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Single top quark production cross section at hadron colliders

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I present results for the theoretical cross section of single top quark production in the s channel and also via associated production with a W boson or a charged Higgs. The calculations include higher-order corrections at NNLL accuracy. Detailed numerical results are provided for Tevatron and LHC energies.

XVIII International Workshop on Deep-Inelastic Scattering and Related Subjects

April 19 -23, 2010

Convitto della Calza, Firenze, Italy

^{*}Speaker.

[†]This work was supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. PHY 0855421.

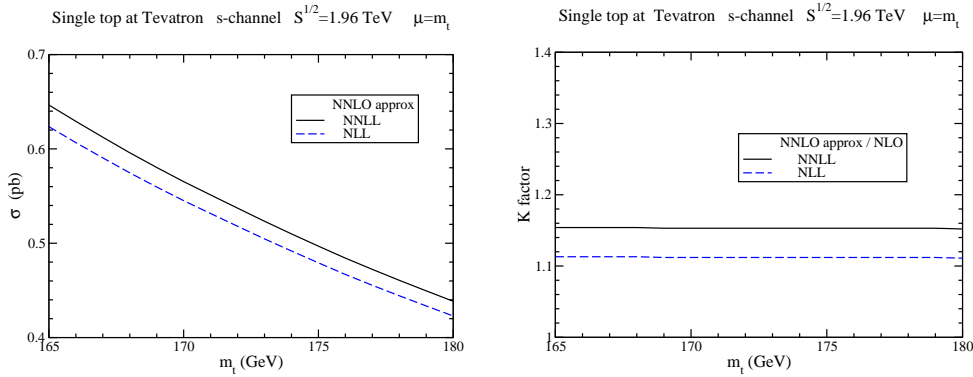


Figure 1: Cross section (left) and K factor (right) for s -channel single top quark production at the Tevatron.

1. Introduction

Single top quark production has been observed at the Tevatron [1, 2] with a cross section consistent with Standard Model predictions. There are three partonic channels: the t -channel, the s -channel, and associated tW^- production. A related process to tW^- production is associated production of a top quark with a charged Higgs boson, $bg \rightarrow tH^-$.

The NLO corrections for the s and t channels were given in [3], for tW^- production in [4], and for tH^- production in [5, 6]. Higher-order QCD corrections are significant for single top quark production. Soft-gluon corrections resummed at next-to-leading-logarithm (NLL) accuracy have been calculated for the three single top channels in [7, 8] and for tH^- in [9, 10].

Recent developments in two-loop calculations of soft anomalous dimensions [11, 12] have now made it possible to improve the resummation to next-to-next-to-leading-logarithm (NNLL) accuracy. In this contribution I discuss new approximate NNLO calculations, derived from the expansion [13] of the NNLL resummed cross section, for s -channel production at the Tevatron and the LHC and for associated production of a top with a W^- or with a charged Higgs [12].

2. Single top quark production in the s channel

The s -channel processes in single top quark production are $q\bar{q}' \rightarrow \bar{b}t$ (i.e. $u\bar{d} \rightarrow \bar{b}t$, etc). We calculate the cross section at Tevatron and LHC energies using the MSTW2008 NNLO pdf [14].

At NLO the soft gluon corrections dominate the cross section and provide an excellent approximation to the complete NLO corrections, especially when damping factors are used to limit contributions far from threshold [12] (as are also used for $t\bar{t}$ production [15]). Thus it can be reasonably expected that at NNLO the soft-gluon corrections are dominant and that the NNLO cross section derived from NNLL resummation is a good approximation to the complete result.

In Fig. 1 we plot the cross section and the K factor for s -channel single top quark production at the Tevatron. Results are shown for the NNLO approximate cross section from both NLL and NNLL resummation. The improved NNLL result increases the cross section even more than NLL, and provides a 15% enhancement over the NLO cross section. For a top quark mass of 173 GeV

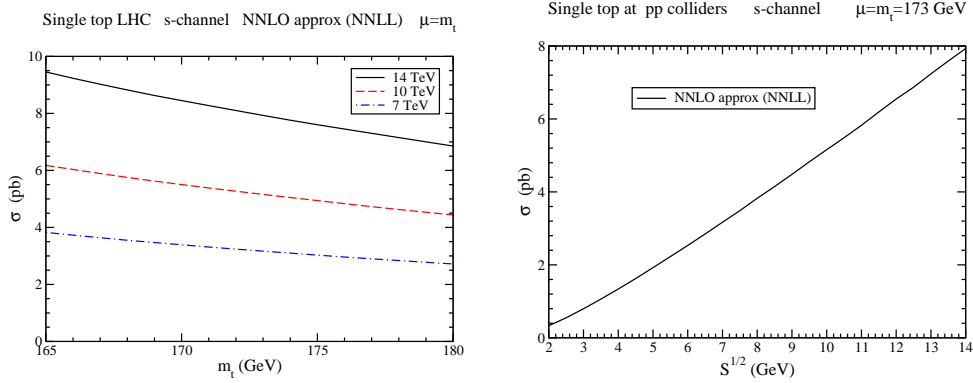


Figure 2: Cross section for s -channel single top quark production at the LHC versus mass (left) and energy (right).

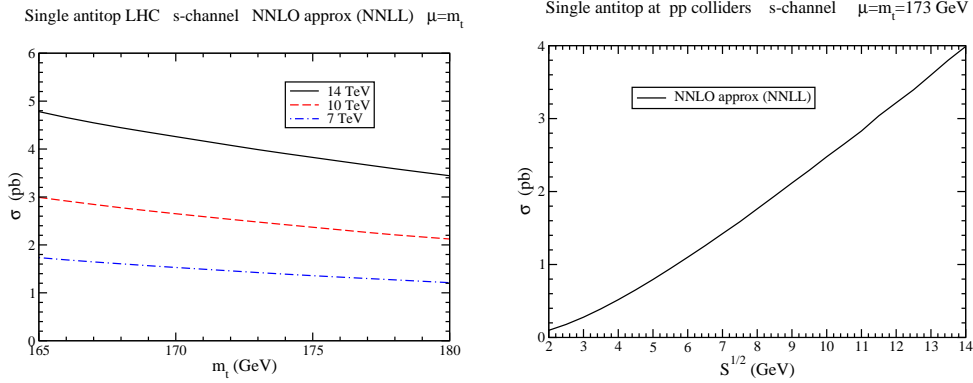


Figure 3: Cross section for s -channel single antitop production at the LHC vs mass (left) and energy (right).

we find

$$\sigma_{s\text{-channel}}^{\text{NNLOapprox, top}}(m_t = 173 \text{ GeV}, 1.96 \text{ TeV}) = 0.523^{+0.001+0.030}_{-0.005-0.028} \text{ pb}$$

where the first uncertainty is from scale variation and the second from pdf errors at 90% C.L. We note that the cross section for s -channel single antitop production at the Tevatron is identical to that for single top.

In Fig. 2 we plot the cross section for s -channel single top quark production at LHC energies. The left plot shows the NNLO approximate cross section from NNLL resummation versus the top quark mass for the current LHC energy of 7 TeV as well as for energies of 10 TeV and 14 TeV. The enhancement over NLO is around 13% at all three energies. The plot on the right shows the cross section as a function of c.m. energy at the LHC. For a top quark mass of 173 GeV we find at 7 TeV

$$\sigma_{s\text{-channel}}^{\text{NNLOapprox, top}}(m_t = 173 \text{ GeV}, 7 \text{ TeV}) = 3.17 \pm 0.06^{+0.13}_{-0.10} \text{ pb}$$

while at 10 TeV we have $5.16 \pm 0.09^{+0.20}_{-0.14}$ pb, and at 14 TeV we have $7.93 \pm 0.14^{+0.31}_{-0.28}$ pb.

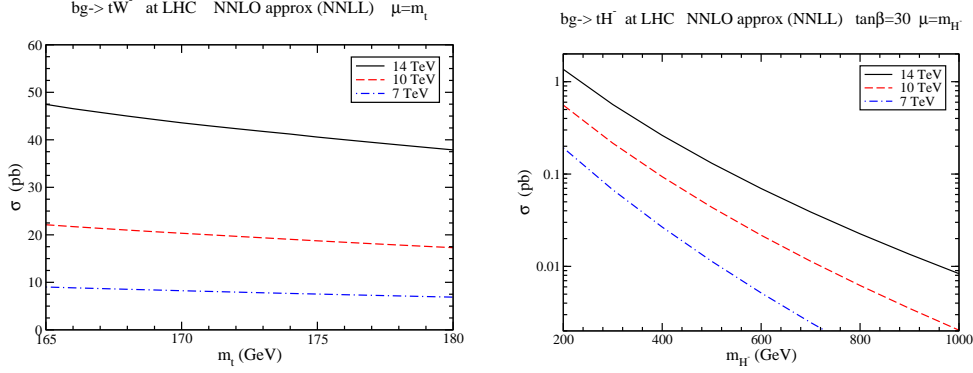


Figure 4: Cross section for tW^- (left) and tH^- (right) production at the LHC.

At the LHC the antitop s -channel cross section is different than for top. Figure 3 shows the corresponding results. At 7 TeV we find

$$\sigma_{s\text{-channel}}^{\text{NNLOapprox, antitop}}(m_t = 173 \text{ GeV}, 7 \text{ TeV}) = 1.42 \pm 0.01^{+0.06}_{-0.07} \text{ pb}$$

while at 10 TeV we have $2.48 \pm 0.02^{+0.09}_{-0.13}$ pb, and at 14 TeV we have $3.99 \pm 0.05^{+0.14}_{-0.21}$ pb.

3. Associated production of a top quark with a W^-

We now turn to the process $bg \rightarrow tW^-$. This process is negligible at the Tevatron but significant at the LHC. The left plot of Fig. 4 shows the approximate NNLO cross section from NNLL resummation for tW^- production at LHC energies. The enhancement over NLO is around 8%. At 7 TeV with $m_t = 173$ GeV we find

$$\sigma_{tW^-}^{\text{NNLOapprox}}(m_t = 173 \text{ GeV}, 7 \text{ TeV}) = 7.8 \pm 0.2^{+0.5}_{-0.6} \text{ pb}$$

while at 10 TeV we have $19.4 \pm 0.5^{+1.0}_{-1.1}$ pb, and at 14 TeV we have $41.8 \pm 1.0^{+1.5}_{-2.4}$ pb. Again, the first uncertainty is from scale variation and the second is from the MSTW2008 NNLO pdf at 90% C.L.

The cross section for $\bar{t}W^+$ production is identical to that for tW^- .

4. Associated production of a top quark with a charged Higgs

Finally we consider the process $bg \rightarrow tH^-$. Charged Higgs bosons appear in supersymmetric theories, and the associated production of a top quark with an H^- is a potentially relevant process. The right plot of Fig. 4 shows the approximate NNLO cross section from NNLL resummation for tH^- production at LHC energies, for a value of $\tan\beta = 30$, versus the charged Higgs mass. The NNLO approximate corrections increase the NLO cross section by $\sim 15\%$ to $\sim 20\%$ for the range of charged Higgs masses shown.

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