

Deterministic Magnetization Switching via Tunable Noncollinear Spin Configurations in Canted Magnets

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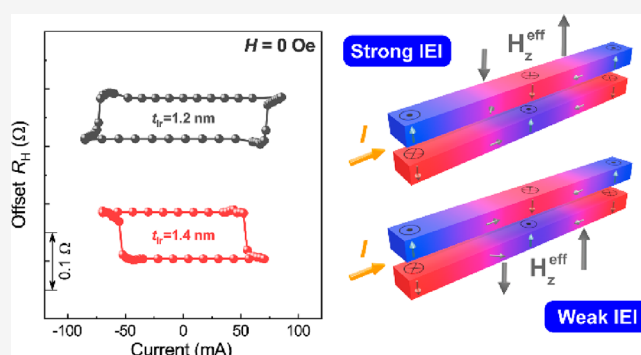


Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Spin orbit torque (SOT) driven magnetization switching has been used widely for encoding consumption-efficient memory and logic. However, symmetry breaking under a magnetic field is required to realize the deterministic switching in synthetic antiferromagnets with perpendicular magnetic anisotropy (PMA), which limits their potential applications. Herein, we report all electric-controlled magnetization switching in the antiferromagnetic Co/Ir/Co trilayers with vertical magnetic imbalance. Besides, the switching polarity could be reversed by optimizing the Ir thickness. By using the polarized neutron reflection (PNR) measurements, the canted noncollinear spin configuration was observed in Co/Ir/Co trilayers, which results from the competition of magnetic inhomogeneity. In addition, the asymmetric domain walls demonstrated by micromagnetic simulations result from introducing imbalance magnetism, leading to the deterministic magnetization switching in Co/Ir/Co trilayers. Our findings highlight a promising route to electric-controlled magnetism via tunable spin configuration, improve our understanding of physical mechanisms, and significantly promote industrial applications in spintronic devices.

KEYWORDS: spin-orbit torque, noncollinear spin configurations, canted magnets, asymmetric domain walls

Spin orbit torque (SOT), due to its advantages of having low energy consumption and being nonvolatile, has emerged as a promising means of spin manipulation and attracted wide interest in information storage and neuro-computing.^{1–10} Generally, the magnetization state can be triggered by the SOT, which mainly includes damping-like torque and field-like torque.^{11,12} However, an in-plane-assisted magnetic field is necessary to realize field-free magnetization switching. So far, several promising approaches, mainly including structural asymmetry,^{13–15} inhomogeneity film,^{16–18} and internal effective field,^{19–21} have been explored to achieve deterministic magnetic switching in heavy metal/ferromagnet bilayers. In addition, deterministic magnetization switching could be achieved in two-dimensional ferromagnets, which broaden the field of spintronics device.^{22–24} Moreover, research on SOT-based spintronics has also been extended to both ferrimagnets (FiMs) and antiferromagnets (AFMs), owing to the advantages of ultrafast domain dynamics and suppression of stray fields.^{25–33} Nevertheless, the difficulty in detecting domain information and magnetoelectric signals remains challenging owing to the fully compensated magnetizations, limiting further development of antiferromagnetic spintronics.^{34–39} As promising candidates, synthetic antiferro-

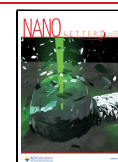


magnets (SAFs) exhibit potential competitiveness, balancing the characteristics of negligible stray fields from AFMs, as well as easy controllability from ferromagnets.^{40,41} For the perpendicular SAFs with collinear spin alignments, deterministic magnetization switching could not be achieved. Currently, field-free magnetization switching could be significantly realized when the in-plane single layer or SAFs structure was introduced to reduce symmetry.^{42–44} Unfortunately, the stray fields in such SAFs, namely T-type or double SAFs, cannot be neglected, making difficult for high-density storage. To overcome the bottleneck, we propose a controllable noncollinear canted spin configuration to realize all-electric-control magnetization switching. Furthermore, the tilting angles should be tuned by the competition with various energy barriers, such as perpendicular magnetic anisotropy (PMA), interlayer

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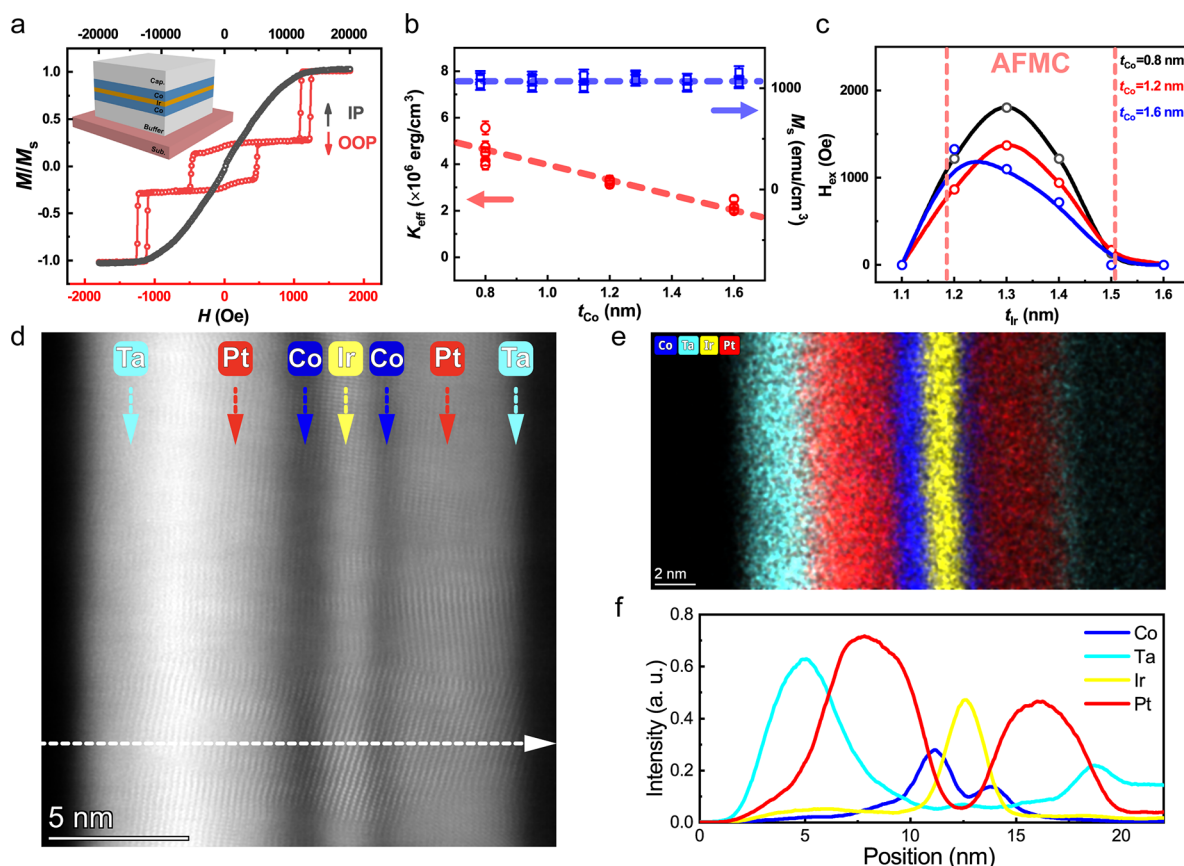


Figure 1. (a) Magnetic hysteresis ($M-H$) loops for Co(0.8)/Ir(1.2)/Co(0.8) (in nm) trilayers under vertical and in-plane magnetic fields. Inset, the schematic setup of the multilayers. (b) The effective magnetic anisotropy (K_{eff}) and saturation magnetization (M_s) as functions of bottom Co layer thickness (t_{Co}) in Co(t_{Co})/Ir/Co(0.8) trilayers (in nm). (c) The exchange coupling field (H_{ex}) as a function of t_{Ir} for the trilayers with various t_{Co} . (d) High-resolution HAADF-STEM image of Co(1.6)/Ir(1.4)/Co(0.8) (in nm). The white dotted line is the line scanning direction of EDS. (e) Ta L_{α} edge, Pt L_{α} edge, Co K_{α} edge, and Ir L_{α} edge EDS mappings. (f) The element scanning along the normal direction of the film.

exchange interaction (IEI), Dzyaloshinskii-Moriya interaction (DMI) and so on. In the study, polarized neutron reflection was used to characterize the noncollinear canted spin texture in out-of-plane magnetized Co/Ir/Co trilayers. Field-free magnetization switching could be successfully achieved by optimizing the canted spin textures. In addition, the noncollinear spin configuration can be effectively tuned by varying the thickness of the Ir spacer, enabling the reversal of the current-driven magnetization switching polarity. Furthermore, micromagnetic simulations show the mixed domain wall between Bloch and Néel type induced by the magnetic inhomogeneity results in the asymmetric domain walls breaking symmetry, leading to deterministic magnetization switching without any assistant fields. This observation represents an effective approach toward the utilization of SAFs as a core stack of SOT-based logic-in-memory.

Co/Ir/Co trilayers is a typical SAFs, in which both the topological magnetism and SOT driven magnetization switching under assistance magnetic fields have been demonstrated,^{45,46} although there is a great gap to achieve all-electric-control magnetism. Ta/Pt/Co/Ir/Co/Pt/Ta was chosen as a reference (denoted as Co/Ir/Co, inset of Figure 1a), and the normalized magnetic hysteresis ($M-H$) loops for Ta(3)/Pt(3)/Co(0.8)/Ir(1.2)/Co(0.8)/Pt(3)/Ta(3) (in nm) can be found in Figure 1a. As expected, good PMA can be observed in the symmetric trilayer, in which the magnetic moments in both top and bottom Co layers exhibit typical antiferromagnetic

coupling (AFMC). Based on the symmetrical Co/Ir/Co structure, the thickness of the bottom Co layer was increased artificially to introduce the vertical magnetic inhomogeneity. The similar IEI state can be also found in the asymmetric samples (Supporting Information (SI), Figure S1 and S2). Figure 1b presents both saturation magnetization (M_s) and effective magnetic anisotropy (K_{eff}) as functions of the bottom Co layer thickness (t_{Co}), respectively. The value of M_s is kept almost constant, and the value of K_{eff} exhibited an obvious decrease with increasing t_{Co} , from 4.56×10^6 to 2.21×10^6 erg/cm³. Generally, the IEI strength, namely exchange coupling field (H_{ex}), can be evaluated by the shift of minor loop from vertical M-H loops. Figure 1c shows H_{ex} as a function of the Ir spacer thickness for the samples with various t_{Co} . The oscillation of H_{ex} can be found for all samples. It indicates the tunability of the IEI between ferromagnetic coupling (FMC) and antiferromagnetic coupling (AFMC), varying the period of $t_{\text{Ir}} = 0.4$ nm. For the samples with various t_{Co} , typical AFMC can be found in the multilayers with t_{Ir} values ranging from 1.2 to 1.4 nm. It should be noted that the maximum H_{ex} value can be tuned by changing the Ir and Co thicknesses. Therefore, magnetic properties in Co/Ir/Co trilayers can be effectively controlled by introducing vertical unbalance magnetism. Furthermore, the structural characterization was performed to assess the multilayers quality. Figure 1d presents a high-resolution, high-angle annular dark field (HAADF) scanning transmission electron microscopy

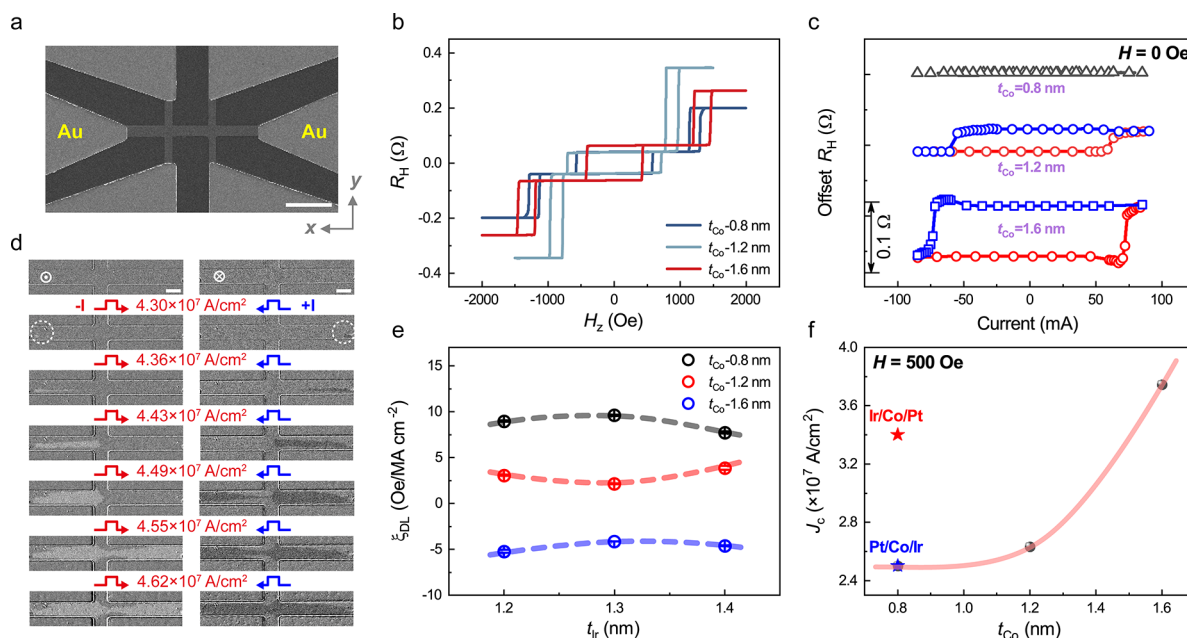


Figure 2. (a) The micrograph of Hall bar device with main channel width of $10 \mu\text{m}$. Scale bar is $40 \mu\text{m}$. (b) Hall loops for the samples $\text{Co}(t_{\text{Co}})/\text{Ir}/\text{Co}(0.8)$ trilayers (in nm), $t_{\text{Co}} = 0.8, 1.2,$ and 1.6 nm. Scale bar is $10 \mu\text{m}$. (c) Current-driven magnetization switching with various t_{Co} in $\text{Co}(t_{\text{Co}})/\text{Ir}/\text{Co}(0.8)$ trilayers (in nm) under zero external fields. (d) The current induce domain motion process in the absence of magnetic fields for $\text{Co}(1.6)/\text{Ir}(1.2)/\text{Co}(0.8)$ trilayers (in nm). The symbols “dot within circle” and “x within circle” correspond to the up-ward and downward magnetization states, respectively. (e) The SOT efficiency (ξ_{DL}) as functions of t_{Ir} for three samples $\text{Co}(0.8)/\text{Ir}/\text{Co}(0.8)$ (black circle), $\text{Co}(1.2)/\text{Ir}/\text{Co}(0.8)$ (red circle), and $\text{Co}(1.6)/\text{Ir}/\text{Co}(0.8)$ (blue circle) (in nm), respectively. (f) Critical current density (J_c) as a function of t_{Co} . The value of J_c for the $\text{Pt}/\text{Co}/\text{Ir}$ (blue star) and $\text{Ir}/\text{Co}/\text{Pt}$ (red star) multilayers are plotted in Figure 2f.

(STEM) image of $\text{Co}(1.6)/\text{Ir}(1.4)/\text{Co}(0.8)$ (in nm). The atomic lattice fringes observed throughout the multilayers indicate the high-quality crystalline nature of the epitaxial multilayered structure. The two dark contrast regions originate from the continuous flat Co layers, whereas the bright contrast region located between the two Co layers is due to the thin Ir spacer. Smooth interfaces, particularly the Co/Ir and Ir/Co interfaces, can be qualitatively observed. The elemental distribution also demonstrated a clear interfacial structure using energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS), with the maps and line scanning model shown in Figure 1e, f. Therefore, the (111) crystallographic texture can be confirmed in the sputtered Co/Ir/Co trilayers, indicating high crystallinity with a certain preferential lattice orientation.

To evaluate the magnetic transport properties, the Co/Ir/Co trilayers was patterned into a standard Hall bar device with a width of $10 \mu\text{m}$ shown in Figure 2a. Figure 2b presents anomalous Hall (AHE) loops for the sample $\text{Co}(t_{\text{Co}})/\text{Ir}(1.2 \text{ nm})/\text{Co}(0.8 \text{ nm})$ with various t_{Co} . Multilevel switching in Hall loops can be observed under a vertical magnetic field (H_z) with increasing t_{Co} , indicating a robust AFMC between two ferromagnetic layers. However, H_{ex} showed a nonmonotonic change, suggesting the competition between various energies. The similar trend occurred in Hall resistance (R_{AHE}) via t_{Co} . Furthermore, we focus on SOT driven magnetization switching in the above samples without assistance magnetic field, as shown in Figure 2c. Surprisingly, SOT driven field-free magnetization switching can be successfully observed in the sample with $t_{\text{Co}} = 1.6$ nm. In constant, no magnetization switching was observed in the symmetric structure $\text{Co}(0.8)/\text{Ir}/\text{Co}(0.8)$ (in nm) under zero fields, although a full switching behavior can be realized under various in-plane magnetic fields (SI, Figure S3a). Moreover, the partial magnetization switching

can be driven without assistance magnetic fields when t_{Co} is increased to 1.2 nm. To further verify the field-free magnetization switching behavior for the imbalanced Co/Ir/Co trilayers, the domain motion process is shown in Figure 2d. In Magneto-optical Kerr effect (MOKE) image, the dark and bright domain regions correspond to the upward and downward magnetization states, respectively. For the upward state (dark region) in the main Hall channel, the critical current density (J_c) of $-4.30 \times 10^7 \text{ A/cm}^2$ was injected, leading to the nucleation of the reversal domain (bright region) at one side of the channel edge, marked by the white circle. With an increase in J_c to $-4.36 \times 10^7 \text{ A/cm}^2$, the reversal domain (bright region) occurred along the channel edge. When the J_c value was increased step by step, the white domain region continuously extended. Then, the reversal domain nearly occupied the main channel with increasing the J_c value to $-4.62 \times 10^7 \text{ A/cm}^2$. For the positive J_c value, a similar behavior can be observed in the main Hall channel. Both the upward and downward domain can transform each other, suggesting the nearly full magnetization switching process. Based on the MOKE results above, field-free magnetization switching in imbalanced Co/Ir/Co trilayers results from the nucleation of a new domain and its following expansion.

The harmonic measurements are performed to quantify the effective torque during the SOT driven magnetization switching process. Generally, the SOT efficiency (ξ_{DL}) is the slope of the $H_{\text{DL}}^{\text{eff}} \sim J$ curve in SI Figure S4, where $H_{\text{DL}}^{\text{eff}}$ and J correspond to the damping-like field and current density, respectively. Figure 2e presents ξ_{DL} as a function of the Ir and Co thickness. The ξ_{DL} value shows a slight change with varying t_{Ir} values for the three series samples, but the sign of ξ_{DL} reverses with increasing t_{Co} . For example, the ξ_{DL} value was

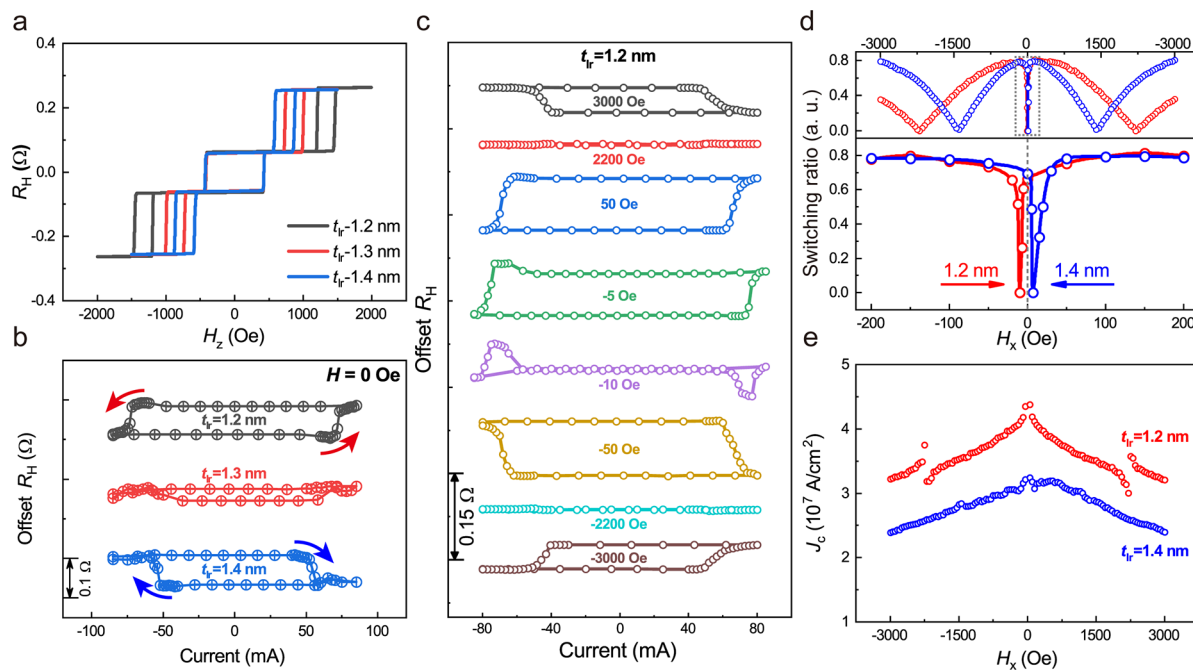


Figure 3. (a) Hall loops with various t_{Ir} in Co(1.6)/Ir(t_{Ir})/Co(0.8) (in nm), where four platforms indicate AFMC in this trilayers. (b) Current-driven magnetization switching (CDMS) with various t_{Ir} in Co(1.6)/Ir(t_{Ir})/Co(0.8) (in nm) under zero external fields. (c) Field dependence of CDMS for the sample of Co(1.6)/Ir(1.2)/Co(0.8) (in nm). (d) Switching ratio as a function of the applied magnetic fields (H_x) (red and blue circles for $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.2$ and 1.4 nm). The bottom panel is an enlarged view of ± 200 Oe from the top one. (e) The current density (J_c) as a function of H_x for Co(1.6)/Ir(t_{Ir})/Co(0.8) (in nm) trilayers with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.2$ and 1.4 nm.

8.96 Oe/(10^6 A cm $^{-2}$) for the symmetric sample Co(0.8)/Ir/Co(0.8) (in nm). Then, the ξ_{DL} value decreased to 3.07 Oe/(10^6 A cm $^{-2}$) in the sample with $t_{\text{Co}} = 1.2$ nm. With further increasing t_{Co} to 1.6 nm, a ξ_{DL} value of -5.23 Oe/(10^6 A cm $^{-2}$) can be observed. The reversal sign of ξ_{DL} suggests the competition between bottom and top spin generators, which is similar to the results in Pt/Co/Pt multilayers.⁴⁷ The SOT efficiency in the single Co layer was evaluated (SI, Figure S5), exhibiting positive and negative ξ_{DL} values for the Pt/Co/Ir and Ir/Co/Pt multilayers, respectively. It indicates the spin torque is dominated by the bottom Pt layer for Co(t_{Co})/Ir/Co(0.8) trilayers with $t_{\text{Co}} = 0.8$ nm and by the top Pt layer for the one with $t_{\text{Co}} = 1.6$ nm. Figure 2f presents J_c as a function of t_{Co} in the samples Co(t_{Co})/Ir/Co(0.8) (in nm) under an external magnetic field of 500 Oe. The J_c value increased with increasing t_{Co} in Co/Ir/Co trilayers, where J_c in Co(0.8)/Ir/Co(0.8) is 2.5×10^7 A/cm 2 . Furthermore, the J_c value in the Pt/Co/Ir sample is nearly equivalent to that in the symmetric sample, which is lower than that in Ir/Co/Pt multilayers shown in Figure 2f, indicating the small SOT efficiency for the top Pt layer.

In addition, we further investigate the effect of the Ir spacer in Co/Ir/Co trilayers on deterministic magnetization switching. Figure 3a presents the Hall loops of samples with a structure of Co(1.6)/Ir(t_{Ir})/Co(0.8) (in nm). Although H_{ex} decreased significantly with increasing t_{Ir} , the AFMC was always kept in the Co/Ir/Co trilayers. Figure 3b shows the deterministic magnetization switching loops in the Co/Ir/Co trilayers with various t_{Ir} . Field-free magnetization switching can be realized successfully in the samples with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.2$ and 1.4 nm. In contrast, nearly zero deterministic switching was observed in the sample with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.3$ nm. Remarkably, the field-free switching loop was counterclockwise for the sample with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.2$ nm and clockwise for the one with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.4$ nm, clearly

indicating the reversal of the magnetization switching chirality. Furthermore, switching loops with varying magnetic fields are presented in Figure 3c. A hump occurred under high current density for the partial switching, mainly due to the renucleation and annihilation of magnetic domains, consistent with the previous studies.¹⁷ For the sample with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.2$ nm, the chirality of switching is identical, clockwise for $H_x = +3000$ Oe and counterclockwise for $H_x = -3000$ Oe. Note that the chirality reverses with a further decrease in H_x . For example, the switching is counterclockwise for $H_x = +50$ Oe and clockwise for $H_x = -50$ Oe. More importantly, there is a reversal of the switching chirality with a lower $H_x = -10$ Oe. The same trend was observed in the sample with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.4$ nm (SI, Figure S3c). The reversal of switching polarity can not be found in symmetric Co(0.8)/Ir/Co(0.8) trilayers. The switching ratio (η) is defined as $\eta = \Delta R_{\text{SW}} / \Delta R_{\text{AHE}}$, where ΔR_{SW} is the switching resistance and ΔR_{AHE} is the Hall resistance at zero fields. Figure 3d shows a nonlinear change in the $\eta - H_x$ curve, suggesting a strong η dependence of H_x . For example, the η value under high H_x (± 1300 Oe) was found to be nearly zero for the sample with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.4$ nm. A similar case occurred for $H_x = \pm 2200$ Oe for the sample with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.2$ nm. Interestingly, the η value decreased unexpectedly to zero under very low $H_x = -10$ and 7 Oe for the sample with $t_{\text{Ir}} = 1.2$ and 1.4 nm, respectively. Figure 3e shows the current density (J_c) as a function of H_x . A J_c value of 3.1×10^7 A/cm 2 for field-free switching was achieved in the Co/Ir(1.4 nm)/Co trilayer. A jump of J_c observed at ± 2300 Oe should be attributed to asymmetric switching induced by the edge domain walls.^{48,49} Different from SOT driven magnetization switching in the double or T-type SAFs,^{42–44} field-free magnetization switching in our trilayers exhibits robust chirality under applying H_x histories (SI, Figure S6b, c).

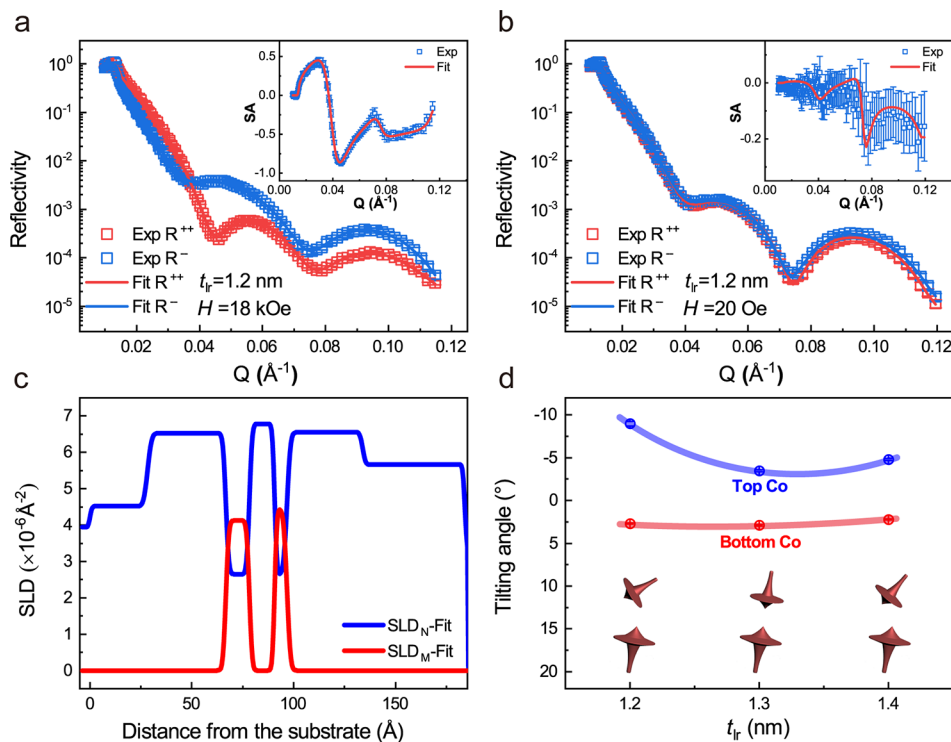


Figure 4. PNR spectra showing R^{++} (red squares) and R^{-} (blue squares) as a function of Q measured with in-plane magnetic fields of (a) 18 kOe and (b) 20 Oe for Co(1.6)/Ir(1.2)/Co(0.8) (in nm). Inset: the related spin asymmetry (SA). (c) The fitted nuclear (blue) and magnetic (red) scattering length density (SLD) profiles. (d) Tilting angle between Co magnetic moments (blue and red circles represent the top and bottom Co layers, respectively) and the normal direction of the films in Co/Ir/Co trilayers obtained from the PNR results.

Polarized neutron reflectometry (PNR) measurements were performed to verify the depth distribution of the magnetic structure. The experimental details can be found in the SI, [Experimental Section](#) and [Figure S7](#). Generally, PNR is highly sensitive to the in-plane magnetic moment.^{50–52} The tilting angles of the magnetizations can be quantitatively calibrated to confirm the spin orientation. First, an in-plane magnetic field as high as 18 kOe was applied to ensure that all of the magnetic moments lie in the film plane. The momentum-transfer (Q)-reflectivity (R^{++} or R^{-}) curves depicted in [Figure 4a](#) are strongly related to the magnetic scattering of neutrons, in which a significant difference result from spin-up or spin-down. The reflectivity curves (R^{++} or R^{-}) almost completely overlap depicted in [Figure 4b](#), when a very low magnetic field (20 Oe) was applied because the ground state in our multilayers tended to be out-of-plane owing to the large PMA. According to the PNR result under external magnetic fields of 18 kOe, the fitted depth-resolved structural and magnetic scattering length density (SLD_N and SLD_M) are presented in [Figure 4c](#). The multilayered structure in Co(1.6)/Ir/Co(0.8) (in nm) was confirmed by SLD results, in agreement with the STEM and EDS results shown in [Figure 1](#). Furthermore, the insets in [Figure 4a](#) and [b](#) show the spin asymmetry (SA) as a function of Q , where the SA, defined as $(R^{++} - R^{-})/(R^{++} + R^{-})$, is sensitive to in-plane magnetization (components with M_{\parallel}/Q). The weak nonzero SA indicates a small in-plane component of magnetization, confirming the canted magnetic moments for the ground state in our trilayers. [Table 1](#) lists the in-plane components of magnetization (M_{\parallel}) under various magnetic fields, where the tilting angle of the coupled magnetic moments can be exactly determined. According to the M_{\parallel} values at various H , the tilting angles were calculated to be

Table 1. In-Plane Component of Magnetizations for Co/Ir/Co Trilayers under Various Magnetic Fields

		Co(1.6)/ Ir(1.2)/ Co(0.8)	Co(1.6)/ Ir(1.3)/ Co(0.8)	Co(1.6)/ Ir(1.4)/ Co(0.8)	Co(0.8)/ Ir(1.2)/ Co(0.8)
18 kOe	Top Co	$1.9 \mu_B$	$1.9 \mu_B$	$1.9 \mu_B$	$1.7 \mu_B$
	Bottom Co	$1.63 \mu_B$	$1.85 \mu_B$	$1.8 \mu_B$	$1.6 \mu_B$
20 Oe	Top Co	$-0.297 \mu_B$	$-0.116 \mu_B$	$-0.16 \mu_B$	$-0.03 \mu_B$
	Bottom Co	$0.084 \mu_B$	$0.0935 \mu_B$	$0.07 \mu_B$	$0.04 \mu_B$

-9.0° and 2.7° for the top and bottom Co layers in Co(1.6)/Ir(1.2)/Co(0.8), respectively. The similar results can be found in Co(1.6)/Ir(t_{Ir})/Co(0.8) with various t_{Ir} (SI, [Figure S8a, b](#)). There is no doubt that the noncollinear spin texture in the ground state was confirmed in our Co/Ir/Co trilayers. The tilting angles as functions of t_{Ir} are summarized in [Figure 4d](#). For the trilayers with AFMC, the tilting angle of the top Co layer exhibited a significant change, whereas that of the bottom Co layer remained nearly constant. More interestingly, the spin configurations transformed from noncollinear to collinear and back to noncollinear with t_{Ir} increasing from 1.2 to 1.4 nm. Note that the competition of magnetic anisotropy and interlayer exchange interaction results in the canted noncollinear spin configuration tunability. For the symmetric Co/Ir/Co trilayer, a collinear perpendicular spin configuration can be observed (SI, [Figure S8c](#)).

In conventional perpendicular SAFs, SOT driven magnetization switching can be realized under an in-plane magnetic field, which effectively breaks the chirality of domain walls. Generally, the configuration of domain wall in typical SAFs is affected by the competition of various energies, mainly

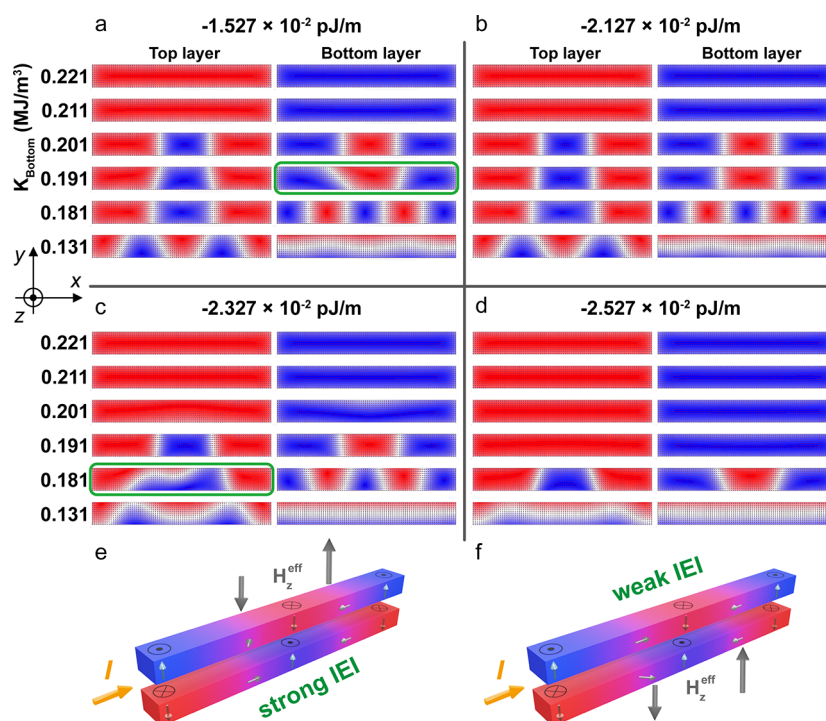


Figure 5. Micromagnetic simulation of domain wall for the trilayers with various A_{inter} and K_{bottom} . The blue and red regions represented spin point-out and point-in vertical to the plane, respectively. Domain configuration for the trilayers with various K_{bottom} at (a) $A_{\text{inter}} = -1.527 \times 10^{-2}$ pJ/m, (b) $A_{\text{inter}} = -2.127 \times 10^{-2}$ pJ/m, (c) $A_{\text{inter}} = -2.327 \times 10^{-2}$ pJ/m, (d) $A_{\text{inter}} = -2.527 \times 10^{-2}$ pJ/m, respectively. The schematic of domain walls configuration in SAFs model at (e) strong and (f) weak IEL, respectively.

including DMI, magnetic anisotropy, IEL and so on. Especially, the reduced DMI induced by different interfacial structure can result in the change of domain walls, leading to deterministic switching.¹⁴ Here, the DMI of Co/Ir/Co was evaluated utilizing a magnetic droplet model.⁵³ H_{DMI} remains a constant, and its impact on asymmetric domain walls can be neglected (SI, Figure S9). Furthermore, the effect of both IEL and magnetic anisotropy on the domain wall should be paid attention, thus micromagnetic simulation was performed to deeply study the mechanism of field-free SOT driven magnetization switching. A model was proposed in which the initial state of domain wall was relaxed based on the ideal stage with both Bloch and Néel type domain walls (SI, Figure S10). In this model, the IEL strength (A_{inter}) is set from -1.327×10^{-2} to -2.527×10^{-2} pJ/m, and the anisotropy constant of the bottom Co layer (K_{bottom}) is changed from 0.131 to 0.221 MJ/m³. Figure 5 display the typical spin configurations under various A_{inter} and K_{bottom} . For Co/Ir/Co trilayers with various A_{inter} , only a single domain can be observed when $K_{\text{bottom}} = K_{\text{top}} = 0.221$ MJ/m³. With further decreasing K_{bottom} value, multiple-domain occurred. For the trilayers with $A_{\text{inter}} = -1.527 \times 10^{-2}$ pJ/m shown in Figure 5a, the typical Néel domain walls can be found when $K_{\text{bottom}} = 0.201$ MJ/m³. Obviously, the mixed domain wall (Bloch-Néel type) in the bottom Co layer occurs with decreasing K_{bottom} to 0.191 MJ/m³, leading to the asymmetric domain walls in SAFs. The similar trend can be found in the trilayer with higher A_{inter} (-2.327×10^{-2} pJ/m) and lower K_{bottom} (0.181 MJ/m³) shown in Figure 5c. However, the asymmetric domain wall cannot be observed for the system with $A_{\text{inter}} = -2.127 \times 10^{-2}$ pJ/m (Figure 5b) and -2.527×10^{-2} pJ/m (Figure 5d). More details on the micromagnetic simulation results are shown in SI Figure S11. The asymmetric domain walls result in the net rate

of domain wall expansion, which favors the reversal of the domain and leads to deterministic magnetization switching. The schematic of domain walls with various IEL is shown in Figure 5e, f based on the results of micromagnetic simulation above. Note that the asymmetric domain walls only exist in the bottom Co layer under weak IEL, and in the top Co layer under relatively strong IEL. In addition, the canted magnetization demonstrated by PNR measurements shows a strong dependence of IEL by varying the Ir spacer thickness, similar to the results of asymmetric domain walls. When the current was injected into the channel, the same direction of the total effective fields (H_z^{eff}) can be found in the layer with asymmetric domain walls. Owing to the relative orientation between the magnetization and H_z^{eff} in the layer with asymmetric domain walls, the switching polarity reverses. Therefore, the asymmetry domain wall configuration in such noncollinear canted magnets should be the main reason for all-electric-control magnetization switching.

In summary, a noncollinear canted magnetic configuration was confirmed in Co/Ir/Co trilayers with vertical magnetization gradient. Utilizing imbalance magnetism, all-electric-control magnetization switching can be successfully realized with the reversal of the switching chirality. Furthermore, the mixed chiral domain between the Néel and Bloch type originating from magnetic inhomogeneity should be the main reason for tunable SOT driven magnetization switching. Our findings in simple trilayers provide an effective pathway for the utilization of SAFs in designing low-consumption logic-in-memory.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

SI Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.nanolett.3c01192>.

Magnetic properties, SOT driven magnetization switching behavior, PNR measurement, characteristic of DMI, and micromagnetic simulations for Co/Ir/Co trilayers (PDF)

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Notes

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