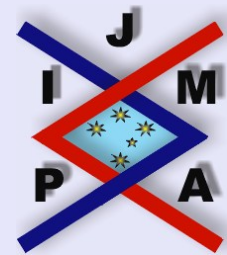


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[Abstract](#)

[Contents](#)

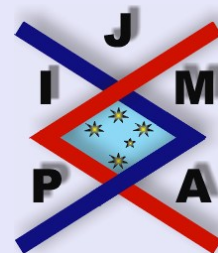


[Home Page](#)

[Go Back](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)



## Abstract

Let  $H$  be a partitioned tridiagonal Hermitian matrix. We characterized the possible inertias of  $H$  by a system of linear inequalities involving the orders of the blocks, the inertia of the diagonal blocks and the ranks the lower and upper subdiagonal blocks. From the main result can be derived some propositions on inertia sets of some symmetric sign pattern matrices.

*2000 Mathematics Subject Classification:* 15A18, 15A42, 15A57

*Key words:* Tridiagonal Block Matrices, Hermitian Matrices, Inertia, Patterned Matrix

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## Contents

1	Preliminaries .....	3
2	Inertia of a Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrix .....	8
3	An Application to Symmetric Sign Pattern Matrices .....	15
	References	

---

### The Inertia of Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

---

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 2 of 21

# 1. Preliminaries

Define the *inertia* of an  $n \times n$  Hermitian matrix  $H$  as the triple  $\text{In}(H) = (\pi, \nu, \delta)$ , where  $\pi, \nu$  and  $\delta = n - \pi - \nu$  are respectively the number of positive, negative, and zero eigenvalues. When  $n$  is given, we can specify  $\text{In}(H)$ , by giving just  $\pi$  and  $\nu$ , as  $(\pi, \nu, *)$ .

In the last decades the characterization of the inertias of Hermitian matrices with prescribed  $2 \times 2$  and  $3 \times 3$  block decompositions has been extensively investigated. In the first case, after the papers [18] and [2] in 1981, Cain and Marques de Sá established the following result.

**Theorem 1.1 ([3]).** *Let us consider nonnegative integers  $n_i, \pi_i, \nu_i$  such that  $\pi_i + \nu_i \leq n_i$ , for  $i = 1, 2$ , and let  $0 \leq r \leq R \leq \min\{n_1, n_2\}$ . Then the following conditions are equivalent:*

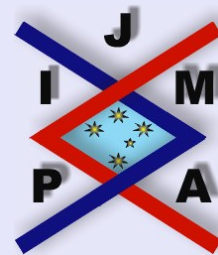
(I) *For  $i = 1, 2$ , there exist  $n_i \times n_i$  Hermitian matrices  $H_i$  and an  $n_1 \times n_2$  matrix  $X$  such that  $\text{In}(H_i) = (\pi_i, \nu_i, *)$ ,  $r \leq \text{rank} X \leq R$  and*

$$(1.1) \quad H = \begin{bmatrix} H_1 & X \\ X^* & H_2 \end{bmatrix}$$

*has inertia  $(\pi, \nu, *)$ .*

(II) *Let  $k \in \{1, 2\}$ . Let  $W_k$  be any fixed Hermitian matrix of order  $n_k$  and inertia  $(\pi_k, \nu_k, *)$ . (I) holds with  $H_k = W_{kk}$ .*

(III) *Let  $W$  be any fixed  $n_1 \times n_2$  matrix with  $r \leq \text{rank} W \leq R$ . (I) holds with  $X = W$ .*



The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 3 of 21

(IV) For  $k = 1, 2$ , let  $W_{kk}$  be any fixed  $n_k \times n_k$  Hermitian matrix with inertia  $(\pi_k, \nu_k, *)$ . (I) holds with  $H_1 = W_{11}$  and  $H_2 = W_{22}$ .

(V) The following inequalities hold:

$$\pi \geq \max \{ \pi_1, \pi_2, r - \nu_1, r - \nu_2, \pi_1 + \pi_2 - R \},$$

$$\nu \geq \max \{ \nu_1, \nu_2, r - \pi_1, r - \pi_2, \nu_1 + \nu_2 - R \},$$

$$\pi \leq \min \{ n_1 + \pi_2, \pi_1 + n_2, \pi_1 + \pi_2 + R \},$$

$$\nu \leq \min \{ n_1 + \nu_2, \nu_1 + n_2, \nu_1 + \nu_2 + R \},$$

$$\pi - \nu \leq \pi_1 + \pi_2,$$

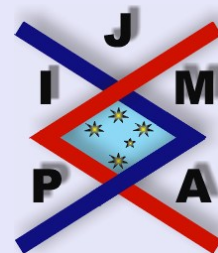
$$\nu - \pi \leq \nu_1 + \nu_2,$$

$$\pi + \nu \geq \pi_1 + \nu_1 + \pi_2 + \nu_2 - R,$$

$$\pi + \nu \leq \min \{ n_1 + n_2, \pi_1 + \nu_1 + n_2 + R, n_1 + \pi_2 + \nu_2 + R \}.$$

In this important theorem we can see how much influence the pair  $H_1, H_2$  of complementary submatrices and the off-diagonal block  $X$  have on the inertia of  $H$ . In particular, if  $H_1 = H_2 = 0$  in (1.1), then the inertias of  $H$  are characterized by the set  $\{(k, k, n - 2k) \mid k = \text{rank} X\}$ .

Haynsworth, [15], established several links connecting the inertia triple of  $H$  with the inertia triples of certain principal submatrices of  $H$ . In 1992, Cain and Marques de Sá ([3]) extended the methods given by Haynsworth and Ostrowski in [16], for estimating and computing the inertia of certain skew-triangular block matrices. Later this result was improved in [11], which can have the following block tridiagonal version.



The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 4 of 21

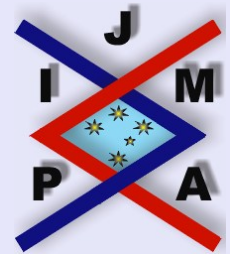
**Theorem 1.2.** Let us consider nonnegative integers  $n_i, \pi_i, \nu_i$  such that  $\pi_i + \nu_i \leq n_i$ , for  $i = 1, 2, 3$ , and let  $0 \leq r_{i,i+1} \leq R_{i,i+1} \leq \min \{n_i, n_{i+1}\}$ , for  $i = 1, 2$ . Then the following conditions are equivalent:

(I) For  $i = 1, 2, 3$ , and  $j = 1, 2$ , there exist  $n_i \times n_i$  Hermitian matrices  $H_i$  and  $n_j \times n_{j+1}$  matrices  $X_{j,j+1}$  such that  $\text{In}(H_i) = (\pi_i, \nu_i, *)$ ,  $r_{j,j+1} \leq \text{rank} X_{j,j+1} \leq R_{j,j+1}$  and

$$H = \begin{bmatrix} H_1 & X_{12} & 0 \\ X_{12}^* & H_2 & X_{23} \\ 0 & X_{23}^* & H_3 \end{bmatrix}$$

has inertia  $(\pi, \nu, *)$ .

- (II) Let  $k \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ . Let  $W_{kk}$  be any fixed  $n_k \times n_k$  Hermitian matrix with inertia  $(\pi_k, \nu_k, *)$ . (I) holds with  $H_k = W_{kk}$ .
- (III) Let  $k \in \{1, 2\}$ . Let  $W_{k,k+1}$  be any fixed  $n_k \times n_{k+1}$  matrix with  $r_{k,k+1} \leq \text{rank} W_{k,k+1} \leq R_{k,k+1}$ . (I) holds with  $X_{k,k+1} = W_{k,k+1}$ .
- (IV) For  $k = 1, 2, 3$  let  $W_{kk}$  be any fixed  $n_k \times n_k$  Hermitian matrix with inertia  $(\pi_k, \nu_k, *)$ . (I) holds with  $H_1 = W_{11}$ ,  $H_2 = W_{22}$  and  $H_3 = W_{33}$ .
- (V) Let  $(i, j, k) = (1, 2, 3)$  or  $(2, 3, 1)$ . Let  $W_{kk}$  be any fixed  $n_k \times n_k$  Hermitian matrix with inertia  $(\pi_k, \nu_k, *)$  and let  $W_{ij}$  be any fixed  $n_i \times n_j$  matrix with  $r_{ij} \leq \text{rank} W_{ij} \leq R_{ij}$ . (I) holds with  $H_k = W_{kk}$  and  $X_{ij} = W_{ij}$ .
- (VI) The following inequalities hold:



## The Inertia of Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 5 of 21

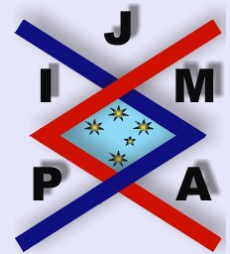
$$\pi \geq \max \{ \pi_2, r_{12} - \nu_2, r_{23} - \nu_2, \\ \pi_1 + r_{23} - \nu_2 - R_{12}, \pi_1 + r_{23} - \nu_3, \pi_3 + r_{12} - \nu_1, \\ \pi_3 + r_{12} - \nu_2 - R_{23}, \pi_1 + \pi_2 - R_{12}, \pi_1 + \pi_3, \\ \pi_2 + \pi_3 - R_{23}, \pi_1 + \pi_2 + \pi_3 - R_{12} - R_{23} \}$$

$$\nu \geq \max \{ \nu_2, r_{12} - \pi_2, r_{23} - \pi_2, \\ \nu_1 + r_{23} - \pi_2 - R_{12}, \nu_1 + r_{23} - \pi_3, \\ \nu_3 + r_{12} - \pi_1, \nu_3 + r_{12} - \pi_2 - R_{23}, \\ \nu_1 + \nu_2 - R_{12}, \nu_1 + \nu_3, \nu_2 + \nu_3 - R_{23}, \\ \nu_1 + \nu_2 + \nu_3 - R_{12} - R_{23} \} ,$$

$$\pi \leq \min \{ n_1 + \pi_2 + n_3, \pi_1 + \pi_2 + \pi_3 + R_{12} + R_{23}, \\ \pi_1 + \pi_2 + n_3 + R_{12}, \pi_1 + n_2 + \pi_3, n_1 + \pi_2 + \pi_3 + R_{23} \} ,$$

$$\nu \leq \min \{ n_1 + \nu_2 + n_3, \nu_1 + \nu_2 + \nu_3 + R_{12} + R_{23}, \\ \nu_1 + \nu_2 + n_3 + R_{12}, \nu_1 + n_2 + \nu_3, n_1 + \nu_2 + \nu_3 + R_{23} \} ,$$

$$\pi + \nu \geq \max \{ \pi_1 + \nu_1 + \pi_2 + \nu_2 - R_{12}, \pi_2 + \nu_2 + \pi_3 + \nu_3 - R_{23}, \\ \pi_1 + \nu_1 + \pi_2 + \nu_2 + \pi_3 + \nu_3 - R_{12} - R_{23}, \\ \pi_1 + \nu_1 + 2r_{23} - \pi_2 - \nu_2 - R_{12}, \\ \pi_3 + \nu_3 + 2r_{12} - \pi_2 - \nu_2 - R_{23} \} ,$$




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**The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices**

C.M. da Fonseca

---

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

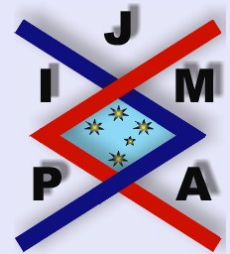
Quit

Page 6 of 21

$$\begin{aligned} \pi + \nu \leq \min \{ & n_1 + n_2 + n_3, \pi_1 + \nu_1 + n_2 + n_3 + R_{12}, \\ & n_1 + \pi_2 + \nu_2 + n_3 + R_{12} + R_{23}, \\ & n_1 + n_2 + \pi_3 + \nu_3 + R_{23}, \\ & \pi_1 + \nu_1 + \pi_2 + \nu_2 + n_3 + 2R_{12} + R_{23}, \\ & \pi_1 + \nu_1 + n_2 + \pi_3 + \nu_3 + R_{12} + R_{23}, \\ & n_1 + \pi_2 + \nu_2 + \pi_3 + \nu_3 + R_{12} + 2R_{23} \} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \pi - \nu \leq \min \{ & \pi_1 + \pi_2 + \pi_3, \\ & \pi_1 + \pi_2 + \pi_3 - \nu_1 + R_{12}, \pi_1 + \pi_2 + \pi_3 - \nu_3 + R_{23} \} , \\ \nu - \pi \leq \min \{ & \nu_1 + \nu_2 + \nu_3, \\ & \nu_1 + \nu_2 + \nu_3 - \pi_1 + R_{12}, \nu_1 + \nu_2 + \nu_3 - \pi_3 + R_{23} \} . \end{aligned}$$

Recently, Cohen and Dancis [5, 6, 7, 8] studied the classification of the ranks and inertias of Hermitian completion for some partially specified block band Hermitian matrix, also known as a *bordered matrix*, in terms of some linear inequalities involving inertias and ranks of specified submatrices. Several consequences have been also considered.




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**The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices**

C.M. da Fonseca

---

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 7 of 21

## 2. Inertia of a Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrix

With a routine induction argument, based on the partitions developed in the proofs of the Theorem 2.1 of [4] or Theorem 3.1 of [11], after an analogous elimination process of redundant inequalities is possible to generalize the Theorem 1.2 to any tridiagonal block decomposition. Clearly Theorem 1.2 gives  $n = 3$ . (The case  $n = 2$  is given by the Theorem 1.1.)

Let us consider the set  $\pi_* = \{\pi_i, r_{i,i+1} - \nu_i, r_{i-1,i} - \nu_i \mid i = 1, \dots, p\}$  and, by  $\pi\nu$ -duality,  $\nu_* = \{\nu_i, r_{i,i+1} - \pi_i, r_{i-1,i} - \pi_i \mid i = 1, \dots, p\}$ . Denote by  $I^C$  the complementary of  $I$  and by  $I_{nc}$  (or  $J_{nc}$ ) a subset of  $\{1, \dots, p\}$  of non-consecutive elements.

**Theorem 2.1.** *Let us assume that*

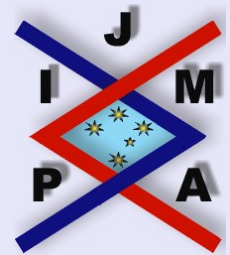
$$n_i \geq 0, \pi_i \geq 0, \nu_i \geq 0, \pi_i + \nu_i \leq n_i, \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, p,$$

and

$$0 \leq r_{i,i+1} \leq R_{i,i+1} \leq \min \{n_i, n_{i+1}\}, \quad \text{for } i = 1, \dots, p-1.$$

Then the following conditions are equivalent:

- (I) For  $i \in \{1, \dots, p\}$ , and  $j \in \{1, \dots, p-1\}$ , there exist  $n_i \times n_i$  Hermitian matrices  $H_i$  and  $n_j \times n_{j+1}$  matrices  $X_{j,j+1}$  such that  $\text{In}(H_i) = (\pi_i, \nu_i, *)$ ,



The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



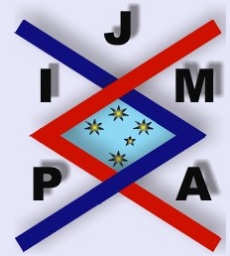
Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 8 of 21





The Inertia of Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 9 of 21

$$r_{j,j+1} \leq \text{rank} X_{j,j+1} \leq R_{j,j+1} \text{ and}$$

$$(2.1) \quad T_p = \begin{bmatrix} H_1 & X_{12} & & & & \\ X_{12}^* & H_2 & X_{23} & & & \\ & X_{23}^* & \ddots & \ddots & & \\ & & \ddots & \ddots & X_{p-1,p} & \\ & & & X_{p-1,p}^* & H_p & \end{bmatrix}.$$

has inertia  $(\pi, \nu, *)$ .

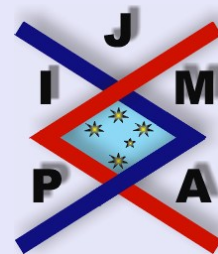
(II) Let  $I$  be any subset of  $\{1, \dots, p\}$  and  $J$  be any subset of non-consecutive elements of  $\{1, \dots, p-1\}$ , such that  $j, j+1 \notin I$ , for any  $j \in J$ . Let  $W_{kk}$  be any fixed  $n_k \times n_k$  Hermitian matrix with inertia  $(\pi_k, \nu_k, *)$ , for  $k \in I$ , and let  $W_{j,j+1}$  be any fixed  $n_j \times n_{j+1}$  matrix with  $r_{j,j+1} \leq \text{rank} W_{j,j+1} \leq R_{j,j+1}$ , for  $j \in J$ . (I) holds with  $H_k = W_{kk}$  and  $X_{j,j+1} = W_{j,j+1}$ .

(III) The following inequalities hold:

$$(2.2) \quad \pi \geq \max \left\{ \sum_I \pi_* - \sum_{I \times I} R_{ij} \mid I \subset \{1, \dots, p\} \right\},$$

$$(2.3) \quad \nu \geq \max \left\{ \sum_I \nu_* - \sum_{I \times I} R_{ij} \mid I \subset \{1, \dots, p\} \right\},$$

$$(2.4) \quad \pi \leq \min \left\{ \sum_{I_{nc}} n_i + \sum_{I_{nc}^C} \pi_i + \sum_{I_{nc}^C \times I_{nc}^C} R_{ij} \mid I_{nc} \subset \{1, \dots, p\} \right\},$$



Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 10 of 21

$$(2.5) \quad \nu \leq \min \left\{ \sum_{I_{nc}} n_i + \sum_{I_{nc}^C} \nu_i + \sum_{I_{nc}^C \times I_{nc}^C} R_{ij} \mid I_{nc} \subset \{1, \dots, p\} \right\},$$

$$(2.6) \quad \pi + \nu \geq \max \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^{p-1} r_{i,i+1}, \left\{ \sum_I (\pi + \nu)_* - \sum_{I \times I} R_{ij} \mid I \subset \{1, \dots, p\} \right\} \right\},$$

$$(2.7) \quad \pi + \nu \leq \min \left\{ \sum_I n_i + \sum_{I^C} (\pi_i + \nu_i + R_{i,i+1} + R_{i-1,i}) \mid I \subset \{1, \dots, p\} \right\},$$

$$(2.8) \quad \pi - \nu \leq \min \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^p \pi_i + \sum_{I_{nc}^C \times I_{nc}^C} R_{ij} + \sum_{I_{nc}} \nu_i - \sum_{J_{nc}} \nu_i \mid I_{nc} \cap J_{nc} \neq \emptyset \right\},$$

$$(2.9) \quad \nu - \pi \leq \min \left\{ \sum_{i=1}^p \nu_i + \sum_{I_{nc}^C \times I_{nc}^C} R_{ij} + \sum_{I_{nc}} \pi_i - \sum_{J_{nc}} \pi_i \mid I_{nc} \cap J_{nc} \neq \emptyset \right\}.$$

In fact, suppose the result is true for  $T_p$  defined in (2.1). For  $T_{p+1}$  we may

set

$$H_{p+1} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{H}_{p+1} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{where} \quad \tilde{H}_{p+1} = \begin{bmatrix} I_{\pi_{p+1}} & 0 \\ 0 & I_{\nu_{p+1}} \end{bmatrix}.$$

This allows us to partition  $T_{p+1}$  as

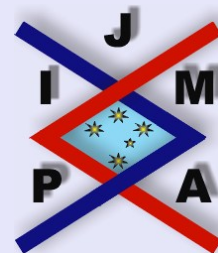
$$T_{p+1} = \left[ \begin{array}{cccc|cc} H_1 & X_{12} & & & & \\ X_{12}^* & H_2 & X_{23} & & & \\ & X_{23}^* & \ddots & \ddots & & \\ & & \ddots & \ddots & X_{p-1,p} & \\ & & & X_{p-1,p}^* & H_p & \\ \hline & & & & Y^* & \tilde{H}_{p+1} & 0 \\ & & & & Z^* & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right],$$

where  $X_{p,p+1} = [ Y \ Z ]$ . Consider now the nonsingular matrices  $U$  and  $V$  such that

$$UZV = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & I_s \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Then  $T_{p+1}$  is conjunctive to

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccc|cc} H_1 & X_{12} & & & & \\ X_{12}^* & H_2 & X_{23} & & & \\ & X_{23}^* & \ddots & \ddots & & \\ & & \ddots & \ddots & 0 & \tilde{X}_{p-1,p} \\ & & & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ & & & & 0 & 0 \\ & & & & \tilde{X}_{p-1,p}^* & 0 & \tilde{H}_p \\ \hline & & & & 0 & \tilde{X}_{p,p+1}^* & \tilde{H}_{p+1} & 0 & 0 \\ & & & & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ & & & & I_s & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right],$$



**The Inertia of Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrices**

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 11 of 21



**Corollary 2.2.** Let us assume that  $n_i \geq 0$ , for  $i = 1, \dots, p$  and

$$0 \leq r_{i,i+1} \leq R_{i,i+1} \leq \min \{n_i, n_{i+1}\}, \quad i = 1, \dots, p-1.$$

Then the following conditions are equivalent:

(I) For  $j = 1, \dots, p-1$ , there exist  $n_j \times n_{j+1}$  matrices  $X_{j,j+1}$  such that  $r_{j,j+1} \leq \text{rank} X_{j,j+1} \leq R_{j,j+1}$  and

$$T = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & X_{12} & & & & \\ X_{12}^* & 0 & X_{23} & & & \\ & X_{23}^* & \ddots & \ddots & & \\ & & \ddots & \ddots & X_{p-1,p} & \\ & & & X_{p-1,p}^* & 0 & \\ & & & & & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

has inertia  $(\pi, \nu, *)$ .

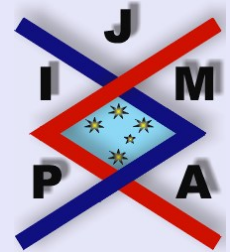
(II) Let  $J$  be any subset of non-consecutive elements of  $\{1, \dots, p-1\}$ . Let  $W_{j,j+1}$  be any fixed  $n_j \times n_{j+1}$  matrix with  $r_{j,j+1} \leq \text{rank} W_{j,j+1} \leq R_{j,j+1}$ , for  $j \in J$ . (I) holds with  $X_{j,j+1} = W_{j,j+1}$ .

(III) The following inequalities hold:

$$\pi = \nu \geq \max \left\{ \sum_{i \in I_{nc}} r_{i,i+1} \mid I_{nc} \subset \{1, \dots, p-1\} \right\}$$

and

$$\pi = \nu \leq \min \left\{ \sum_{i \in I_{nc}} n_i + \sum_{(i,j) \in I_{nc}^C \times I_{nc}^C} R_{ij} \mid I_{nc} \subset \{1, \dots, p\} \right\}.$$



The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 13 of 21

We can find a general characterization of the set of inertias of a Hermitian matrix in [1]. In fact, given an  $n_i \times n_i$  Hermitian matrix  $H_i$  with inertia  $\text{In}(H_i) = (\pi_i, \nu_i, \delta_i)$ , for  $i = 1, \dots, m$ , can be characterized in terms of the  $\pi_i, \nu_i, \delta_i$  the range of  $\text{In}(H)$ , where  $H$  varies over all

Hermitian matrices which have a block decomposition  $H = (X_{ij})_{i,j=1,\dots,m}$  in which  $X_{ij}$  is  $n_i \times n_j$  and  $X_{ii} = H_i$ .



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### The Inertia of Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

---

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 14 of 21

### 3. An Application to Symmetric Sign Pattern Matrices

Several authors have been studied properties of matrices based on combinatorial and qualitative information such as the signs of the entries (cf. [9, 10, 13, 14]). A matrix whose entries are from the set  $\{+, -, 0\}$  is called a *sign pattern matrix* (or simply, a *pattern*). For each  $n \times n$  pattern  $A$ , there is a natural class of real matrices whose entries have the signs indicated by  $A$ , i.e., the *sign pattern class* of a pattern  $A$  is defined by

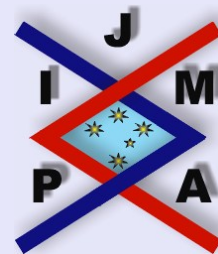
$$Q(A) = \{B \mid \text{sign } B = A\}.$$

We say the pattern  $A$  *requires unique inertia* and is *sign nonsingular* if every real matrix in  $Q(A)$  has the same inertia and is nonsingular, respectively. We shall be interested on symmetric matrices.

**Example 3.1** ([14]). *Let us consider the pattern*

$$A = \left[ \begin{array}{cc|cc} + & 0 & + & + \\ 0 & + & + & + \\ \hline + & + & - & 0 \\ + & + & 0 & - \end{array} \right].$$

*Since the inertia of the diagonal blocks are always  $(2, 0, 0)$  and  $(0, 2, 0)$ , respectively, and the rank of the off-diagonal block varies between 1 and 2, according to the Theorem 1.2 (also [3, cf. Theorem 2.1]),  $\pi = \nu = 2$  and, therefore,  $A$  requires a unique inertia and is nonsingular.*



The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 15 of 21

As an immediate consequence of the Corollary 2.2, we have the following result:

**Proposition 3.1 ([13]).** *For the  $n \times n$  symmetric tridiagonal pattern*

$$A_0 = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & + & & & \\ + & 0 & + & & \\ & + & \ddots & \ddots & \\ & & \ddots & \ddots & + \\ & & & + & 0 \end{bmatrix},$$

(a) *if  $n$  is even, then  $A_0$  is sign nonsingular and  $\text{In}(A_0) = (\frac{n}{2}, \frac{n}{2}, 0)$ ,*

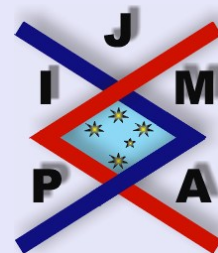
(b) *if  $n$  is odd, then  $A_0$  is sign singular and  $\text{In}(A_0) = (\frac{n-1}{2}, \frac{n-1}{2}, 1)$ .*

We observe that the result above is still true when the sign of any nonzero entry is “-”. The same observation can be made for the off-diagonals of the patterns in the propositions below. Notice also that Proposition 3.1 is true if the even diagonal entries are possibly nonzero.

Let  $\lfloor x \rfloor$  denotes the greater integer less or equal to the real number  $x$ .

**Proposition 3.2.** *If*

$$A_+ = \begin{bmatrix} + & \pm & & & \\ \pm & + & \pm & & \\ & \pm & \ddots & \ddots & \\ & & \ddots & \ddots & \pm \\ & & & \pm & + \end{bmatrix}$$



The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 16 of 21



is an  $n \times n$  symmetric tridiagonal pattern, then  $\text{In}(A_+)$  has the form

$$(n - k, k, 0), 0 \leq k \leq \left\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \right\rfloor, \quad \text{or} \quad (n - k, k - 1, 1), 1 \leq k \leq \left\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \right\rfloor.$$

*Proof.* From the Theorem 2.1, if  $\text{In}(A_+) = (\pi, \nu, *)$ , then  $n - 1 \leq \pi + \nu \leq n$  and  $0 \leq \nu \leq \left\lfloor \frac{n}{2} \right\rfloor$ .  $\square$

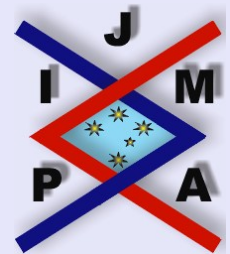
The diagonal entries  $a_{ii}$  and  $a_{jj}$  are said in *ascending positions* when  $i < j$ . We may state now a generalization which includes some results of [13, 14].

**Proposition 3.3.** *For the symmetric tridiagonal pattern*

$$A_* = \begin{bmatrix} * & \pm & & & & \\ \pm & * & \pm & & & \\ & \pm & \ddots & \ddots & & \\ & & \ddots & \ddots & \pm & \\ & & & \pm & * & \end{bmatrix},$$

where each diagonal entry is 0, + or −,

- (a) if  $n$  is even, then  $A_*$  is sign nonsingular if and only if neither two + nor two − diagonal entries in  $A_*$  are in odd-even ascending positions, respectively. In this case  $\text{In}(A_*) = \left(\frac{n}{2}, \frac{n}{2}, 0\right)$ ,
- (b) if  $n$  is odd, then  $A_*$  is sign nonsingular if and only if there is at least one + or one − diagonal entry is in an odd position, but not + and − in odd positions at same time, and neither three + nor three − diagonal entries are in odd-even-odd ascending positions, respectively. In this case  $\text{In}(A_*) = \left(\frac{n+1}{2}, \frac{n-1}{2}, 0\right)$  or  $\text{In}(A_*) = \left(\frac{n-1}{2}, \frac{n+1}{2}, 0\right)$ ,



The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 17 of 21

(c) if  $n$  is odd and neither  $+$  nor  $-$  diagonal entries are in odd positions, then  $A_*$  requires the unique inertia  $(\frac{n-1}{2}, \frac{n-1}{2}, 1)$ .

*Proof.* Remind that if  $A$  is in the sign pattern class of  $A_*$  and  $\text{In}(A) = (\pi, \nu, \delta)$ , then  $0 \leq \delta \leq 1$ . Also, according to (2.2) and (2.3), since  $R_{i,i+1} = r_{i,i+1} = 1$ , for  $i = 1, \dots, n-1$ , the minima values of  $\pi$  and  $\nu$  are obtained in maximal sets of nonconsecutive elements of  $I_n$ .

Suppose that  $n$  is even. If there are two  $+$  in odd-even ascending positions, then  $\nu \geq m$  such that  $m < n/2$  and  $\nu \geq n/2$ , i.e.,  $A_*$  does not require unique inertia and is not sign nonsingular. Otherwise, without loss of generality, suppose that the first nonzero main diagonal element in an odd  $(2i+1)$ -position is a  $+$  (if the main diagonal is zero, the result follows from Proposition 3.1). Then

$$(3.1) \quad \pi \geq r_{12} - \nu_1 + \dots + r_{2i-1,2i} - \nu_{2i-1} + \pi_{2i+1} = i + 1,$$

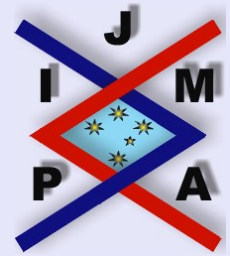
$$(3.2) \quad \nu \geq r_{12} - \pi_1 + \dots + r_{2i-1,2i} - \pi_{2i-1} + r_{2i+1,2i+2} - \pi_{2i+2} = i + 1.$$

If the element in  $(2i+3)$ -position is a  $+$ ,  $-$  or  $0$ , then we add to the right side of (3.1)  $\pi_{2i+3} = 1$ ,  $r_{2i+3,2i+4} - \nu_{2i+4} = 1$  and  $r_{2i+3,2i+4} - \nu_{2i+3} = 1$ , respectively, and to right side of (3.2)  $r_{2i+3,2i+4} - \pi_{2i+4} = 1$ ,  $\nu_{2i+3} = 1$  and  $r_{2i+3,2i+4} - \pi_{2i+3} = 1$ , respectively. Following this procedure we get  $\pi, \nu \geq n/2$ , i.e.,  $\text{In}(A_*) = (\frac{n}{2}, \frac{n}{2}, 0)$ .

If  $n$  is odd, suppose the first diagonal entry is  $+$ . Then, by (2.2),

$$\pi \geq \pi_1 + r_{23} - \nu_3 + \dots + r_{n-1,n} - \nu_n,$$

i.e.,  $\pi \geq (n+1)/2$ . On the other hand, by (2.3),  $\nu \geq (n-1)/2$ . Therefore  $\text{In}(A_*) = (\frac{n+1}{2}, \frac{n-1}{2}, 0)$ .



The Inertia of Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

Title Page

Contents



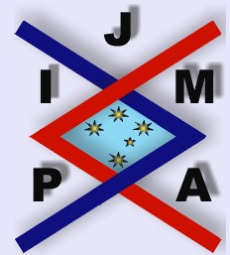
Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 18 of 21

Suppose now  $n$  is odd and neither  $+$  nor  $-$  diagonal entries are in odd positions. From the Theorem 2.1, making  $I = \{1, 3, 5, \dots, n - 2\}$  in (2.4) and in (2.5) we get  $\pi, \nu \leq \frac{n-1}{2}$ , and  $I_{nc} = \{2, 4, \dots, n - 1\}$  in (2.2) and in (2.3) we get  $\pi, \nu \geq \frac{n-1}{2}$ . Then  $A_*$  requires the unique inertia  $(\frac{n-1}{2}, \frac{n-1}{2}, 1)$ .  $\square$




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## The Inertia of Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

---

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 19 of 21

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### The Inertia of Hermitian Tridiagonal Block Matrices

C.M. da Fonseca

---

Title Page

Contents



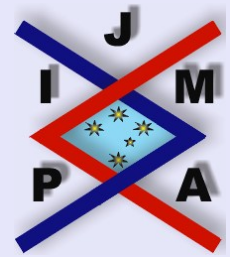
Go Back

Close

Quit

Page 20 of 21

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**The Inertia of Hermitian  
Tridiagonal Block Matrices**

C.M. da Fonseca

---

Title Page

Contents



Go Back

Close

Quit

Page **21** of **21**

---