



Review of single top quark physics

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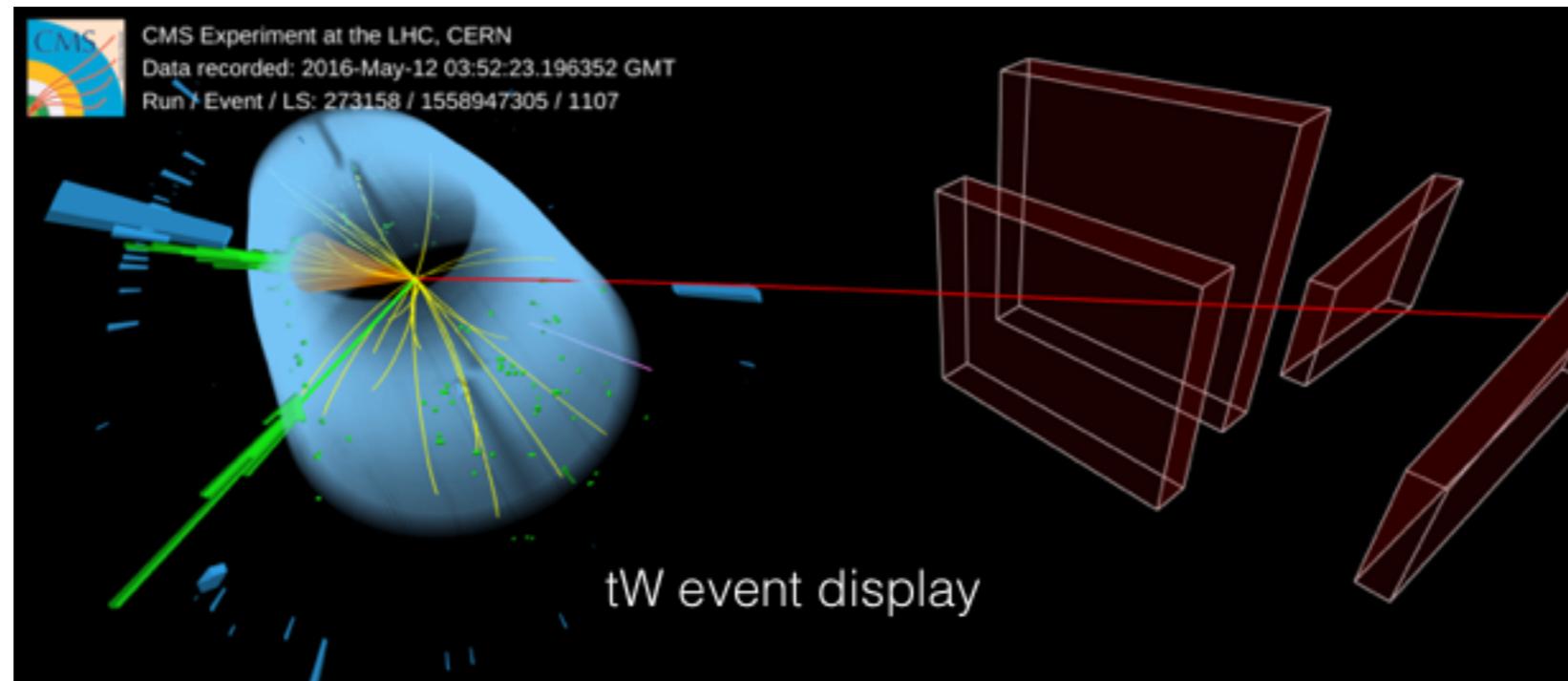
Submitted on 5 Feb 2025

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Review of single top quark physics

Top LHC France 2023 - 16/05/2023



Jeremy Andrea – IPHC Strasbourg, CNRS/IN2P3
Nicolas Chanon – IP2I Lyon, CNRS/IN2P3

Introduction

- **Disclaimer:** this talk cannot cover all the topics
- In particular, it will not cover results obtained at Tevatron
- Focus on the LHC results

Outline:

- **Single top quark cross sections:** t-channel, tW, s-channel
- **Properties** related to Wtb vertex
- **Top quark production associated with Z/ γ bosons**
- **Top quark Yukawa coupling with tH process**

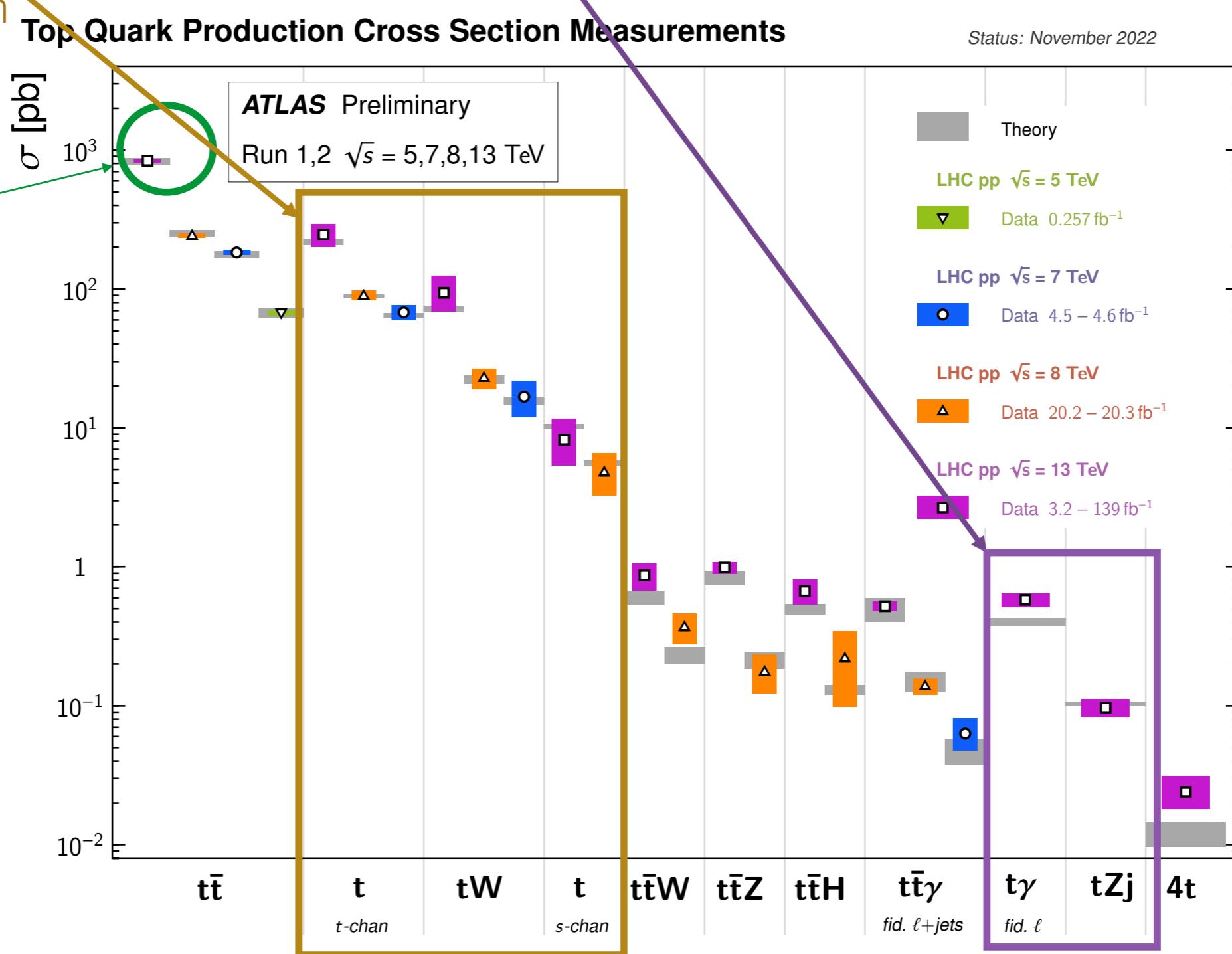
Processes considered in this seminar

Single top
quark
production

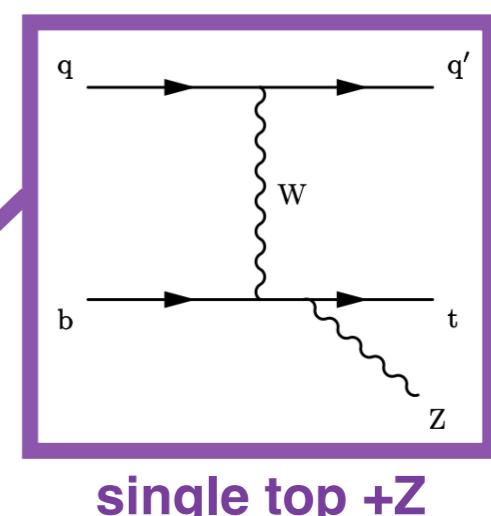
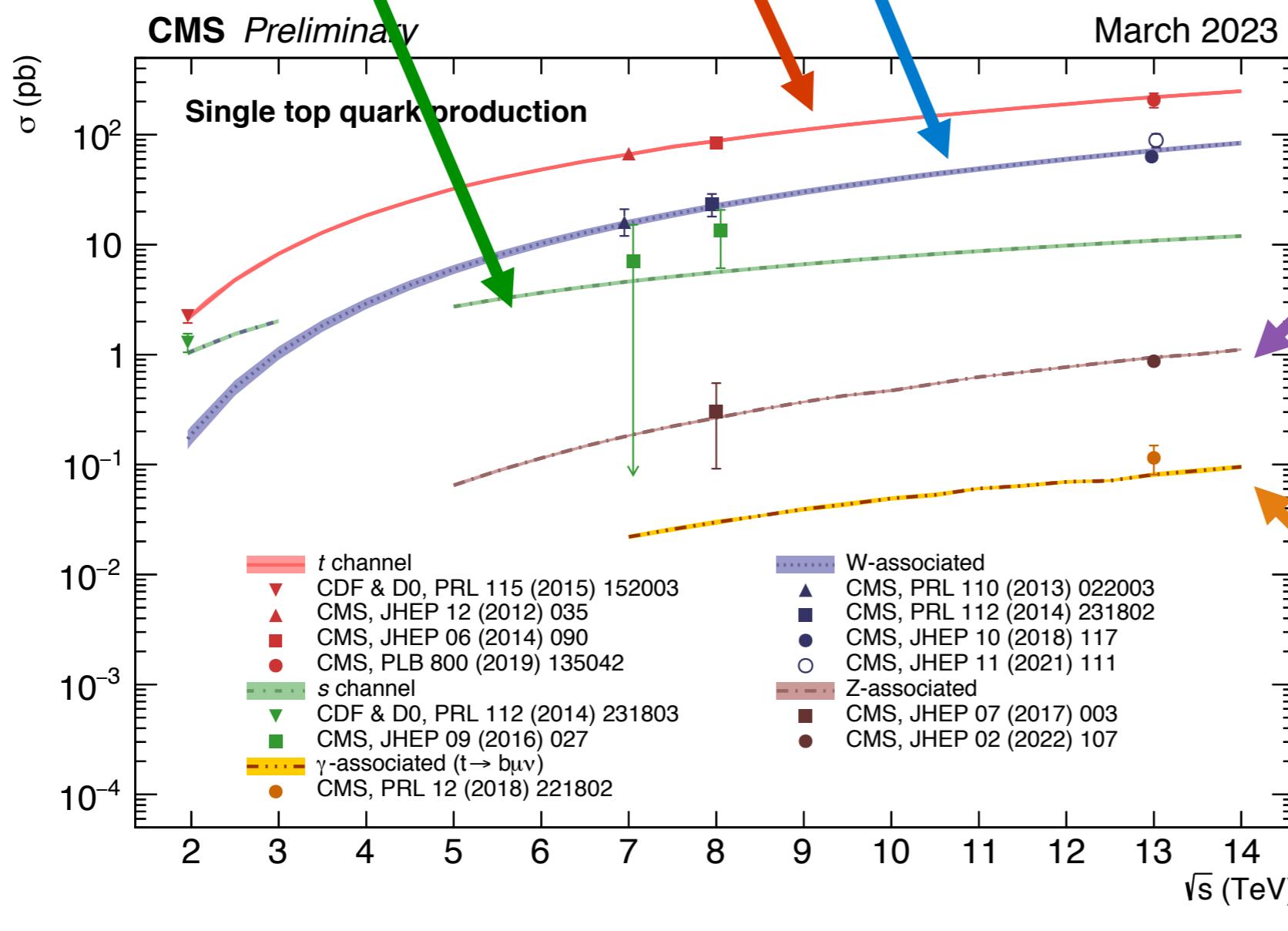
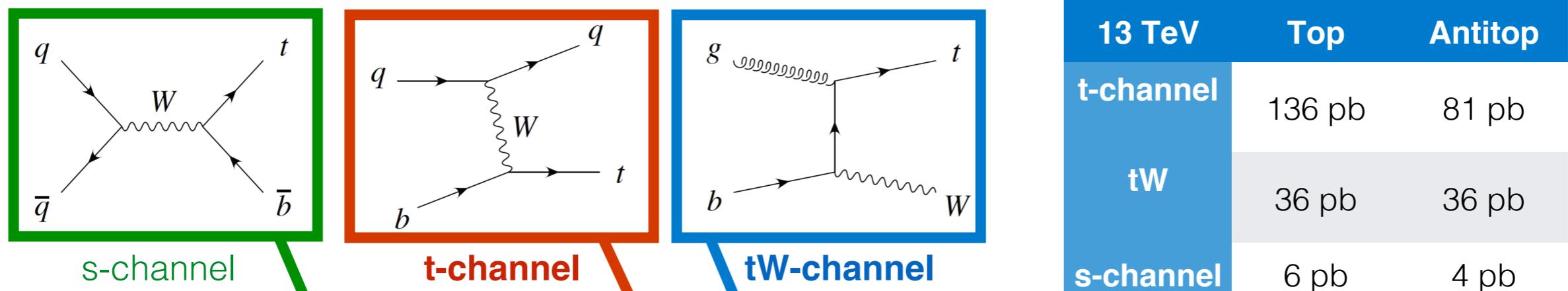
ttbar at 13
TeV:
 ~ 820 pb

Processes involving **single
top + gauge bosons**

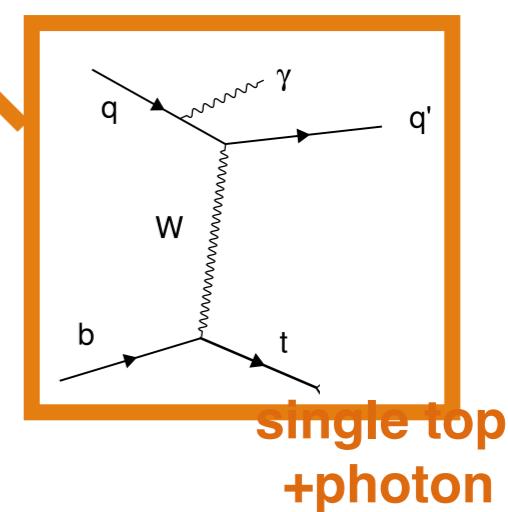
Consider “rare” top
quark production



Single top quark cross sections



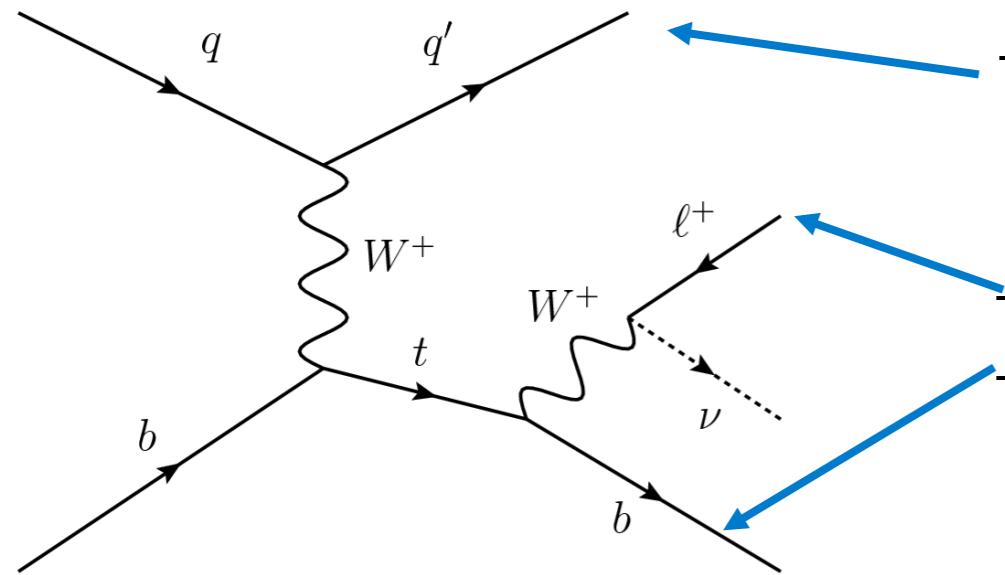
single top +Z



single top +photon

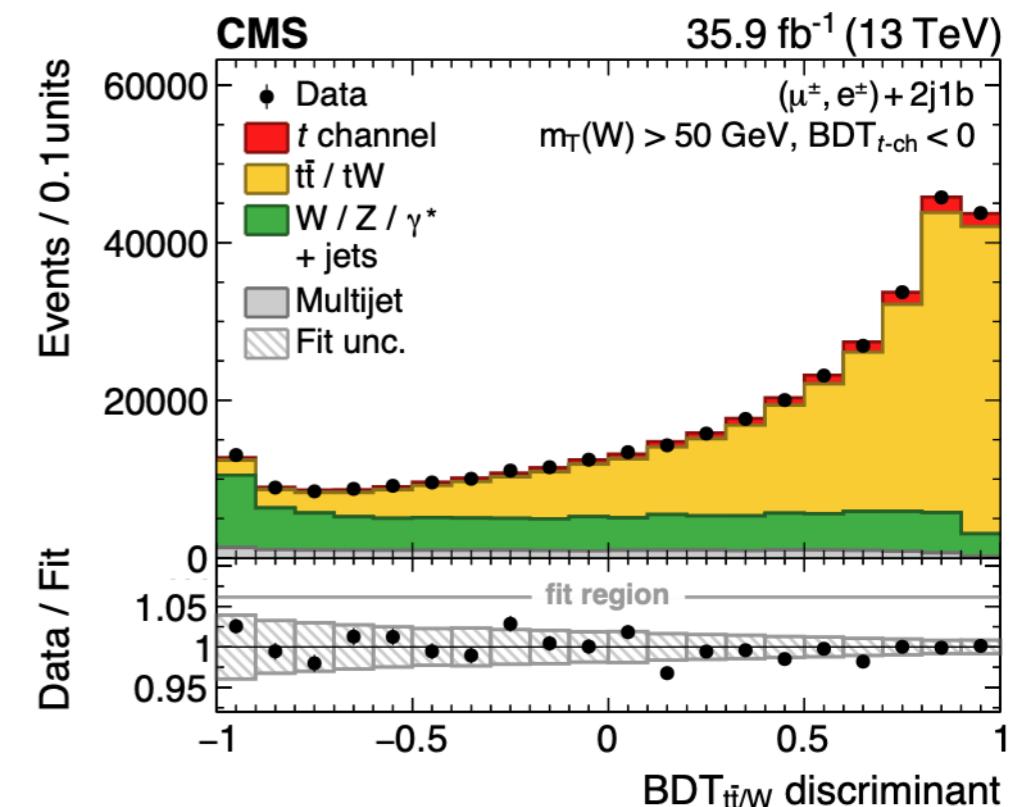
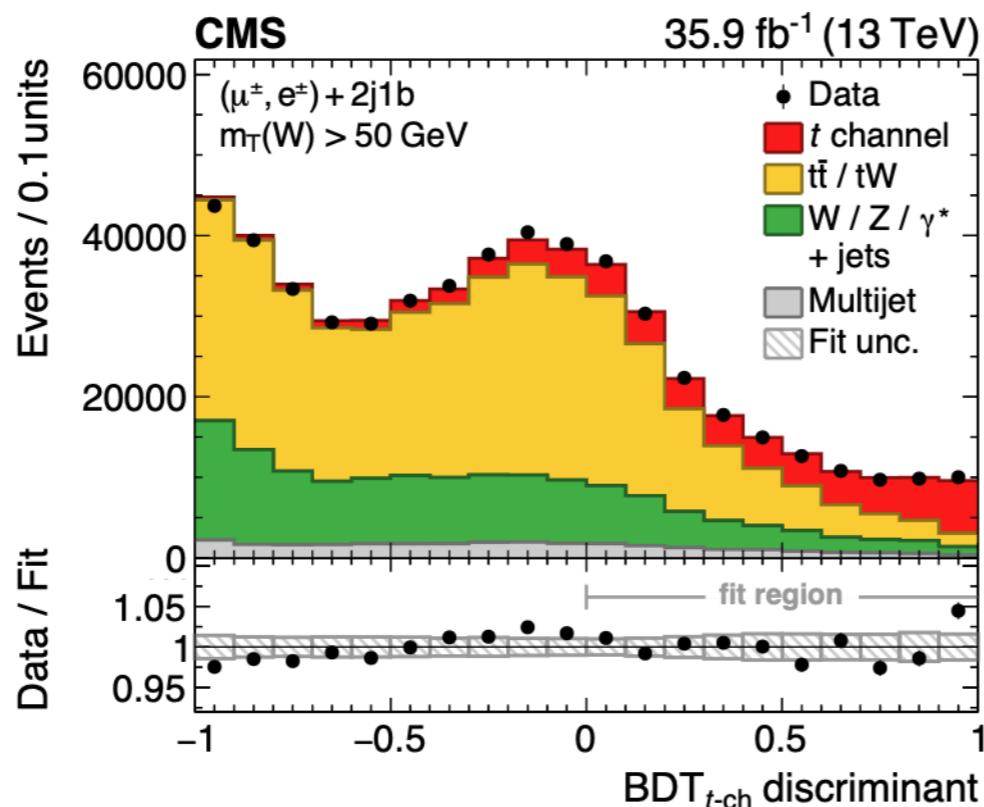
t-channel differential cross section

CMS - Eur. Phys. J. C 80 (2020) 370



- Jet $pT > 40$ GeV in $|\eta| < 4.7$: **t-channel** is an **electroweak** production: features a **forward jet**
- 1 Muon (electron) $pT > 26$ (35) GeV.
- One b-jet in $|\eta| < 2.4$ (tracker acceptance)
- **Define 3 categories**: signal region (2j1b), W +jet control region (2j0b) and $t\bar{t}$ control region (3j2b)
- QCD jet background estimated from data (revert lepton isolation)

**Discriminant:
boosted decision
trees (BDT)**



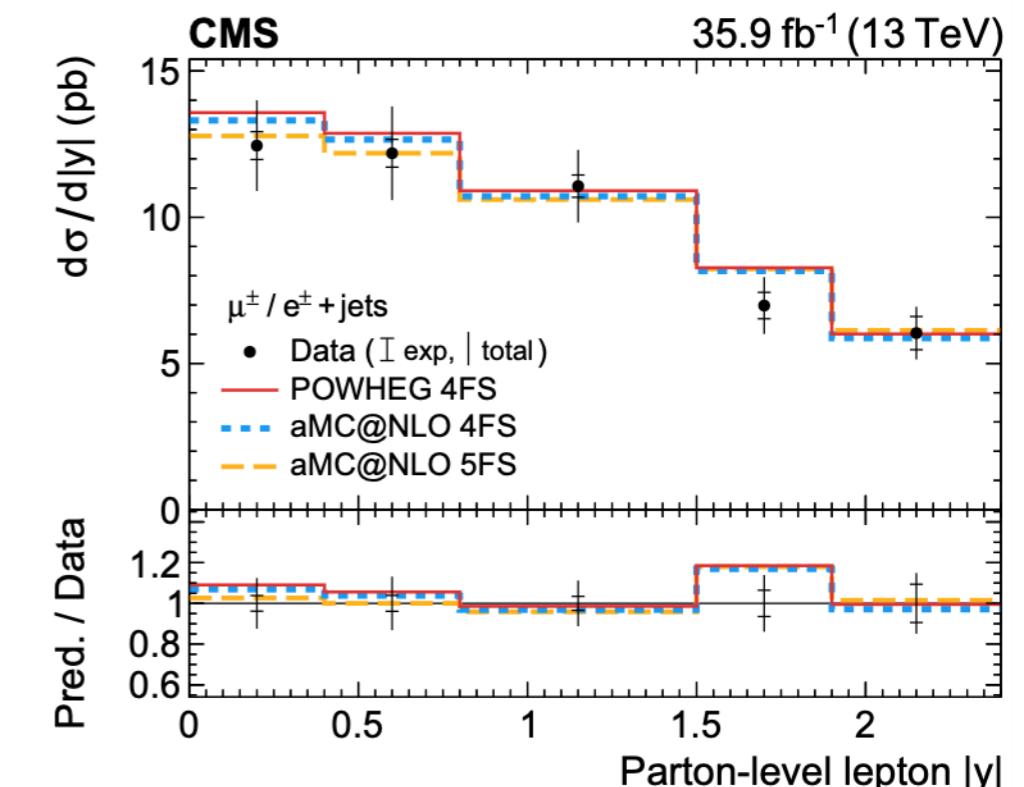
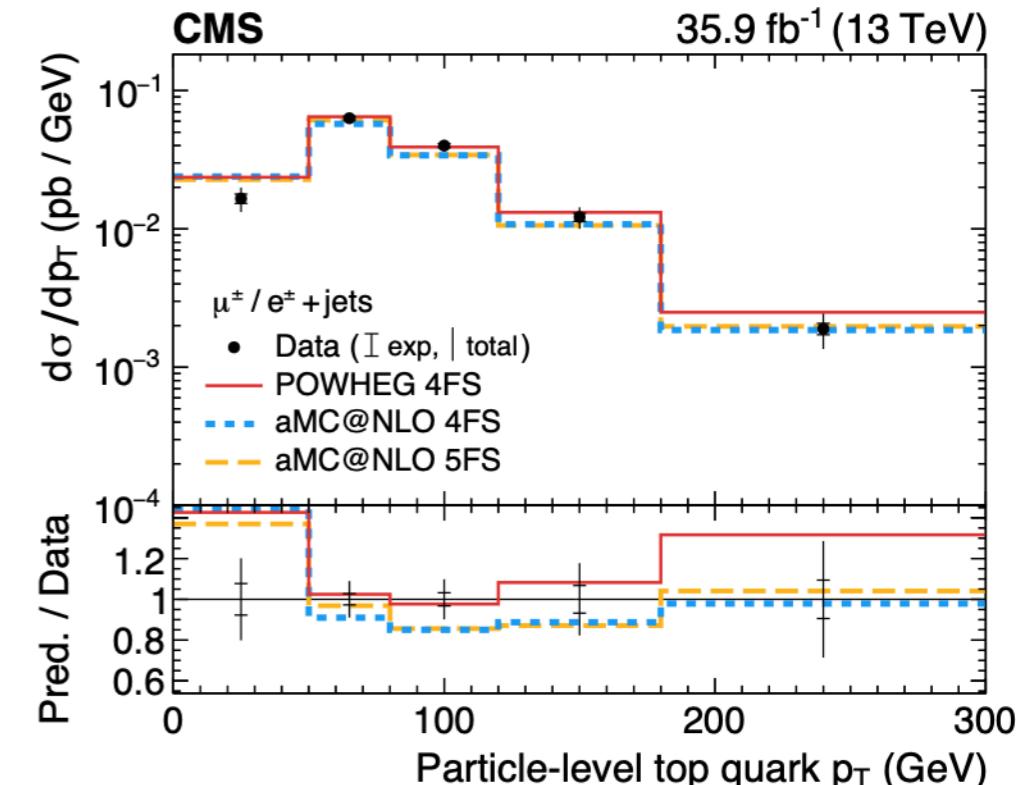
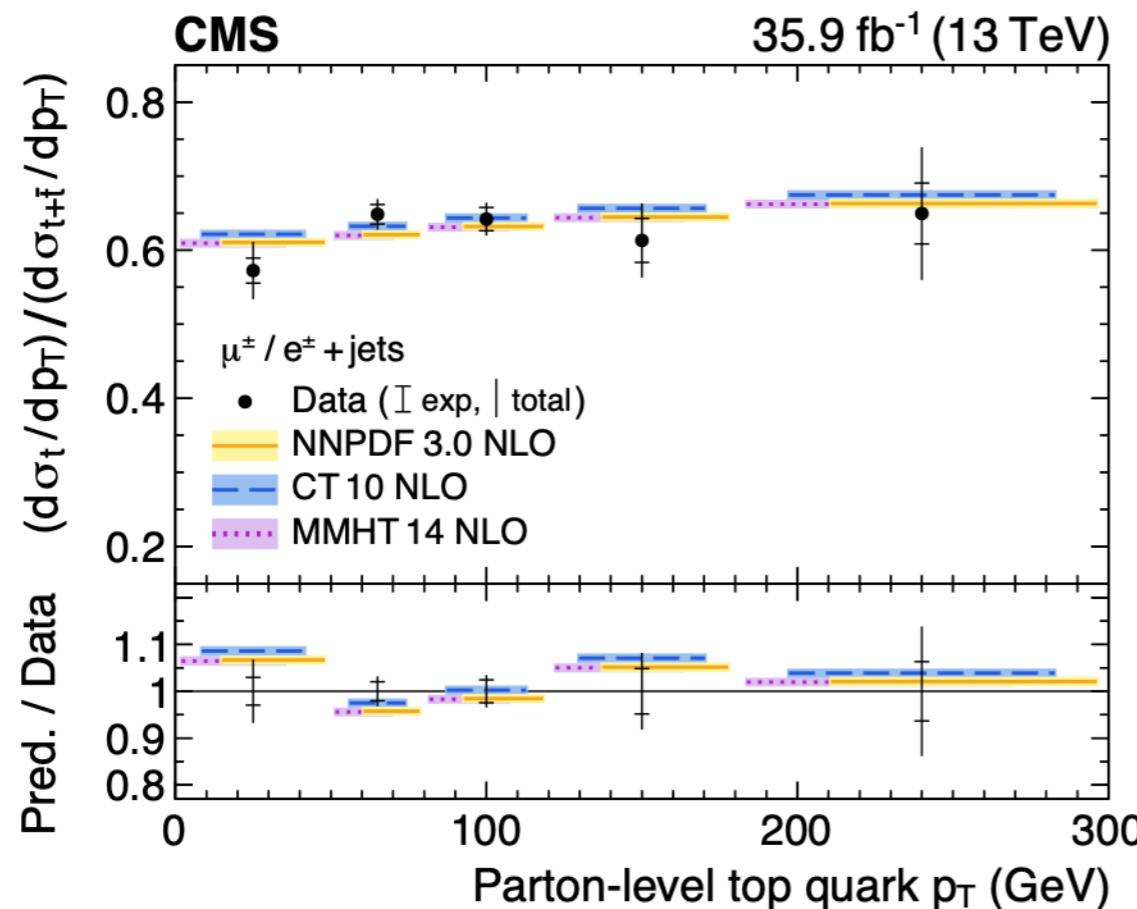
t-channel differential cross section

[CMS - Eur. Phys. J. C 80 \(2020\) 370](#)

Differential cross sections:

- Unfolding detector effects to parton-level (and particle level)
- **Reasonable agreement with NLO theory predictions**, within the uncertainties

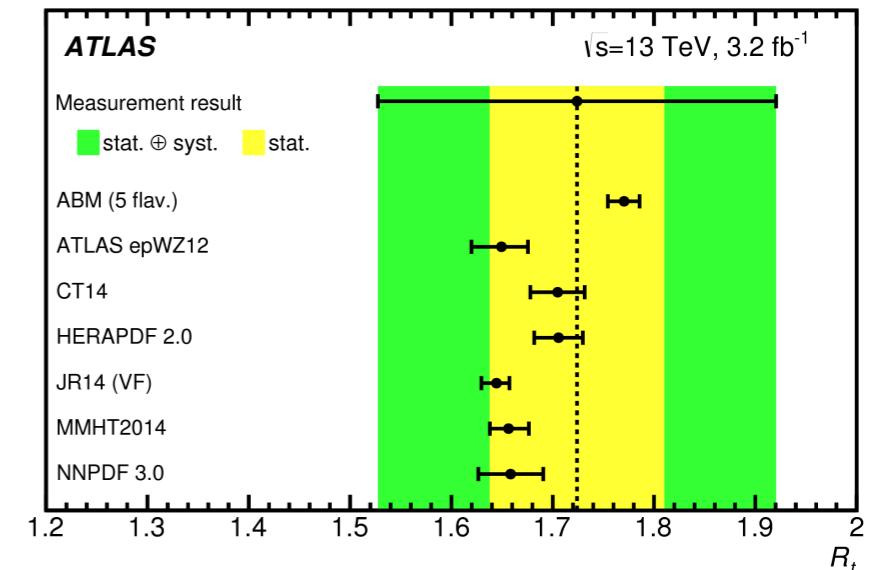
The **charge ratio** is sensitive to the parton content in the proton: >0.6 and increases with top pT



t-channel differential cross section 8 TeV

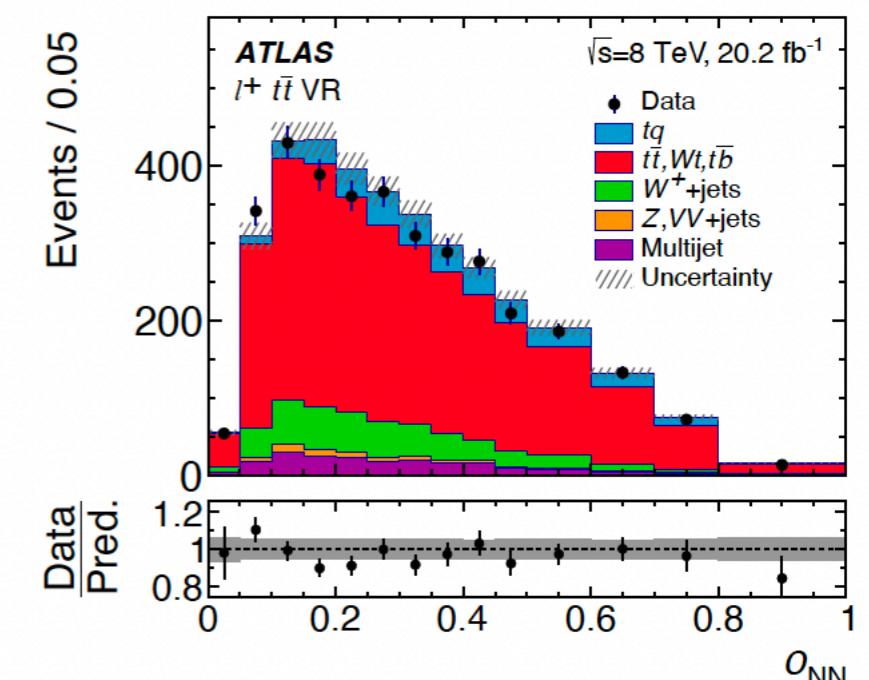
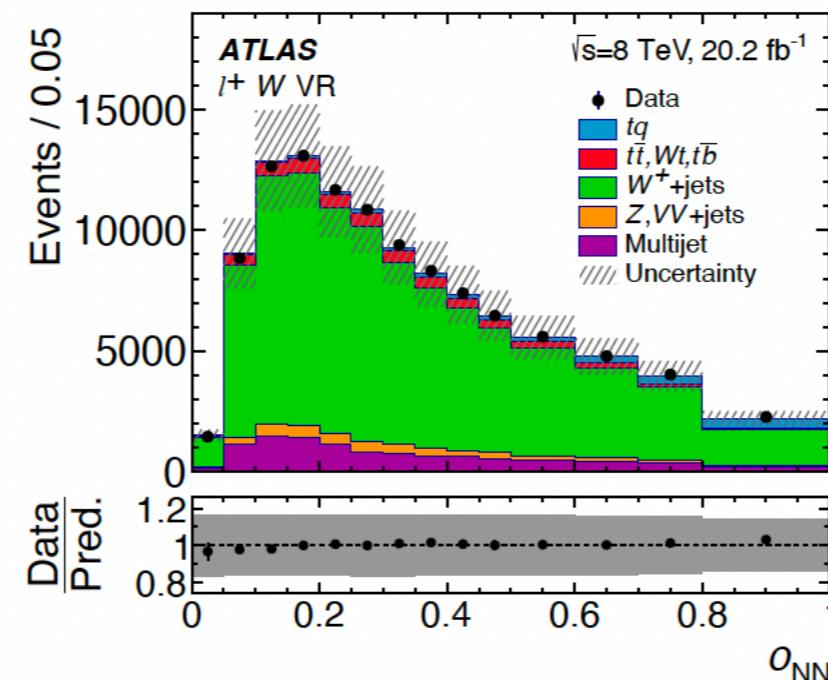
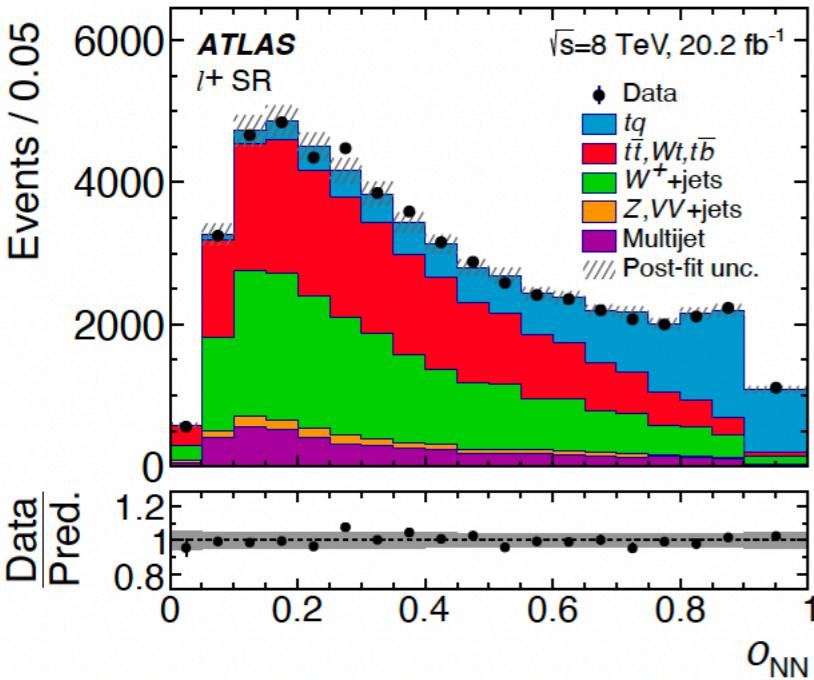
[ATLAS - JHEP 04 \(2017\) 086, Eur. Phys. J. C 77 \(2017\) 531](#)

ATLAS 13TeV: inclusive cross section



ATLAS 8 TeV, similar selection as CMS :

- looser pT selection for leptons (25 GeV) and jets (30 GeV)
- Similar SR definition (2j0b), W+jets VR (loose b-tagging) and ttbar VR (2j2b).
- VR are used to validate the background modeling, but are not part of the fit.
- QCD multijet => fit of missing ET distribution.
- Signal discrimination from Neural-Net.

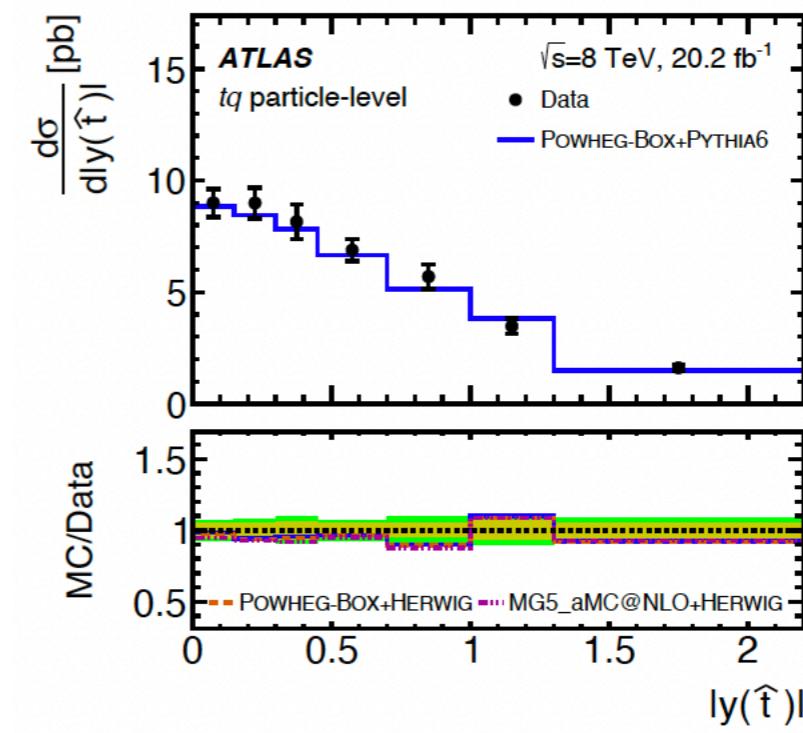
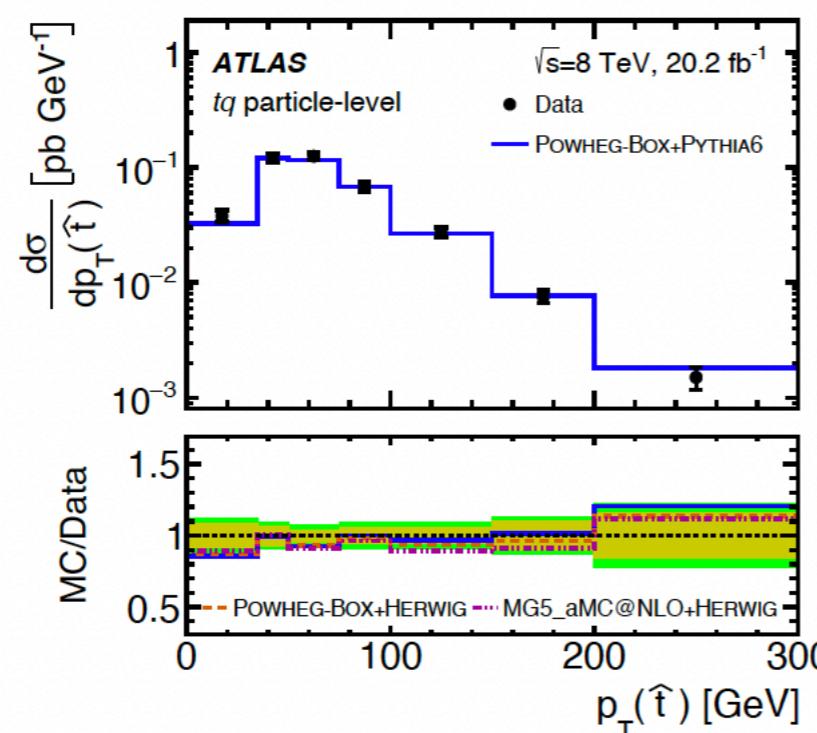
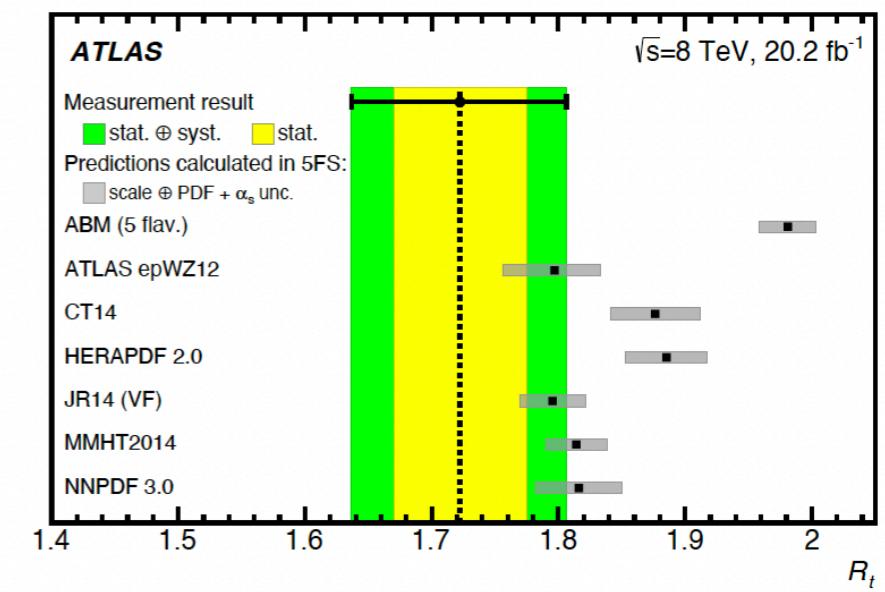
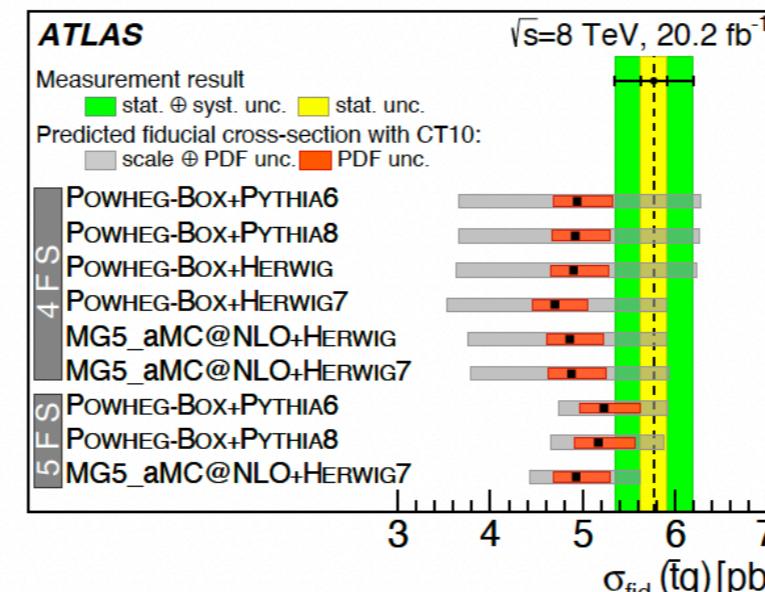
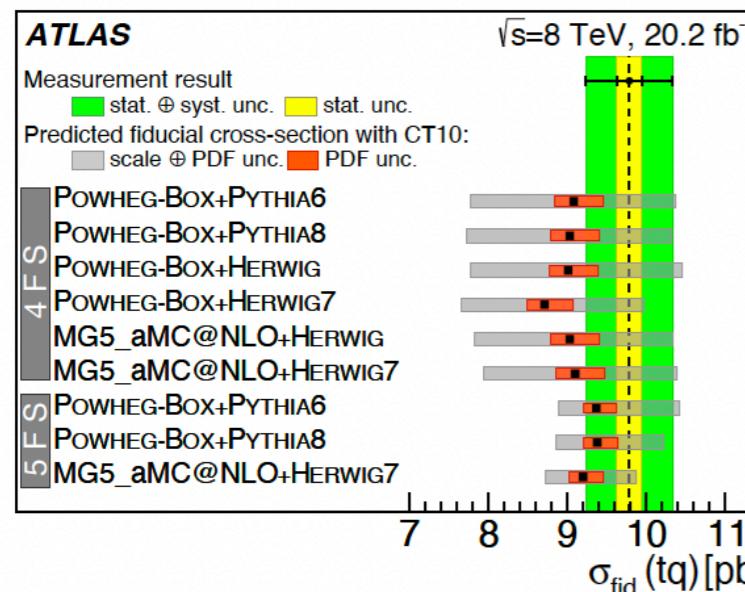


t-channel differential cross section

[ATLAS - Eur. Phys. J. C 77 \(2017\) 531](#)

Fiducial and **differential** cross sections for **top** and **antitop**

Ratio of top to antitop:
Tensions with data?

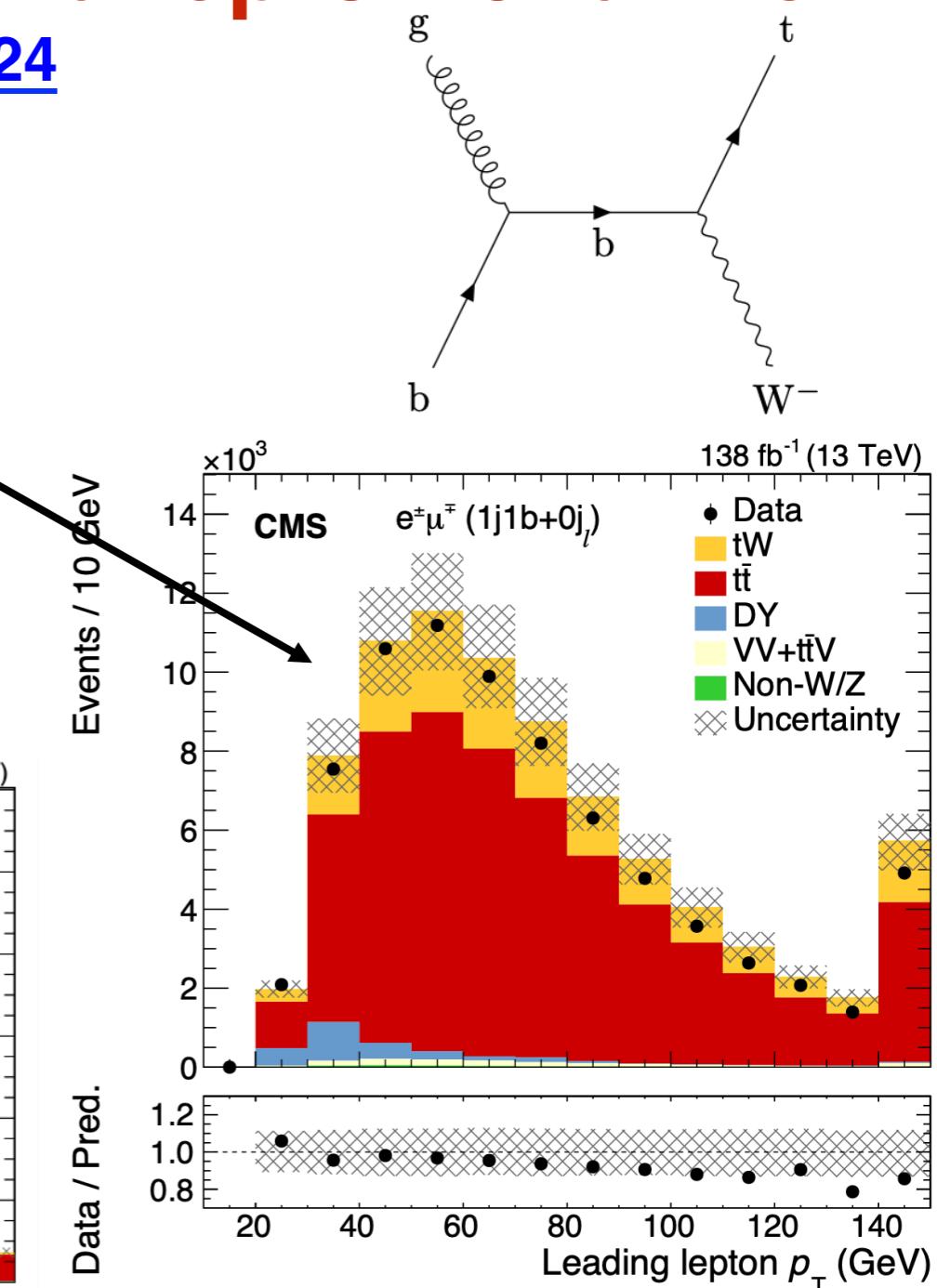
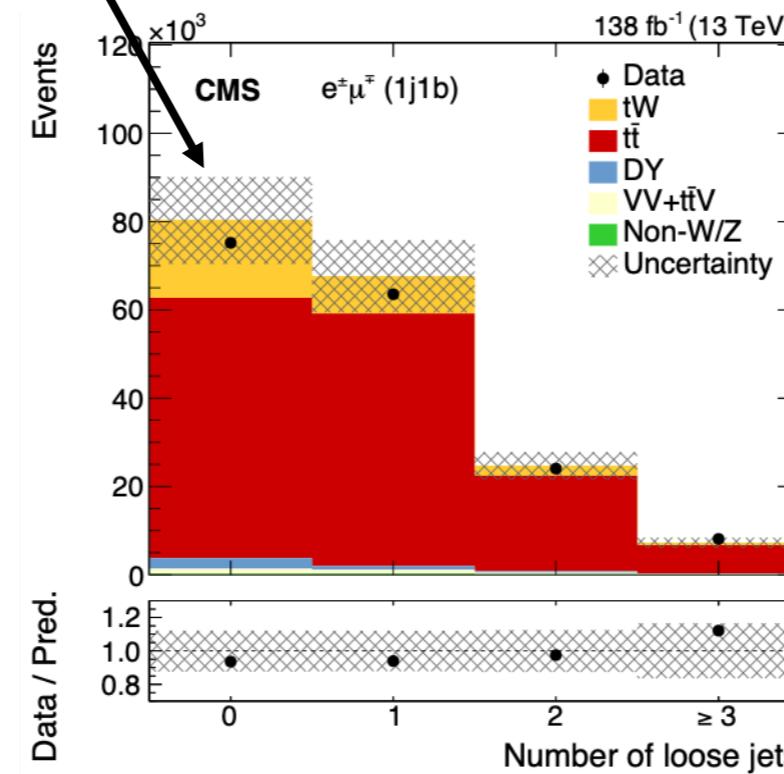
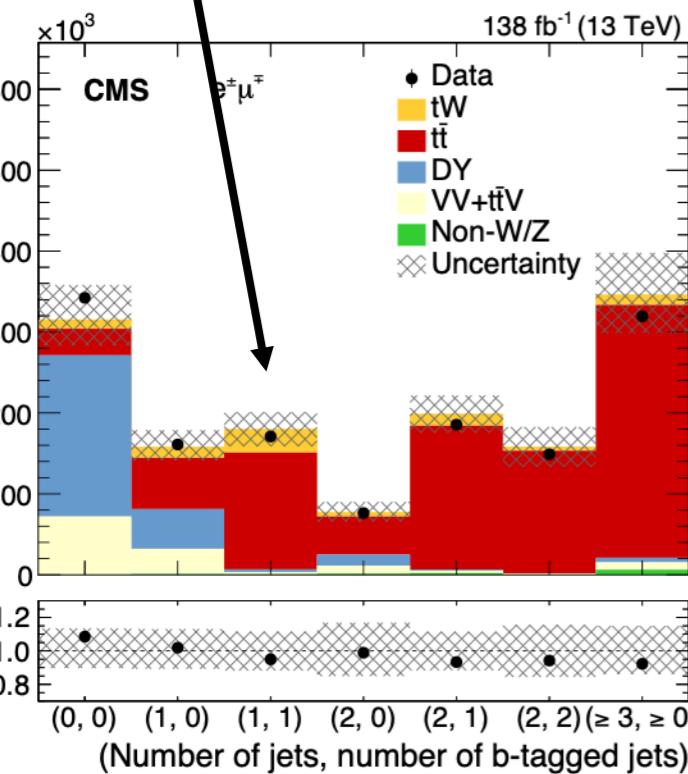


tW differential measurement in dilepton channel

CMS - arXiv:2208.00924

e μ channel analyzed:

- Two isolated leptons with $p_T > 25, 20 \text{ GeV}$
- $m_{ll} > 20 \text{ GeV}$, jets $p_T > 30 \text{ GeV}$
- **Signal region** defined as:
 - exactly 1 jet tagged as b-jet,
 - and 0 additional loose jets



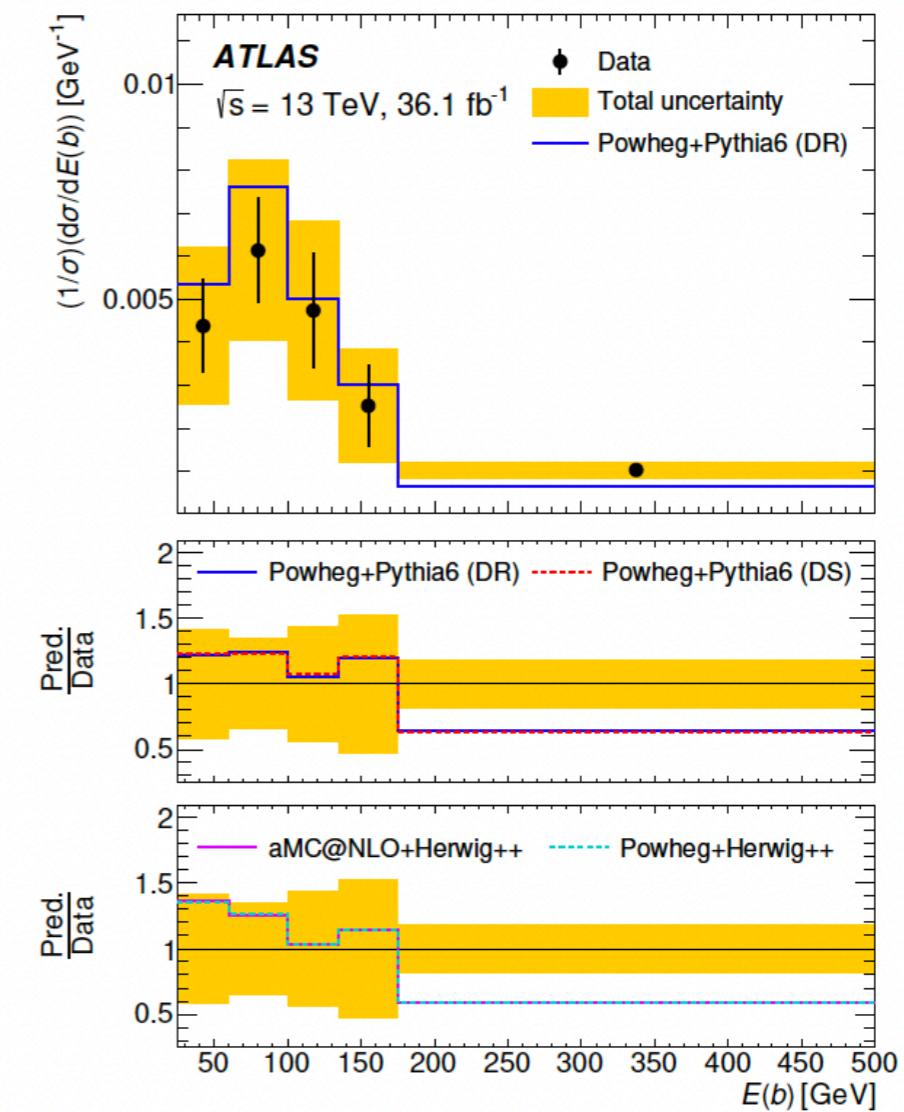
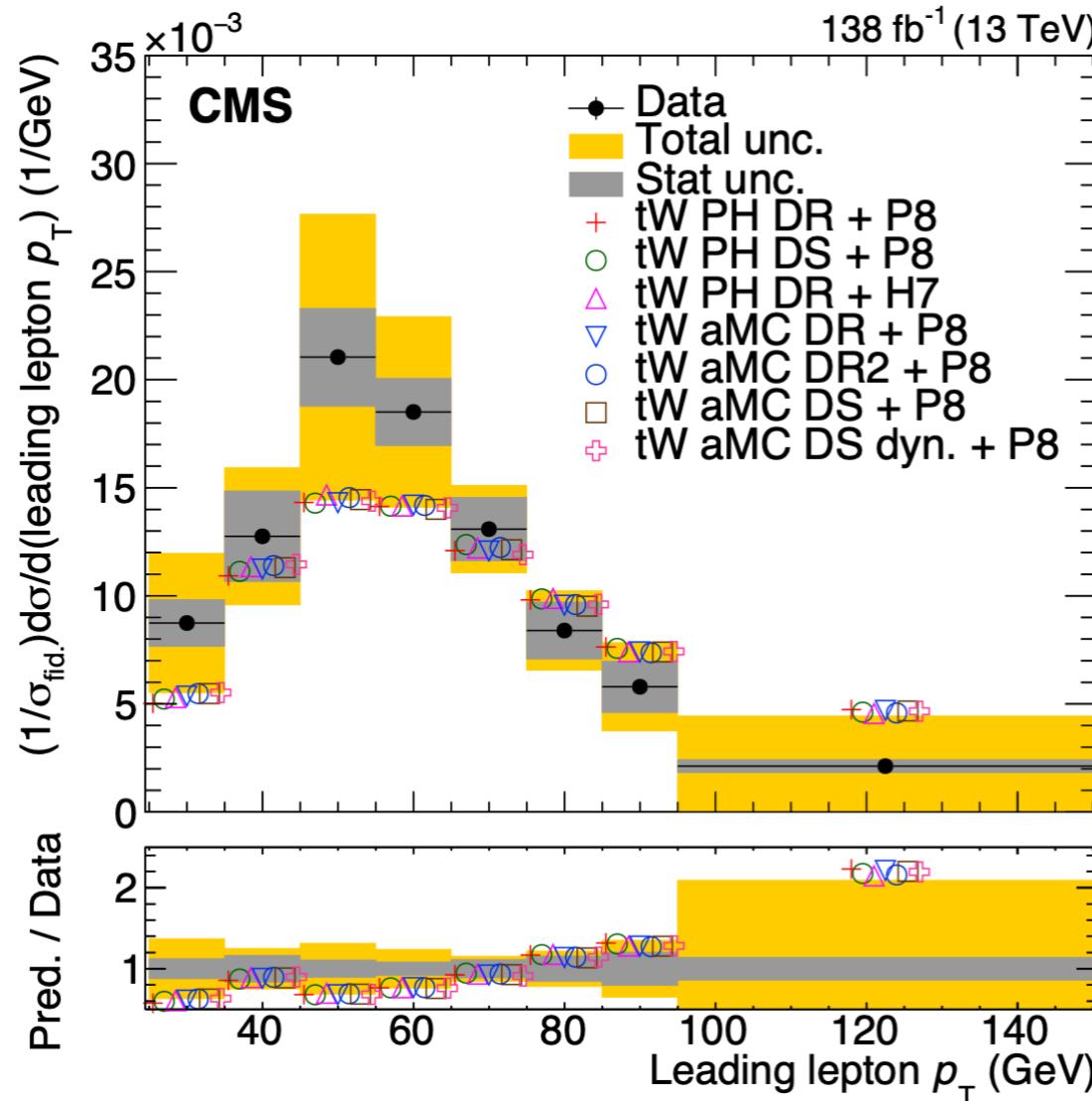
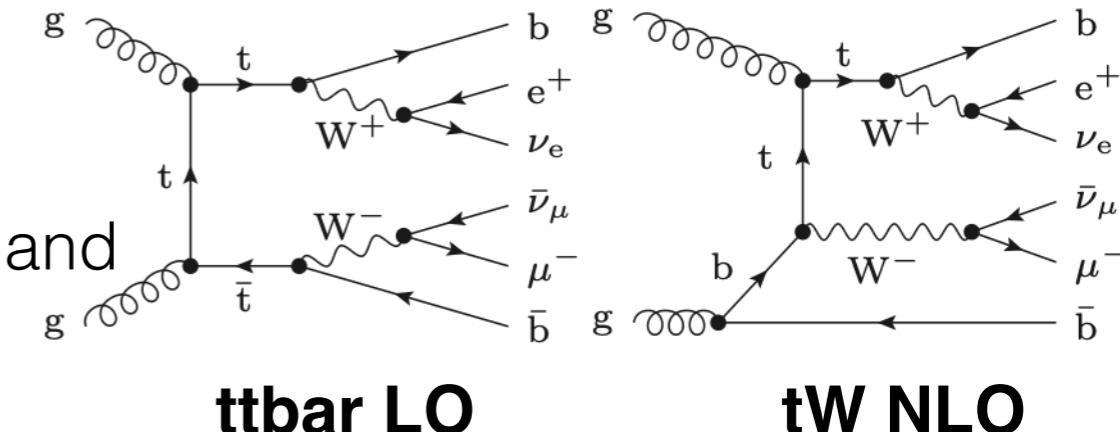
- ttbar and other background **estimated from simulation**, normalised by a fit to data

tW differential measurement in dilepton channel

CMS - arXiv:2208.00924, ATLAS - EPJC78(2018)186

Interference between tW NLO and ttbar LO:

- comparisons of tW NLO predictions with ttbar resonance removed using DR (diagram removal) and DS (diagram subtraction) schemes.
- need more data to conclude.



Probing the interference between ttbar and tW

ATLAS - PRL121(2018)152002

Dedicated measurement in WbWb phase-space to probe the interference:

- Events selected with 2 b-jets
- Good agreement with dedicated so-called “bb4l” predictions, which includes the resonances and the interferences
- Various comparisons of generators and resonance removal schemes.

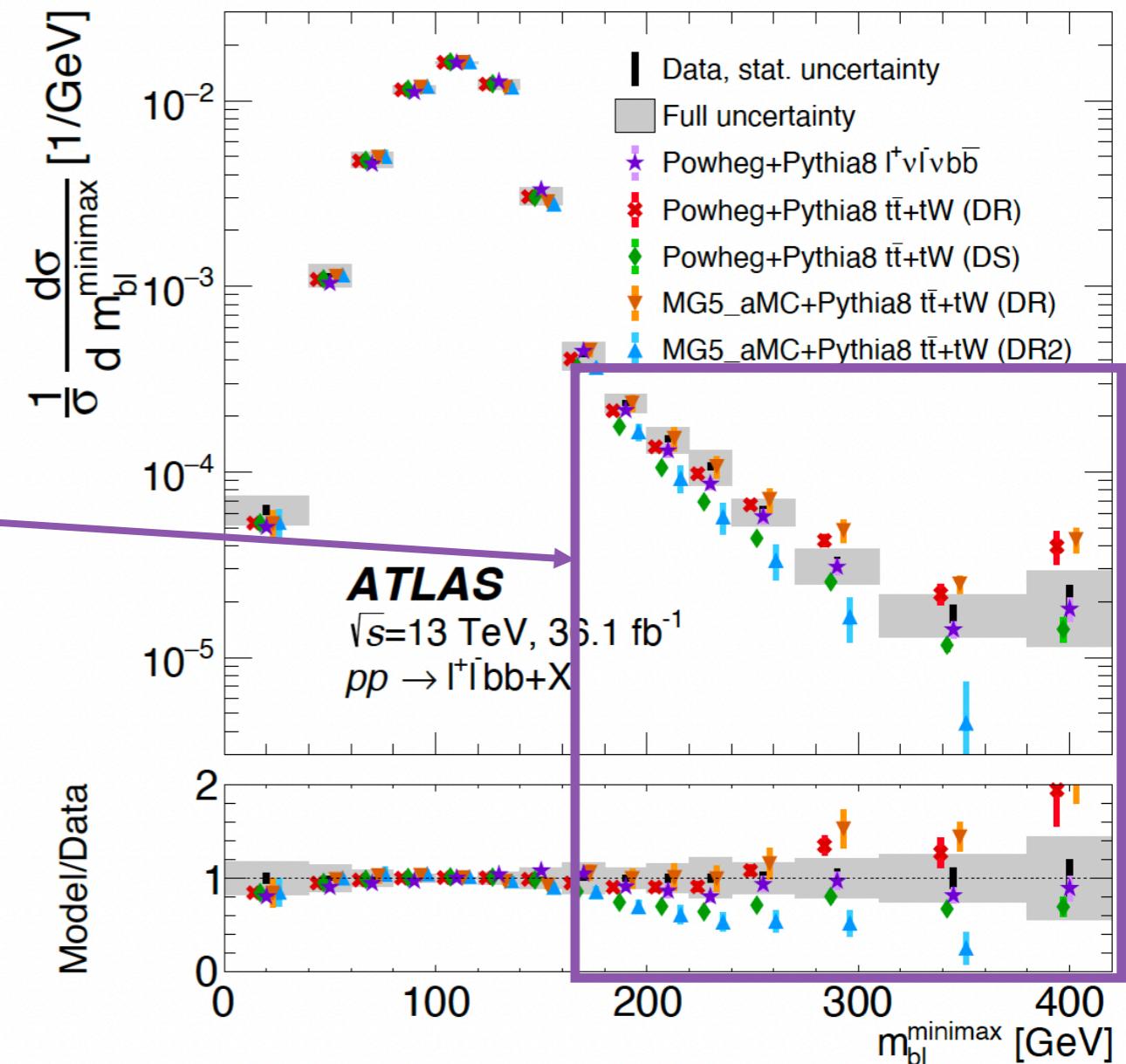
$$m_{b\ell}^{minimax} = \min\left(\max(m_{b_1\ell_1}, m_{b_2\ell_2}), \max(m_{b_1\ell_2}, m_{b_2\ell_1})\right)$$

at LO, $m_{b\ell}^{minimax} < \sqrt{m_t^2 - m_W^2}$.

Sensitive to the interference

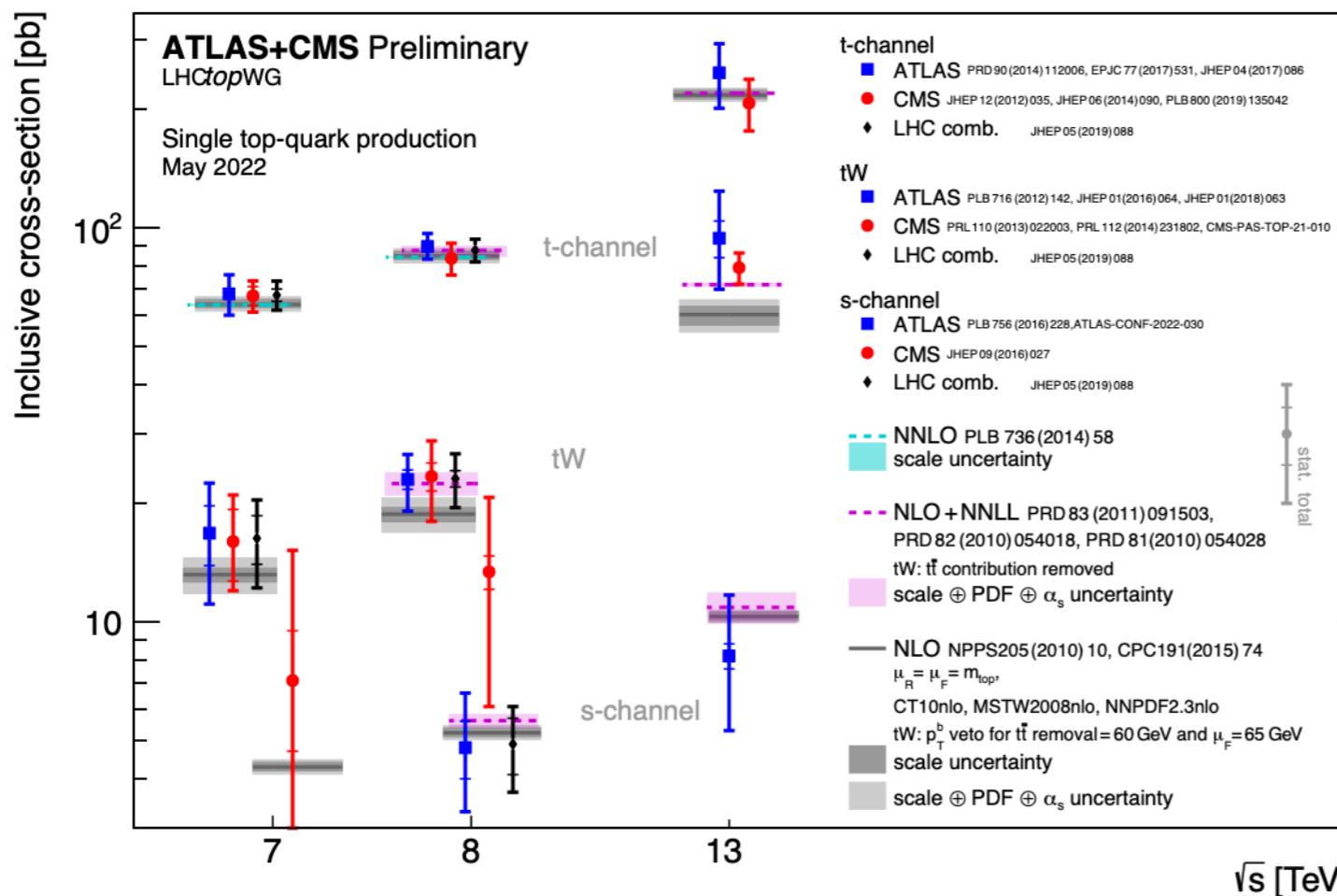
p-value:

Model	All bins	$m_{b\ell}^{minimax} > 160 \text{ GeV}$
POWHEG-Box $t\bar{t} + tW$ (DR)	0.71	0.40
POWHEG-Box $t\bar{t} + tW$ (DS)	0.77	0.56
MG5_aMC $t\bar{t} + tW$ (DR)	0.14	0.17
MG5_aMC $t\bar{t} + tW$ (DR2)	0.02	0.08
POWHEG-Box $\ell^+ \nu \ell^- \nu bb$	0.92	0.95

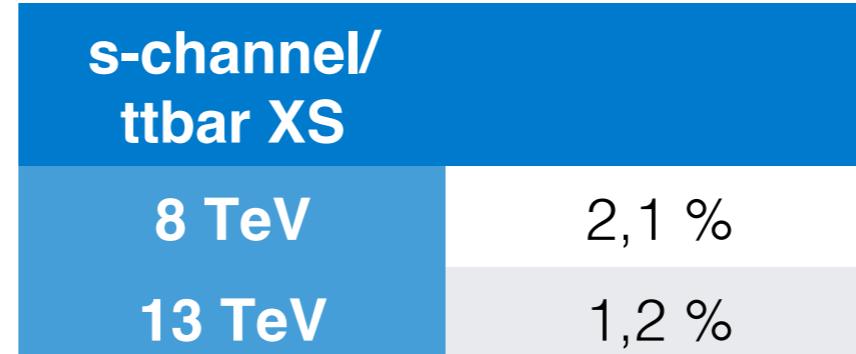


Measuring s-channel process at the LHC

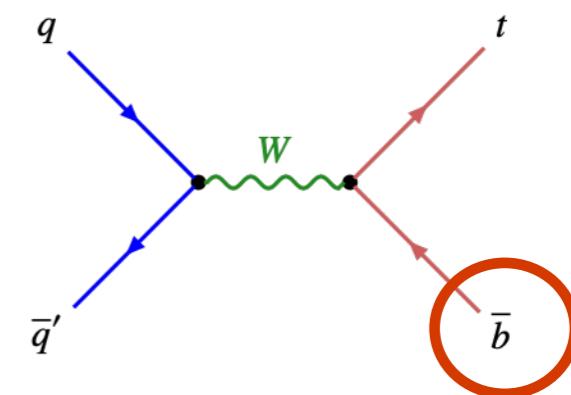
ATLAS - arXiv:2209.08990



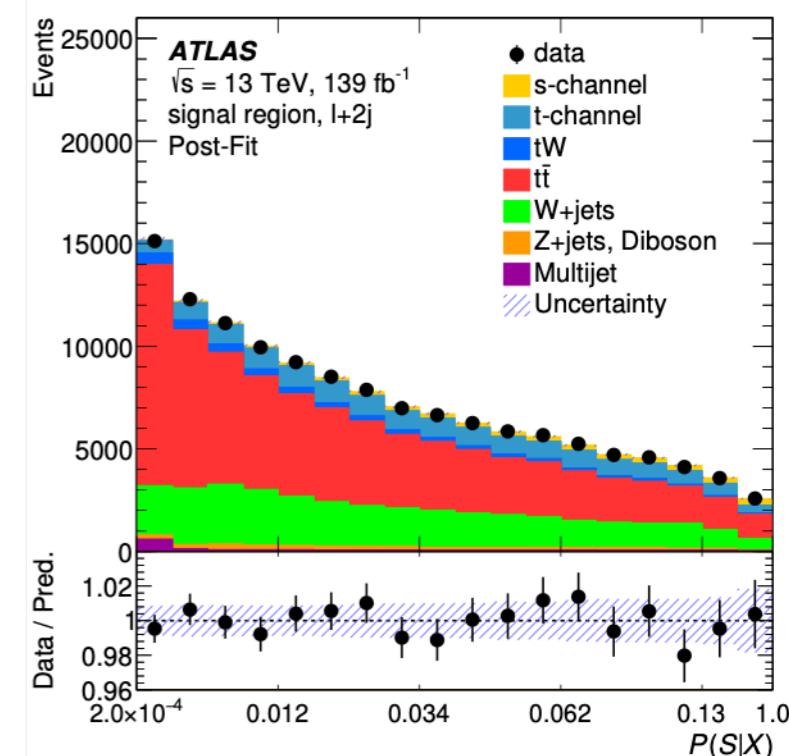
Search more difficult at 13 TeV than at 8 TeV:



Advanced analysis methods need to be employed: ATLAS uses matrix element method

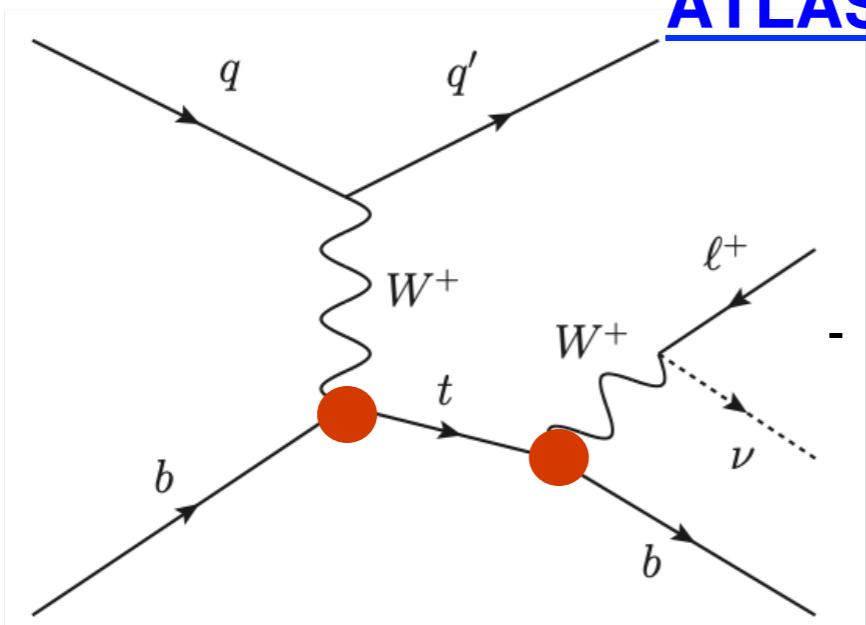


- t-channel is now a background
- **s-channel observed at Tevatron (2014)**
- signal to background ratio (s/b) decreases when center-of-mass energy increases
- **Evidence ($>3\sigma$) obtained at ATLAS 8 TeV and 13 TeV**



***Wtb* vertex: anomalous couplings**

[ATLAS - JHEP12\(2017\)017](#)



Wtb vertex **involved both** in production and decay of **single top t-channel**

Effective lagrangian for the anomalous coupling at Wtb vertex:

$$L_{Wtb} = \frac{g}{\sqrt{2}} \bar{b} \gamma^\mu (V_L P_L + V_R P_R) t W_\mu^- + \frac{g}{\sqrt{2}} \bar{b} \frac{i \sigma^{\mu\nu}}{M_W} (g_L P_L + g_R P_R) t W_\mu^- + h.c.$$

$$P_{L,R} = (1 \mp \gamma_5)/2$$

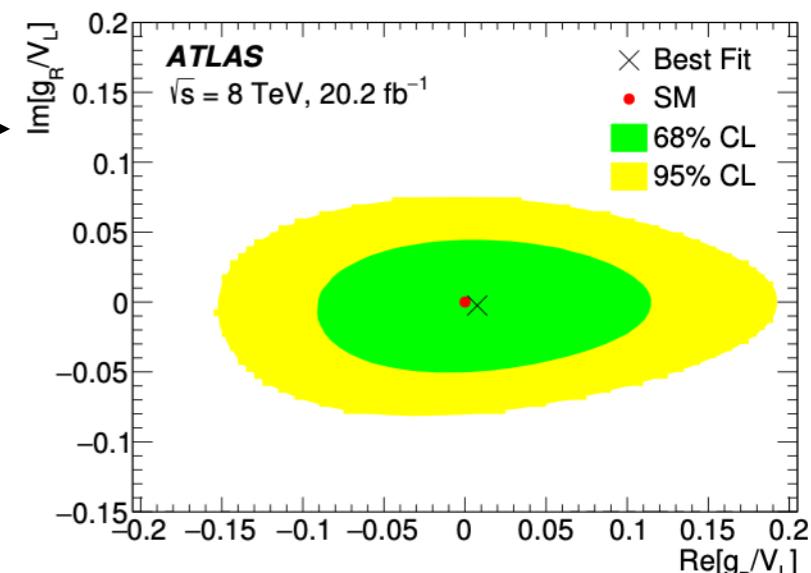
Left and right handed
vectorial couplings

Left and right handed
tensorial couplings

Imaginary coeff.: CP-violating
Only done with t-channel!

In the SM at tree level:
 - $V_L = V_{tb} \sim 1$ (CKM element)
 - $V_R = g_R = g_L = 0$

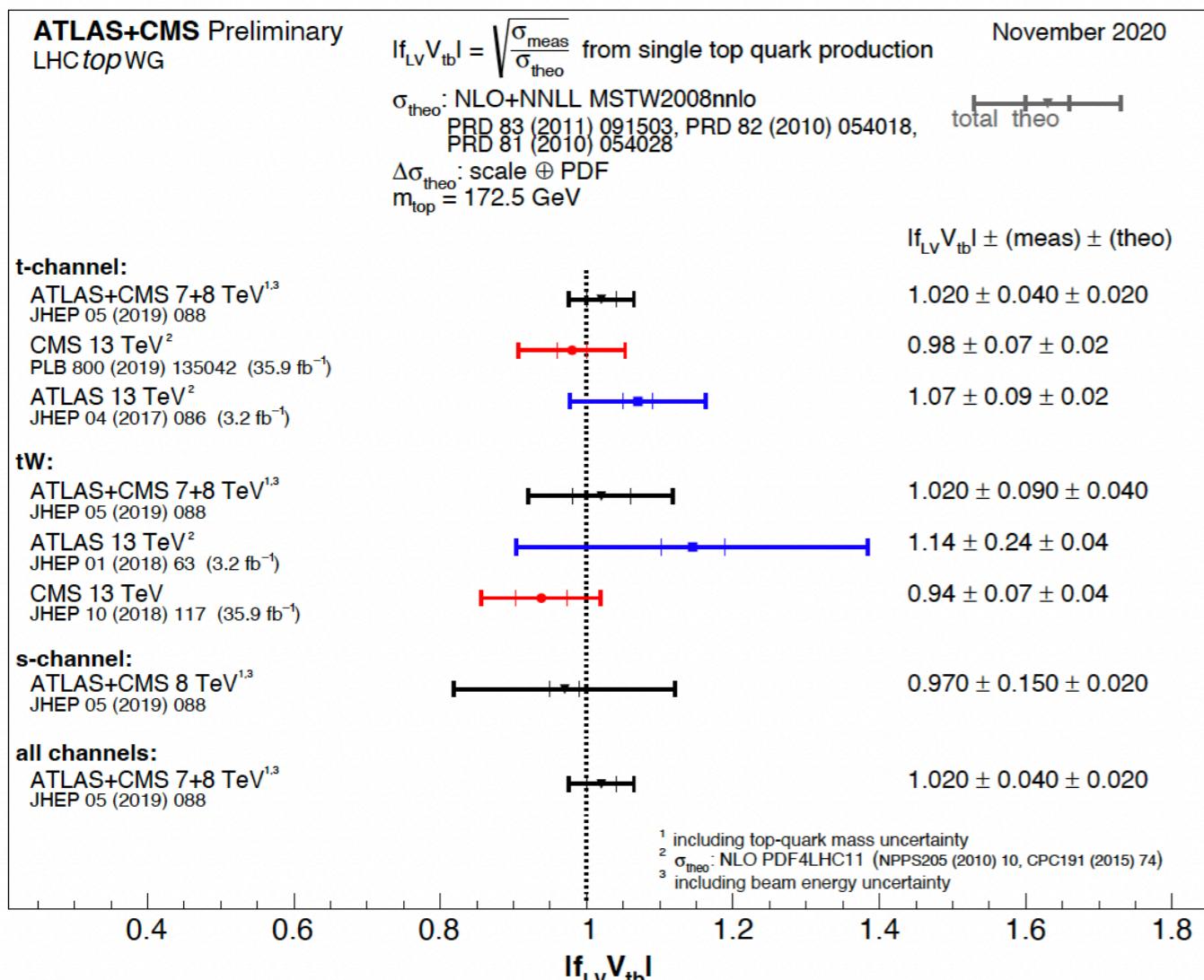
ATLAS, JHEP12(2017)017



Measurements:

- Related to W helicity (mostly visible with ttbar), top quark polarization (single top production only)
- Impacts **angular distributions** defined in the top quark or W rest frame

Measurement of $|f_L V_{tb}|$



Extraction of $|f_L V_{tb}|$ (= $V_L W_{tb}$ coupling) from cross section measurements.

$$|f_L V_{tb}| = \sqrt{\frac{\sigma_{t-ch.}}{\sigma_{t-ch}^{th}}}$$

Assumes $|V_{td}|, |V_{ts}| \ll |V_{tb}|$

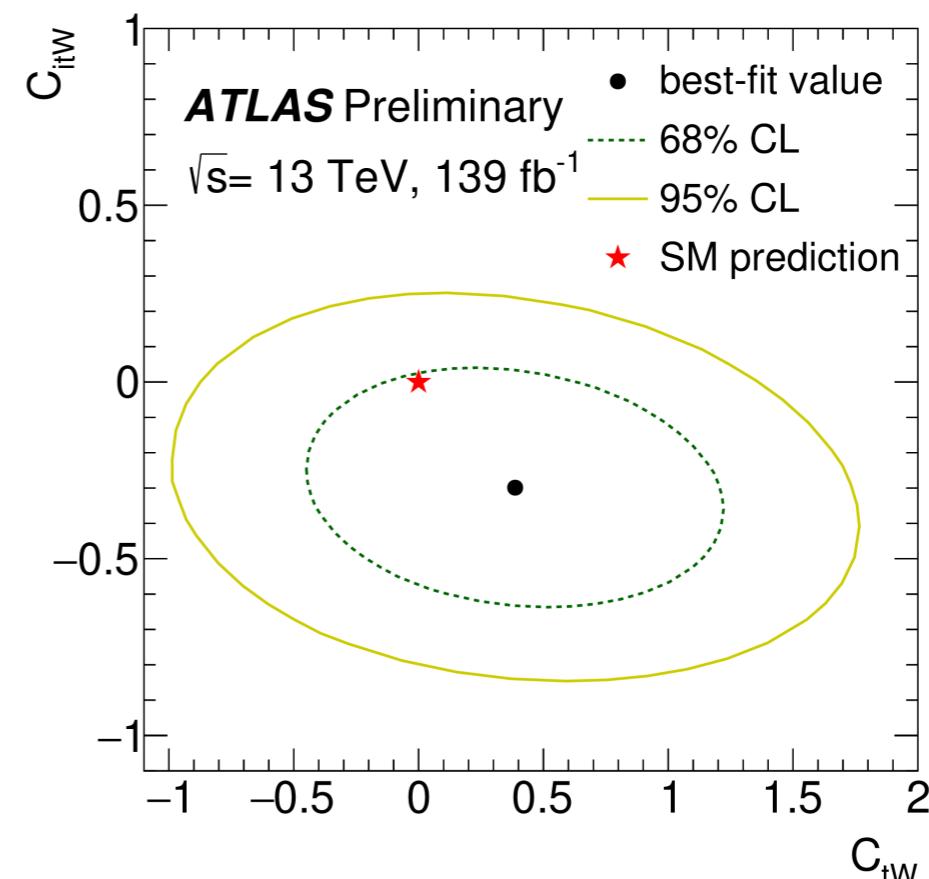
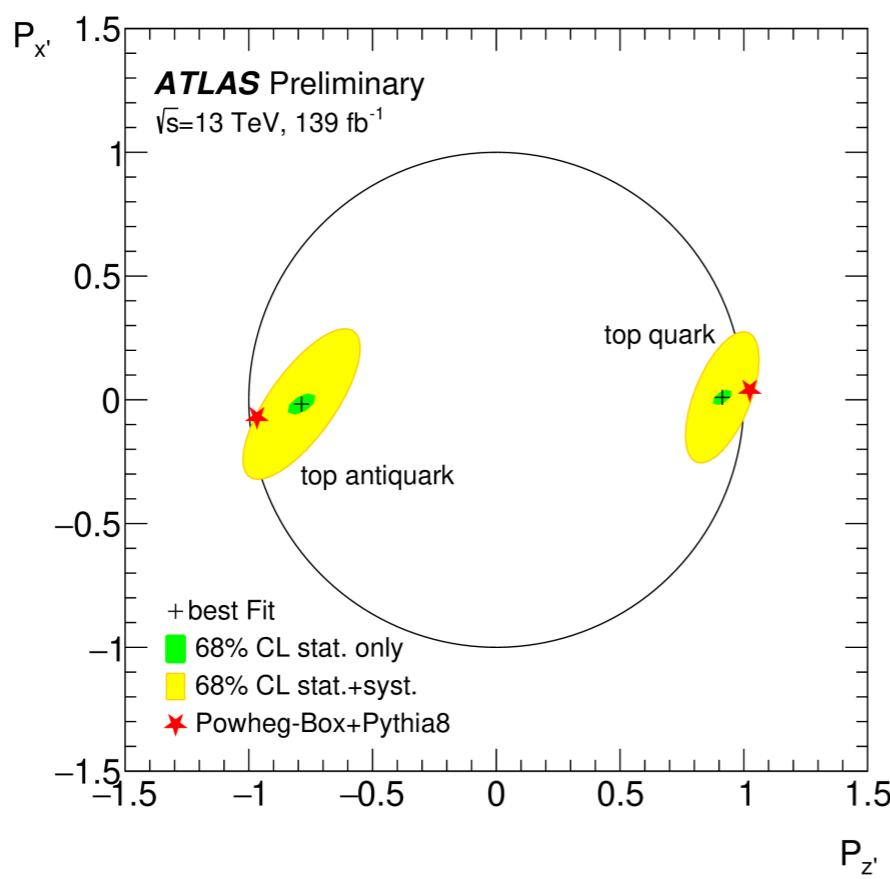
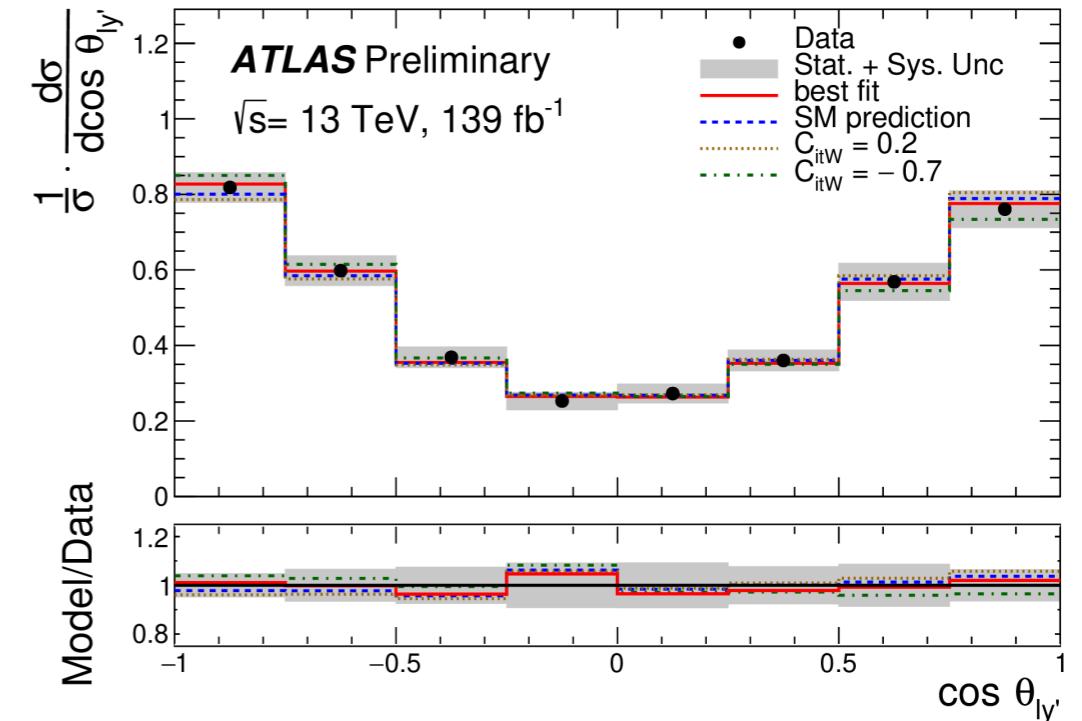
Combinations at 8TeV (t, tW and s-channels) provide the best precision.

Measurement without assumptions (t-channel measurement also measuring V_{td}, V_{ts}) lead to similar precision.

Top quark polarization

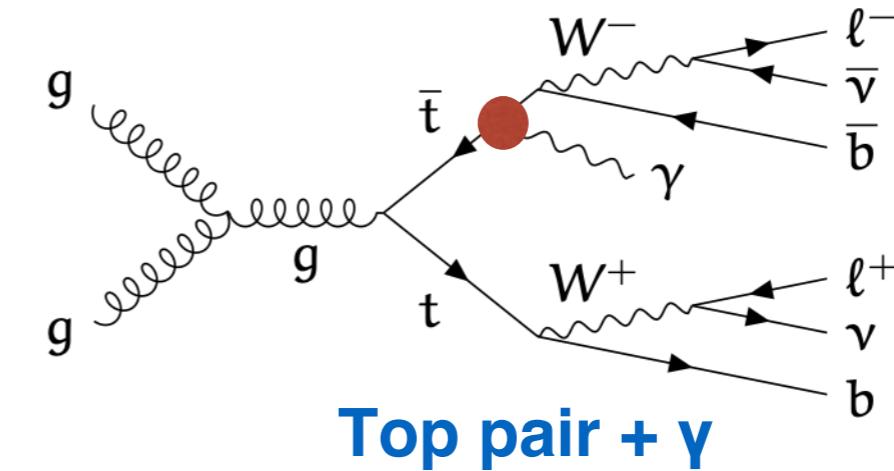
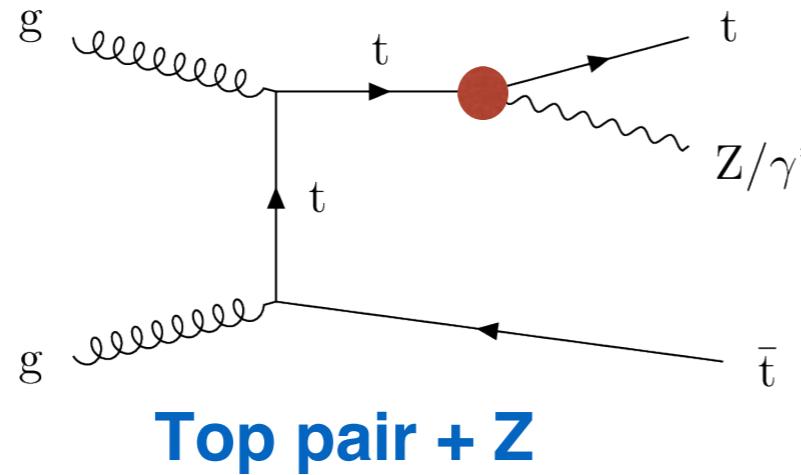
[ATLAS - JHEP 11 \(2022\) 040](#)

- Measure **angular distribution of the lepton in the top quark rest frame**
- Interpret results in term of top quark polarization along x' and z' directions ($P_{x'} \sim 0$, $P_{z'} \sim 1$)
- Extract **measurement of effective field theory couplings, tensor left** (aka g_L and $\text{Im}(g_L)$)

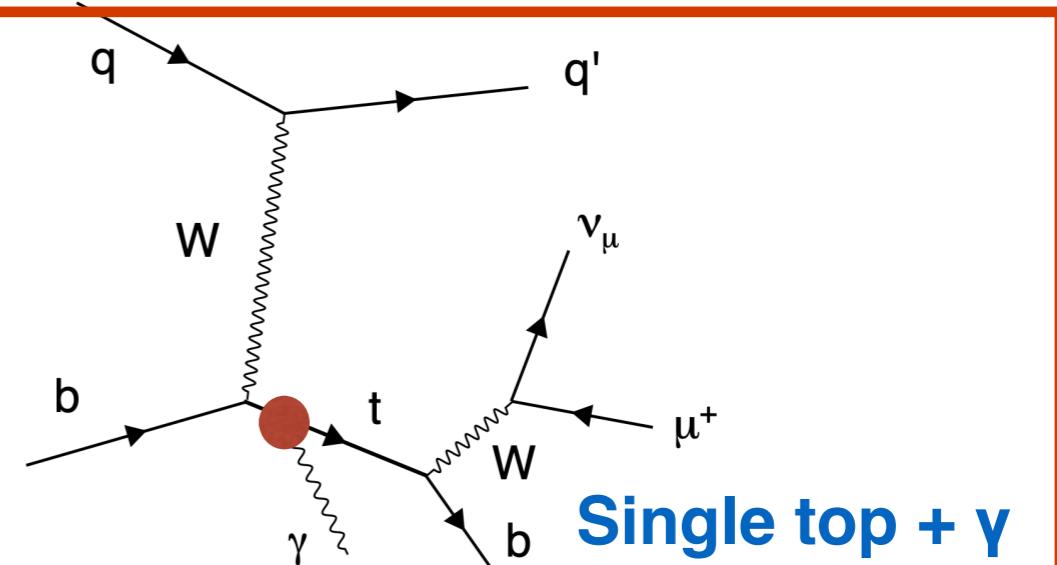
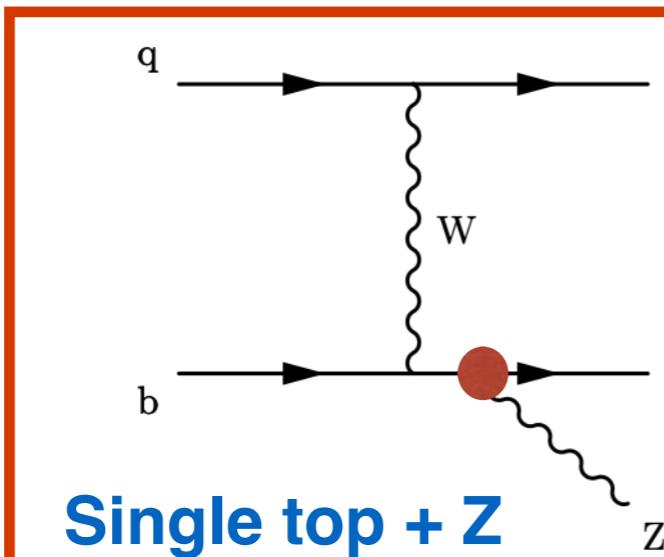


Processes with tops and gauge bosons

Larger cross section



Smaller cross section



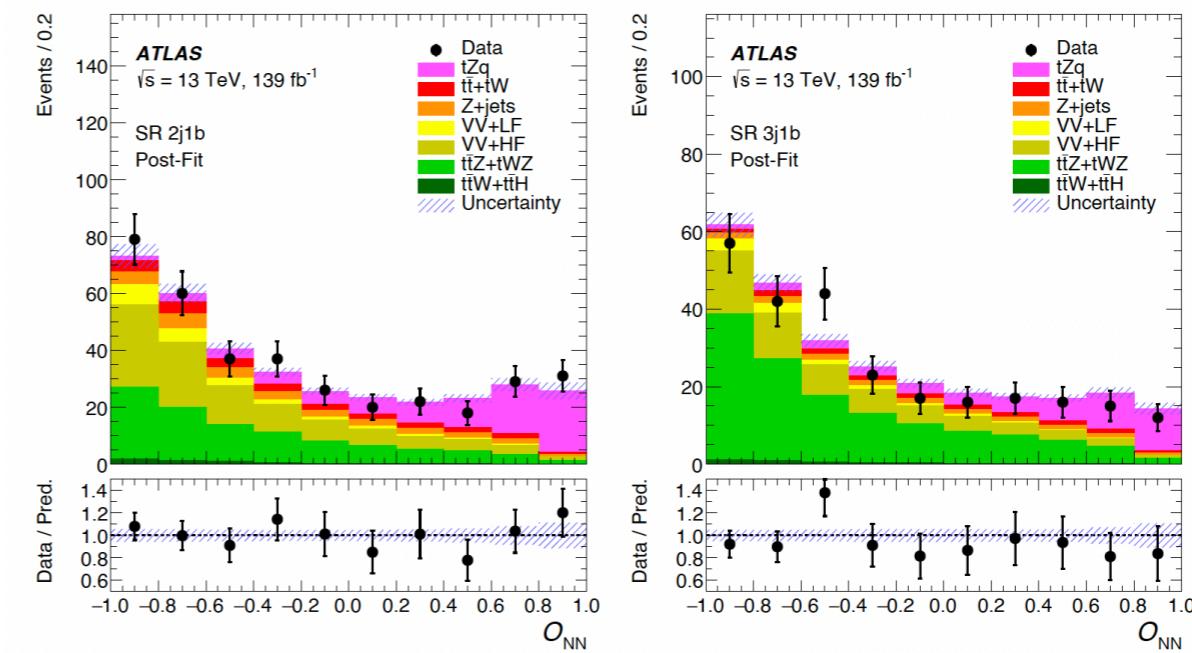
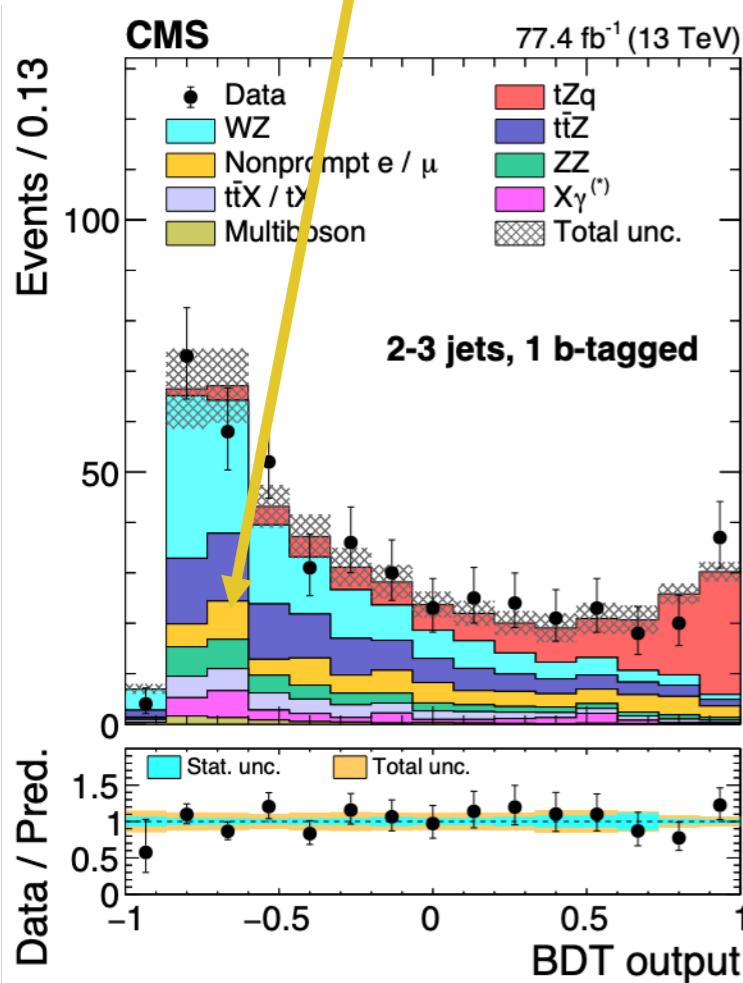
- Top pair + boson process is a background for single top + boson measurement
- **Test of SM predictions** (perturbative QCD, EW corrections)
- **Probe of the top - gauge boson coupling** (tZ in tZq , $t\gamma$ in $t\gamma q$)
- Search deviations from the SM within the framework of the **effective field theory**

Single top + Z (tZq)

CMS - PRL 122 (2019) 132003, ATLAS - JHEP 07 (2020) 124

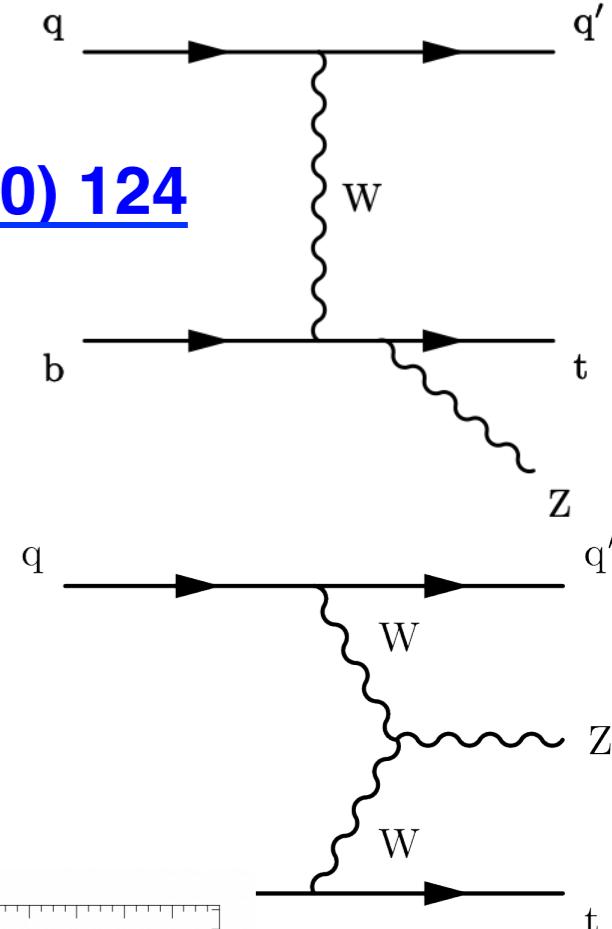
Analysis performed in **3ℓ final state (e or μ)**

- tZq is produced by EW interaction: make use of the **forward jet** ($|n|<4.7$) to discriminate signal from background
 - Need efficient **lepton identification to reject fake leptons**
 - **Non prompt background** (ttbar and Z+jets): fake rate estimated in QCD jets data



Signal extraction: **Fit of BDT (CMS) or NN output (ATLAS) in several event categories**

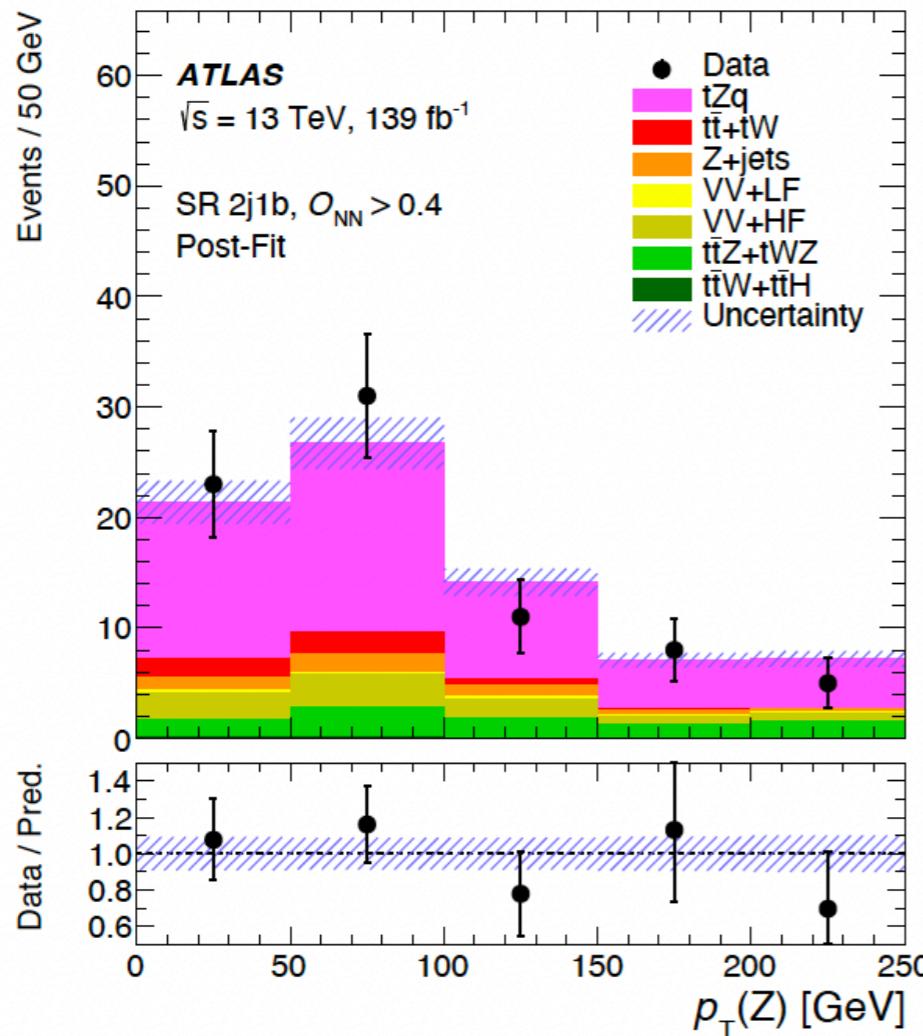
Observed at CMS and ATLAS ($>5\sigma$)



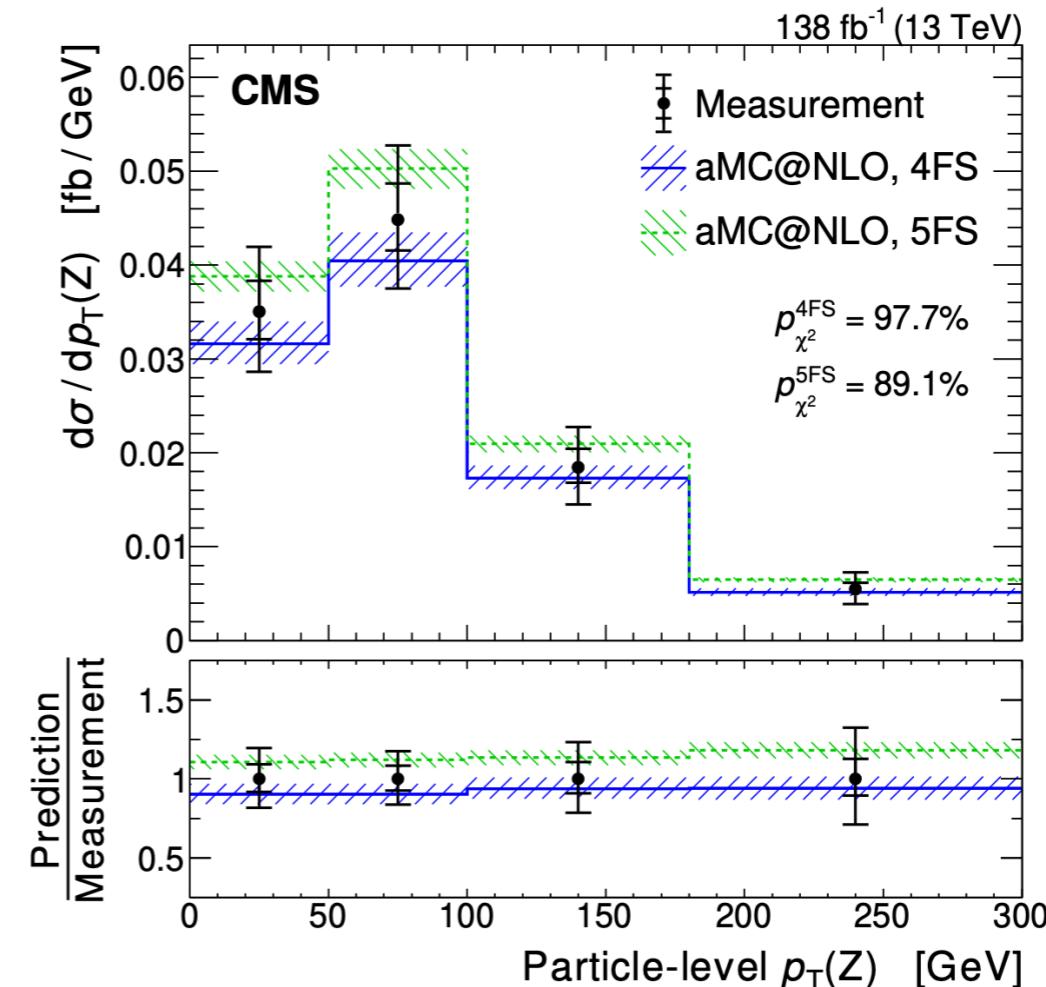
Single top + Z (tZq)

[CMS - JHEP 02 \(2022\) 107, ATLAS - PLB 780\(2018\)557-577](#)

Kinematic distributions at ATLAS



CMS differential measurement



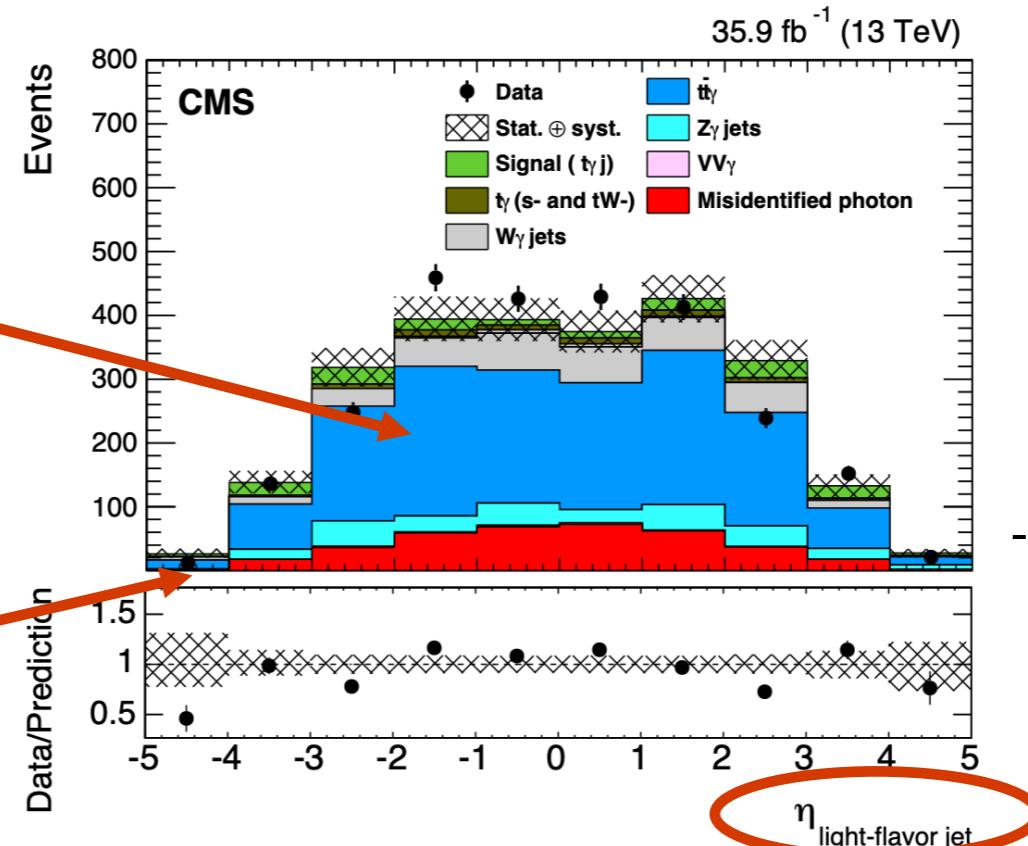
Main uncertainties: Non-prompt background, jet energy scale, lepton efficiency, final state radiation and tZq QCD scale uncertainty (modeling uncertainties relatively smaller at ATLAS)

Single top + γ (tyq)

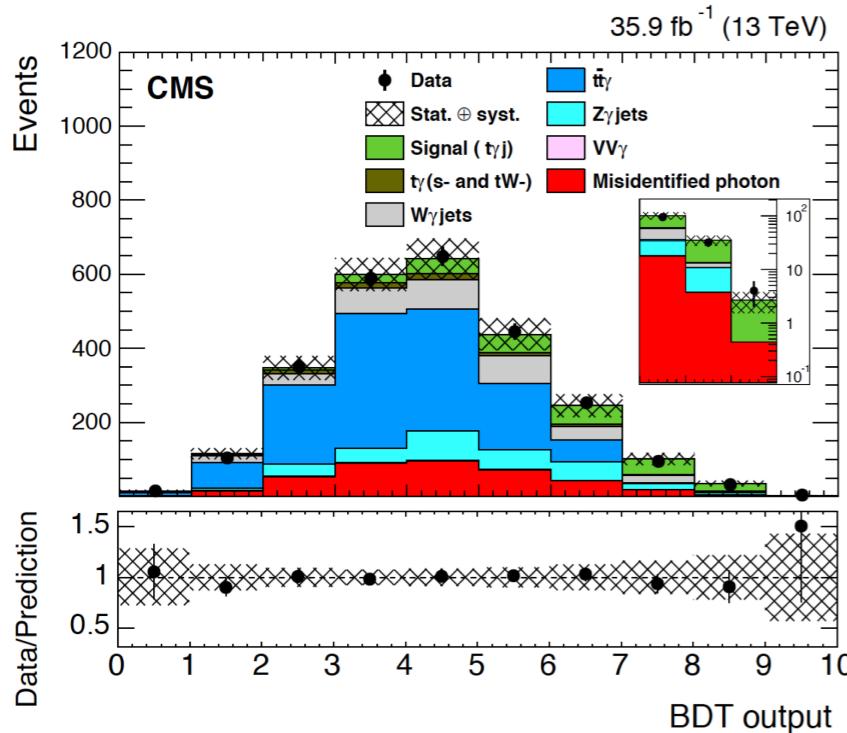
CMS - Phys. Rev. Lett. 121 (2018) 221802

Dominant background $t\bar{t}+\gamma$ (dedicated CR is used)

Estimate **non-prompt photon** background with a **fake ratio method**



- Uses the **forward jet** to increase discrimination



Extract signal with **BDT** using kinematics (noticeably **forward jet n**)

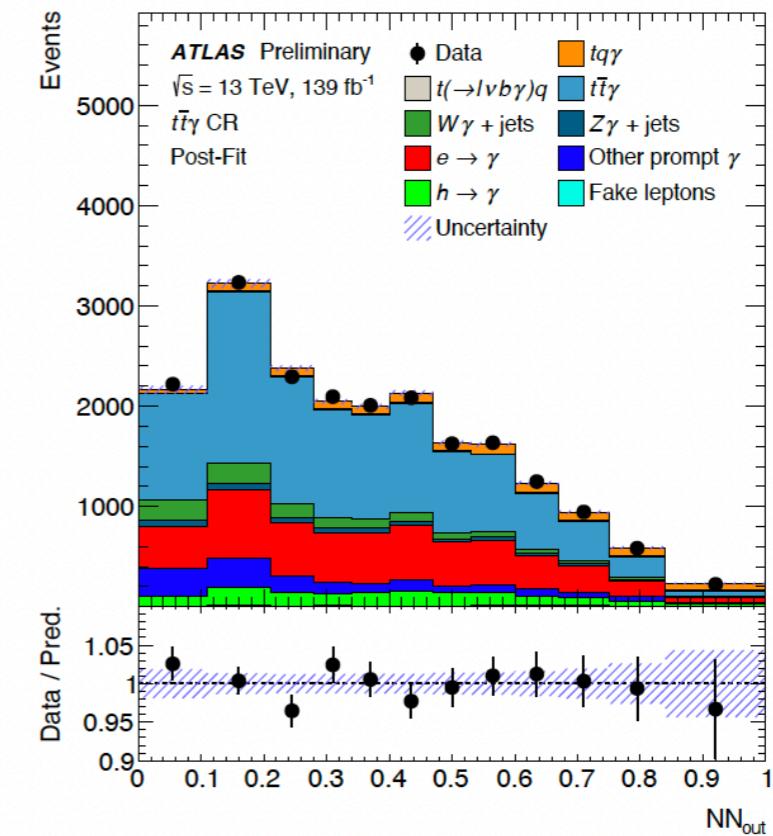
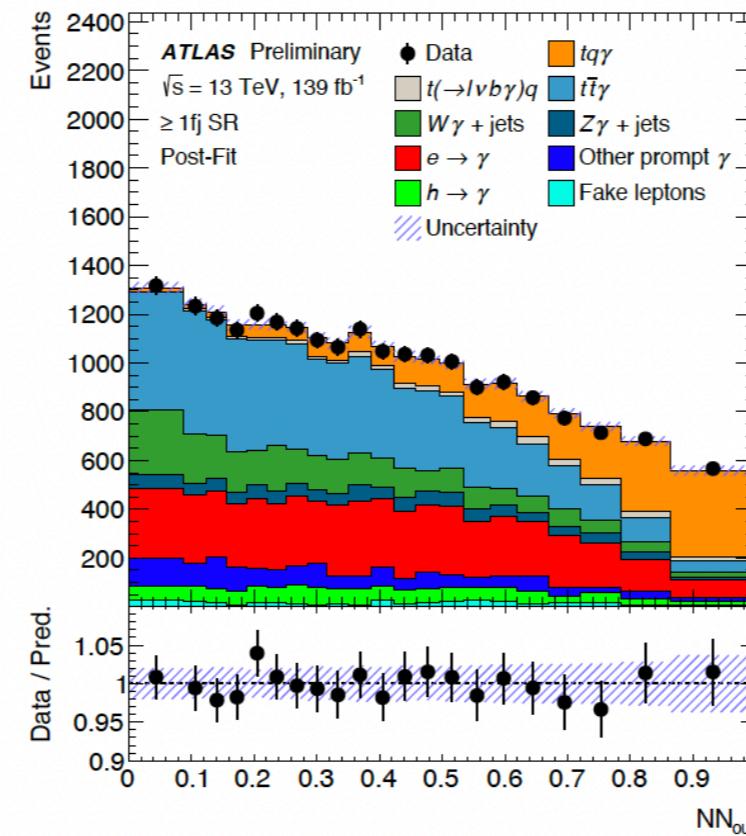
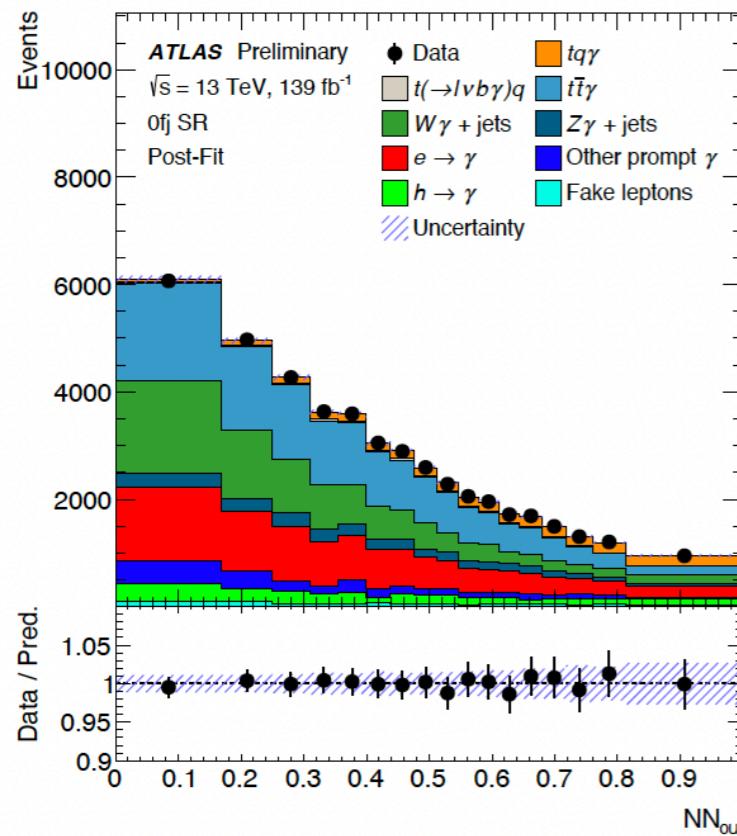
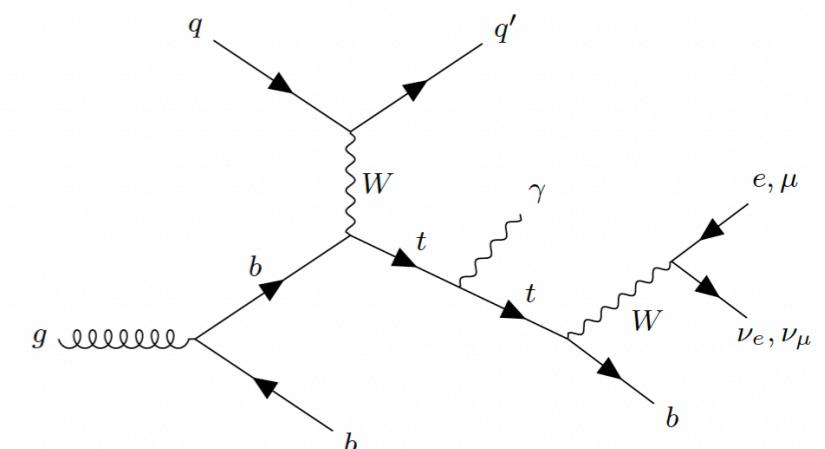
First evidence: significance 4.4σ (3.0σ expected)

Dominated by systematics: jet energy scale, b-tagging, tyq modeling

Observation of single top + γ ($t\gamma q$)

ATLAS-CONF-2022-013

Similar analysis strategy at ATLAS
 Signal extraction from fit of SR and CR (also $W\gamma$).
Signal is very clearly visible!

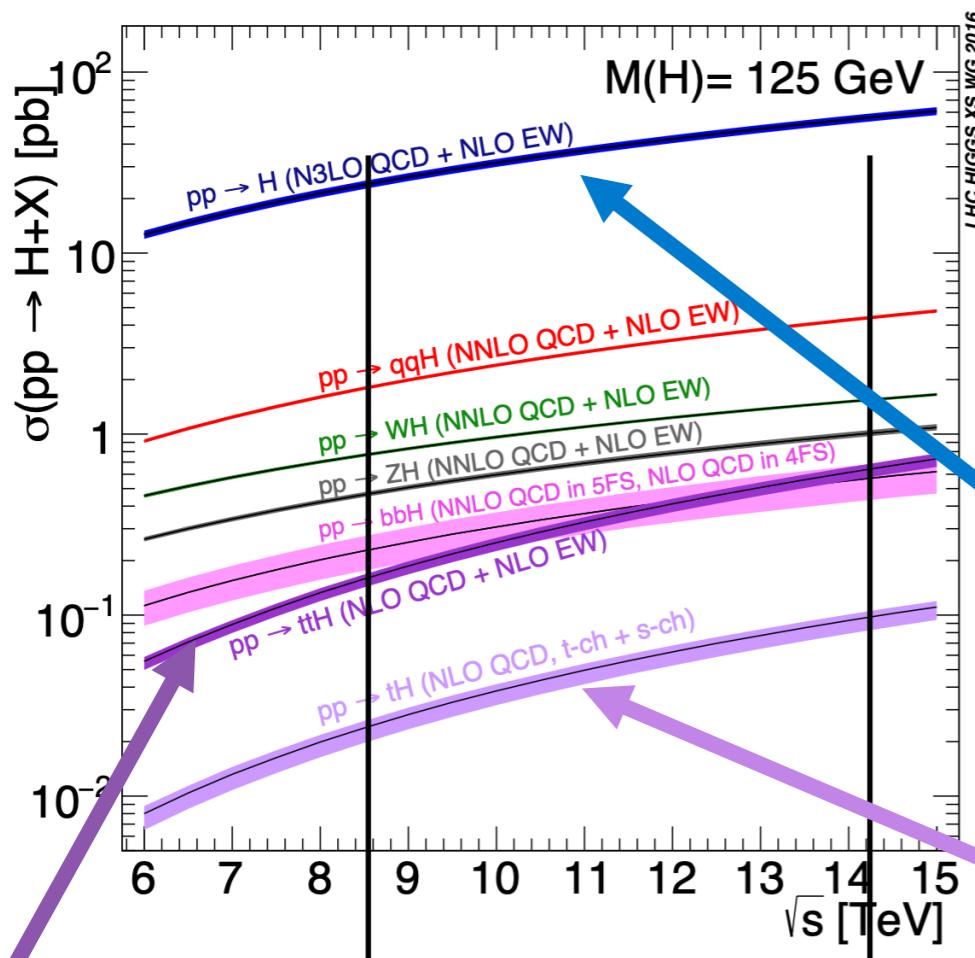


The measured fiducial parton-level cross section is $\sigma_{tq\gamma} \times \mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow \ell\nu b) = 580 \pm 19 \text{ (stat.)} \pm 63 \text{ (syst.) fb.}$

Observation: significance 9.1σ (6.7σ expected)

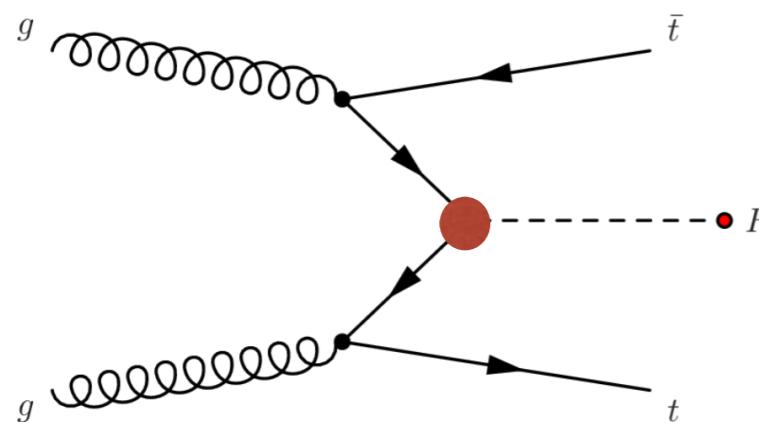
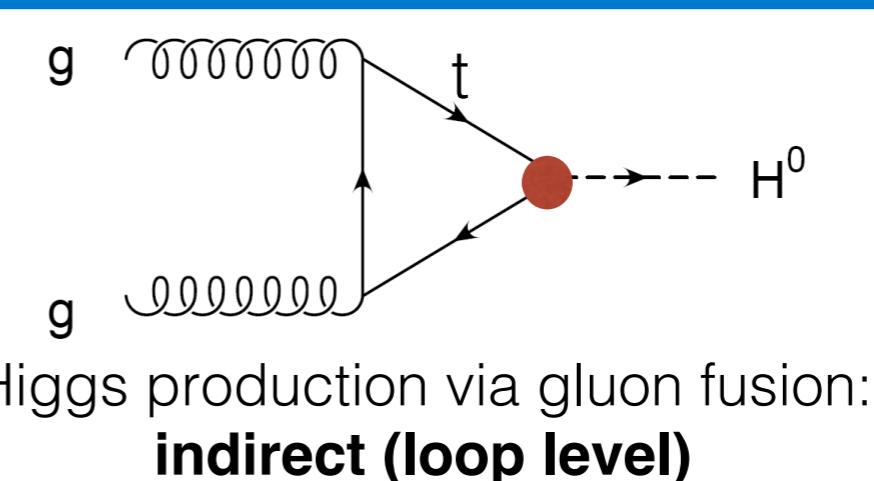
Dominated by systematics: ttgamma modeling, MC stat, ttbar modeling.

Top - Higgs coupling at the LHC

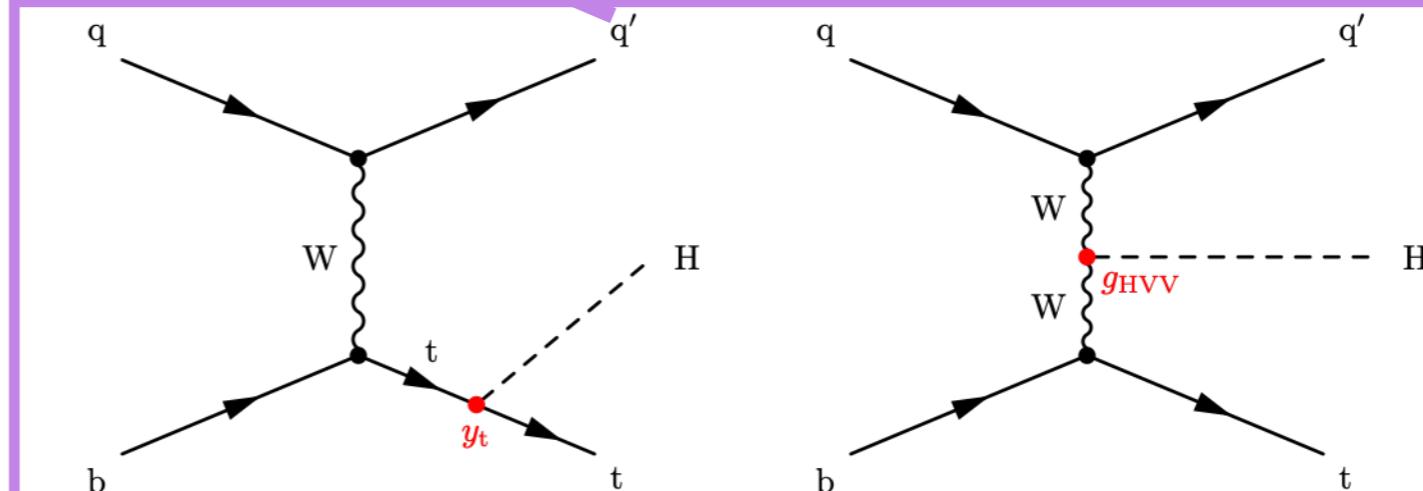


The Higgs boson generates fermion mass via its vacuum expectation value v : **Yukawa coupling**

- **Top Yukawa coupling** $\lambda_t = \sqrt{2} \cdot m_t/v \sim 1$
- Measuring accurately λ_t is one of the priorities of the LHC



ttH: Direct (tree level) probe of top-Higgs coupling

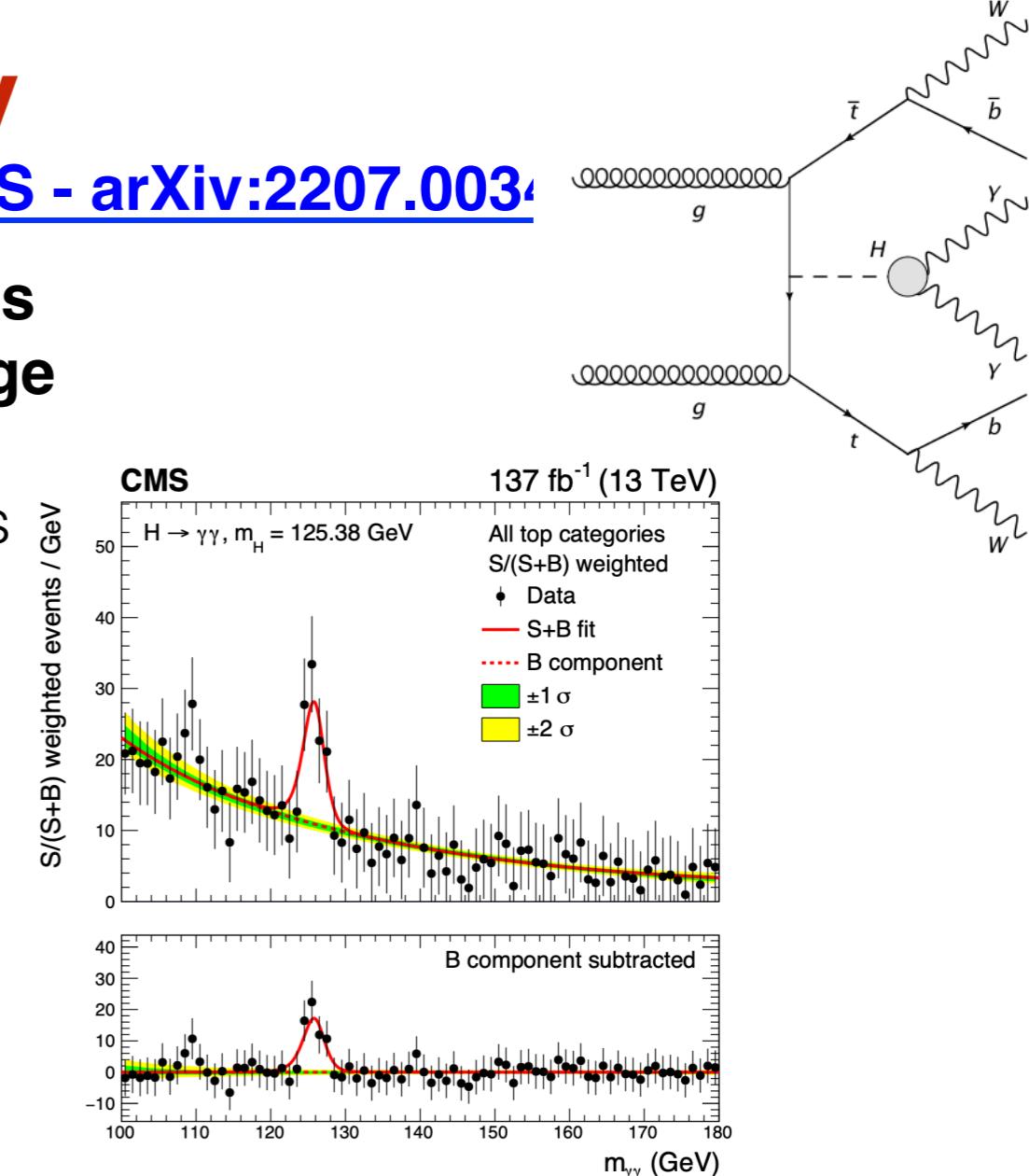
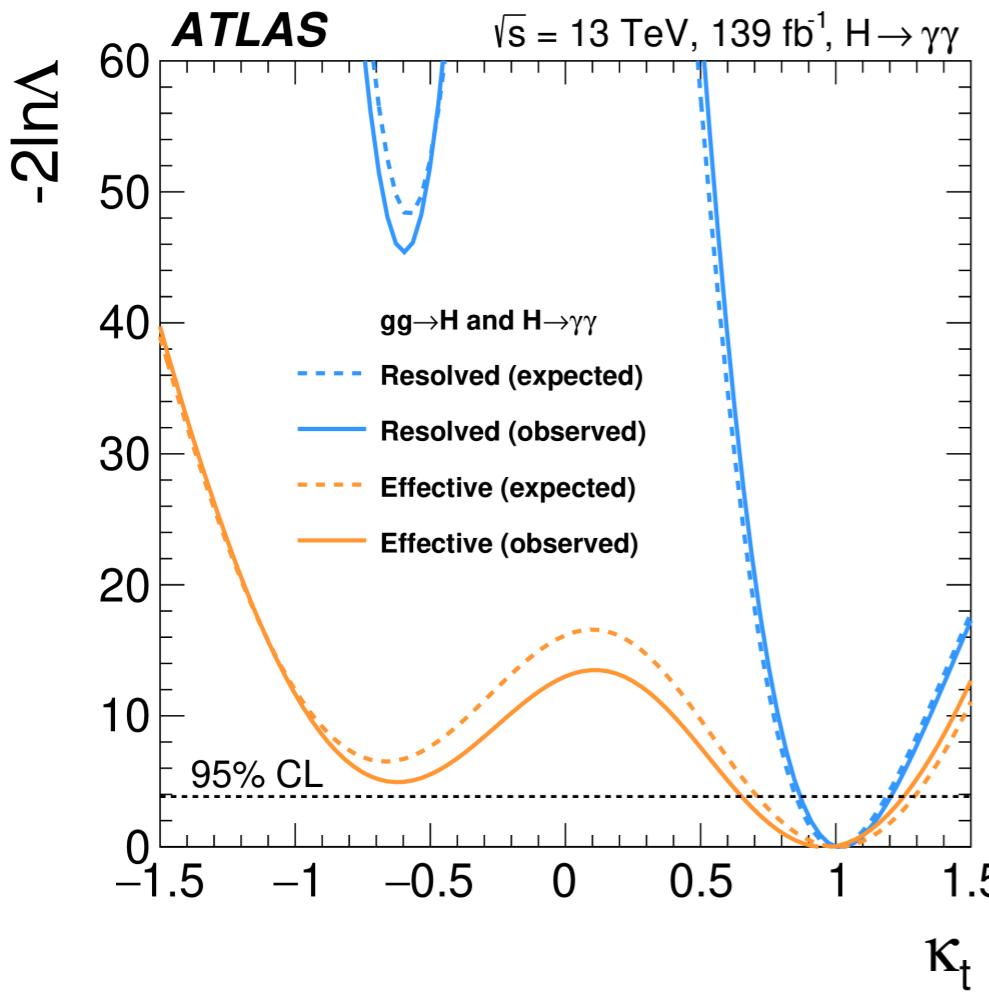


tHq: Direct (tree level) probe of top-Higgs coupling
+ sign of the coupling through interference

tH, H \rightarrow $\gamma\gamma$

CMS - JHEP 07 (2021) 027, ATLAS - arXiv:2207.003

- Dedicated tH category in H \rightarrow $\gamma\gamma$ measurements
- Look for **small signal peak (BR~0.2%) over large background**
- **Photon identification:** reject jets faking photons with shower shape and isolation
- **Photon energy resolution ~1.2-1.6%**
depending on categories: calibration is crucial
- Use **ML** in several **ttH and tH categories**

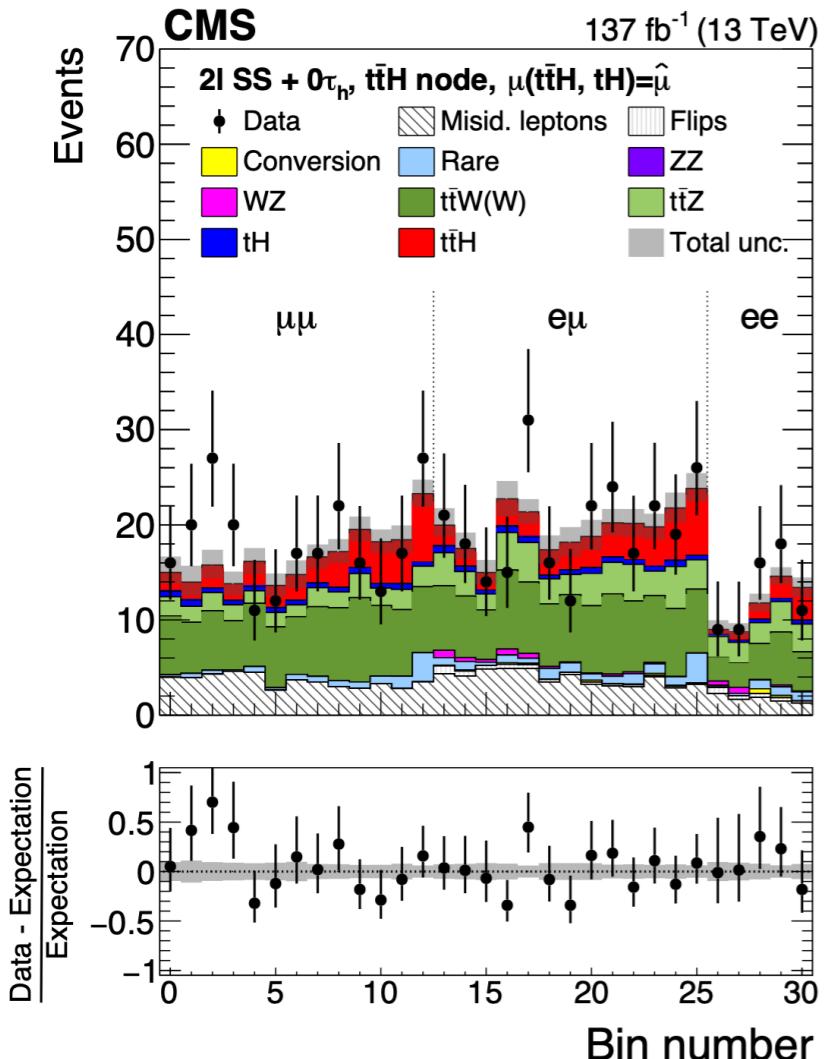


Data prefers **positive sign** of top-Higgs coupling

“Simplified template cross section”:
 Measuring production mechanisms in kinematic bins at generator-level:
 - **ATLAS:** $2.1^{+4.2}_{-3.1}$ times the standard model expectation
 - **CMS:** $6.3^{+3.4}_{-3.7}$ times the SM expectation

tH multilepton

[Eur. Phys. J. C 81 \(2021\) 378](#)



CMS combination: $\mu_{tH} = 6 \pm 2.5$

Projections on κ_t : 3% precision
at the HL-LHC (10% today)
(Nature 607 (2022) 60-68)

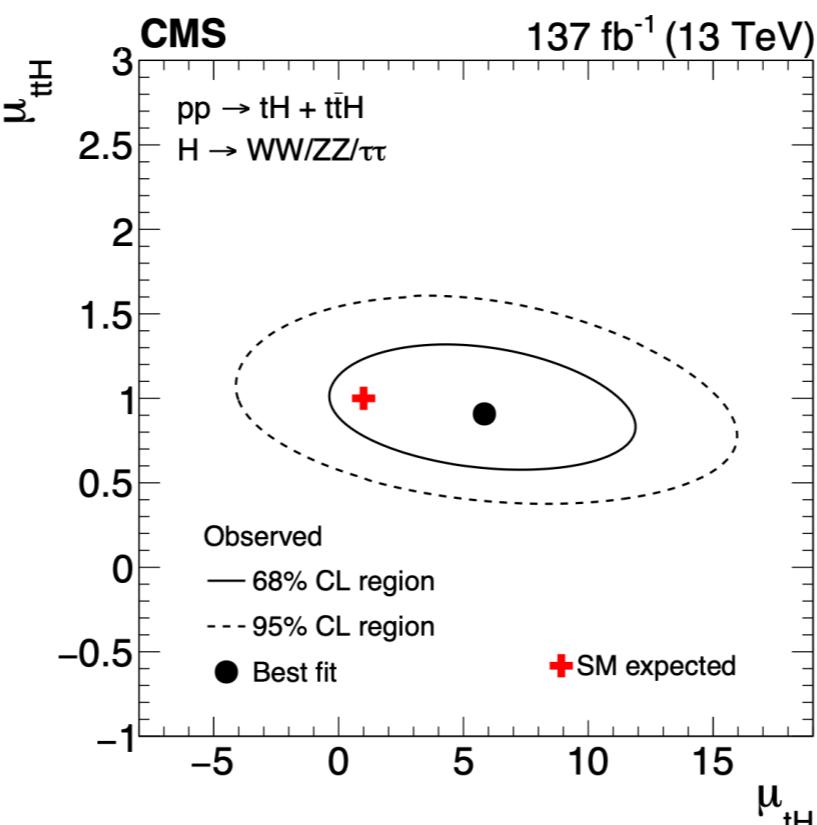
Most sensitive event categories: 2 leptons of same sign ($2\ell\text{ss}$), 3ℓ , $2\ell\text{ss}+1\tau_h$ (hadronic tau), $1\ell+2\tau_h$

Signal extraction:

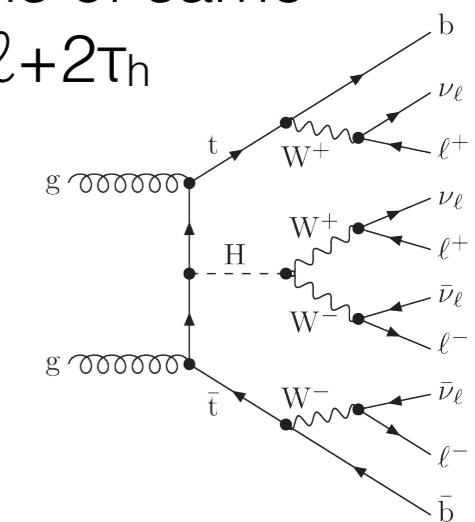
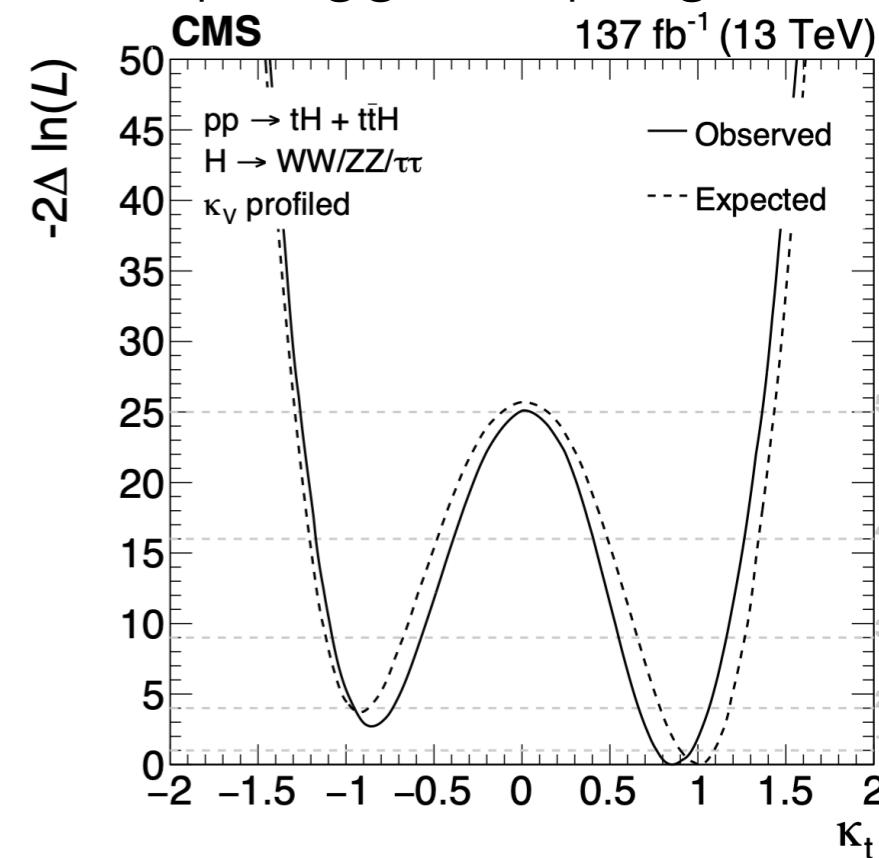
- Deep neural networks and BDTs

Simultaneous fit of ttH and tH signal strengths:

- Sensitivity to tH: 5-10x SM



Data prefers **positive sign** of top-Higgs coupling



Conclusions

Single top cross sections

- **Differential** cross sections measured in **t-channel and tW channel**
- t-channel used for **top quark property** measurements
- **s-channel still to be observed at the LHC**

Top quark properties

- Properties of **Wtb vertex** (V_{tb} , CP-even/odd) and top quark polarization are explored
- **EFT framework** is gaining popularity

Top quark production associated with Z/y bosons

- **SM top quark - gauge boson coupling** well established
- Background for processes involving top and Higgs
- **Deviations searched for** with the Effective Field Theory framework

Top quark Yukawa coupling with tH process

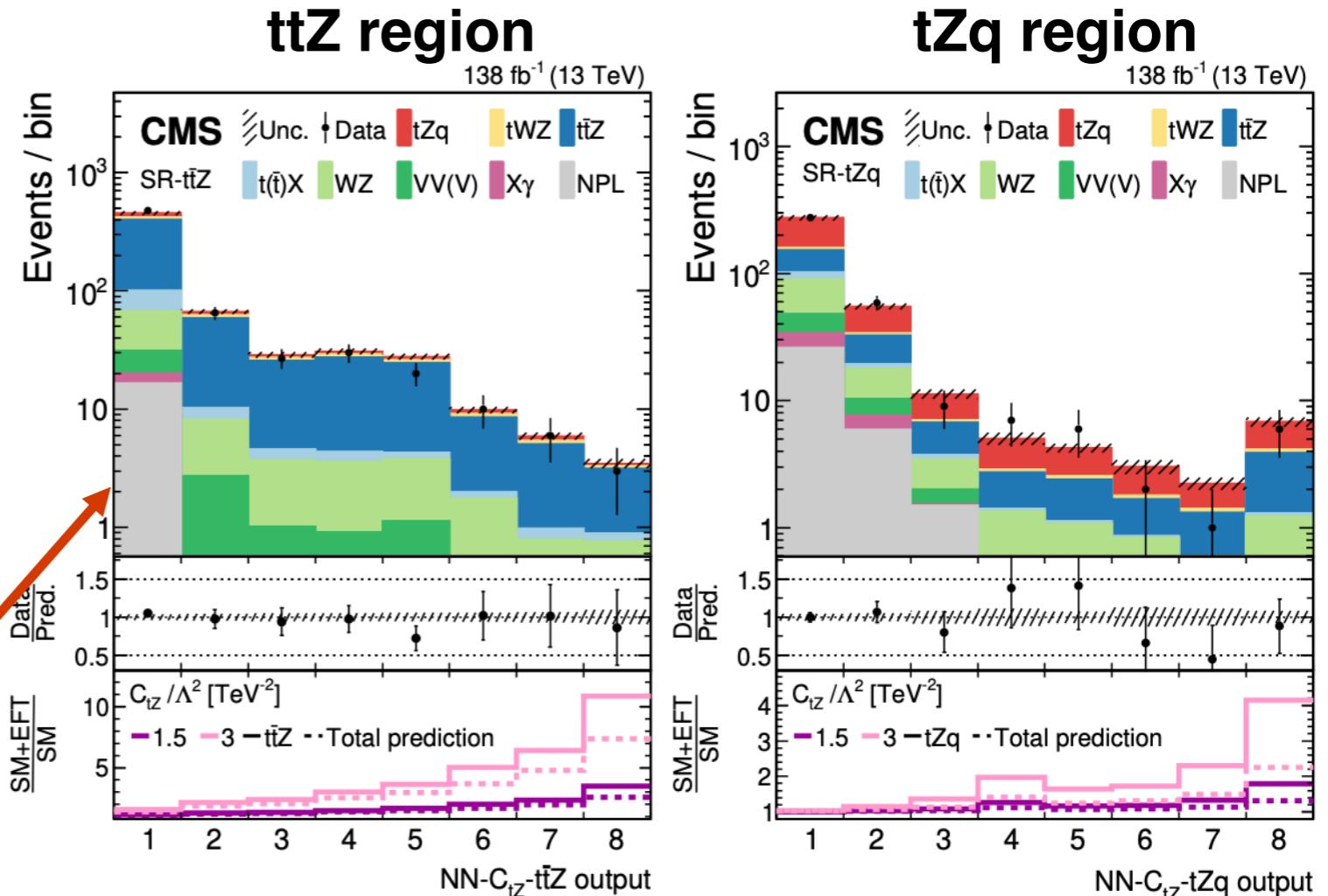
- **Top - Higgs coupling measured** with **ttH+tH** production
- **tH process still to be observed**

Back-up slides

top-Z couplings with Machine learning

[JHEP 12 \(2021\) 083](#)

- Neural network to **produce 3 classes of SM events:** enriched in ttZ events, tZq events and other events.
- Neural network to **discriminate SM signal from backgrounds.**
- Neural network to **discriminate new physics from SM.**



- **Simultaneous fit of 5 coefficients** in the **Effective Field theory** modifying top-Z coupling, parametrising deviations from SM.

$$L = L_{SM} + \sum_i \frac{a_i}{\Lambda^2} O_i + \sum_j \frac{b_i}{\Lambda^4} O_j + \dots$$

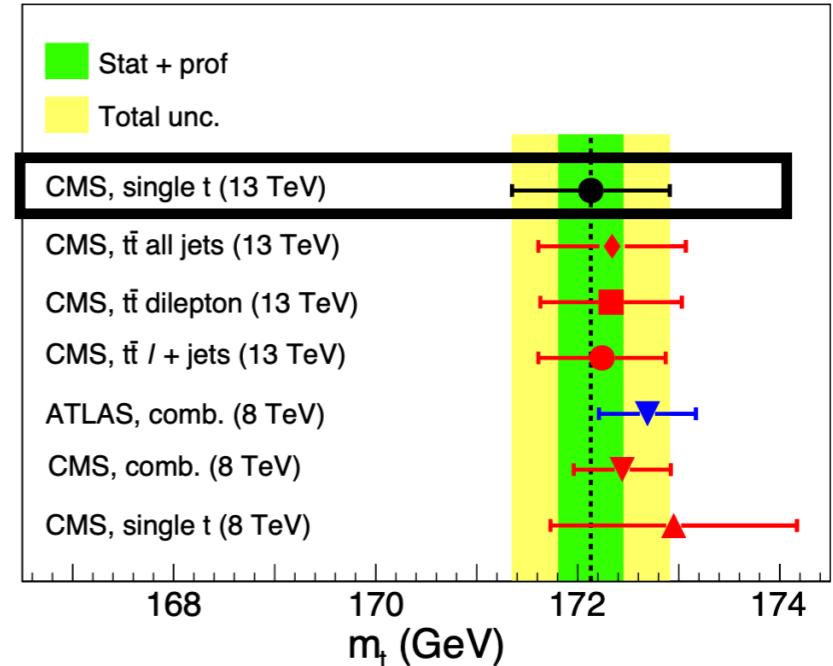
WC/Λ ² [TeV ⁻²]	Other WCs fixed to SM		95% CL confidence intervals		5D fit
	Expected	Observed	Expected	Observed	
c_{tZ}	[−0.97, 0.96]	[−0.76, 0.71]			
c_{tW}	[−0.76, 0.74]	[−0.52, 0.52]			
$c_{\phi Q}^3$	[−1.39, 1.25]	[−1.10, 1.41]			
$c_{\phi Q}^-$	[−2.86, 2.33]	[−3.00, 2.29]			
$c_{\phi t}$	[−3.70, 3.71]	[−21.65, −14.61] ∪ [−2.06, 2.69]			
			Expected	Observed	
			[−1.24, 1.17]	[−0.85, 0.76]	
			[−0.96, 0.93]	[−0.69, 0.70]	
			[−1.91, 1.36]	[−1.26, 1.43]	
			[−6.06, 14.09]	[−7.09, 14.76]	
			[−16.18, 10.46]	[−19.15, 10.34]	

top quark mass with t-channel

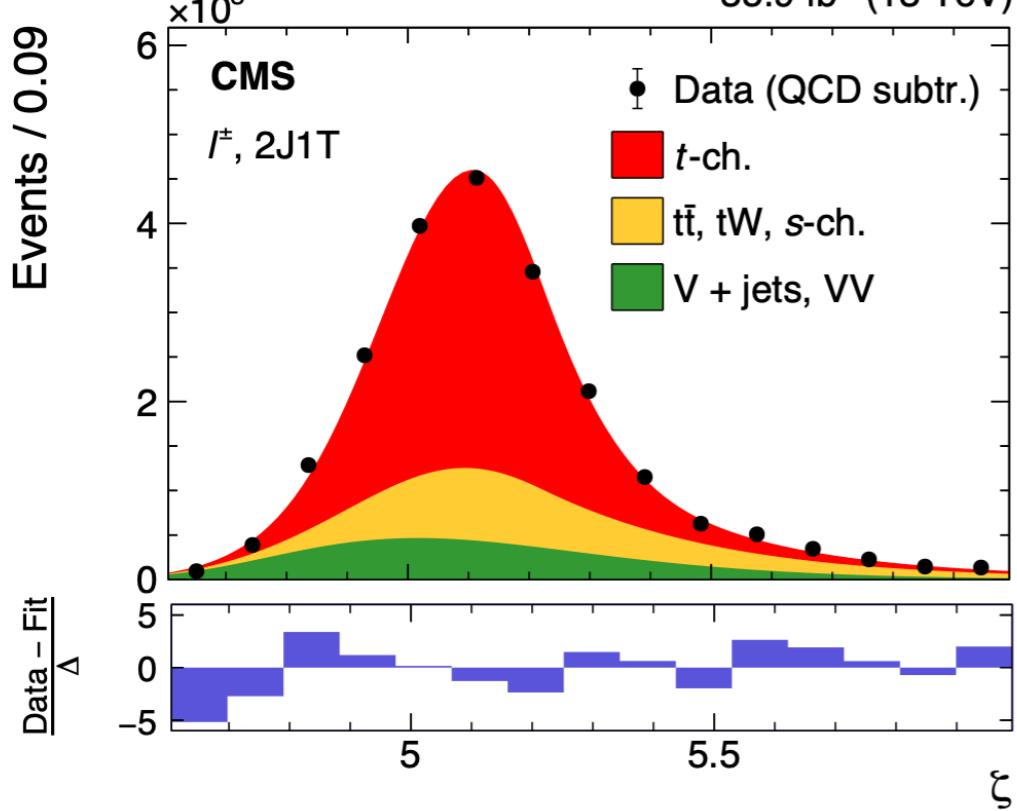
[JHEP 12 \(2021\) 161](#)

Measurement at 13 TeV:

- Main channel usually ttbar dilepton, but single top t-channel starts to be competitive
- Optimize selection with boosted decision tree
- Unbinned fit of $\ln(m_t)$ as discriminant variable
- Calibration of extracted m_t with true m_t



Main syst. uncertainties:



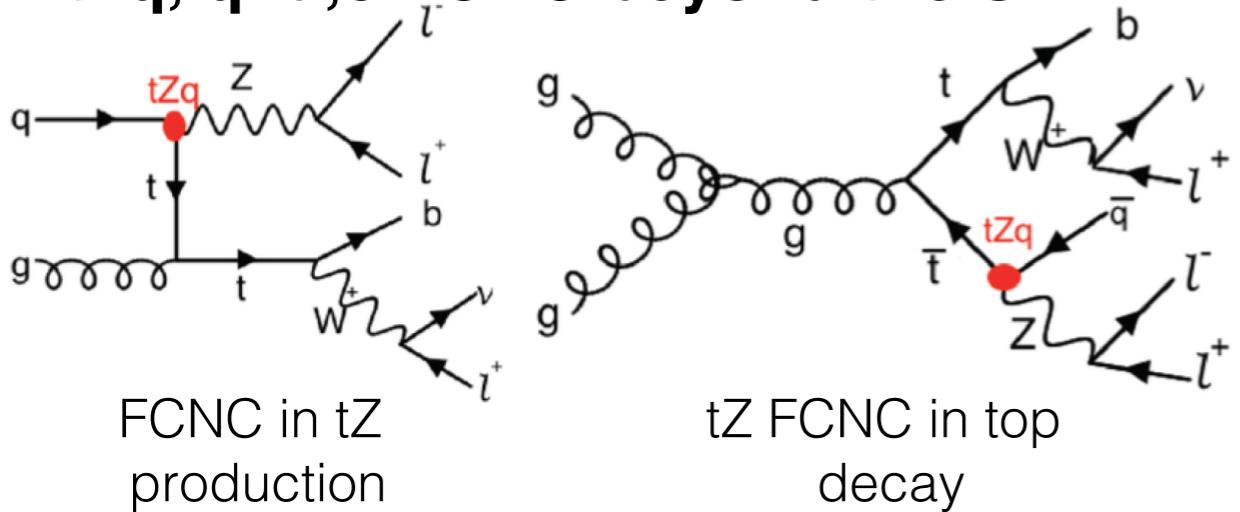
Jet energy scale

Color reconnection
in hadron shower
b-quark
fragmentation model

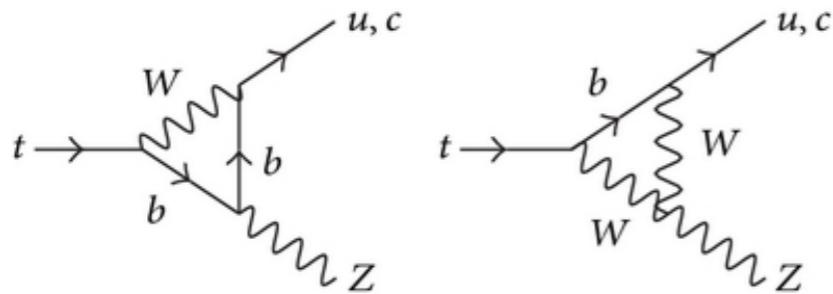
Source	$\delta m_{l\pm}$	δm_{l+}	δm_{l-}
Statistical	± 0.19	± 0.23	± 0.33
Statistical + profiled systematic	± 0.32	± 0.37	± 0.58
JES	± 0.09	± 0.07	± 0.12
JER	± 0.02	± 0.02	± 0.01
Unclustered energy	< 0.39	± 0.17	± 0.83
Muon efficiencies	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01
Electron efficiencies	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01
Pileup	± 0.01	± 0.01	± 0.01
b tagging	± 0.14	± 0.04	± 0.34
QCD multijet background	± 0.20	± 0.18	± 0.22
Mass calibration	± 0.02	± 0.01	± 0.02
Int. luminosity	± 0.02	± 0.13	± 0.20
CR model and ERD	$\pm 0.11 (0.017)$	$\pm 0.39 (0.027)$	$\pm 0.68 (0.048)$
Gluon	± 0.52	± 0.75	± 0.03
Light quark (uds)	-0.18	$+0.18$	-0.23
Charm	$+0.01$	$+0.08$	$+0.11$
Bottom	-0.48	-0.29	-0.31
Total (linear sum)	-0.13	$+0.72$	-0.46
b frag. Bowler-Lund	± 0.03	± 0.06	± 0.08
b frag. Peterson	$+0.14$	$+0.11$	$+0.19$
Semileptonic b hadron decays	$+0.18$	$+0.17$	$+0.19$
Total (quadrature sum)	$+0.23 - 0.18$	$+0.21 - 0.18$	$+0.28 - 0.21$
ISR	± 0.01	± 0.01	< 0.01
FSR	± 0.28	± 0.31	± 0.20
μ_R and μ_F scales	± 0.09	± 0.13	± 0.03
PDF+ α_S	± 0.06	± 0.06	± 0.07
Total (quadrature sum)	± 0.30	± 0.34	± 0.21
ISR	$\pm 0.11 (0.008)$	$\pm 0.02 (0.001)$	$\pm 0.22 (0.016)$
FSR	$\pm 0.10 (0.007)$	$\pm 0.14 (0.010)$	$\pm 0.40 (0.028)$
ME-PS matching scale	$\pm 0.10 (0.007)$	$\pm 0.10 (0.006)$	$\pm 0.10 (0.008)$
μ_R and μ_F scales	± 0.03	± 0.03	± 0.01
PDF+ α_S	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01
Top quark p_T reweighting	-0.04	-0.08	-0.04
UE	$\pm 0.07 (0.005)$	$\pm 0.04 (0.003)$	$\pm 0.17 (0.012)$
Total (quadrature sum)	± 0.20	$+0.18 - 0.20$	± 0.50
Signal shape	± 0.05	± 0.03	± 0.04
tt bkg. shape	± 0.07	± 0.04	± 0.05
EW bkg. shape	± 0.03	± 0.01	± 0.02
Total (quadrature sum)	± 0.09	± 0.05	± 0.07
Total externalized systematic	$+0.69 - 0.71$	$+0.97 - 0.65$	$+1.32 - 1.39$
Grand total	$+0.76 - 0.77$	$+1.04 - 0.75$	$+1.44 - 1.51$

Flavour Changing Neutral Currents

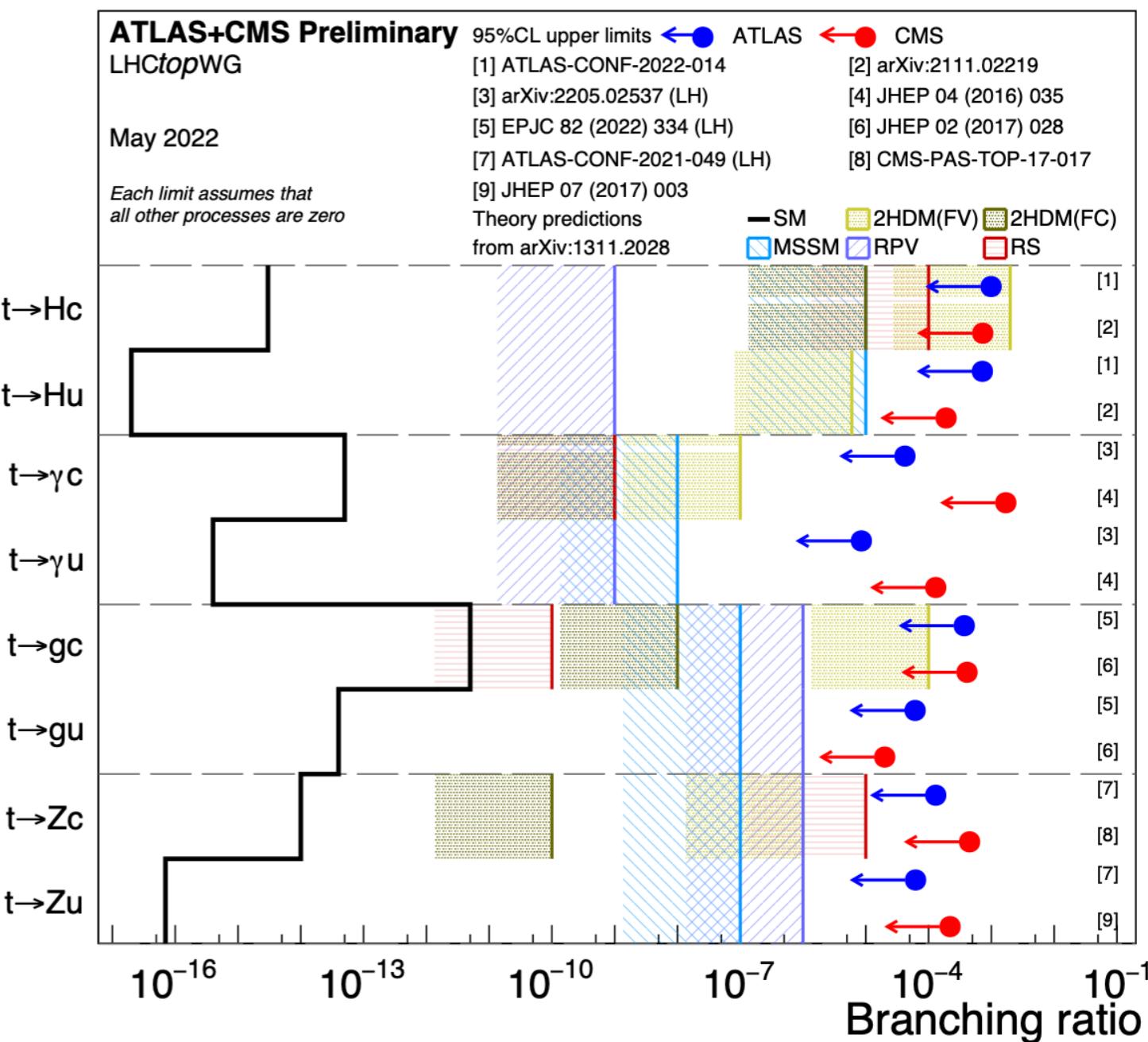
tZq , $q=u,c$ FCNC beyond the SM:



SM tZq coupling, $q=u,c$ via loops are suppressed by GIM mechanism)



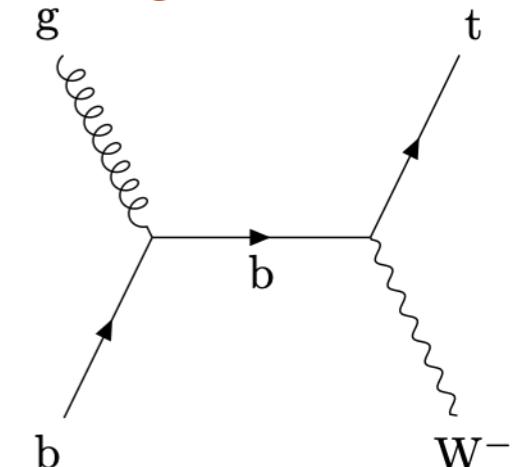
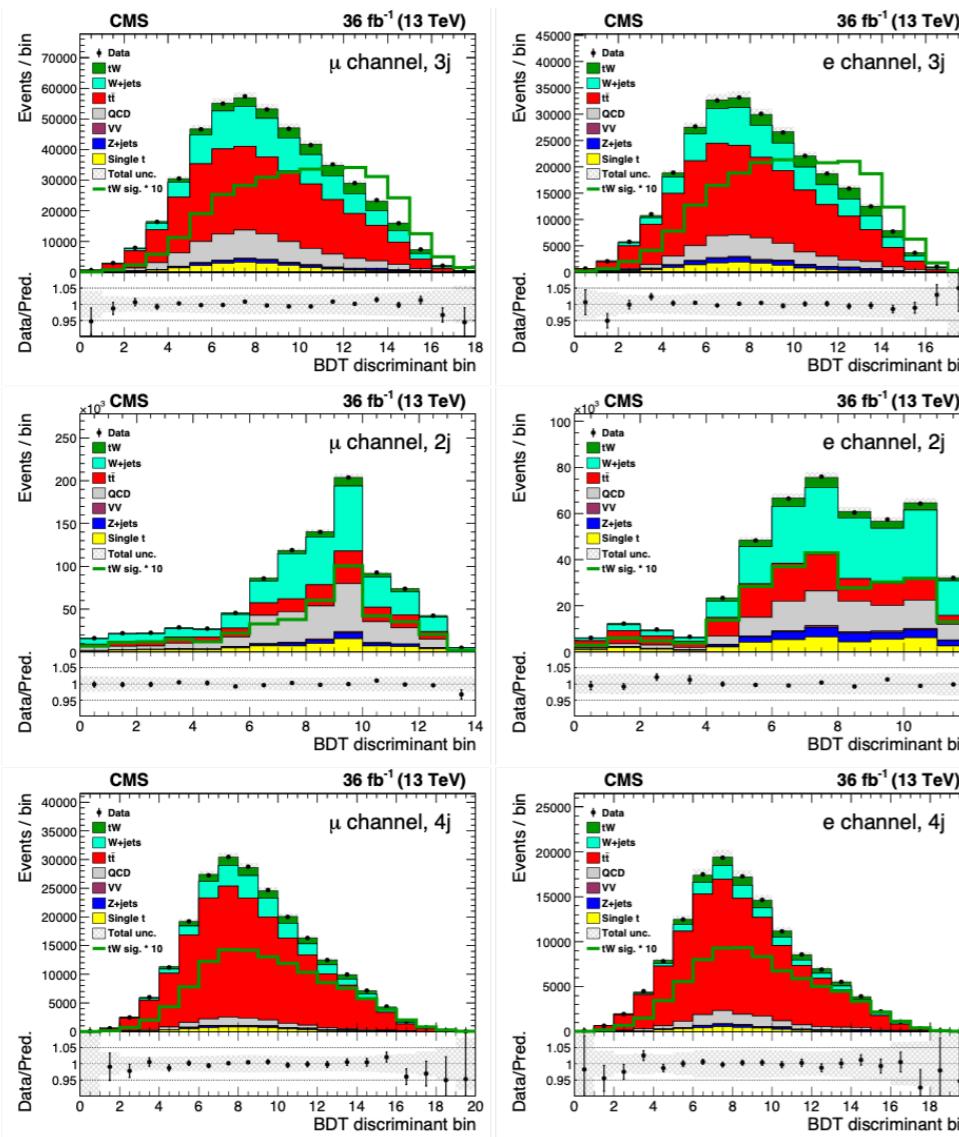
Summary: approaching sensitivity to several BSM models



tW cross section in lepton+jets channel

[JHEP 11 \(2021\) 111](#)

- A **BDT** is trained against ttbar, exploiting the difference in jet kinematics
- tW extraction likelihood fit of the **3 regions**: 2 jets (W+jets control region), 3 jets (signal region) and 4 jets (ttbar control region)



First observation of tW process in l+jets channel ($>5\sigma$)

Cross section: $89 \pm 4 \text{ (stat)} \pm 12 \text{ (syst)} \text{ pb}$

Source	Relative uncertainty (%)
<i>Experimental</i>	
Jet energy scale	6
b tagging efficiency	4
Luminosity	3
Lepton energy scale	2
Trigger efficiency	1
Jet energy resolution	1
b tagging misidentification rate	<1
Unclustered energy	<1
Pileup	<1
<i>Normalization</i>	
QCD multijet normalization	7
W+jets normalization	6
Z+jets normalization	3
Single t normalization	1
tt normalization	1
VV normalization	<1
<i>Theoretical</i>	
h_{damp}	4
Diagram removal/diagram subtraction	3
Underlying event tune	3
Colour reconnection model	1
Parton distribution function	1
Matrix element/parton shower matching	1
Final-state radiation	<1
Initial-state radiation	<1
Total systematic uncertainty	14
Statistical uncertainty	5
Total uncertainty	15

Searching for deviations with the EFT

Effective Field Theory:

- New physics at higher energy scale Λ would manifest itself at the electroweak scale as **small deviations relative to the SM**, that can be detected
- Construct all the **operators** involving SM fields with new interactions, respecting gauge invariance: SM-EFT
- This approach is mostly “**model-independent**”

$$L = L_{SM} + \sum_i \frac{a_i}{\Lambda^2} O_i + \sum_j \frac{b_i}{\Lambda^4} O_j + \dots$$

Dimension 4 operators
in the SM Lagrangian

Dimension 6 operators

Wilson coefficients

- Real part of Wilson coefficient is **CP-conserving**, imaginary part is **CP-violating**

Higgs boson decay

Higgs decay width at 125 GeV: $\Gamma \sim 4$ MeV

$H \rightarrow \tau\tau$ (6.3%)

- Hadronic or leptonic τ decay

$H \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$ ($\sim 0.2\%$)

- Excellent mass resolution,
- But low branching ratio

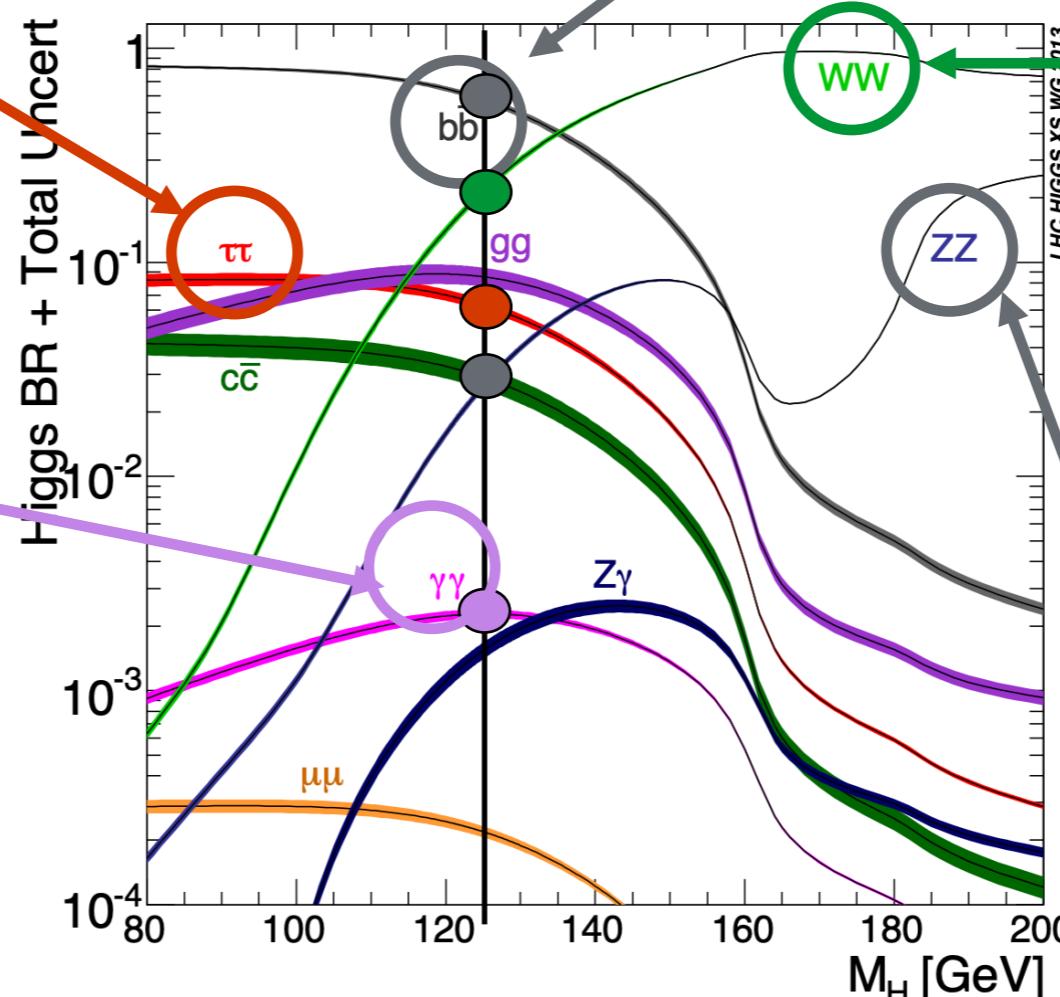
$H \rightarrow bb$ (57.7%)

- Large branching ratio
- But large jets background

$H \rightarrow WW$ (21.5%)

$H \rightarrow ZZ$ (2.6%)

- $ZZ \rightarrow 4l$: excellent mass resolution



$H \rightarrow WW$ (and $H \rightarrow ZZ$), $H \rightarrow \tau\tau$ final state:
tackled with the “multilepton” analysis

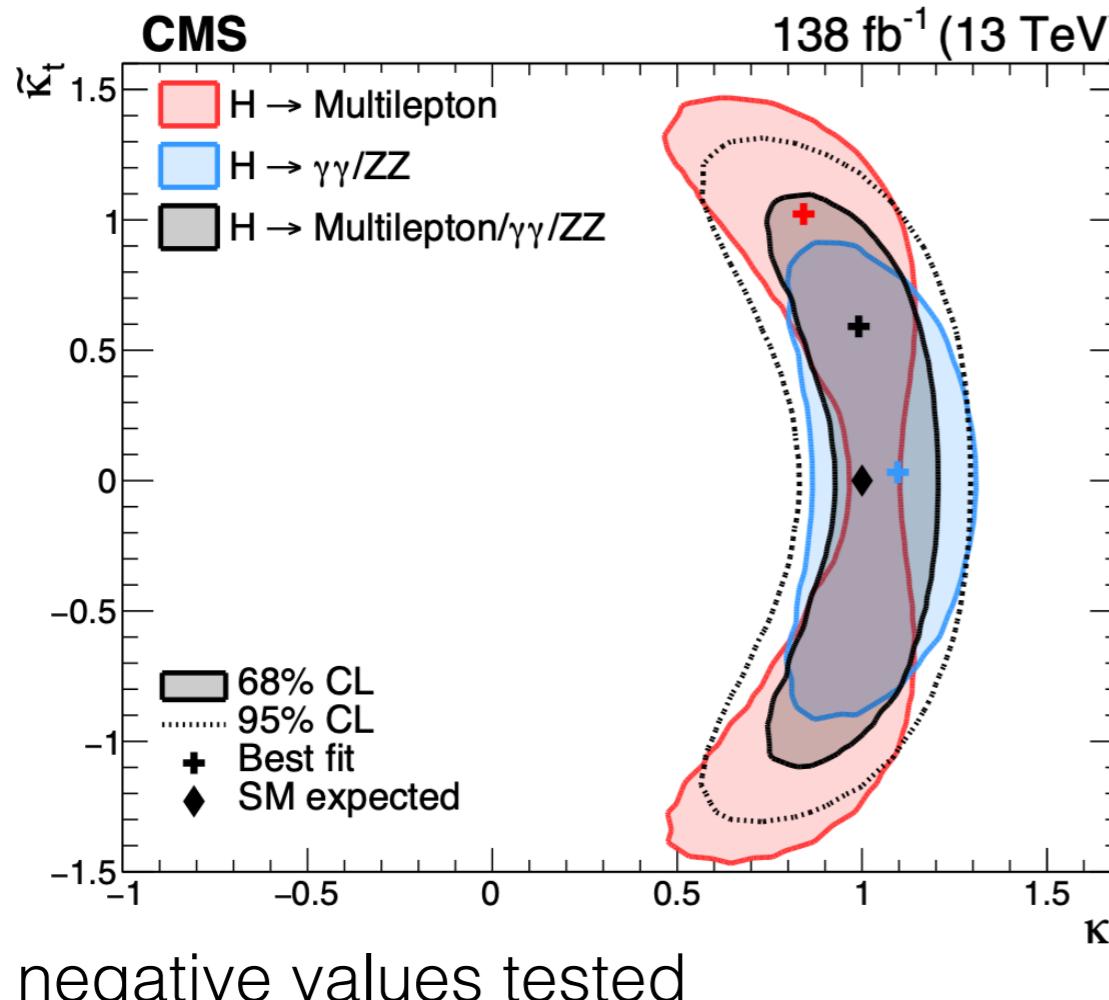
CP violation in top coupling with $t\bar{t}H$

CMS - arXiv:2208.02686

Why universe is there a matter/antimatter asymmetry in the Universe ?

- Skharov conditions: baryogenesis needs **CP violation** (not only)
- Amount of CP violation in the SM is not sufficient: new sources are searched for.
- The top quark impacts electroweak baryogenesis if its Yukawa coupling is CP-violating (see for instance arXiv:1512.08922)

$$\mathcal{L}(Hff) = -\frac{m_f}{v} \bar{\psi}_f (\kappa_f + i \tilde{\kappa}_f \gamma_5) \psi_f H$$



$$f_{CP}^{Htt} = \frac{|\tilde{\kappa}_t|^2}{|\kappa_t|^2 + |\tilde{\kappa}_t|^2} \text{ sign}(\tilde{\kappa}_t / \kappa_t)$$

$|f_{CP}^{Htt}| < 0.55$ at 68% confidence level

