEANT4 based simulation [44,45] to model the ATLAS detector and the same reconstruction as used in data. During the 2011 data-taking period the average number of simultaneous \(pp\) interactions per beam crossing (pileup) at the beginning of a fill of the LHC increased from 6 to 17. For each MC process, pileup is overlaid using simulated minimum-bias events from the pythia generator. The number of additional \(pp\) interactions is reweighted to the number of interactions observed in data. Additional small corrections are made to the simulation to ensure that it describes the data well in terms of efficiencies and momentum or energy scales for the various objects used.

While all other backgrounds are based on MC simulation, the background arising from misidentified and nonprompt leptons (referred to as “fake leptons” in the figures and tables) is determined using a data-driven technique known as the matrix method [46].

III. EVENT SELECTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

A. Event selection

Candidate events are selected in the dilepton topology, referred to as the \(e^+e^-, \mu^+\mu^-,\) and \(e^+\mu^\pm\) channels, according to the flavors of the two leptons. The full object and event selection are the same as described in Ref. [14], with the additional requirement that at least one \(b\)-jet is identified. The analysis requires events selected by an inclusive single-lepton(e or \(\mu\)) trigger [47]. The primary vertex with highest \(p_T^2\) is taken as the primary vertex of the event if it has at least five associated tracks, with \(p_T > 400\) MeV per track, consistent with the \(x, y\) profile of the beam, and the other vertices are not considered.

Electron candidates are reconstructed using energy deposits in the EM calorimeter associated with reconstructed tracks in the ID [48]. Muon candidate reconstruction makes use of tracking in the MS and ID [49]. Both the electron and muon candidates have isolation criteria applied as in Ref. [14] and are matched to a triggered object. Jets are reconstructed with the anti-\(k_t\) algorithm [50] with a radius parameter \(R = 0.4\), starting
from energy deposits in clusters of adjacent calorimeter cells. The missing transverse momentum magnitude $E_{\text{miss}}$ is reconstructed from the vector sum of all calorimeter cell energies associated with topological clusters with $|\eta| < 4.5$ [51]. Contributions from the calorimeter energy clusters matched with a reconstructed lepton or jet are corrected to the corresponding energy scale. A term accounting for the $p_T$ of any selected muon is included in the $E_{\text{miss}}$ calculation. The following kinematic requirements are made:

(i) Electron candidates are required to have $p_T > 25$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.47$, excluding electrons from the transition region between the barrel and endcap calorimeters defined by $1.37 < |\eta| < 1.52$. Muon candidates are required to have $p_T > 20$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$.

(ii) Events must have at least two jets with $p_T > 25$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$. Jets associated with large energy deposits from additional $pp$ interactions are suppressed by requiring that the $p_T$ sum of the reconstructed tracks matched to both the jet and the primary vertex is at least 75% of the total $p_T$ sum of all tracks associated with the jet. This quantity is referred to as the jet vertex fraction (JVF) [52]. Jets satisfying $p_T > 50$ GeV are always accepted and jets having no associated tracks are also accepted. The jet candidate closest to an accepted electron candidate is removed if it is within $\Delta R < 0.2$. Finally, electron and muon candidates that lie within a cone of $\Delta R = 0.4$ around an accepted jet are removed.

(iii) Events must have exactly two oppositely charged lepton candidates ($e^+e^−$, $\mu^+\mu^−$, $e^+\mu^−$).

(iv) At least one of the selected jets must be identified as originating from a $b$-quark ($b$-tagged) using the multivariate discriminant MV1 [53], which uses impact parameter and secondary vertex information. The chosen MV1 working point corresponds to an average $b$-tagging efficiency of 70% for $b$-jets in simulated $t\bar{t}$ events. The requirement of at least one $b$-tagged jet suppresses the background processes (e.g. $Z +$ jets), while retaining a large fraction of $t\bar{t}$ events.

(v) Events in the $e^+e^−$ and $\mu^+\mu^−$ channels are required to have $m_{ll} > 15$ GeV to exclude regions not well described by the MC simulation and to remove contributions from $T$ and $J/\psi$ production.

(vi) Events in the $e^+e^−$ and $\mu^+\mu^−$ channels must satisfy $E_{\text{miss}}^{T} > 60$ GeV to suppress the background from $Z/\gamma'$ + jets. In addition, $m_{ll}$ must differ by at least 10 GeV from the $Z$ boson mass to further suppress the $Z/\gamma'$ + jets background.

(vii) For the $e^+\mu^−$ channel, no $E_{\text{miss}}^{T}$ or $m_{ll}$ cuts are applied. In this case, the remaining background from $Z/\gamma' (\rightarrow \tau\tau) +$ jets production is further suppressed by requiring that the scalar sum of the $p_T$ of all selected jets and leptons is greater than 130 GeV.

B. Topology reconstruction method

In order to reconstruct the distribution of $\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2$, the $t$ and $\bar{t}$ quarks must be reconstructed from their decay products. The momenta of the two neutrinos from the $W$ boson decays in dilepton final states cannot be measured but can be inferred from the measured missing transverse momentum in the event. Since only the sum of the missing transverse momenta of the two neutrinos is measured as $E_{\text{miss}}^{T}$, the system is underconstrained. The kinematic information about the $b$-jets, leptons, and the missing transverse momentum are used in six independent equations describing the kinematic properties of $t$ and $\bar{t}$ decays. The equations describing the kinematic constraints are

\begin{align}
    p_{x,x} + p_{x,y} &= E_{x}^{\text{miss}}, \\
    p_{y,x} + p_{y,y} &= E_{y}^{\text{miss}}, \\
    (p_{x}^+ + p_{y}^+) &= m_W^2, \\
    (p_{x}^- + p_{y}^-) &= m_t^2, \\
    (p_{W^+} + p_{b}^+) &= m_{W^+}, \\
    (p_{W^-} + p_{b}^-) &= m_{W^-}, \\
\end{align}

where $E_{x}^{\text{miss}}$ and $E_{y}^{\text{miss}}$ represent the missing momentum along the $x$- and $y$-axes, $p_{x}^+$, and $p_{x}^-$ (and $p_{b}^+$ and $p_{b}^-$) are the four-momenta of the two charged leptons (two $b$-jets), and $m_W$ and $m_t$ are the masses of the $W$ boson and top quark. The reconstruction algorithm requires the kinematic information for exactly two of the selected jets. Jets are ranked primarily by whether they are $b$-tagged or not, and then by descending $p_T$. The two highest-ranked jets are used in the reconstruction method.

Each selected event has two possible $b$-$\ell$ pairings. The pairing with the lower invariant mass is first considered for the $t\bar{t}$ reconstruction. This results in a higher probability to correctly identify the $b$-jets that originate from the respective top quarks than using the alternate pairing. When comparing the data and MC we find the fraction of events passing the reconstruction is consistent, indicating no systematic bias in the method. If no solution is found, the top quark mass is varied from the nominal value in steps of 1.5 GeV until a solution is found or the limits of 157.5 GeV and 187.5 GeV are reached. If it is still not possible to solve Eq. (2) then the alternative $b$-$\ell$ pairing is considered and the procedure is repeated. If more than one solution is found, the one with the minimum product of $p_T^b$ and $p_T^{\ell}$ is selected. About 70% of signal $t\bar{t}$ simulated events and 50% of background events are reconstructed.

The number of expected and observed events in each channel after selection and reconstruction is listed in Table I.

The distribution of reconstructed $\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2$ for the sum of the three dilepton channels, with the signal $t\bar{t}$ simulated sample from MC@NLO and backgrounds overlaid, is shown in Fig. 1. The backgrounds are highly
distribution at parton level from the reconstructed distribution is in good agreement with data. 

### IV. STATISTICAL METHOD AND VALIDATION

#### A. Unfolding method

The distribution of \( \cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2 \) is distorted due to the resolution and acceptance of the detector. An unfolding method is used to build an estimator for the \( \cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2 \) distribution from parton level to the reconstructed distribution by correcting for such effects.

Prior to unfolding, the backgrounds listed in Table I are subtracted from data. The \( tt \) events where one or both of the \( W \) bosons decay to a \( \tau \) that subsequently decays to an \( e \) or \( \mu \) are taken from simulation and are also subtracted from data. The number of bins used in the unfolding is chosen based on studies of the resolution of the \( \cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2 \) reconstruction and taking into account the number of selected events in data, while minimizing the bin-to-bin correlations. Eight equally sized bins in \( \cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2 \) are used.

A true physical observable in bin \( C_i \) of distribution \( n(C_i) \) is related to the reconstructed quantity in bin \( E_j \) of a distribution \( n(E_j) \) by the response matrix \( P(E_j|C_i) \), which represents the event migration probability from bin \( C_i \) to bin \( E_j \):

\[
n(E_j) = \sum_{i=1}^{n_C} P(E_j|C_i) e_i n(C_i), \quad j = 1, \ldots, n_E. \tag{3}
\]

where \( e_i \) represents the measurement efficiency of events in bin \( C_i \) and \( n_C \) and \( n_E \) represent the total number of bins in the true and reconstructed distributions respectively.

In this analysis an iterative Bayesian unfolding method is used [54,55], in which Bayes’ theorem is adopted to produce the following conditional probability:

\[
P(C_i|E_j) = \frac{P(E_j|C_i) P_0(C_i)}{\sum_{j=1}^{n_E} P(E_j|C_i) P_0(C_i)}, \tag{4}
\]

\[
e_i \equiv \sum_{j=1}^{n_E} P(E_j|C_i), \tag{5}
\]

where \( P(C_i|E_j) \) represents the probability of having a true event in bin \( C_i \), given a reconstructed event in bin \( E_j \). And \( P_0(C) \) is the normalized prior distribution of \( n(C_i) \). Using \( P(C_i|E_j) \), one can calculate \( n(C_i) e_i \) using the following equation:

\[
\hat{n}(C_i) e_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n_E} n(E_j) P(C_i|E_j)}{P_0(C)}, \tag{6}
\]

The probability \( P(C_i|E_j) \) depends on the prior distribution of \( P_0(C) \), and \( \hat{n}(C_i) e_i \) is a biased estimator if \( P_0(C) \)
differs from data. To reduce the bias, an iterative procedure is introduced, replacing $P_0(C)$ with the normalized $\tilde{n}(C_i)e_i$ in Eq. (4) to recalculate $P(C_i|E_i)$ and then $\tilde{n}(C_i)$ using Eq. (6). Finally, $\tilde{n}(C_i)$ is obtained by scaling $\tilde{n}(C_i)e_i$ using $1/e_i$ from MC simulation.

Increasing the number of iterations reduces the bias of the estimator. However, fluctuations and correlations between bins of the estimator are increased. The iterative procedure is repeated until the unfolded distribution in the current iteration is consistent with the unfolded distribution in the previous iteration within the statistical uncertainty. In this case, further iterations would not increase the sensitivity. Therefore the termination criterion is defined as

$$\frac{\chi^2}{N_{\text{bins}}} \leq 1,$$

where

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{j=1}^{N_{\text{bins}}} \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{bins}}} (n_i' - n_j)(\sigma_{i,j})^{-1}(n_i' - n_j)^T,$$

in which $(n_i' - n_j)$ refers to the $i$th bin difference between the unfolded distribution $n_i'$ in the current iteration and the unfolded distribution $n_j$ in the previous iteration, $\sigma_{i,j}$ is the covariance matrix of the unfolded distribution $n_i'$, and $N_{\text{bins}}$ is the number of bins in the unfolded distribution. The larger the difference between the prior distribution and the real distribution, the more iterations are required. Studies using MC simulation have shown that three iterations suffice to reduce the bias below the level of the statistical uncertainty.

**B. Method validation**

The unfolding method is validated and its uncertainty obtained using a MC sample containing the SM spin correlation. The simulated $\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2$ distribution after detector simulation, selection, and reconstruction is compared to that in collision data, and the ratio of the two is fitted by a smooth function that is used to weight the parton-level distribution. This is propagated through to the reconstructed distribution and results in a pseudomeasurement and a corresponding parton-level distribution. The unfolding method, using the nominal response matrix, is applied to the pseudomeasurement. The systematic uncertainty on the unfolding method is taken as the difference between the unfolded pseudomeasurement and the known parton-level distribution and is shown in Table II.

### V. SYSTEMATIC AND STATISTICAL UNCERTAINTIES

**A. Systematic uncertainties**

Systematic uncertainties are evaluated by applying the unfolding procedure (using the nominal unfolding matrix) to pseudoexperiments created using MC samples modified to reflect the various systematic uncertainties. The systematic uncertainty of the unfolded distribution is then obtained by comparing the varied unfolded distributions to the nominal unfolded distribution. The following systematic uncertainty sources are considered in this analysis.

**1. MC generator modeling**

The uncertainty due to generator modeling is assessed using three different groups of samples. Powheg+pythia [56–59] is compared to MC@NLO+Herwig, where both the generator and parton showering are varied. Powheg+pythia is compared to Alpgen+Herwig and finally Powheg+pythia is compared to Powheg+herwig, where only the parton showering is different. The largest variation of the unfolded distributions found in these three comparisons is taken as the uncertainty.

**TABLE II.** Relative uncertainties (in %) for each bin of the normalized unfolded $\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2$ distribution. Where the magnitudes of the upwards and downwards systematic uncertainties differ, the larger of the two is taken. The total shows the sum in quadrature of the individual components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bin range</th>
<th>-1: - 0.75</th>
<th>-0.75: - 0.5</th>
<th>-0.5: - 0.25</th>
<th>-0.25: 0</th>
<th>0: 0.25</th>
<th>0.25: 0.5</th>
<th>0.5: 0.75</th>
<th>0.75: 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generator modeling</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISR/FSR</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>UE/color reconnection</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JES/jet reconstruction</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b$-tagging SF</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$E_T$</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lepton reconstruction</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luminosity uncertainty</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background uncertainty</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayesian unfolding method</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top quark mass (±1 GeV)</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. ISR/FSR

The uncertainty due to initial-state radiation/final-state radiation (ISR/FSR) is evaluated using Alpgen+pythia samples within which the parameters controlling ISR and FSR are varied within a range consistent with data. The average of the absolute values of the upwards and downwards variations of the unfolded distributions is taken as the systematic uncertainty.

3. PDF

The impact of the choice of PDF in simulation was studied by reweighting the MC samples to three PDF sets (CT10, MSTW2008 [60] NLO, and NNPDF20 [61]) and taking half of the maximum difference of the unfolded distributions using any two PDF sets.

4. Underlying event and color reconnection

To estimate the effect of the underlying event (UE), two samples simulated by Powheg+pythia with the Perugia 11 and Perugia 11 mpiHI sets of tuned parameters are used [62]. The variation of the unfolded distributions between these two tunes is taken as the systematic uncertainty. The impact due to the modeling of color reconnection is studied by comparing two samples simulated with Powheg+pythia. One has the nominal color reconnection model and the other has no color reconnection. The difference of the unfolded distributions between these two samples is taken as the systematic uncertainty.

5. Jet energy scale and jet reconstruction

The relative jet energy scale (JES) uncertainty varies from 1% to 3% depending on jet $p_T$ and $\eta$ [63]. The jet reconstruction efficiency for data and the MC simulation is found to be in agreement with an accuracy of better than ±2% [64]. To account for the residual uncertainties, 2% of jets with $p_T < 30$ GeV are randomly removed from MC simulated events. The uncertainty related to the JVF is less than 1% and depends on jet $p_T$. For all jet-related systematic uncertainties the differences are propagated to the unfolded distribution and the variation taken as the uncertainty.

6. $b$-tagging efficiency

Differences in the $b$-tagging efficiency as well as $c$-jet and light-jet mistag rates in data and simulation are parametrized using correction factors, which are functions of $p_T$ and $\eta$ [65]. The uncertainty on these correction factors is propagated to the unfolded distribution.

7. Modeling of $E_T^{\text{miss}}$

Uncertainties on the energy scale of jets and leptons are also propagated to the uncertainty on $E_T^{\text{miss}}$. Other contributions to this uncertainty originate from the energy scale and resolution of the soft calorimeter energy deposits that are not included in the reconstructed jets and leptons, and is propagated to the uncertainty of the unfolded distribution.

8. Lepton reconstruction

The modeling of the lepton momentum scale and resolution is studied using the reconstructed dilepton invariant mass distribution of $Z \to \ell^+\ell^-$ candidates and the simulation is adjusted accordingly. Any mismodeling of the electron and muon trigger, reconstruction, and selection efficiencies in the simulation is corrected using measurements of the efficiency in data. The systematic uncertainties on the correction factors applied are propagated to the unfolded distribution.

9. Luminosity uncertainty

The uncertainty on the measured integrated luminosity is 1.8% [22]. The effect of the luminosity uncertainty is evaluated by scaling the number of signal and background events by the luminosity uncertainty, for processes estimated exclusively from simulation. The change in the result due to the luminosity uncertainty is taken as systematic uncertainty.

10. Background uncertainties

The uncertainties due to the normalization of the non-prompt and fake lepton estimate, $Wt$ channel single top, $Z +$ jets, and diboson events are propagated to the uncertainty of the unfolded distribution.

11. Bayesian unfolding method

The residual bias in the unfolding method is taken as a systematic uncertainty as described in Sec. IV.

The evaluated systematic uncertainties are listed in Table II, for each bin of the $\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2$ distribution. The result of varying the top quark mass by $\pm 1$ GeV is shown in the last row of the table. The main sources of uncertainty are the unfolding method, followed by the uncertainties associated with jets. Some theoretical uncertainties (MC generator, top quark mass, UE/color connection) are estimated with uncorrelated MC samples, and
TABLE IV. The numerical summary of the unfolded \(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2\) distribution, with statistical and systematic uncertainties. The SM prediction is shown in the last column for comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bin range</th>
<th>Unfolded data (1/\sigma d\sigma/d(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2) \pm \text{stat} \pm \text{syst})</th>
<th>MC@NLO prediction (1/\sigma d\sigma/d(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2) \pm \text{stat})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1.00: -0.75</td>
<td>0.0202 (\pm 0.0020) (\pm 0.0028)</td>
<td>0.0215 (\pm 0.0005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.75: -0.50</td>
<td>0.0696 (\pm 0.0037) (\pm 0.0034)</td>
<td>0.0707 (\pm 0.0008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.50: -0.25</td>
<td>0.1418 (\pm 0.0045) (\pm 0.0047)</td>
<td>0.1384 (\pm 0.0010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.25: 0</td>
<td>0.3106 (\pm 0.0062) (\pm 0.0057)</td>
<td>0.3079 (\pm 0.0014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0: 0.25</td>
<td>0.2882 (\pm 0.0059) (\pm 0.0048)</td>
<td>0.2884 (\pm 0.0013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25:0.50</td>
<td>0.1078 (\pm 0.0033) (\pm 0.0042)</td>
<td>0.1118 (\pm 0.0009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.50:0.75</td>
<td>0.0489 (\pm 0.0024) (\pm 0.0013)</td>
<td>0.0484 (\pm 0.0006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.75:1.00</td>
<td>0.0129 (\pm 0.0009) (\pm 0.0012)</td>
<td>0.0129 (\pm 0.0003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

hence include a statistical uncertainty due to the MC sample size.

B. Statistical uncertainties
The uncorrelated bin-to-bin statistical uncertainties of the \(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2\) distribution at reconstruction level are propagated to the unfolded distribution, in which bin-to-bin correlations arise. The \(8 \times 8\) correlation matrix is shown in Table III.

The statistical and systematic uncertainties for each bin of the unfolded \(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2\) distribution is summarized in Table IV.

VI. RESULTS
The unfolded distribution of \(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2\) is shown in Fig. 2 and presented in Table IV. The distribution is compared to the prediction from MC@NLO giving a \(\chi^2/N_{\text{bin}} = 4.1/8\). Individual analyses for the \(e^+e^-, \mu^+\mu^-\), and \(e^+\mu^-\) channels are performed and the measurements are found to be consistent with the combined result.

Previous publications quote the results in terms of \(A_{\text{helicity}} = (N_{\text{like}} - N_{\text{unlike}})/(N_{\text{like}} + N_{\text{unlike}})\) where \(N_{\text{like}}\) is the number of events where the top quark and top antiquark have parallel (antiparallel) spins with respect to the helicity basis. To compare with these quantitatively, the parameter \(C_{\text{helicity}}\) in Eq. (1) is extracted from the unfolded distribution using \(C_{\text{helicity}} = -9(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2)\) \([18,66]\). This is converted to \(A_{\text{helicity}}\) using \(C_{\text{helicity}} = -A_{\text{helicity}}\alpha_1\alpha_2\), where \(\alpha_1\) and \(\alpha_2\) are the spin analyzing powers for the two charged leptons as in Ref. [14]. In dilepton final states the spin-analyzing power is effectively 100%; therefore \(C = A\). This results in \(A_{\text{helicity}} = 0.315 \pm 0.061\text{(stat)} \pm 0.049\text{(syst)}\), which agrees well with the NLO QCD prediction of \(A_{\text{helicity}} = 0.31\) \([67]\), the previous measurements using template fits to event properties without correcting for detector acceptance and efficiencies by ATLAS \([13,15]\), and the unfolded parton level results reported by CMS \([16]\).

VII. CONCLUSION
A differential cross-section measurement of the \(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2\) distribution is presented using 4.6 fb\(^{-1}\) of proton-proton collision data collected at \(\sqrt{s} = 7\) TeV by the ATLAS detector at the LHC during 2011. Events are selected in the dilepton topology with two jets. The background rejection is improved by the use of \(b\)-tagging. The distribution of \(\cos \theta_1 \cdot \cos \theta_2\) is reconstructed using the kinematic information about the selected objects and unfolded to parton level using an iterative Bayesian unfolding algorithm. The unfolded distribution is in good agreement with the prediction from MC@NLO. The main sources of uncertainty are due to the unfolding method, theoretical modeling of the signal, and uncertainties related to the reconstruction of jets.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank CERN for the very successful operation of the LHC, as well as the support staff from our institutions without whom ATLAS could not be operated efficiently. We acknowledge the support of ANPCyT, Argentina; YerPhI, Armenia; ARC, Australia; BMWF and FWF, Austria; ANAS, Azerbaijan; SSTC, Belarus; CNPq and FAPESP, Brazil; NSERC, NFC and CFI, Canada; CERN; CONICYT, Chile; CAS, MOST and NSFC, China; COLCIENCIAS, Colombia; MPO CR, MUTEK and VSC CR, Czech Republic; DNRF, DNSRC and Lundbeck Foundation, Denmark; EPLANET, ERC and NSRF, European Union; IN2P3-CNRS, CEA-DSM/IRFU, France; GNSF, Georgia; BMBF, DFG, HGF, MPG and AvH Foundation, Germany; GSRT and NSRF, Greece; RGC, Hong Kong SAR, China; ISF, MINERVA, GIF, I-CORE and Benoziyo Center, Israel; INFN, Italy; MEXT and JSPS, Japan; CNRST, Morocco; FOM and NWO, Netherlands; BRF and RCN, Norway; MNiSW and NCN, Poland; GRICES and FCT, Portugal; MNE/IFA, Romania; MES of Russia and NRC KI, Russian Federation; JINR; MSTD, Serbia; MSSR, Slovakia; ARRS and MIZŠ, Slovenia; DST/NRF, South Africa; MINECO, Spain; SRC and Wallenberg Foundation, Sweden; SER, SNSF and Cantons of Bern and Geneva, Switzerland; NSC, Taiwan; TAEK, Turkey; STFC, the Royal Society and Leverhulme Trust, United Kingdom; DOE and NSF, United States of America. The crucial computing support from all WLCG partners is acknowledged gratefully, in particular from CERN and the ATLAS Tier-1 facilities at TRIUMF (Canada), NDGF (Denmark, Norway, Sweden), CC-IN2P3 (France), KIT/GridKA (Germany), INFN-CNAF (Italy), NL-T1 (Netherlands), PIC (Spain), ASGC (Taiwan), RAL (UK) and BNL (USA) and in the Tier-2 facilities worldwide.

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1 Department of Physics, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia
2 Physics Department, SUNY Albany, Albany, New York, USA
3 Department of Physics, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
4a Department of Physics, Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey
4b Istanbul Aydin University, Istanbul, Turkey
4c Division of Physics, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ankara, Turkey
5 LAPP, CNRS/IN2P3 and Université Savoie Mont Blanc, Annecy-le-Vieux, France
6 High Energy Physics Division, Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, Illinois, USA
7 Department of Physics, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, USA
8 Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas, USA
9 Physics Department, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
10 Physics Department, National Technical University of Athens, Zografou, Greece
11 Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan
12 Institut de Física d’Altes Energies and Departament de Física de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
13 Institute of Physics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
14 Department for Physics and Technology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway
15 Physics Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, California, USA
16 Department of Physics, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany
17 Albert Einstein Center for Fundamental Physics and Laboratory for High Energy Physics, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland
18 School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
19a Department of Physics, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey
19b Department of Physics, Gaziantep University, Gaziantep, Turkey
19c Department of Physics, D ogus University, Istanbul, Turkey
20a INFN Sezione di Bologna, Italy
20b Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
21 Physikalisches Institut, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
22 Department of Physics, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
23 Department of Physics, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA
24 Universidade Federal do Rio De Janeiro COPPE/EE/IF, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
25 Electrical Circuits Department, Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Juiz de Fora, Brazil
26 Federal University of Sao Joao del Rei (UFSJ), Sao Joao do Rei, Brazil
27 Instituto de Física, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
28 Physics Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York, USA
29 Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov, Romania
30 National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest, Romania
31 National Institute for Research and Development of Isotopic and Molecular Technologies, Physics Department, Cluj Napoca, Romania
32a University Politehnica Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania
32b West University in Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania
33a Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China
33b Department of Modern Physics, University of Science and Technology of China, Anhui, China
33c Department of Physics, Nanjing University, Jiangsu, China
33d Department of Physics, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia
33e Physics Department, SUNY Albany, Albany, New York, USA
33f Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan
33g Department of Physics, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
33h Department of Physics, Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey
33i Istanbul Aydin University, Istanbul, Turkey
33j Division of Physics, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ankara, Turkey
33k LAPP, CNRS/IN2P3 and Université Savoie Mont Blanc, Annecy-le-Vieux, France
33l High Energy Physics Division, Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, Illinois, USA
33m Department of Physics, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, USA
33n Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas, USA
33o Physics Department, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
33p Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan
33q Institute of Physics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
33r Department for Physics and Technology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway
33s Physics Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, California, USA
33t Department of Physics, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany
33u Albert Einstein Center for Fundamental Physics and Laboratory for High Energy Physics, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland
33v School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
33w Department of Physics, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey
33x Department of Physics, Gaziantep University, Gaziantep, Turkey
33y Department of Physics, Dogus University, Istanbul, Turkey
33z INFN Sezione di Bologna, Italy
34a Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
34b Physikalisches Institut, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
34c Department of Physics, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
34d Department of Physics, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA
34e Universidade Federal do Rio De Janeiro COPPE/EE/IF, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
34f Electrical Circuits Department, Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Juiz de Fora, Brazil
34g Federal University of Sao Joao del Rei (UFSJ), Sao Joao do Rei, Brazil
34h Instituto de Física, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil
34i Physics Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York, USA
34j Transilvania University of Brasov, Brasov, Romania
34k National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest, Romania
34l National Institute for Research and Development of Isotopic and Molecular Technologies, Physics Department, Cluj Napoca, Romania
34m University Politehnica Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania
34n West University in Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania
34o Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China
34p Department of Modern Physics, University of Science and Technology of China, Anhui, China
34q Department of Physics, Nanjing University, Jiangsu, China
34r Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China
34s Department of Modern Physics, University of Science and Technology of China, Anhui, China
34t Department of Physics, Nanjing University, Jiangsu, China

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125 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
126 Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas—LIP, Lisboa, Portugal
127 Faculty of Sciences, Universität de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal
128 Department of Physics, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal
129 Centro de Física Nuclear da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal
126 Departamento de Física, Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal
126 Dep Física and CEFITEC of Faculdade de Ciencias e Tecnologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Caparica, Portugal
127 Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Praha, Czech Republic
128 Czech Technical University in Prague, Praha, Czech Republic
129 Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University in Prague, Praha, Czech Republic
130 State Research Center Institute for High Energy Physics (Protvino), NRC KI, Russia
131 Particle Physics Department, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
132 INFN Sezione di Roma, Italy
132b Dipartimento di Fisica, Sapienza Università di Roma, Roma, Italy
133a INFN Sezione di Roma Tor Vergata, Italy
133b Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy
133c INFN Sezione di Roma Tre, Italy
133b Dipartimento di Matematica e Física, Università Roma Tre, Roma, Italy
135a Faculté des Sciences Ain Chock, Réseau Universitaire de Physique des Hautes Energies—Université Hassan II, Casablanca, Morocco
135b Centre National de l’Energie des Sciences Techniques Nucleaires, Rabat, Morocco
135c Faculté des Sciences Semlalia, Université Cadi Ayyad, LPHEA-Marrakech, Morocco
135d Faculté des Sciences, Université Mohamed Premier and LPTPM, Oujda, Morocco
135e Faculté des sciences, Université Mohammed V, Rabat, Morocco
136 DSM/IRFU (Institut de Recherches sur les Lois Fondamentales de l’Univers), CEA Saclay (Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique et aux Energies Alternatives), Gif-sur-Yvette, France
137 Santa Cruz Institute for Particle Physics, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California, USA
138 Department of Physics, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, USA
139 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom
140 Department of Physics, Shinshu University, Nagano, Japan
141 Fachbereich Physik, Universität Siegen, Siegen, Germany
142 Department of Physics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada
143 SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford, California, USA
144 Faculty of Mathematics, Physics & Informatics, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovak Republic
145 Department of Subnuclear Physics, Institute of Experimental Physics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Kosice, Slovak Republic
146 Department of Physics, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa
147 Department of Physics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa
145 School of Physics, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
146a Department of Physics, Stockholm University, Sweden
146b The Oskar Klein Centre, Stockholm, Sweden
148 Physics Department, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
149 Departments of Physics & Astronomy and Chemistry, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, New York, USA
150 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom
151 School of Physics, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
152 Department of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
153 Department of Physics, Technion: Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel
154 Raymond and Beverly Sackler School of Physics and Astronomy, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
154 Department of Physics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece
155 International Center for Elementary Particle Physics and Department of Physics, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
156 Graduate School of Science and Technology, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, Japan
157 Department of Physics, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan
158 Department of Physics, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
G. AAD et al.

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159a TRIUMF, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

159b Department of Physics and Astronomy, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

160 Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, and Center for Integrated Research in Fundamental Science and Engineering, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan

161 Department of Physics and Astronomy, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, USA

162 Centro de Investigaciones, Universidad Antonio Narino, Bogota, Colombia

163 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of California Irvine, Irvine, California, USA

164a INFN Gruppo Collegato di Udine, Sezione di Trieste, Udine, Italy

164b ICTP, Trieste, Italy

164c Dipartimento di Chimica, Fisica e Ambiente, Università di Udine, Udine, Italy

165 Department of Physics, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, USA

166 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden

167 Instituto de Fisica Corpuscular (IFIC) and Departamento de Fisica Atómica, Molecular y Nuclear and Departamento de Ingeniería Electrónica and Instituto de Microelectrónica de Barcelona (IMB-CN), University of Valencia and CSIC, Valencia, Spain

168 Department of Physics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

169 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

170 Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom

171 Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

172 Department of Particle Physics, The Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel

173 Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, USA

174 Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie, Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, Germany

175 Fachbereich C Physik, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany

176 Department of Physics, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

177 Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

178 Centre de Calcul de l’Institut National de Physique Nucléaire et de Physique des Particules (IN2P3), Villeurbanne, France

Deceased.

Also at Department of Physics, King’s College London, London, United Kingdom.

Also at Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan.

Also at Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia.

Also at TRIUMF, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Also at Department of Physics & Astronomy, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, USA.

Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Fresno, CA, USA.

Also at Department of Physics, University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland.

Also at Departamento de Fisica e Astronomia, Faculdade de Ciencias, Universidade do Porto, Portugal.

Also at Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia.

Also at CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France.

Also at Universita di Napoli Parthenope, Napoli, Italy.

Also at Institute of Particle Physics (IPP), Canada.

Also at Particle Physics Department, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom.

Also at Department of Physics, St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, St. Petersburg, Russia.

Also at Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA.

Also at Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA, USA.

Also at Instituto Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avancats, ICREA, Barcelona, Spain.

Also at Graduate School of Science, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan.

Also at Department of Physics, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan.

Also at Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, USA.

Also at Institute of Theoretical Physics, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Also at CERN, Geneva, Switzerland.

Also at Georgian Technical University (GTU), Tbilisi, Georgia.

Also at Ochadai Academic Production, Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan.

Also at Manhattan College, New York, NY, USA.

Also at Hellenic Open University, Patras, Greece.

Also at Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan.

Also at LAL, Université Paris-Sud and CNRS/IN2P3, Orsay, France.

Also at Academia Sinica Grid Computing, Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan.

Also at School of Physics, Shandong University, Shandong, China.
Also at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology State University, Dolgoprudny, Russia.
Also at Section de Physique, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland.
Also at International School for Advanced Studies (SISSA), Trieste, Italy.
Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA.
Also at School of Physics and Engineering, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China.
Also at Faculty of Physics, M.V.Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia.
Also at National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Moscow, Russia.
Also at Department of Physics, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA.
Also at Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary.
Also at University of Malaya, Department of Physics, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.