

Event generator overview

MC4EIC

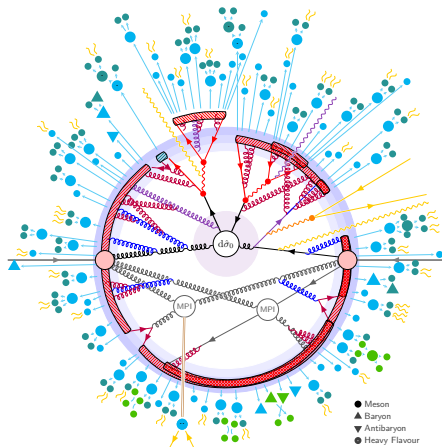
Ilkka Helenius

July 9th, 2025



Outline

1. Event generators for high energy colliders
2. Electroproduction
3. Photoproduction
4. Diffractive processes
5. Tuning
6. MC4EIC recap



[figure by P. Skands]

General purpose event generators

- Aim to provide a full description of a collision event, ie. exclusive hadronic final states, using Monte Carlo methods
- Use perturbative QCD where applicable, fill in with phenomenological models
- Main players:
 - **Herwig (7.3.0)** <https://herwig.hepforge.org> [Eur.Phys.J. C80 (2020) 452]
 - **Pythia (8.315)** <https://pythia.org> [SciPost Phys. Codebases 8-r8.3 (2022)]
 - **Sherpa (3.0.1)** <https://sherpa-team.gitlab.io> [JHEP 12 (2024) 156]

Specialized event generators

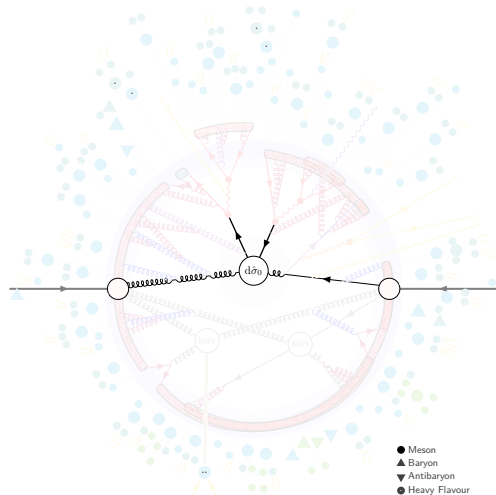
- Matrix-element (Hard-process) generators for higher perturbative accuracy and multiplicities: Madgraph5(_aMC@NLO), POWHEG(-BOX)
- Fixed-order codes: MCFM, NNLOJET, ...

Physics modelled within generators

Classify event generation in terms of
“hardness”

1. Hard Process (here $t\bar{t}$)

[figure credit: P. Skands]

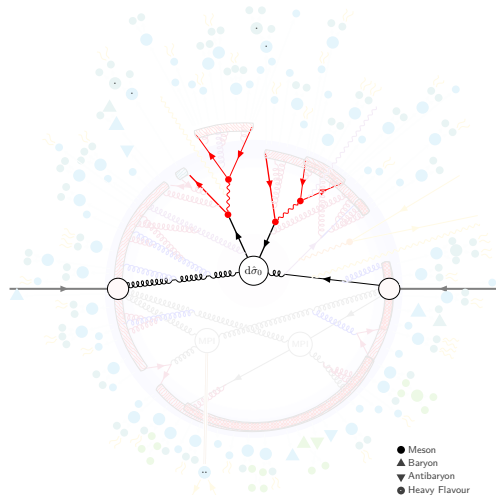


Physics modelled within generators

Classify event generation in terms of “hardness”

1. Hard Process (here $t\bar{t}$)
2. Resonance decays (t, Z, \dots)

[figure credit: P. Skands]

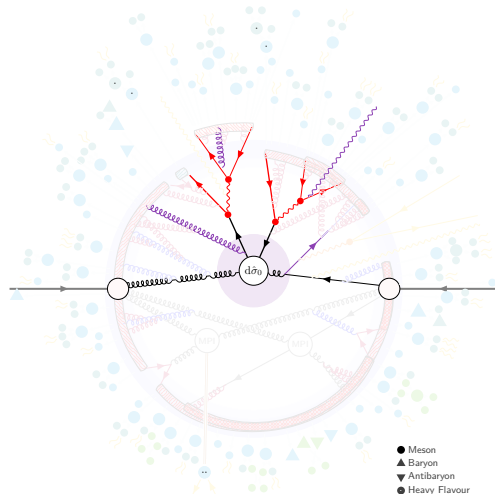


Physics modelled within generators

Classify event generation in terms of “hardness”

1. Hard Process (here $t\bar{t}$)
2. Resonance decays (t, Z, \dots)
3. Matching, Merging and matrix-element corrections

[figure credit: P. Skands]

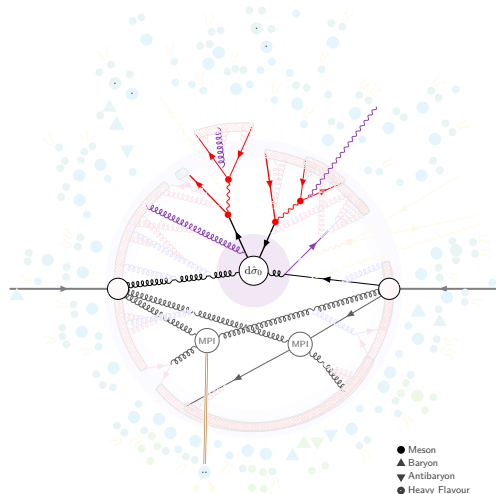


Physics modelled within generators

Classify event generation in terms of “hardness”

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4. Multiparton interactions

[figure credit: P. Skands]

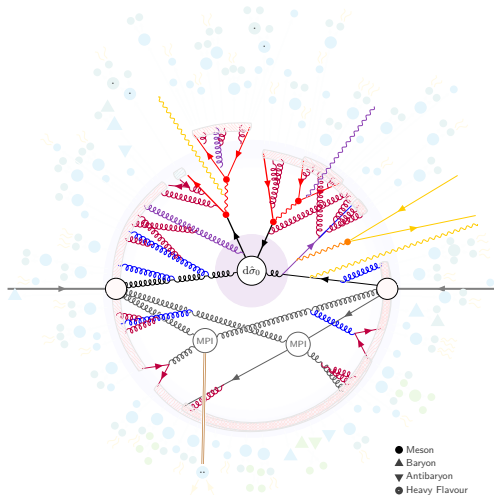


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5. Parton showers:
ISR, FSR, QED, Weak

[figure credit: P. Skands]

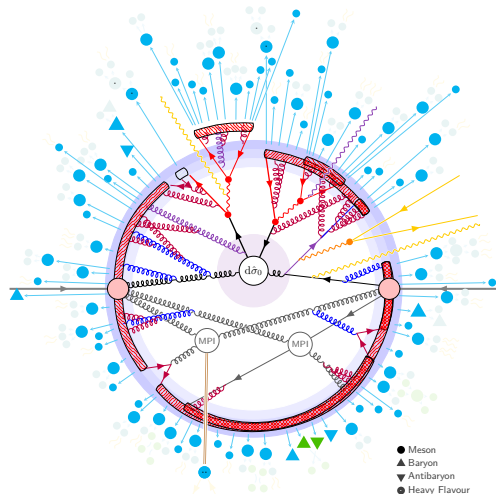


Physics modelled within generators

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6. Hadronization, Beam remnants

[figure credit: P. Skands]

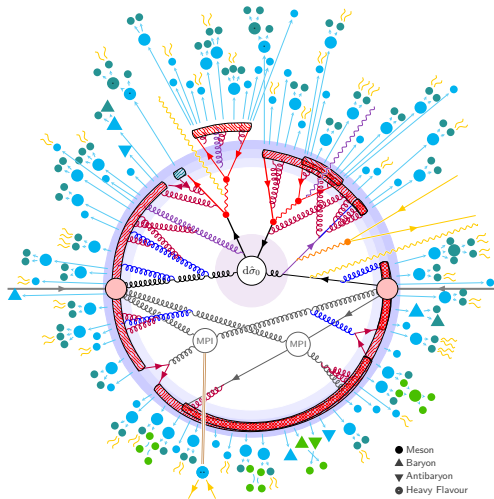


Physics modelled within generators

Classify event generation in terms of “hardness”

1. Hard Process (here $t\bar{t}$)
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3. Matching, Merging and matrix-element corrections
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ISR, FSR, QED, Weak
6. Hadronization, Beam remnants
7. Decays, Rescattering

[figure credit: P. Skands]



Parton Showers provide leading-log resummation

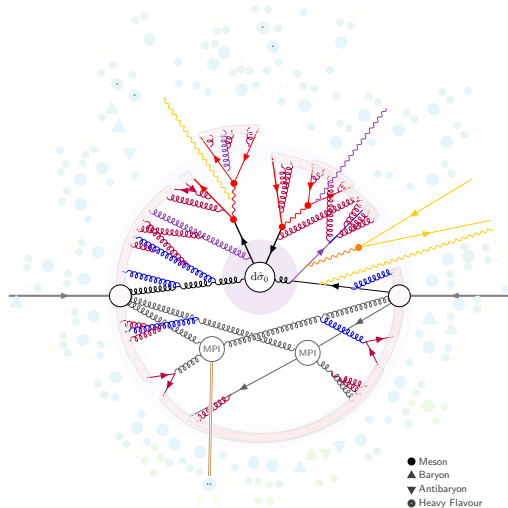
Dress the partons by generating explicit branchings iteratively

- Start from highly-virtual partons, evolve down to low scales with DGLAP
- Splitting probabilities from

$$dP_a(z, Q^2) = \frac{dQ^2}{Q^2} \frac{\alpha_s(Q^2)}{2\pi} \sum_{b,c} P_{a \rightarrow bc}(z) dz$$

where $P_{a \rightarrow bc}(z)$ splitting kernels

- Different choices in ordering variable and phase-space mapping lead to some differences between different implementations



Improve precision: Matching and merging

Combine multi-jet (fixed-order) calculations with each other and with PS

Matrix element corrections (MECs):

- Correct first PS splitting ($2 \rightarrow 2 + 1$) with the full matrix element ($2 \rightarrow 3$)

Matching:

- Combine $\{n, n + 1\}$ -parton states from NLO ME generator with parton shower
- Exclude overlap by subtraction or by correction factors
- NLO precision for n -parton observables

Merging:

- Combine $\{n, n + 1, \dots, n + m\}$ events from ME generators with each other and parton shower
- Overlap removed by applying cuts and vetoes

NLO merging:

- As above but with NLO MEs, overlap removed by subtraction
- NLO precision for inclusive $(n + i)$ -parton observables

Multiparton interactions (MPIs)

- MPIs from $2 \rightarrow 2$ QCD cross sections

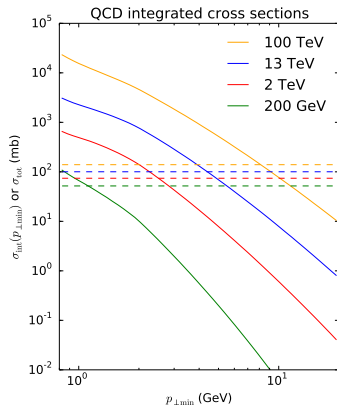
$$\frac{d\mathcal{P}_{\text{MPI}}}{dp_T^2} = \frac{1}{\sigma_{\text{nd}}(\sqrt{s})} \frac{d\sigma^{2 \rightarrow 2}}{dp_T^2}$$

$\sigma_{\text{nd}}(\sqrt{s})$ is the non-diffractive cross section

- Partonic cross section diverges at $p_T \rightarrow 0$
 \Rightarrow Introduce a screening parameter p_{T0}

$$\frac{d\sigma^{2 \rightarrow 2}}{dp_T^2} \propto \frac{\alpha_s(p_T^2)}{p_T^4} \rightarrow \frac{\alpha_s(p_{T0}^2 + p_T^2)}{(p_{T0}^2 + p_T^2)^2}$$

- Energy-dependent parametrization:
 $p_{T0}(\sqrt{s}) = p_{T0}^{\text{ref}}(\sqrt{s}/\sqrt{s_{\text{ref}}})^\alpha$
- Number of interactions: $\langle n \rangle = \sigma_{\text{int}}(p_{T0})/\sigma_{\text{nd}}$



- $\sigma_{\text{int}}(p_{T,\text{min}})$ exceeds σ_{tot}
 \Rightarrow Several interactions

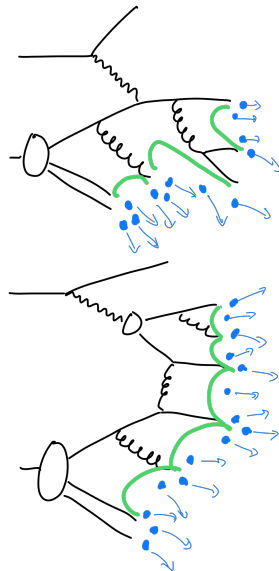
Electron-hadron collisions

Electroproduction (deep inelastic scattering, DIS)

- Lepton scatters off a parton by exchanging a highly virtual photon
- High virtuality, $Q^2 > \text{a few GeV}^2$
- Hard process + Parton showers

Photoproduction (PhP)

- Low virtuality, $Q^2 \rightarrow 0 \text{ GeV}^2$
- Photon may fluctuate into a hadronic state, resolved in the interaction \Rightarrow MPIs
- Factorize photon flux, evolve γp system
- Also soft QCD processes, diffraction



Electroproduction

Event generation in DIS

Hard scattering

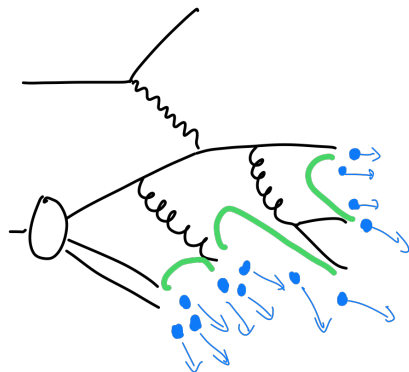
- Convolution between PDFs and matrix element (ME) for partonic scattering

Parton shower

- Final state radiation (FSR)
- Initial state radiation (ISR) for hadron
- QED emissions from leptons

Hadronization

- String/cluster hadronization with colour reconnections
- Decays to stable hadrons



H1 data for 1-jettiness

Pythia

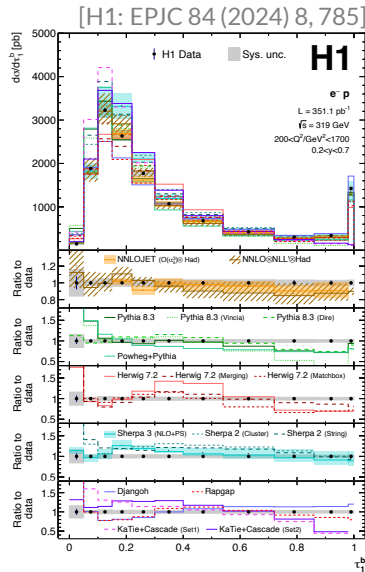
- Default shower with the dipole-recoil option
- Vincia sectorized parton shower
- Dire parton shower

Herwig

- Default angular-ordered shower
- Matching (Matchbox) and merging

Sherpa

- With cluster and string hadronization
- NLO matching



Photoproduction

Photoproduction in electron-proton collisions

Direct processes

- Convolute photon flux f_γ with proton PDFs f_i^p and $d\hat{\sigma}$

$$d\sigma^{\text{ep} \rightarrow \text{kl} + \text{X}} = f_\gamma^e(x, Q^2) \otimes f_j^p(x_p, \mu^2) \otimes d\hat{\sigma}^{\gamma j \rightarrow \text{kl}}$$

- Generate FSR and ISR for proton side

Resolved processes

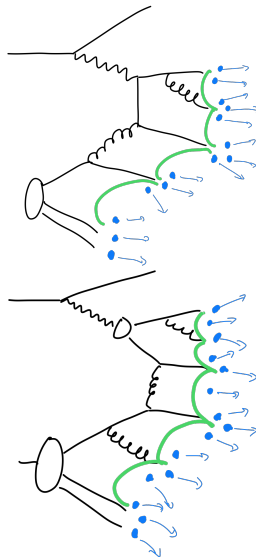
- Convolute also with photon PDFs

$$d\sigma^{\text{ep} \rightarrow \text{kl} + \text{X}} = f_\gamma^e(x, Q^2) \otimes f_i^\gamma(x_\gamma, \mu^2) \otimes f_j^p(x_p, \mu^2) \otimes d\sigma^{ij \rightarrow \text{kl}}$$

- Sample x and Q^2 , setup γp sub-system with $W_{\gamma p}$
- Evolve γp as any hadronic collision (including MPIs)

Photon flux from EPA

$$f_\gamma^e(x, Q^2) = \frac{\alpha_{\text{em}}}{2\pi} \frac{1}{Q^2} \frac{(1 + (1-x)^2)}{x}$$

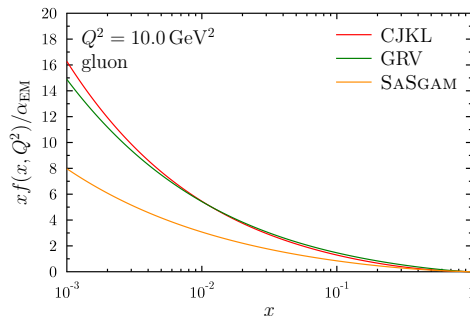
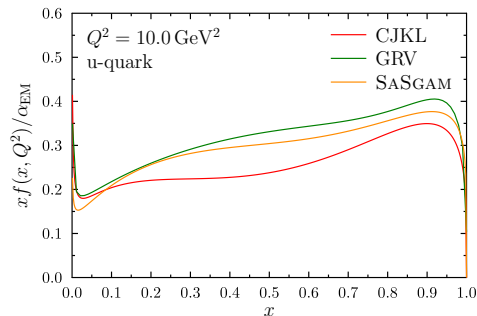


DGLAP equation for photons

- Additional term due to $\gamma \rightarrow q\bar{q}$ splittings

$$\frac{\partial f_i^\gamma(x, Q^2)}{\partial \log(Q^2)} = \frac{\alpha_{\text{em}}}{2\pi} e_i^2 P_{i\gamma}(x) + \frac{\alpha_s(Q^2)}{2\pi} \sum_j \int_x^1 \frac{dz}{z} P_{ij}(z) f_j(x/z, Q^2)$$

where $P_{i\gamma}(x) = 3(x^2 + (1-x)^2)$ for quarks, 0 for gluons (LO)



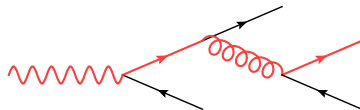
Evolution equation and ISR for resolved photons

ISR probability based on DGLAP evolution

- Add a term corresponding to $\gamma \rightarrow q\bar{q}$ to (conditional) ISR probability

$$d\mathcal{P}_{a \leftarrow b} = \frac{dQ^2}{Q^2} \frac{\alpha_s}{2\pi} \frac{x' f_a^\gamma(x', Q^2)}{x f_b^\gamma(x, Q^2)} P_{a \rightarrow bc}(z) dz + \frac{dQ^2}{Q^2} \frac{\alpha_{em}}{2\pi} \frac{e_b^2 P_{\gamma \rightarrow bc}(x)}{f_b^\gamma(x, Q^2)}$$

- Corresponds to ending up to the beam photon during evolution
 - \Rightarrow Parton originated from the point-like (anomalous) part of the PDFs
 - No further ISR or MPIs below the scale of the splitting
 - Implemented for the default Simple Shower in Pythia 8

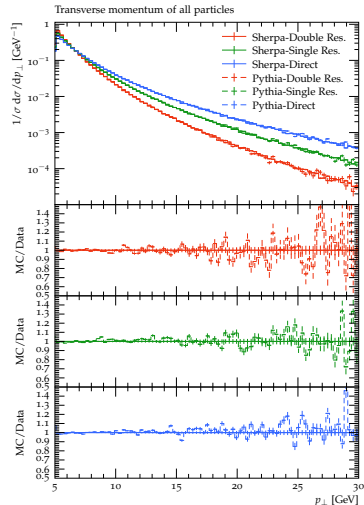


Comparisons between Pythia, Sherpa and Herwig

[I. Helenius, P. Meizinger, S. Plätzer, P. Richardson: arXiv:2406.08026 [hep-ph]]

Compare different generators for photoproduction

- Good agreement at ME-level
- Differences build up from inputs and modelling
- Scale variations large at LO



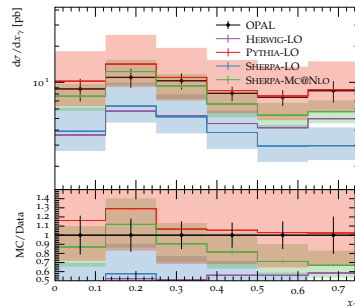
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Dijets in $\gamma\gamma$ (LEP)



[OPAL: PLB 651 (2007) 92-101]

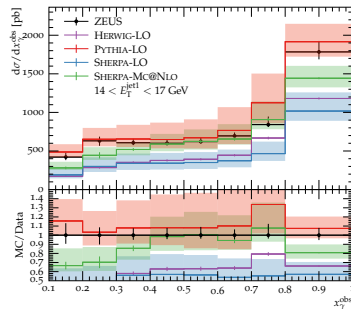
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Dijets in γp (HERA)



[ZEUS: EPJC 23 (2002) 615-631]

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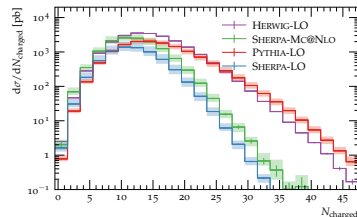
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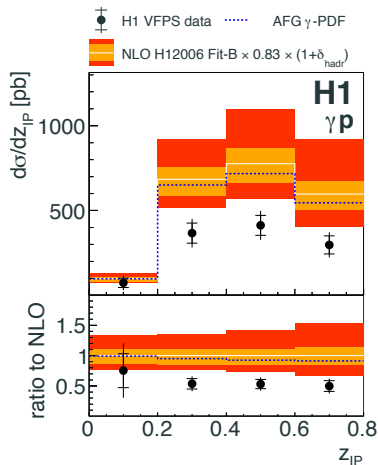
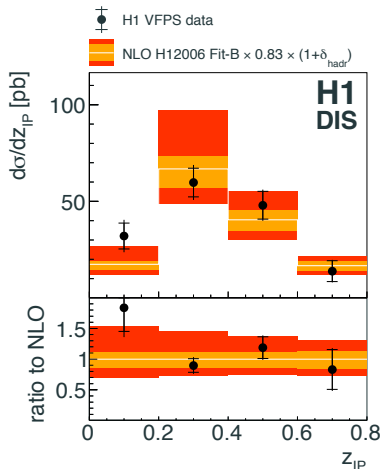
Solid predictions for EIC require

- Validated inputs: (γ) PDFs, accurate flux
- Improved modelling for PS and remnant handling
- Tuning of models to HERA and LEP data

Predictions for multiplicity distributions in EIC

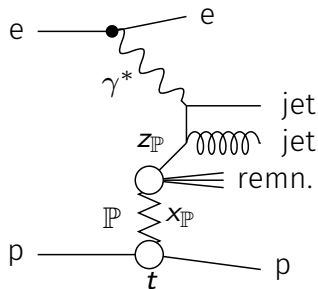


Diffraction processes



- Good agreement between H1 data and NLO calculation in DIS regime (high- Q^2)
- NLO overshoot the data in photoproduction (low- Q^2)

Hard diffraction in DIS



Diffraction dijets

- Virtual photon interacts with Pomeron from proton producing jets
- Signature: scattered proton or a rapidity gap between proton and Pomeron remnant

Factorized cross section for diffractive dijets

- DIS: $d\sigma^{2\text{jets}+X} = f_i^{\mathbb{P}}(z_{\mathbb{P}}, \mu^2) \otimes f_{\mathbb{P}}^p(x_{\mathbb{P}}, t) \otimes d\sigma^{ie \rightarrow 2\text{jets}}$

where $f_{\mathbb{P}}^p$ is Pomeron flux and $f_j^{\mathbb{P}}$ diffractive PDF (dPDF)

- Factorization verified by H1 and ZEUS at HERA

Hard diffraction in photoproduction

Factorization-based approach

- Direct:

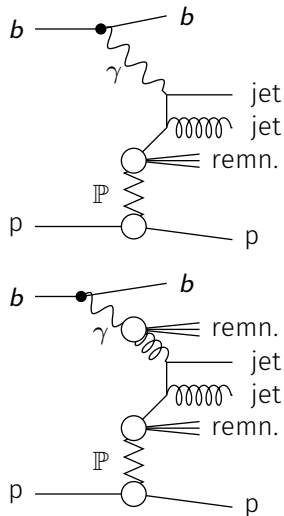
$$d\sigma^{2\text{jets}} = f_{\gamma}^b(x) \otimes d\sigma^{\gamma j \rightarrow 2\text{jets}} \otimes f_i^{\text{P}}(z_{\text{P}}, \mu^2) \otimes f_{\text{P}}^{\text{p}}(x_{\text{P}}, t)$$

- Resolved:

$$d\sigma^{2\text{jets}} = f_{\gamma}^b(x) \otimes f_i^{\gamma}(x_{\gamma}, \mu^2) \otimes d\sigma^{ij \rightarrow 2\text{jets}} \otimes f_i^{\text{P}}(z_{\text{P}}, \mu^2) \otimes f_{\text{P}}^{\text{P}}(x_{\text{P}}, t)$$

Factorization breaking

- Suppression wrt. factorized approach around 10%–50% at HERA
- Even larger effects seen in pp (and $p\bar{p}$)
- Potential explanation additional interactions between photon remnants and the proton covering the rapidity gap



Hard diffraction in photoproduction

Pythia

[I.H., C. O. Rasmussen, EPJC (2019) 79:413]

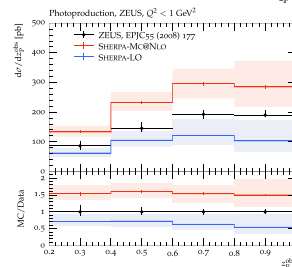
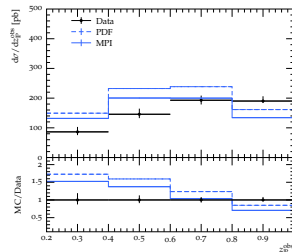
- Based on diffractive PDFs at LO
- Factorization breaking effects with dynamical rapidity gap survival with MPI rejection
⇒ Suppression in line with the HERA data

Sherpa

[F. Krauss, P. Meinzinger, EPJC 84 (2024) 9, 894]

- Both LO and NLO available
- NLO tend to overshoot the data
- Factorization breaking effects studies by scaling resolved and direct components

Three Rivet routines available (2 for H1, 1 ZEUS)



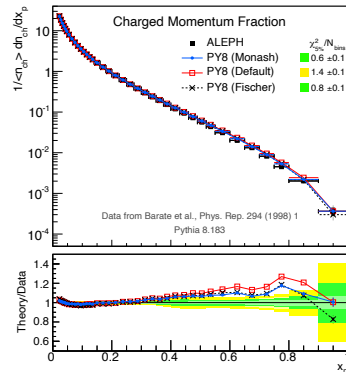
Tuning

Need for tuning

- Modelling complete collision events require phenomenological models
- These involve parameters that have to be fixed using experimental data
- Should be “global” to retain predictability of a given model (eg. energy dependence)

Tools for automated tuning

- Rivet provides easy comparison between data and simulations
- Professor 2 provides Rivet-based framework to optimize parameters by minimizing χ^2



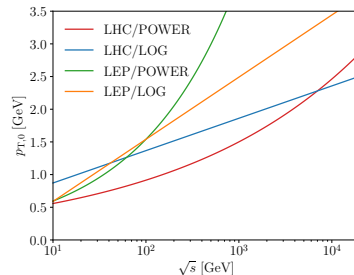
[P. Skands, S. Carrazza, J. Rojo,
EPJC 74(8), 3024 (2014)]

An example: Tuning MPIs in photoproduction

[J.M. Butterworth, I. H., J.J. Juan Castella, B. Pattengale, S. Sanjrani, M. Wing: SciPost Phys. 17 (2024) 6, 158]

Systematic comparisons of existing MPI tunes

- Vary $p_{T,0}$ parametrization
- pp at LHC and Tevatron and for $\gamma\gamma$ from LEP
- Data for jet and charged-particle production for pp, γp and $\gamma\gamma$ (10 data sets in total)



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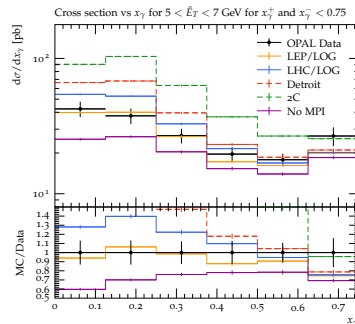
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Conclusions

- Can find good agreement for $\gamma\gamma$



[OPAL: EPJC 31, 307 (2003)]

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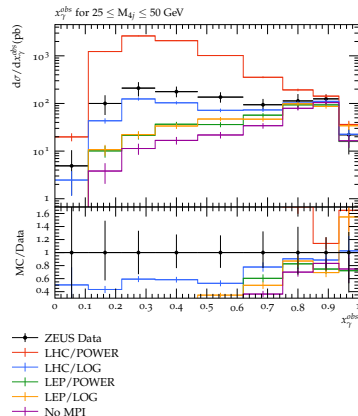
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[ZEUS: NPB 792 1 (2008)]

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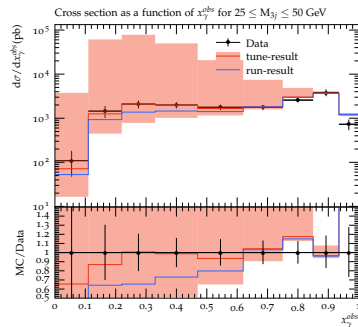
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Conclusions

- Can find good agreement for $\gamma\gamma$ and γp
- Published new Rivet analyses enabling dedicated tunes for each beam configuration
- Automatized parameter optimization with Professor 2



[In progress]

MC4EIC recap

- Monte Carlo event generators required for detector planning and analysis
- Follow up MC development relevant to EIC with MC working group in the EICUG

Previous workshops, following MCEGs in 2018 and 2019

- MC4EIC 2021, Remote, hosted by CFNS
 - Kick off to review experimental needs for theory and event generators
- MC4EIC 2022, Remote, hosted by BNL
 - Reports from MC developers and experimentalists, live notes
- MC4EIC 2024, In-person meeting in Durham
 - Reports from general purpose and specialized event generators
 - Reviews on the existing data relevant to validation
- MC4EIC 2025, Hybrid in JLab (connected to EICUG meeting the following week)
 - Overview talks and generator updates, focus on Rivet and validation
 - Draft a report from the validation efforts

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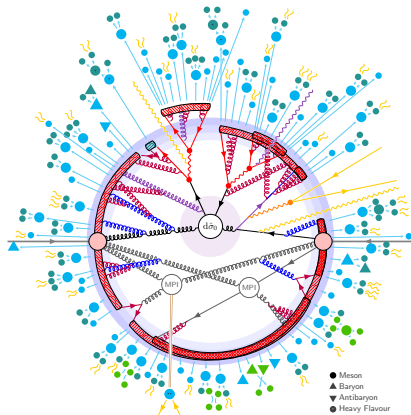
Summary & Outlook

Many recent developments in different areas relevant for EIC

- Extend capabilities for different processes in event generators
- Precision improvements with matching and merging
- First validation and tuning efforts completed/ongoing

Things to work on

- Radiative effects, nuclear targets, diffraction
- What else? How to communicate experimental needs? Rivet analyses?



[figure by P. Skands]