

# A new probe of magnetic fields in the pre-reionization epoch: II. Detectability

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In the first paper of this series, we proposed a novel method to detect large-scale magnetic fields in the Dark Ages, using 21-cm tomography surveys. In this paper, we examine detectability of magnetic fields using this method. We first develop a minimum-variance estimator formalism to measure magnetic fields using the characteristic anisotropic imprints in the 21-cm brightness-temperature 2-point correlation functions. We then evaluate Fisher expressions for this estimator and find that a radio array presenting about a square kilometer of area covered in dipole antennas (such as the next-generation of HERA, or the SKA in a tightly-packed configuration) can detect fields of strength on the order of  $10^{-21}$  Gauss (scaled to present day)—almost 10 orders of magnitude below the CMB constraints. Measurement of the field strength will, however, require more futuristic arrays.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Magnetic fields are ubiquitous in the universe on all observed scales [1–5]. However, the origins of the magnetic fields in Galaxies and on large scales are as of yet an unresolved question. Various forms of dynamo mechanisms [6] are proposed to maintain and amplify magnetic fields, but they typically require seed fields to act [1]. The seed fields may be produced during structure formation through Biermann battery or similar mechanisms [7, 8], or otherwise may be relics from the early universe [1, 9, 10]. Observations of large-scale weak magnetic fields in the high-redshift intergalactic medium (IGM) can thus provide tools for understanding the origins of magnetic fields in the present-day universe, and potentially open up an entirely new window into the physics of the early universe.

Many observational probes have previously been used to search for evidence of large-scale magnetic fields locally and at high redshifts; see, e. g. [4, 11–19]. Amongst the most sensitive tracers of cosmological magnetic fields are the measurements of the cumulative effect of Faraday rotation in the cosmic-microwave-background polarization maps, which currently place an upper limit of  $\sim 10^{-10}$  Gauss (in comoving units) using the data from the Planck satellite [20]. In Paper I of this series [21], we proposed a novel method to detect and measure extremely weak cosmological magnetic fields during the pre-reionization epoch (the Dark Ages). This method relies on future 21-cm brightness-temperature tomography surveys [22, 23], many of which have pathfinder experiments currently running [24–29], and plans for the next stages to be realized in the coming decade [27, 29]. As we show in Paper I, the measurement of statistical anisotropy in the 21-cm signal from the Dark Ages has intrinsic sensitivity to magnetic fields in the IGM more than *10 orders of magnitude below the current upper limits*.

While Paper I laid out the formalism necessary to account for the effect of magnetic fields on the statistics of the 21-cm signal, this paper (which we refer to as

Paper II in the following) focuses on evaluating the sensitivity of future 21-cm experiments using this method. The rest of this paper is organized as follows. In §II, we present a quick overview of the main results in Paper I. In §IV, we derive minimum-variance estimators for a uniform and stochastic magnetic field. In §V, we set up the Fisher analysis formalism necessary to evaluate detectability. In §VI, we present numerical results, and we conclude in §VII. Supporting materials are presented in the appendices.

## II. SUMMARY OF THE METHOD

Magnetic moments of hydrogen atoms in the excited state of the 21-cm line transition tend to be aligned with the incident quadrupole of the 21-cm radiation from the surrounding medium. This effect of “ground-state alignment” [30, 31] arises in a cosmological setting due to velocity-field gradients. In the presence of external large-scale magnetic fields, the emitted 21-cm quadrupole is misaligned with the incident quadrupole, due to atomic precession (illustrated in Figure 1). The resulting emission anisotropy can thus be used to trace magnetic fields at high redshifts.

The main result of Paper I was a calculation of the 21-cm brightness temperature  $T$  as a function of the line of sight (LOS) direction  $\hat{\mathbf{n}}$ , in the frame of the emitting ensemble of atoms. The relevant expression is

$$\begin{aligned}
 T(\hat{\mathbf{n}}) = & \left(1 - \frac{T_\gamma}{T_s}\right) x_{1s} \left(\frac{1+z}{10}\right)^{1/2} \\
 & \times \left[ 26.4 \text{ mK} \left\{ 1 + \left(1 + (\hat{\mathbf{k}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{n}})^2\right) \delta \right\} - 0.128 \text{ mK} \left(\frac{T_\gamma}{T_s}\right) \right. \\
 & \times x_{1s} \left(\frac{1+z}{10}\right)^{1/2} \left\{ 1 + 2 \left(1 + (\hat{\mathbf{k}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{n}})^2\right) \delta \right. \\
 & \left. \left. - \frac{\delta}{15} \sum_m \frac{4\pi}{5} \frac{Y_{2m}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) [Y_{2m}(\hat{\mathbf{n}})]^*}{1 + x_{\alpha,(2)} + x_{c,(2)} - imx_B} \right\} \right], \tag{1}
 \end{aligned}$$

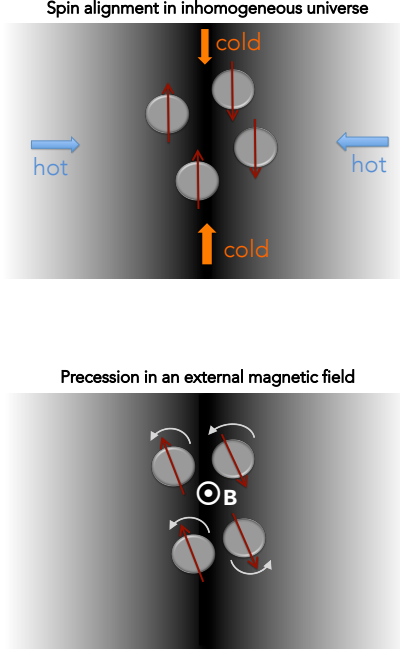


Figure 1. Illustration of the effect of a magnetic field on hydrogen atoms in the excited state of 21-cm transition at high redshifts. In the classical picture, magnetic moments of the atoms (depicted as red arrows) tend to be aligned with density gradients (upper panel; the gradient is depicted with the background shading), unless they precess about the direction of ambient magnetic field (pointing out of the page on the lower panel). When the precessing atoms decay back into the ground state, the emitted quadrupole (aligned with the direction of the magnetic moments) is misaligned with the incident quadrupole. This offset can be observed as a statistical anisotropy of 21-cm-brightness-temperature correlation functions, and used to trace cosmological magnetic fields.

where  $x_{\alpha,(2)}$ ,  $x_{c,(2)}$  and  $x_B$  parametrize the rates of depolarization of the ground state by optical pumping, collisions, and magnetic precession (relative to radiative depolarization), respectively (defined in detail in Paper I). Furthermore,  $T_s$  and  $T_\gamma$  are the spin temperature and the temperature of the cosmic microwave background at redshift  $z$ , respectively;  $\hat{\mathbf{k}}$  is a unit vector in the direction of the wave-vector  $\vec{k}$  of a given density Fourier mode; and  $Y_{2m}$  represent the usual spin-zero spherical harmonics. Figure 2 illustrates the effect of the magnetic field on the brightness temperature emission pattern in the frame of the atom; shown are quadrupole patterns corresponding to the sum-term of Eq. (1), for various strengths of the magnetic field. Notice that there is a saturation limit for the field strength—for strong enough fields, the precession time is much smaller than the lifetime in the excited state, and when the emission pattern asymptotes to the one shown in the bottom panel of Figure 2. Above this limit, approximation of linear dependence of  $T$  breaks

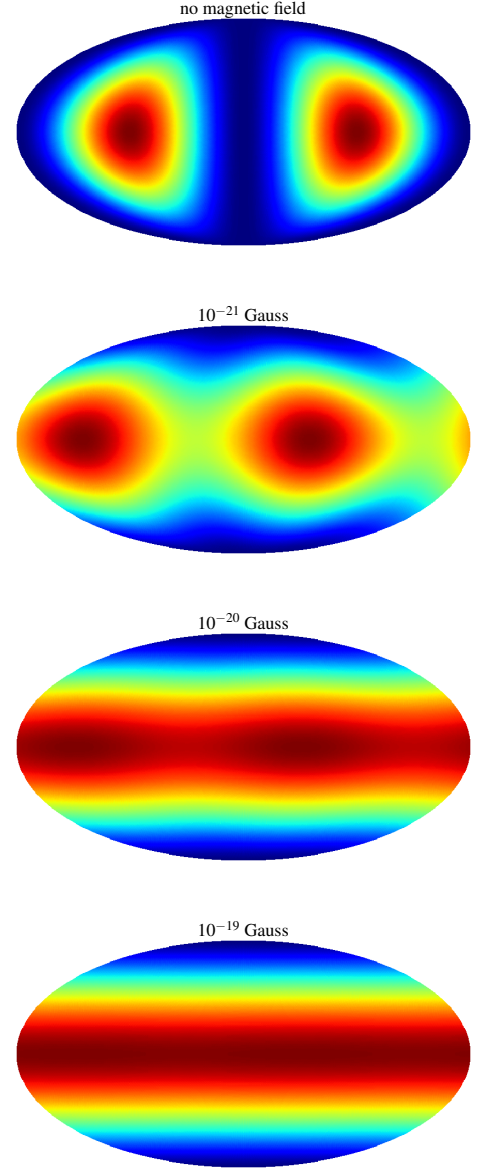


Figure 2. Illustration of the quadrupolar pattern of 21-cm emission from the last ( $B$ -dependent) term of Eq. (1) in the frame of the emitting atoms, for the case where  $\vec{k}$  is perpendicular to  $\hat{\mathbf{n}}$  (maximal signal), shown in Mollweide projection. Lower panels correspond to increasingly stronger magnetic fields (strength denoted on each panel in comoving units), with the bottom panel corresponding to the saturated case. Notice how the type of quadrupole differs for the no-magnetic field case and the case the field is “strong” in the saturation sense.

down, which implies that the signal cannot be used to reconstruct the strength of the field; however, it is still possible to distinguish saturated regime from the case of null field, as we will see in §V.

The affect of quadrupole misalignment arises at second order in optical depth (it is a result of a two-

scattering process), and is thus a small correction to the total brightness temperature. However, owing to the long lifetime of the excited state (during which even an extremely slow precession has large cumulative effect on the direction of the quadrupole at second order), the effect of misalignment is exclusively sensitive to magnetic fields in the IGM at redshifts prior to cosmic reionization—as we show in Paper I, a miniscule magnetic field strength of  $10^{-21}$  Gauss (in comoving units) produces order-one changes in the direction of the quadrupole. This means that a high-precision measurement of the 21-cm brightness-temperature 2-point correlation function intrinsically has that level of sensitivity to detecting magnetic fields in the Dark Ages. We now proceed to develop a formalism to search for this effect, with future surveys of redshifted 21-cm line, and to identifying experimental setups that can reach it.

### III. BASICS

Before focusing on the estimator formalism in the next Section, here we review the basics of 21-cm brightness temperature fluctuation measurements. In §III A, we review definitions of quantities describing sensitivity of interferometric radio arrays; in §III B, we focus on the derivation of the noise power spectrum; and in §III C, we discuss the effects of the array configuration and its relation to coverage of modes in the  $uv$  plane of the array.

#### A. Definitions

The redshifted 21-cm signal can be represented as a specific intensity at the location in physical space  $I(\vec{r})$ , or in Fourier space  $\tilde{I}(\vec{k})$ . In sky coordinates (centered on an emitting patch of the sky), these functions become  $\mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \theta_\nu)$ , and  $\tilde{\mathcal{I}}(u, v, \eta)$ , respectively. Here, vector  $\vec{k}$  (in the units of comoving  $\text{Mpc}^{-1}$ ) is a Fourier dual of  $\vec{r}$  (comoving Mpc), and likewise,  $\theta_x$  (rad),  $\theta_y$  (rad), and  $\theta_\nu$  (Hz) are duals of the coordinates  $u$  ( $\text{rad}^{-1}$ ),  $v$  ( $\text{rad}^{-1}$ ), and  $\eta$  (seconds), respectively. Notice that  $\theta_x$  and  $\theta_y$  represent the angular extent of the patch in the sky, while  $\theta_\nu$  represents its extent in the frequency space. The two sets of coordinates are related through linear transformations in the following way

$$\begin{aligned} \theta_x &= \frac{r_x}{\chi(z)}, & u &= \frac{k_x \chi(z)}{2\pi}, \\ \theta_y &= \frac{r_y}{\chi(z)}, & v &= \frac{k_y \chi(z)}{2\pi}, \\ \theta_\nu &= \frac{H(z)\nu_{21}}{c(1+z)^2} r_z, & \eta &= \frac{c(1+z)^2}{2\pi H(z)\nu_{21}} k_z, \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where  $\nu_{21}$  is the 21-cm frequency in the rest frame of emitting atoms,  $H(z)$  is the Hubble parameter,  $\chi(z)$  is the comoving distance to redshift  $z$ , which marks the

middle of the observed data cube (where  $r_z$  and  $\theta_\nu$  intervals are evaluated). Note that conditions of the type  $2\pi\theta_x u = r_x k_x$  are satisfied.

The convention we use for the Fourier transforms is (note that Fourier-space functions are denoted with tilde)

$$\begin{aligned} I(\vec{r}) &= \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int \tilde{I}(\vec{k}) e^{i\vec{k}\cdot\vec{r}} d\vec{k}, \\ \tilde{I}(\vec{k}) &= \int I(\vec{r}) e^{-i\vec{k}\cdot\vec{r}} d\vec{r}, \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

and similarly,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \theta_\nu) &= \int \tilde{\mathcal{I}}(u, v, \eta) e^{2\pi i(u\theta_x + v\theta_y + \eta\theta_\nu)} du dv d\eta, \\ \tilde{\mathcal{I}}(u, v, \eta) &= \int \mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \theta_\nu) e^{-2\pi i(u\theta_x + v\theta_y + \eta\theta_\nu)} d\theta_x d\theta_y d\theta_\nu. \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

The following scaling relation is satisfied

$$\tilde{I}(\vec{k}) = \frac{c(1+z)^2 \chi(z)^2}{H(z)\nu_{21}} \tilde{\mathcal{I}}(u, v, \eta), \quad (5)$$

where the proportionality factor contains a Jacobian  $\frac{dr_x dr_y dr_z}{d\theta_x d\theta_y d\theta_\nu}$ . Finally, the relationship between the specific intensity in the  $uv$ -plane and the visibility function  $V(u, v, \theta_\nu)$  is given by a Fourier transform over only the frequency coordinate,

$$\begin{aligned} V(u, v, \theta_\nu) &= \int \tilde{\mathcal{I}}(u, v, \eta) e^{2\pi i\theta_\nu \eta} d\eta, \\ \tilde{\mathcal{I}}(u, v, \eta) &= \int V(u, v, \theta_\nu) e^{-2\pi i\theta_\nu \eta} d\theta_\nu, \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

Here,  $\theta_{\nu, \text{max}} - \theta_{\nu, \text{min}} = \Delta\nu$  is the bandwidth of the observed data cube centered on  $z$  (see also Appendix A).

#### B. Power spectra and noise

In this Section, we derive the noise power spectrum for the brightness temperature signal. We start by defining a brightness-temperature power spectrum as

$$\langle \tilde{I}(\vec{k}) \tilde{I}^*(\vec{k}') \rangle \equiv (2\pi)^3 P_I \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}'), \quad (7)$$

where  $\delta_D$  is the Dirac delta function. The observable we wish to relate this power spectrum to is the visibility function—a complex Gaussian variable with a zero mean, whose noise-induced variance (derived in Appendix A) reads

$$\begin{aligned} &\langle V(u, v, \theta_\nu) V(u', v', \theta'_\nu)^* \rangle \\ &= \left( \frac{2k_B T_{\text{sky}}}{A_e \sqrt{\Delta\nu t_1}} \right)^2 \delta_D(u - u') \delta_D(v - v') \delta_{\theta_\nu \theta'_\nu}, \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

where  $T_{\text{sky}}$  is the sky temperature;  $t_1$  is the total time a single baseline spent observing an element at the position  $(u, v)$  in the  $uv$  plane;  $A_e$  is the collecting area of a single

dish;  $k_B$  is Boltzmann constant;  $\Delta\nu$  is the bandwidth centered on  $z$ ; and  $\delta$  symbol with subscripts denotes the Kronecker delta.

The next step is to combine Eqs. (6) and (8), and take ensemble average to get

$$\begin{aligned} & \langle \tilde{\mathcal{I}}(u, v, \eta) \tilde{\mathcal{I}}^*(u', v', \eta') \rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{t_1} \left( \frac{2k_B T_{\text{sky}}}{A_e} \right)^2 \delta_D(u - u') \delta_D(v - v') \delta(\eta - \eta'), \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

where

$$\int e^{2\pi i \theta_\nu (\eta - \eta')} d\theta_\nu = \delta_D(\eta - \eta'), \quad (10)$$

is the periodic delta-function on the  $t_1$  interval. Taking into account the scaling relation of Eq. (5), introducing the power spectrum of Eq. (7), and keeping in mind the scaling property of the delta function, we arrive at

$$P_1^N(\vec{k}) = \frac{1}{t_1 (2\pi)^3} \frac{c(1+z)^2 \chi^2(z)}{H(z) \nu_{21}} \left( \frac{2k_B T_{\text{sky}}}{A_e} \right)^2, \quad (11)$$

for the noise per  $\vec{k}$  mode, per baseline.

Computation of  $t_1$  from the total duration of the survey  $t_{\text{obs}}$  depends on the type of the experiment. For a beam of a solid angle  $\Omega_{\text{beam}} = \lambda^2/A_e$  much smaller than the solid angle of the entire survey,  $\Omega_{\text{survey}}$ , where telescopes scan the sky one beamwidth at a time (such as the case for radio dishes),  $t_1$  is the total time spent observing one  $uv$  element of size corresponding to the beam size,  $t_1 = t_{\text{obs}} \Omega_{\text{survey}}/\Omega_{\text{beam}}$ . However, in the case of an array of dipoles, the beam is greater or equal to the survey angular size, and  $t_1 = t_{\text{obs}}$ . When deriving numerical results in §VI, we will assume the latter. Finally, we will not account for the fact that a given patch of the sky is only visible for a part of a day from a given location; therefore,  $t_{\text{obs}}$  we use in §VI is the survey duration times a factor of a few or less that corrects for this assumption.

The last step is to get from Eq. (11) to the expression for the noise power spectrum that corresponds to the observation with all the available baselines. To do that, we need to incorporate the knowledge about the array configuration and the coverage of the  $uv$  plane. In other words, we need to divide the expression in Eq. (11) by the number of baselines that see a given mode  $\vec{k}$  at any given time  $n_{\text{base}}(\vec{k})$  (for a discussion of the  $uv$  coverage, see the following section). The final result for the noise power spectrum per mode  $\vec{k}$  in the intensity units is then

$$P^N(\vec{k}) = \frac{1}{t_1 (2\pi)^3} \frac{c(1+z)^2 \chi^2(z)}{H(z) \nu_{21}} \frac{(2k_B T_{\text{sky}})^2}{A_e^2 n_{\text{base}}(\vec{k})}, \quad (12)$$

and in temperature units

$$P^N(\vec{k}) = \frac{\lambda^4}{t_1 (2\pi)^3} \frac{c(1+z)^2 \chi^2(z)}{H(z) \nu_{21}} \frac{T_{\text{sky}}^2}{A_e^2 n_{\text{base}}(\vec{k})}. \quad (13)$$

### C. The UV coverage

Total number density  $n_{\text{base}}(\vec{k})$  of baselines that can observe mode  $\vec{k}$  is related to the (unitless) number density  $n(u, v)$  of baselines per  $dudv$  element as

$$n_{\text{base}}(\vec{k}) = \frac{n(u, v)}{\Omega_{\text{beam}}}, \quad (14)$$

where  $\frac{1}{\Omega_{\text{beam}}}$  represents an element in the  $uv$  plane. The number density integrates to the total number of baselines  $N_{\text{base}}$ ,

$$N_{\text{base}} = \frac{1}{2} N_{\text{ant}} (N_{\text{ant}} + 1) = \int_{\text{half}} n(u, v) dudv, \quad (15)$$

where  $N_{\text{ant}}$  is the number of antennas in the array, and the integration is done on the half of the  $uv$  plane (because the visibility has the following property  $V(u, v, \theta_\nu) = V^*(-u, -v, \theta_\nu)$ , and only half the plane contains independent samples). We assume that the array consists of many antennas, so that time-dependence of  $n(u, v)$  is negligible; if this is not the case, one should compute its time average to account for Earth's rotation.

Let us now consider  $n_{\text{base}}(\vec{k})$  for a specific array configuration that is of particular interest to cosmology—a tightly packed array of simple dipole antennas, tiling a squared-surface of the area  $(\Delta L)^2$  with a filling fraction close to one. This is a design such as the Fast Fourier Transform Telescope (FFTT) described in [32]. In this case, the beam solid angle is 1 sr, the effective area of a single dipole is  $A_e = \lambda^2$ , and the effective number of antennas is then  $N_{\text{ant}} = \frac{(\Delta L)^2}{\lambda^2}$ . For such configuration

$$n(u, v) = \left( \frac{\Delta L}{\lambda} - u \right) \left( \frac{\Delta L}{\lambda} - v \right). \quad (16)$$

The relation between  $\vec{k} = (k, \theta_k, \phi_k)$  and  $(u, v)$  is

$$\begin{aligned} u_\perp &\equiv \frac{\chi(z)}{2\pi} k \sin \theta_k, \\ u &= u_\perp \cos \phi_k, \\ v &= u_\perp \sin \phi_k, \end{aligned} \quad (17)$$

where subscript  $\perp$  denotes components perpendicular to the LOS direction  $\hat{\mathbf{n}}$ . From this, the corresponding number of baselines observing a given  $\vec{k}$  is

$$\begin{aligned} n_{\text{base}}(\vec{k}) &= \left( \frac{\Delta L}{\lambda} - \frac{\chi(z)}{2\pi} k \sin \theta_k \cos \phi_k \right) \\ &\times \left( \frac{\Delta L}{\lambda} - \frac{\chi(z)}{2\pi} k \sin \theta_k \sin \phi_k \right). \end{aligned} \quad (18)$$

In §VI, we use a  $\phi_k$ -averaged version of this quantity (between 0 and  $\pi/2$  only, due to the four-fold symmetry of the experimental setup of a square of dipoles), to account for the rotation of the baselines with respect to the

modes,

$$\begin{aligned} \langle n_{\text{base}}(\vec{k}) \rangle_{\phi_k} &= \left( \frac{\Delta L}{\lambda} \right)^2 - \frac{4}{\pi} \frac{\Delta L}{\lambda} \frac{\chi(z)}{2\pi} k \sin \theta_k \\ &+ \left( \frac{\chi(z)}{2\pi} k \sin \theta_k \right)^2. \end{aligned} \quad (19)$$

#### IV. QUADRATIC ESTIMATOR FORMALISM

We now derive an unbiased minimum-variance quadratic estimator for a cosmic magnetic field  $\vec{B}$ , following a formalism similar to what is used in CMB studies [33]. In the following, we assume that the field only evolves with redshift due to the expansion of the universe (adiabatically) as

$$B(z) = B_0(1+z)^2, \quad (20)$$

where  $B_0$  represents its present-day value (or equivalently, its value in comoving units), where the relevant estimator is denoted with a hat sign,  $\hat{B}_0$ . We first consider the case of a field uniform in the entire survey volume, described by a single parameter,  $B_0$ . Then we move on to the case of a stochastic magnetic field, with a given power spectrum  $P_B(\vec{K})$  where  $\vec{K}$  denotes the wavevector for the mode of the field; in this case, the relevant estimator is of its amplitude,  $\hat{A}_0^2$ . In both cases, the presented formalism is only valid if there the following separation is satisfied: density-field modes in consideration must have much smaller wavelengths than the coherence scale of the magnetic field (or a given mode of a stochastic magnetic field), and both must be smaller than the size of the tomography survey at hand.

##### A. Uniform field

We first derive an unbiased minimum-variance quadratic estimator  $\hat{B}_0$  for a comoving uniform magnetic field. We start by noting that the redshifted 21-cm brightness temperature Fourier modes  $T(\vec{k})$  contain contribution from the noise  $T^N(\vec{k})$  and the signal  $T^S(\vec{k})$ , where the signal is contains contributions from the 21-cm signal with no magnetic field (null-case signal  $T_0^S(\vec{k})$ ), and with the magnetic field,

$$\begin{aligned} T(\vec{k}) &= T^N(\vec{k}) + T^S(\vec{k}), \\ T^S(\vec{k}) &= T_0^S(\vec{k}) + B_0 \frac{\partial T_0^S}{\partial B_0}(\vec{k}), \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

where  $B$  is a small expansion parameter (we adopt the linear-theory approach through this work). We use the subscript “0” to denote functions evaluated at  $B = 0$ . Temperature is proportional to is the density fluctuation  $\delta$ , with the transfer function  $G(\hat{\mathbf{k}})$  as the proportionality

factor,

$$\begin{aligned} T^S(\vec{k}) &= G(\hat{\mathbf{k}})\delta(k), \\ T_0^S(\vec{k}) &= G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}})\delta(k), \end{aligned} \quad (22)$$

where  $\hat{\mathbf{k}} = (\theta_k, \phi_k)$  is a unit vector in the direction of  $\vec{k}$ . Note that while  $G$  is a function of the direction vector  $\hat{\mathbf{k}}$  only, the power spectrum  $P_\delta$  is a function of the magnitude  $k$ , in an isotropic universe. For simplicity of the expressions, we adopt the following notation

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial T_0^S}{\partial B_0}(\vec{k}) &\equiv \delta(k) \frac{\partial G}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}, B_0 = 0), \\ \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) &\equiv \frac{\partial G}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}, B_0 = 0). \end{aligned} \quad (23)$$

Since in the rest of this work we assume adiabatic evolution of the magnetic field, it is worth noting that  $\frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0} = \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B}(1+z)^2$ . Furthermore, we denote the power spectrum in the null case as

$$P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) \equiv P^N(\vec{k}) + P_0^S(\vec{k}). \quad (24)$$

The signal power spectrum in the absence of a magnetic fields is given as

$$\begin{aligned} \langle T_0(\vec{k}) T_0^*(\vec{k}') \rangle &\equiv (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') P_0^S(\vec{k}) \\ &= (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') G_0^2(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) P_\delta(k), \end{aligned} \quad (25)$$

where

$$\langle \delta(\vec{k}) \delta^*(\vec{k}') \rangle \equiv (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') P_\delta(k). \quad (26)$$

The observable 2-point correlation function in Fourier space is

$$\begin{aligned} \langle T(\vec{k}) T^*(\vec{k}') \rangle &= P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') \\ &+ \langle T_0^S(\vec{k}) B_0 \frac{\partial T_0^{S,*}}{\partial B_0}(\vec{k}') \rangle + \langle T_0^{S,*}(\vec{k}') B_0 \frac{\partial T_0^S}{\partial B_0}(\vec{k}) \rangle \\ &= \left( P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) + 2B_0 P_\delta(k) G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \right) \\ &\quad \times (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}'), \end{aligned} \quad (27)$$

where we assume that the signal and the noise are uncorrelated and keep only terms linear in  $B_0$ , and used the reality of  $G_0$  and  $\frac{\partial G}{\partial B_0}$ .

Since we observe only one universe, the measured proxy for the ensemble average in Eq. (27) is the product  $T(\vec{k}) T^*(\vec{k}')$ . Using Eq. (27), each  $T(\vec{k})$  gives an estimate for  $B_0$ ,

$$\hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}} = \frac{\frac{1}{V} T(\vec{k}) T^*(\vec{k}) - P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k})}{2P_\delta(k) G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}})}, \quad (28)$$

where we use the following property of the Dirac delta function on a finite volume of the survey  $V$

$$\delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') = \frac{V}{(2\pi)^3}, \quad \text{for } \vec{k} = \vec{k}', \quad (29)$$

related to the Kroneker delta,

$$\delta_{\vec{k}\vec{k}'} = \frac{(2\pi)^3}{V} \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}'), \quad (30)$$

and the following normalization convention

$$(2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') \equiv \int d\vec{r} e^{-i\vec{r} \cdot (\vec{k} - \vec{k}')}. \quad (31)$$

The estimator of Eq. (28) is unbiased,  $\langle \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}} \rangle = 0$ . The covariance of the estimates from all available temperature-field modes  $\langle \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}} \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}',*} \rangle$  involves temperature-field 4-point correlation with three Wick contractions; its numerator reads

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{1}{V^2} \langle T(\vec{k}) T^*(\vec{k}) T(\vec{k}') T^*(\vec{k}') \rangle + P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}') \\ & - \frac{1}{V} P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) \langle T(\vec{k}') T^*(\vec{k}') \rangle - \frac{1}{V} P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}') \langle T(\vec{k}) T^*(\vec{k}) \rangle \\ & = P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}') \left[ \frac{(2\pi)^6}{V^2} \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}) \delta_D(\vec{k}' - \vec{k}') \right. \\ & + \frac{(2\pi)^6}{V^2} \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') + \frac{(2\pi)^6}{V^2} \delta_D(\vec{k} + \vec{k}') \delta_D(\vec{k} + \vec{k}') \\ & \left. - \frac{(2\pi)^3}{V} \delta_D(\vec{k}' - \vec{k}') - \frac{(2\pi)^3}{V} \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}) \right] \\ & = P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}') \left( \delta_{\vec{k}, \vec{k}'} + \delta_{\vec{k}, -\vec{k}'} \right) \end{aligned} \quad (32)$$

where every ensemble average yielded one factor of  $V$ . Finally, we get the following expression

$$\langle \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}} \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}',*} \rangle = \frac{P_{\text{null}}^2(\vec{k}) \left( \delta_{\vec{k}, \vec{k}'} + \delta_{\vec{k}, -\vec{k}'} \right)}{4P_\delta(k)^2 \left[ G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \right]^2}, \quad (33)$$

Estimates coming from different  $\vec{k}$ -modes can be combined with inverse-variance weights in the usual way to form a minimum-variance estimator,

$$\hat{B}_0 = \frac{\sum_{\vec{k}} \frac{\hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}}}{\langle \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}} \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k},*} \rangle}}{\sum_{\vec{k}} \frac{1}{\langle \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}} \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k},*} \rangle}}. \quad (34)$$

The final expression for the minimum-variance quadratic estimator computed from temperature measurements at a given redshift is

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{B}_0 &= \sigma_{\hat{B}_0}^2 \sum_{\vec{k}} \frac{\frac{1}{V} T(\vec{k}) T^*(\vec{k}) - P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k})}{P_{\text{null}}^2(\vec{k})} \\ &\quad \times 2P_\delta(k) G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}), \end{aligned} \quad (35)$$

with variance given by

$$\sigma_{\hat{B}_0}^{-2} = \sum_{\vec{k}} \left( \frac{2P_\delta(k) G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}})}{G_0^2(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) P_\delta(k) + P^N(\vec{k})} \right)^2, \quad (36)$$

where the sums are over the whole  $\vec{k}$ -plane, and thus the factor of 2 coming from Kronecker deltas is removed to avoid double-counting modes. This is because  $\hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}} = \hat{B}_0^{-\vec{k}}$ , following from the reality condition on the temperature field,  $T(\vec{k}) = T^*(\vec{k})$ , and the isotropy of space in the null-assumption case,  $G(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) = G(-\hat{\mathbf{k}})$ .

## B. Stochastic field

We now derive a minimum-variance quadratic estimator for Fourier modes of a stochastic magnetic field. Note that in this Section we do *not* assume a particular model for its power spectrum. We use  $B_0$  to denote a component of the magnetic field along one of the three Cartesian-system axes, and  $\vec{r}$  to denote a position vector in physical space. We start with

$$T(\vec{r}) = T_0(\vec{r}) + B_0(\vec{r}) \frac{\partial T_0^S}{\partial B_0}(\vec{r}), \quad (37)$$

where the subscripts and superscripts have the same meaning as before. Note that the distinction from the uniform field case is that the components of the magnetic field are now functions of  $\vec{r}$ . In Fourier space, we have

$$\begin{aligned} T(\vec{k}) &= T_0(\vec{k}) + \int d\vec{r} e^{-i\vec{k} \cdot \vec{r}} B_0(\vec{r}) \frac{\partial T_0^S}{\partial B_0}(\vec{r}) \\ &= T_0(\vec{k}) + \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d\vec{k}_1 B_0(\vec{k}_1) \frac{\partial T_0^S}{\partial B_0}(\vec{k} - \vec{k}_1), \end{aligned} \quad (38)$$

where the last step used the convolution theorem.

In this case, the observable 2-point correlation function in Fourier space becomes

$$\begin{aligned} \langle T(\vec{k}) T^*(\vec{k}') \rangle &= (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) \\ &+ \left\langle T_0^{S,*}(\vec{k}') \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d\vec{k}_1 B_0(\vec{k}_1) \frac{\partial T_0^S}{\partial B_0}(\vec{k} - \vec{k}_1) \right\rangle \\ &+ \left\langle T_0^S(\vec{k}) \frac{1}{(2\pi)^3} \int d\vec{k}_1 B_0^*(\vec{k}_1) \left( \frac{\partial T_0^S}{\partial B_0}(\vec{k}' - \vec{k}_1) \right)^* \right\rangle, \end{aligned} \quad (39)$$

to first order in  $B_0$ . Using Eqs. (22), (23), and (26), we further get

$$\begin{aligned} \langle T(\vec{k}) T^*(\vec{k}') \rangle &= (2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) + B_0(\vec{k} - \vec{k}') \\ &\quad \times \left[ P_\delta(k') G_0^*(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') + P_\delta(k) G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G_0^*}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \right], \end{aligned} \quad (40)$$

where we also used the reality of the  $B_0$  field that warrants  $B_0^*(-\vec{K}) = B_0(\vec{K})$ . Now, using a procedure analogous to that presented in §IV A, we can estimate  $B_0(\vec{K} \equiv \vec{k} - \vec{k}')$  from  $\vec{k}\vec{k}'$  pair of mode measurements in

the temperature field as

$$\hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}\vec{k}'}(\vec{K}) = \frac{T(\vec{k})T^*(\vec{k}')}{P_\delta(k')G_0^*(\hat{\mathbf{k}}')\frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') + P_\delta(k)G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}})\frac{\partial G_0^*}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}})}, \quad (41)$$

where we only focus on terms  $\vec{K} \neq 0$  ( $\vec{k} \neq \vec{k}'$ ). The variance  $\langle \hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}\vec{k}'}(\vec{K}) (\hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}\vec{k}'}(\vec{K}'))^* \rangle$  of this estimator under the null assumption can be evaluated trivially from the above expression. Finally, from Eq. (41), we can derive the full estimator for the mode  $B_0(\vec{K})$ , in the usual way—by combining the individual  $\hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}\vec{k}'}(\vec{K})$  estimates with inverse-variance weights, and normalizing appropriately. However, for the purpose of detectability analysis, we are only interested in the variance of that estimator, or equivalently, the noise power spectrum of  $\hat{B}_0$ , given by

$$(2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{K} - \vec{K}') P_{B_0}^N(\vec{K}) \equiv \langle \hat{B}_0(\vec{K}) \hat{B}_0(\vec{K}')^* \rangle = \left( \sum_{\vec{k}} \frac{\left( P_\delta(k') G_0^*(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') + P_\delta(k) G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G_0^*}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \right)^2}{2V^2 P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}')} \right)^{-1} \quad (42)$$

with the restriction  $\vec{K} = \vec{k} - \vec{k}'$ . Factor of 2 in the denominator corrects for double-counting mode pairs since  $\hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}\vec{k}'}(\vec{K}) = (\hat{B}_0^{\vec{k}'-\vec{k}}(\vec{K}))^*$ , and the sum in the above expression is unconstrained. If we only consider diagonal terms  $\vec{K} = \vec{K}'$ , then the LHS of the above expression becomes equal to  $V P_{B_0}^N(\vec{K})$ . The explicit expression for the noise power spectrum is then

$$P_{B_0}^N(\vec{K}) = \left( \sum_{\vec{k}} \frac{\left( P_\delta(k') G_0^*(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') + P_\delta(k) G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G_0^*}{\partial B_0}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \right)^2}{2V P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}')} \right)^{-1}, \quad (43)$$

Note that only the components of the magnetic field in the plane of the sky have an effect of the observed brightness temperature, and so the above expression represents the noise power spectrum for either one of those two (uncorrelated) components. The noise in the direction along the line of sight can be considered infinite. Finally, note that a similar type of estimator can be written down for the direction of the magnetic field in a given patch of the sky. However, in this work we only focus on the magnitude of the field.

## V. FISHER ANALYSIS

We now use the key results of §IV to evaluate expressions for sensitivity of future observations. We first derive the expression for sensitivity to a field uniform in the entire survey volume. We start with the unsaturated case,

and consider the limit where the field (in the classical picture) produces less than 1 radian of precession at all redshifts of interest, and then move on to the saturated (strong field) limit. Secondly, we derive the expression for sensitivity to detecting a stochastic magnetic field with a scale-independent power spectrum.

### A. Uniform field case

For a measurement of the redshifted 21-cm brightness temperature signal at a given  $z$ , the sensitivity  $\sigma_{\hat{B}_0}$  to recovering a uniform field  $B_0$  in unsaturated limit is given by Eq. (36). The total sensitivity of a tomography survey over a range of redshifts is given by

$$\sigma_{B_0}^{-2} = \int dV(z) \frac{k^2 dk d\phi_k \sin \theta_k d\theta_k}{(2\pi)^3} \times \left( \frac{2P_\delta(k, z) G_0(\theta_k, \phi_k, z) \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_0}(\theta_k, \phi_k, z)}{P^N(k, \theta_k, z) + P_\delta(k, z) G_0^2(\theta_k, \phi_k, z)} \right)^2, \quad (44)$$

where we transitioned from a sum over  $\vec{k}$  modes to an integral, using  $\sum_{\vec{k}} \rightarrow V \int d\vec{k}/(2\pi)^3$ . The integral is performed over the (comoving) volume of the survey of angular size  $\Omega_{\text{survey}}$  (in steradians) at a given redshift,

$$dV = \frac{c}{H(z)} \chi^2(z) \Omega_{\text{survey}} dz, \quad (45)$$

and the integration limits are:  $\phi_k \in [0, 2\pi]$ ;  $\theta_k \in [0, \pi]$ ; and  $k \in [2\pi u_{\min}/(d_A \sin \theta_k), 2\pi u_{\max}/(d_A \sin \theta_k)]$ , where  $u_{\min, \max} = \frac{L_{\min, \max}}{\lambda}$  correspond to the maximum and minimum baseline  $L_{\min}$  and  $L_{\max}$ , respectively. If the survey area is big enough that the flat-sky approximation breaks down,  $\sigma_{B_0}^{-2}$  can be computed on small (approximately flat) patch  $\Omega_{\text{patch}}$ , and corrected in the following way to account for the total survey volume<sup>1</sup>

$$\sigma_{\hat{B}_0, \text{tot}}^{-2} = \frac{\sigma_{\hat{B}_0}^{-2}}{\Omega_{\text{patch}}} \int_0^{\theta_{\text{survey}}} \int_0^{2\pi} \cos^2 \theta d\theta d\phi = \frac{\sigma_{\hat{B}_0}^{-2} \pi}{\Omega_{\text{patch}}} (\theta_{\text{survey}} + \cos \theta_{\text{survey}} \sin \theta_{\text{survey}}). \quad (46)$$

Let us now consider a field that is strong enough to produce precession by more than a radian in a lifetime of the excited state of the 21-cm transition; this is the saturated-signal case. The brightness-temperature 2-point correlation functions still capture the presence of the field in this case (as illustrated in Figure 2), but it loses sensitivity to recovering its exact magnitude. Ability to distinguish saturated case from zero magnetic field becomes a relevant measure of sensitivity in this case.

<sup>1</sup> This accounts for the change in the angle that a uniform magnetic field makes with a line of sight, as the line of sight moves through a large survey area.

To evaluate the sensitivity, we can write the signal power spectrum as a sum of contributions from  $B_0 = 0$  and  $B_0 \rightarrow \infty$  cases,

$$P^S(\vec{k}) = (1 - \xi)P^S(\vec{k}, B = 0) + \xi P^S(\vec{k}, B \rightarrow \infty), \quad (47)$$

and perform the standard Fisher analysis to evaluate sensitivity to recovering parameter  $\xi$ ,

$$\sigma_\xi^{-2} = \int dV(z) \frac{d\vec{k}}{(2\pi)^3} \left( \frac{\frac{\partial P^S(\vec{k})}{\partial \xi}}{P^N(\vec{k}) + P_0^S(\vec{k}, \xi = 0)} \right)^2. \quad (48)$$

In this case, we interpret  $\sigma_\xi$  as a  $1\sigma$  sensitivity to *detecting* presence of a strong magnetic field.

### B. Stochastic field case

Using Eq. (43) and a procedure analogous to the case of a uniform field, we get the following integral expression for the noise power spectrum of a plane-of-the-sky component of the magnetic field

$$\begin{aligned} \left( P_{B_{0,i}}^N(\vec{K}) \right)^{-1} &= \int k^2 dk \sin \theta_k d\theta_k d\phi_k \\ &\times \frac{\left( P_\delta(k') G_0^*(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') \frac{\partial G_0}{\partial B_i}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}') + P_\delta(k) G_0(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \frac{\partial G_0^*}{\partial B_i}(\hat{\mathbf{k}}) \right)^2}{2(2\pi)^3 P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}) P_{\text{null}}(\vec{k}')} \end{aligned} \quad (49)$$

where  $\vec{k}' = \vec{K} - \vec{k}$ .

To compute signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) for measuring the amplitude of an arbitrary stochastic-field power spectrum in a given redshift slice  $z$  we need to perform a sum over all voxels (3d pixels) in the survey volume at that redshift. A general expression for SNR is

$$\text{SNR}^2 = \frac{1}{2} \text{Tr} (N^{-1} S N^{-1} S), \quad (50)$$

where  $S$  and  $N$  are the signal and noise matrices. In our case, these are  $3N_{\text{voxels}} \times 3N_{\text{voxels}}$  matrices (there are  $N_{\text{voxels}}$  voxels in the entire survey, and 3 components of the magnetic field). In the null case, voxels are independent, and so the noise matrix is diagonal, and the signal is captured by the 3d power spectrum of the magnetic field. The voxel-noise variance for measuring a single mode is given by  $P_{B_{0,i}}^N(\vec{K}, z)/V_{\text{voxel}}(z)$ , where  $V_{\text{voxel}}$  is volume of a given voxel. Summing over voxels and components of the magnetic field with inverse-variance weights, for a single redshift slice, we get SNR as

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SNR}^2(z) &= \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i\alpha, j\beta} \frac{S_{i\alpha, j\beta}^2}{P_{B_{0,i}}^N(\vec{K}, z) P_{B_{0,j}}^N(\vec{K}, z)} V_{\text{voxel}}^2 \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \sum_{ij} \int d\vec{r}_\alpha \int d\vec{r}_\beta \frac{\langle B_{0,i}(\vec{r}_\alpha) B_{0,j}(\vec{r}_\beta) \rangle^2}{P_{B_{0,i}}^N(\vec{K}, z) P_{B_{0,j}}^N(\vec{K}, z)}, \end{aligned} \quad (51)$$

where we label voxels with Greek indices, and, as before, retain Roman indices for the field components;  $\vec{r}_{\alpha/\beta}$  represents the spatial position of a given voxel.

To simplify further calculations, we now only focus on a particular class of magnetic-field models, where most of the power is on largest scales (small  $\vec{K}$ ). In this (squeezed) limit,  $\vec{K} \ll \vec{k}$  and thus  $\vec{k} \approx \vec{k}'$ , such that Eq. (49) reduces to the white noise (independent on  $\vec{K}$ ). The model for the power spectrum is defined through

$$(2\pi)^3 \delta_D(\vec{K} - \vec{K}') P_{B_{0,i} B_{0,j}}(\vec{K}) = \langle B_{0,i}^*(\vec{K}) B_{0,j}(\vec{K}') \rangle, \quad (52)$$

which relates to the variance in the transverse component  $P_{B_\perp}(\vec{K})$  as

$$P_{B_{0,i} B_{0,j}}(\vec{K}) = (\delta_{ij} - \hat{K}_i \hat{K}_j) P_{B_\perp}(\vec{K}), \quad (53)$$

where  $\hat{K}_{i/j}$  is a unit vector along the direction of  $i/j$  component. In this discussion, as a concrete model example, we consider a scale-independent (SI) power spectrum,

$$P_{B_\perp}(\vec{K}) = A_0^2 / K^3, \quad (54)$$

where the amplitude  $A_0$  is a free parameter (in units of Gauss). Furthermore, if homogeneity and isotropy are satisfied, the integrand in Eq. (51) only depends on the separation vector  $\vec{s} \equiv \vec{r}_\beta - \vec{r}_\alpha$ . Using this and the squeezed limit assumption gives<sup>2</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SNR}^2(z) &= \frac{1}{2} \sum_{ij} \frac{dV_{\text{patch}}}{(P_{B_{0,i}}^N(z))^2} \int d\vec{s} \langle B_{0,i}(\vec{r}_\beta - \vec{s}) B_{0,j}(\vec{r}_\beta) \rangle^2 \\ &= \frac{1}{2(2\pi)^3} \sum_{ij} \frac{dV_{\text{patch}}}{(P_{B_{0,i}}^N(z))^2} \int d\vec{K} \left( P_{B_{0,i} B_{0,j}}(\vec{K}) \right)^2, \end{aligned} \quad (55)$$

where  $dV_{\text{patch}}$  is the volume of a redshift-slice patch of Eq. (45). Substituting Eq. (54), and integrating over all  $z$ 's available in the survey, total SNR reads

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SNR}^2 &= \frac{A_0^4}{2(2\pi)^3} \int_{z_{\min}}^{z_{\max}} \frac{dV_{\text{patch}}}{(P_{B_{0,i}}^N(z))^2} \int_0^\pi \sin \theta d\theta \\ &\int_0^{2\pi} d\phi \int_{K_{\min}(z, \theta, \phi)}^{K_{\max}(z, \theta, \phi)} \frac{dK}{K^4} \sum_{ij \in \{xx, xy, yx, yy\}} (\delta_{ij} - \hat{K}_i \hat{K}_j)^2, \end{aligned} \quad (56)$$

where  $x$  and  $y$  denote components in the plane of the sky, and

$$\hat{K}_x = \sin \theta \sin \phi, \quad \hat{K}_y = \sin \theta \cos \phi. \quad (57)$$

The sum in the above expression reduces to

$$\sum_{ij \in \{xx, xy, yx, yy\}} (\delta_{ij} - \hat{K}_i \hat{K}_j)^2 = 2 \cos^2 \theta + \sin^4 \theta. \quad (58)$$

<sup>2</sup> Note that in the last step we used  $\int d\vec{s} |f(\vec{s})|^2 = \int \frac{d\vec{K}}{(2\pi)^3} |\tilde{f}(\vec{K})|^2$ , which holds for an arbitrary function  $f$  and its Fourier transform  $\tilde{f}$ .



Substituting this into Eq. (56), and integrating over  $K, \theta, \phi$  gives

$$\text{SNR}^2 = \frac{A_0^4}{10\pi^2} \int_{z_{\min}}^{z_{\max}} \frac{dV_{\text{patch}}}{(P_{B_{0,i}}^N(z))^2} \left( \frac{1}{K_{\min}^3} - \frac{1}{K_{\max}^3} \right). \quad (59)$$

From this expression,  $1\sigma$  sensitivity to measuring  $A_0^2$  is

$$\sigma_{A_0^2} = \left[ \frac{1}{10\pi^2} \int_{z_{\min}}^{z_{\max}} \frac{dV_{\text{patch}}}{(P_{B_{0,i}}^N(z))^2} \left( \frac{1}{K_{\min}^3} - \frac{1}{K_{\max}^3} \right) \right]^{-\frac{1}{2}}. \quad (60)$$

## VI. RESULTS

We now proceed to numerically evaluate the sensitivity of a tomographic 21-cm survey to detecting magnetic fields during the pre-reionization epoch, using the formalism of previous two Sections. For the purposes of deriving numerical results, we only focus on one type of experimental setup—an array of closely-packed dipole antennas, such as the FFTT considered in §III C. The motivation for this choice is the fact that such configuration is known to maximize sensitivity of measurements based on the 2-point statistics [32], such as the one we propose in this work. For the parameters of this survey, we assume that a surface area of  $(\Delta L \text{ km})^2$  is covered in dipole antennas, and that the experiment observes  $\Omega_{\text{survey}} = 1\text{sr}$  of the sky for about 5 years.<sup>3</sup> For the sky temperature that enters the calculation of the noise power spectrum in Eq. (13), we assume a simple model of Galactic foregrounds from [34], where

$$T_{\text{sky}} = 60 \left( \frac{21}{100} (1+z) \right)^{2.55} [\text{K}]. \quad (61)$$

Furthermore, we assume that the redshift range covered by the survey is  $z \in [15, 35]$ . Other ingredients entering the sensitivity calculation are the Lyman- $\alpha$  flux  $J_{\text{Ly}\alpha}(z)$ , and the spin and kinetic temperatures of the IGM; these are obtained using 21CMFAST [35], for standard cosmology, and are shown in Figure 3. We checked that the variation in the x-ray heating rate within a factor of a few from the fiducial model does not make significant changes to the presented results.

Figures 4 and ?? show how the sensitivity changes as a function of the maximum baseline  $\Delta L$  (since different baselines may correspond to different stages of the experiment). Figure 4 shows  $1\sigma$  sensitivity to measuring parameter  $\xi$  of Eq. (47), that distinguishes amongst

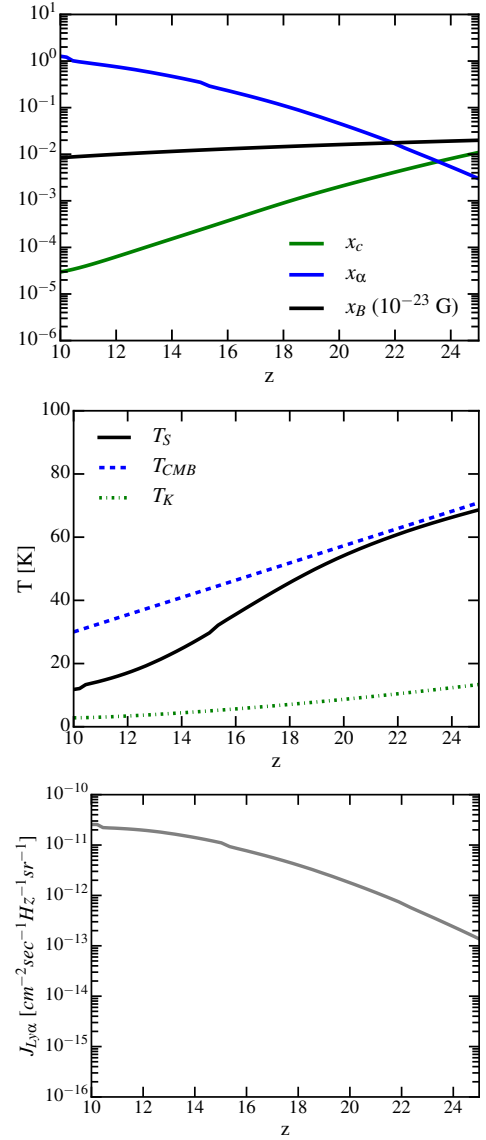


Figure 3. Inputs for sensitivity calculations: Lyman- $\alpha$  flux model, and the relevant spin- and kinetic- temperature models.

the zero magnetic field case and the case where the field is strong enough that the signal saturates (in the sense described in §II). This parameter is by definition bounded between the values of 0 and 1, where 0 represents the case of no magnetic field, and 1 represents the saturated case. From this Figure, we can see that, for example, a little over a square kilometer of coverage area is necessary for a  $1\sigma$  detection of magnetic fields stronger than about  $10^{-21}$  Gauss comoving. While this size of a radio array is still futuristic in terms of the sheer number of antennas (compare to the SKA [27], for example), the number of mode measurements required for this measurement corresponds to the computational demands for the next-generation 21-cm cosmology experiment, and may thus be feasible in the coming couple of decades.

<sup>3</sup> The value used to evaluate Fisher formulas is actually 2 years. When corrected for the effect of Earth's rotation, and the fact that a given sky patch is above the horizon for only a fraction of a day, the effective observation time of 2 years translates to a (factor-of-a-few) longer wall-clock time.

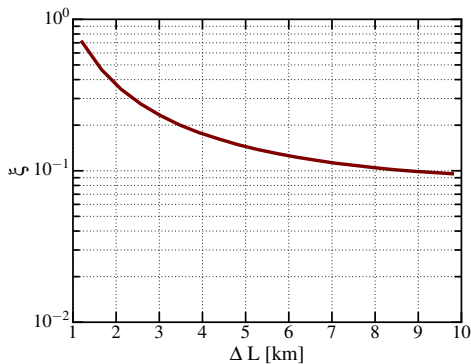


Figure 4. FFTT sensitivity to distinguishing saturated case from no magnetic field (upper panel), as a function of maximum array baseline, assuming a survey size of 1 sr, for survey duration of 2 years.

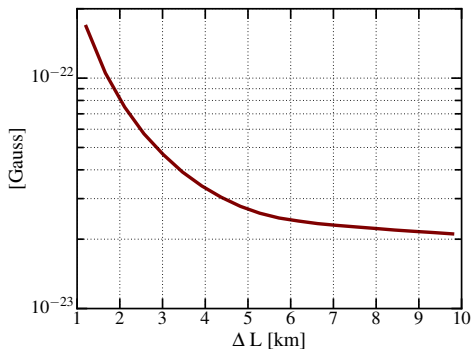


Figure 5. FFTT sensitivity to detecting a uniform and stochastic magnetic field (stochastic field is assumed to have a scale-independent (SI) power spectrum, and shown is the rms per  $\log K$ ,  $A_0/\pi$ ), as a function of maximum array baseline, assuming a survey size of 1 sr, for survey duration of 2 years.

Figure 5 is obtained by evaluating the expressions of Eqs. (44) and (59), and shows sensitivity to measuring the scaled value of the magnetic field in the case of a uniform field (dark red line), and the sensitivity to measuring the amplitude of a particular model for a stochastic field (gray line)—the scale-independent (SI) power spectrum discussed in §V. While the numerical calculation behind this plot assumed that the brightness temperature is a linear function of the field strength, this assumption is not guaranteed to hold—it breaks in the saturation limit, as discussed in §II. In order to understand how the constraints (or, sensitivities) of Figure ?? compare to the saturation “ceiling” at the redshifts we integrate over, we present a rough calculation of the saturation as a function of redshift, and compare it to the values of the  $z$ -dependent integrands of Eq. (44). From this Figure, we can see that only above the coverage of about  $16\text{km}^2$  are we able to actually measure the exact value of the amplitude of the magnetic field power spectrum.

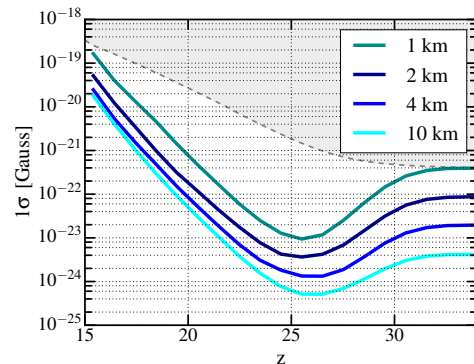


Figure 6. Saturation ceiling is shown as a shaded gray area, and integrand of Eq. (44) (inverse square root of it) is shown as a function of redshift, for several maximum baseline sizes. When the colored curves are below the saturation limit around their minima, the analysis assuming unsaturated regime is valid.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

In Paper I of this series, we proposed a new method to detect extremely weak magnetic fields in the IGM during the Dark Ages, using future 21-cm tomography experiments. In this paper, Paper II, we investigated sensitivity of future radio arrays using this method. We developed minimum-variance-estimator formalism that uses 2-point correlation function of the 21-cm brightness temperature to detect and measure magnetic fields in pre-reionization epoch.

Our results imply that the next-stage array with a little over a square kilometer of area covered in dipole antennas in a tightly-packed configuration, observing redshifts from 15 to 35, can in principle reach the sensitivity to detect magnetic fields on the order of  $10^{-21}$  Gauss comoving. However, disentangling the exact spectral shape of a stochastic field is more challenging, and can only be expected in the futuristic scenarios where arrays grow to a size of tens of square kilometers in coverage area. In this analysis, we took into account the noise arising from the presence of the large Galactic foreground signal, but we ignored more subtle effects such as, for example, frequency dependence of the beams, etc., calculation of which would be necessary to create figures of merit for future experiments.

At the end, we emphasize again that the main limitation to sensitivity of this method to measuring magnetic fields at high redshifts is a mere fact that it is based on a two-scattering process—as soon as quality of the 21-cm statistics reaches the levels necessary to probe second-order processes, the effect we focused on in this series of papers will immediately open up an “*in situ*” way to trace miniscule (and possibly primordial) magnetic fields with unprecedented precision.

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### Appendix A: Visibility-variance derivation

Here we derive the variance of the visibility for an interferometric array of two antennas separated by a baseline  $\vec{b} = (b_x, b_y)$ , each with an effective collecting area  $A_e$ , observing a single element in  $uv$  plane for time duration  $t_1$ , in the total bandwidth  $\Delta\nu = \nu_{\max} - \nu_{\min}$ . This setup is shown in Figure 7. Note that modes with frequencies that differ by less than  $1/t_1$  cannot be distinguished in observation time  $t_1$ , and modes with frequencies in each interval of size  $1/t_1$  are “collapsed” into a discrete mode with  $\nu_n = n/t_1$ , where  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$ . Thus, the number of measured (discrete) frequencies is  $N_\nu = t_1 \Delta\nu$ .

Electric field induced in a single antenna is

$$E(t) = \sum_n^{N_\nu} \tilde{E}(\nu_n) e^{2\pi i \nu_n t}, \quad (\text{A1})$$

while the quantity an interferometer measures is the correlation coefficient between the electric field in one,  $E_i$ , and the electric field in the other antenna,  $E_j$ , as a function of frequency,

$$\rho_{ij}(\nu) \equiv \frac{\langle \tilde{E}_i^*(\nu) \tilde{E}_j(\nu) \rangle}{\sqrt{\langle |\tilde{E}_i(\nu)|^2 \rangle \langle |\tilde{E}_j(\nu)|^2 \rangle}}. \quad (\text{A2})$$

Let us now assume that

$$\langle \tilde{E}_i^*(\nu_n) \tilde{E}_j(\nu_m) \rangle = \sigma(\nu)^2 \delta_{mn}, \quad (\text{A3})$$

In the following, for clarity, we will omit writing the explicit dependence on  $\nu$ . The real (or imaginary) part of  $\rho$  has the following variance

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{var}(Re[\rho_{ij}]) \\ &= \frac{1}{(2\sigma^2)^2} \text{var}(\langle Re[\tilde{E}_i] Re[\tilde{E}_j] + Im[\tilde{E}_i] Im[\tilde{E}_j] \rangle) \\ &= \frac{2\sigma^2\sigma^2}{(2\sigma^2)^2} = \frac{1}{2N_\nu} = \frac{1}{2t_1\Delta\nu}. \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A4})$$

Before continuing, let us take a brief digression to show that the above formula implicitly assumes that the electric fields in the two antennas  $\tilde{E}_i$  and  $\tilde{E}_j$  have a very weak correlation,  $\rho \ll 1$ . Namely, suppose  $x$  and  $y$  are random Gaussian variables with zero mean values, where  $\text{var}(x) \equiv \langle (x - \langle x \rangle)^2 \rangle = \langle x^2 \rangle - \langle x \rangle^2 = \langle x^2 \rangle$ , and similarly

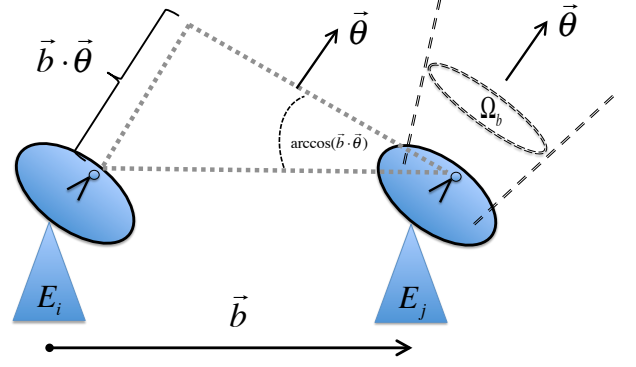


Figure 7. Two-antennae interferometer.

for  $y$ , and their correlation coefficient is  $\rho \equiv \frac{\langle xy \rangle}{\sqrt{\langle x^2 \rangle \langle y^2 \rangle}}$ .

In this case, the following is true

$$\begin{aligned} \text{var}(xy) &= \langle x^2 y^2 \rangle - \langle xy \rangle^2 = \langle x^2 \rangle \langle y^2 \rangle + \langle xy \rangle^2 \\ &= \langle x^2 \rangle \langle y^2 \rangle + \rho^2 \langle x^2 \rangle \langle y^2 \rangle = \text{var}(x) \text{var}(y) (1 + \rho^2), \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A5})$$

so that when  $\rho$  is small  $\text{var}(xy) = \text{var}(x) \text{var}(y)$ , which was assumed in the first equality of Eq. (A4).

Resuming the derivation, if different frequencies are uncorrelated, the result of Eq. (A4) implies

$$\langle |\rho_{ij}(\nu)|^2 \rangle = \frac{1}{t_1 \Delta\nu}. \quad (\text{A6})$$

The final step in this derivation requires the relation between intensity in the sky  $\mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \nu)$  (within the beam of the solid angle  $\Omega_b$ , centered on the direction  $(\theta_x, \theta_y)$ ) and the electric fields measured in the two antennas,

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \tilde{E}_i^*(\nu) \tilde{E}_j(\nu) \rangle &\propto \int_{\Omega_b} d\theta_x d\theta_y \mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \nu) \\ &\times e^{i \frac{2\pi\nu}{c} (b_x \theta_x + b_y \theta_y)} R(\theta_x, \theta_y), \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A7})$$

where  $R(\theta_x, \theta_y)$  is the antenna response function (the shape of the beam in the sky), which we will assume to be unity. Furthermore,  $\frac{2\pi\nu}{c} (b_x \theta_x + b_y \theta_y) \equiv 2\pi(u\theta_x + v\theta_y)$  is the phase delay between two antennae (position in the  $uv$  plane measures the phase lag between the two dishes in wavelengths). The coefficient of proportionality in the above equation is set by various instrumental parameters, and is not relevant for our purposes. From Eq. (A2), it follows

$$\rho_{ij}(\nu) = \frac{\int_{\Omega_b} d\theta_x d\theta_y \mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \nu) e^{2\pi i(u\theta_x + v\theta_y)}}{\int_{\Omega_b} d\theta_x d\theta_y \mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \nu)}, \quad (\text{A8})$$

where the denominator in the above formula approximately integrates to (for a small beam)

$$\int_{\Omega_b} d\theta_x d\theta_y \mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \nu) \approx \Omega_b \mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \nu). \quad (\text{A9})$$

<sup>4</sup> <http://healpix.sf.net>; <https://github.com/healpy/healpy>

We can now use the approximate expression for the resolution of a single dish,

$$\Omega_b = \frac{\lambda^2}{A_e}, \quad (\text{A10})$$

the Rayleigh-Jeans law (or the definition of the brightness temperature),

$$\mathcal{I}(\theta_x, \theta_y, \theta_\nu) = \frac{2k_B T_{\text{sky}}}{\lambda^2}, \quad (\text{A11})$$

and note that the numerator in Eq. (A8) matches the definition of visibility from Eq. (6) to get

$$\rho_{ij}(\nu) = \frac{A_e}{2k_B T_{\text{sky}}} V(u, v, \theta_\nu), \quad (\text{A12})$$

Combining the above expression and Eq. (A6), we get the final result of this derivation,

$$\langle |V(u, v, \theta_\nu)|^2 \rangle = \left( \frac{2k_B T_{\text{sky}}}{A_e \sqrt{t_1 \Delta \nu}} \right)^2 \delta(u - u') \delta(v - v') \delta_{\theta_\nu, \theta_{\nu'}}, \quad (\text{A13})$$

where  $V$  is a complex Gaussian variable, centered at zero, and uncorrelated for different values of its arguments.

It should be noted at the end that we were calculating the contribution to the visibility from the noise only (the system + the foregrounds in the absence of a signal), so we used system temperature for brightness temperature (this could contain the signal from foregrounds and from the instrument). In case we want to repeat the computation in the presence of a signal,  $T_{\text{sky}}$  should instead be the sum of the signal and the noise temperatures.

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