Electronic Journal of Linear Algebra ISSN 1081-3810
A publication of the International Linear Algebra Society
Volume 17, pp. 219-233, April 2008

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GROUP INVERSES OF MATRICES WITH PATH GRAPHS*

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Abstract. A simple formula for the group inverse of a 2×2 block matrix with a bipartite digraph is given in terms of the block matrices. This formula is used to give a graph-theoretic description of the group inverse of an irreducible tridiagonal matrix of odd order with zero diagonal (which is singular). Relations between the zero/nonzero structures of the group inverse and the Moore-Penrose inverse of such matrices are given. An extension of the graph-theoretic description of the group inverse to singular matrices with tree graphs is conjectured.

Key words. Group inverse, Tridiagonal matrix, Tree graph, Moore-Penrose inverse, Bipartite digraph.

AMS subject classifications. 15A09, 05C50.

1. Introduction.

For a real $n \times n$ matrix A, the *group inverse*, if it exists, is the unique matrix $A^\#$ satisfying the matrix equations $AA^\# = A^\# A$, $AA^\# A = A$ and $A^\# AA^\# = A^\#$. If A is invertible, then $A^\# = A^{-1}$. It is well-known that $A^\#$ exists if and only if rank $A =$ rank A^2. For more detailed expositions on the group inverse and its properties, see [3], [7].

We present a new formula in Section 2 for the group inverse of a 2×2 block matrix with bipartite form as in (1.1) below. We use this formula to give a graph-theoretic description of the entries of the group inverse of an irreducible tridiagonal matrix of order $2k+1$ with zero diagonal (which has a path graph and is singular). This description, given in Section 3, is proved using a graph-theoretic characterization of the usual inverse of a nonsingular tridiagonal matrix of order k (see e.g. [11]). In Section 4, we relate our results to the zero/nonzero structure of another type of generalized inverse, the Moore-Penrose inverse. We conclude in Section 5 with a conjecture, which extends our graph-theoretic description of the entries of the group inverse to a matrix with a tree graph.

Generalized inverses of banded matrices, including tridiagonal matrices, are considered in [2] where the focus is on the rank of submatrices of the generalized inverse. Campbell and Meyer [7, page 139] investigate the Drazin inverse (which is a generalization of the group inverse) for a 2×2 block matrix. Recently, special cases of this problem that have been studied are listed in [10] and some new formulas are derived.

We first introduce some graph-theoretic notation. There is a one-to-one correspon-

* Received by the editors January 25, 2008. Accepted for publication April 13, 2008. Handling Editor: Ravindra B. Bapat.

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dence between $n \times n$ matrices $A = (a_{ij})$ and digraphs $D(A) = (V,E)$ having vertex set $V = \{1,\cdots,n\}$ and arc set E, where $(i,j) \in E$ if and only if $a_{ij} \neq 0$. For $q \geq 1$, a sequence $(i_1,i_2,i_3,\cdots,i_q,i_{q+1})$ of distinct vertices with arcs $(i_1,i_2),(i_2,i_3),\cdots,(i_q,i_{q+1})$ all in E is called a *path of length q* from i_1 to i_{q+1} in $D(A)$. For $q \geq 2$, a sequence $(i_1,i_2,i_3,\cdots,i_q,i_1)$ with $i_1,i_2,\cdots,i_q$ distinct and arcs $(i_1,i_2),\cdots(i_q,i_1)$ in E is called a *q-cycle* (a *cycle of length q*) in $D(A)$. A digraph is called a (directed) *tree graph* if it is strongly connected and all of its cycles have length 2. If the digraph $D(A)$ of a matrix A is a tree graph, then all of the diagonal entries of A are necessarily zero. Since a tree graph is bipartite, its vertices can be labeled so that its associated matrix has the form

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \tag{1.1}$$

where $B \in \mathbb{R}^{p\times(n-p)}$, $C \in \mathbb{R}^{(n-p)\times p}$ and $p \leq \frac{n}{2}$.

A particular example of a tree graph is a *path graph* on n vertices $i_1,i_2,\cdots,i_n$ which consists of the path $p = (i_1,i_2,\cdots,i_n)$ from i_1 to i_n and its reversal (i.e., the path obtained by reversing all of the arcs in p). If, for $k \geq 1$, a path graph on $n = 2k+1$ vertices consists of the path $(k+1,1,k+2,2,\cdots,2k,k,2k+1)$ and its reversal, then we call this the *bipartite path graph* on $n = 2k+1$ vertices.

Consider a tree graph $D(A)$, with A as in (1.1). For every pair of distinct vertices i_1 and i_{q+1}, there is a unique path $(i_1,i_2,\cdots,i_q,i_{q+1})$ from i_1 to i_{q+1}. For this path, the product $a_{i_1,i_2}a_{i_2,i_3}\cdots a_{i_q,i_{q+1}}$ is called the *path product* and is denoted by $P_A[i_1 \to i_{q+1}]$. All of the cycles in $D(A)$ are 2-cycles and a product $a_{i_1,i_2}a_{i_2,i_1}a_{i_3,i_4}a_{i_4,i_3}\cdots a_{i_{r-1},i_r}a_{i_r,i_{r-1}}$ corresponding to a set $\{(i_1,i_2,i_1),(i_3,i_4,i_3),\cdots,(i_{r-1},i_r,i_{r-1})\}$ of $r/2$ disjoint 2-cycles in $D(A)$ is called a *matching* in $D(A)$ of size r. If this set of 2-cycles has maximal cardinality, then the matching is a *maximal matching* and the number r is called the *term rank* of A. The sum of all maximal matchings in $D(A)$ is denoted by Δ_A. The notation $\gamma[i_1,i_{q+1}]$ denotes the sum of all maximal matchings in the path subgraph of $D(A)$ on the vertices $i_1,\cdots,i_{q+1}$, and we set $\gamma[i_w,i_w] = 1$. Also, $\gamma(i_1,i_{q+1})$ denotes the sum of all maximal matchings *not* on the path subgraph of $D(A)$ on the vertices $i_1,\cdots,i_{q+1}$. If there are no such maximal matchings, then $\gamma(i_1,i_{q+1}) = 1$. It follows from these definitions that $\gamma[i_1,i_{q+1}] = \gamma[i_{q+1},i_1]$ and $\gamma(i_1,i_{q+1}) = \gamma(i_{q+1},i_1)$. If $D(A)$ is the path graph on vertices $i_1,\cdots,i_n$, then $\Delta_A = \gamma[i_1,i_n]$.

For a tree graph $D(A)$, the matrix A is nearly reducible, so the term rank of A is equal to the rank of A [4, Theorem 4.5]. The following proposition shows that a necessary and sufficient condition for $A^\#$ to exist is that the sum of all maximal matchings in $D(A)$ is nonzero, i.e. $\Delta_A \neq 0$. An analogous result for an arbitrary complex $n \times n$ matrix is given in [6, Lemma 2.2]. Our proof uses the fact that the group inverse of A exists if and only if rank $A =$ rank A^2, or equivalently, the geometric and algebraic multiplicities of the eigenvalue 0 are equal [8, Exercise 17, page 141].

PROPOSITION 1.1. *Let A be an $n \times n$ matrix with a tree graph $D(A)$. Then the group*

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inverse $A^\#$ exists if and only if $\Delta_A \neq 0$.

Proof. Note that since $D(A)$ is a tree graph, A has zero diagonal. Let $p(x) = x^n + c_1x^{n-1} + c_2x^{n-2} + \cdots + c_{n-1}x^{n-1} + c_n$ be the characteristic polynomial of A. The coefficient c_t of x^{n-t} equals $(-1)^t$ times the sum of the determinants of the principal submatrices of A of order t (see [5]). Thus, $c_t = 0$ if t is odd; for t even, c_t is equal to $(-1)^{t/2}$ times the sum of all matchings in $D(A)$ of size t. Let r be the term rank, and thus the rank, of A. The order of the largest nonsingular submatrix in A is then r, and there is no nonsingular submatrix of larger order. Assume that $\Delta_A \neq 0$. Then the coefficient $(-1)^r\Delta_A$ of x^{n-r} in $p(x)$ is nonzero, and all coefficients c_t of x^{n-t} for $t > r$ are zero. Thus, the algebraic multiplicity of the eigenvalue 0 is $n-r$, which equals $n-$rank A, the geometric multiplicity of 0. By the preceding discussion, rank $A =$ rank A^2 and hence $A^\#$ exists. Conversely, if $\Delta_A = 0$, then $p(x) = x^sq(x)$, where $s > n-r$ and $q(x)$ is a polynomial. This implies that the algebraic multiplicity of the eigenvalue 0 is strictly greater than its geometric multiplicity; thus rank $A \neq$ rank A^2 and $A^\#$ does not exist. □

2. Group Inverses of Matrices with Bipartite Digraphs. In the following theorem, A has a bipartite digraph, but it is not necessarily a tree graph. Our proof of the theorem uses the next result.

LEMMA 2.1. *Let $B \in \mathbb{R}^{p\times(n-p)}, C \in \mathbb{R}^{(n-p)\times p}$. If rank $B =$ rank $C =$ rank $BC =$ rank CB, then rank $(BC)^2 =$ rank BC, i.e., $(BC)^\#$ exists. Furthermore, $BC(BC)^\#B = B$ and $C(BC)^\#BC = C$.*

Proof. Let rank $B =$ rank $C =$ rank $BC =$ rank $CB = m$. A rank inequality of Frobenius (see [8, page 13])

$$\operatorname{rank} BC + \operatorname{rank} CB \;\leq\; \operatorname{rank} C + \operatorname{rank} BCB$$

implies that $\operatorname{rank} BCB \geq m$. But clearly $\operatorname{rank} BCB \leq m$, hence equality holds. Similarly, $\operatorname{rank} CBC = m$. Now using the Frobenius inequality again gives

$$\operatorname{rank} BCB + \operatorname{rank} CBC \;\leq\; \operatorname{rank} CB + \operatorname{rank} BCBC.$$

By a similar argument as above, $\operatorname{rank}(BC)^2 = m$. Thus, $\operatorname{rank}(BC)^2 = \operatorname{rank} BC$, i.e., $(BC)^\#$ exists.

For the second part, the equality $BC(BC)^\#BC = BC$ implies that $BC(BC)^\#x = x$ for all vectors x in $\mathcal{R}(BC)$, the range of BC. Now, $\mathcal{R}(BC) \subseteq \mathcal{R}(B)$ so the assumption rank $BC =$ rank B implies that $\mathcal{R}(BC) = \mathcal{R}(B)$. Thus, $BC(BC)^\#x = x$ for all x in $\mathcal{R}(B)$ and therefore, $BC(BC)^\#B = B$. Similarly, $(BC)^T(BC)^{T\#}y = y$ for all y in $\mathcal{R}((BC)^T)$ and the rank assumptions imply that $\mathcal{R}((BC)^T) = \mathcal{R}(C^T)$. Thus, $y^T(BC)^\#(BC) = y^T$ for all y in $\mathcal{R}(C^T)$ and therefore, $C(BC)^\#(BC) = C$. □

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THEOREM 2.2. *Let* $A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{bmatrix}$, *where* $B \in \mathbb{R}^{p\times(n-p)}$, $C \in \mathbb{R}^{(n-p)\times p}$ *and* $p \le \frac{n}{2}$. *Then the group inverse* $A^\#$ *of* A *exists if and only if rank* $B =$ *rank* $C =$ *rank* $BC =$ *rank* CB. *If* $A^\#$ *exists, then*

$$A^\# = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & (BC)^\# B \\ C(BC)^\# & 0 \end{bmatrix}. \tag{2.1}$$

Proof. If rank $B =$ rank $C =$ rank $BC =$ rank CB, then rank $B +$ rank $C =$ rank $BC+$ rank CB, which implies that rank $A =$ rank A^2. Thus $A^\#$ exists. Conversely, if $A^\#$ exists and rank $B \ne$ rank C, then without loss of generality suppose that rank $B <$ rank C. Then rank $A^2 =$ rank $BC+$ rank $CB \le 2$ rank $B <$ rank $B+$ rank $C =$ rank A, which contradicts the existence of $A^\#$. Thus, rank $B =$ rank C, and by a similar argument, rank $BC =$ rank CB. Hence rank $A =$ rank A^2 implies that rank $B +$ rank $C =$ rank $BC+$ rank CB and therefore rank $B =$ rank $C =$ rank $BC =$ rank CB.

For the second part, $(BC)^\#$ exists by Lemma 2.1. Denoting the right hand side of (2.1) by G, we need only show that $AG = GA$, $AGA = A$ and $GAG = G$ to prove that $G = A^\#$. Since $BC(BC)^\# = (BC)^\# BC$, it follows that
$AG = \begin{bmatrix} BC(BC)^\# & 0 \\ 0 & C(BC)^\# B \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} (BC)^\# BC & 0 \\ 0 & C(BC)^\# B \end{bmatrix} = GA$. Using the equalities established in Lemma 2.1,
$AGA = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & BC(BC)^\# B \\ C(BC)^\# BC & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{bmatrix} = A$, and
$GAG = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & (BC)^\# BC(BC)^\# B \\ C(BC)^\# BC(BC)^\# & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & (BC)^\# B \\ C(BC)^\# & 0 \end{bmatrix} = G$. ∎

If rank $BC =$ rank $CB =$ rank $B =$ rank $C = p$, then the $p \times p$ matrix BC is invertible and we obtain the following result.

COROLLARY 2.3. *Using the notation of Theorem 2.2, if rank* $BC =$ *rank* $CB =$ *rank* $B =$ *rank* $C = p$, *then the group inverse* $A^\#$ *exists and is given by*

$$A^\# = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & (BC)^{-1} B \\ C(BC)^{-1} & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

We note that in [10], formulas for the more general Drazin inverse of certain 2×2 block matrices are given. However, the conditions there are not in general satisfied by a matrix of form (1.1).

The following example has BC singular but satisfying the conditions of Theorem 2.2.

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EXAMPLE 2.4. If

$$A = \left[\begin{array}{ccc|ccc} 0 & 0 & 0 & a_{14} & a_{15} & a_{16} \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & a_{25} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & a_{35} & 0 \\ \hline a_{41} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ a_{51} & a_{52} & a_{53} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ a_{61} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}\right] = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{bmatrix},$$

then

$$BC = \begin{bmatrix} a_{14}a_{41}+a_{15}a_{51}+a_{16}a_{61} & a_{15}a_{52} & a_{15}a_{53} \\ a_{25}a_{51} & a_{25}a_{52} & a_{25}a_{53} \\ a_{35}a_{51} & a_{35}a_{52} & a_{35}a_{53} \end{bmatrix}$$

and

$$CB = \begin{bmatrix} a_{41}a_{14} & a_{41}a_{15} & a_{41}a_{16} \\ a_{51}a_{14} & a_{51}a_{15}+a_{52}a_{25}+a_{53}a_{35} & a_{51}a_{16} \\ a_{61}a_{14} & a_{61}a_{15} & a_{61}a_{16} \end{bmatrix}.$$

Note that $D(A)$ is a tree graph.

Here, $\Delta_A = a_{14}a_{41}a_{25}a_{52} + a_{14}a_{41}a_{35}a_{53} + a_{16}a_{61}a_{25}a_{52} + a_{16}a_{61}a_{35}a_{53} = (a_{14}a_{41}+a_{16}a_{61})(a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53})$, the sum of maximal matchings in $D(A)$. If $\Delta_A \neq 0$, then the matrices B, C, BC and CB all have rank 2 and by Theorem 2.2, $A^\#$ exists and is given by (2.1). Using Algorithm 7.2.1 in [7] and Maple,

$$(BC)^\# = \frac{1}{\Delta_A}\begin{bmatrix} a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53} & -a_{15}a_{52} & -a_{15}a_{53} \\ -a_{25}a_{51} & \frac{a_{25}a_{52}(a_{14}a_{41}+a_{15}a_{51}+a_{16}a_{61})}{a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53}} & \frac{a_{25}a_{53}(a_{14}a_{41}+a_{15}a_{51}+a_{16}a_{61})}{a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53}} \\ -a_{35}a_{51} & \frac{a_{35}a_{52}(a_{14}a_{41}+a_{15}a_{51}+a_{16}a_{61})}{a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53}} & \frac{a_{35}a_{53}(a_{14}a_{41}+a_{15}a_{51}+a_{16}a_{61})}{a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53}} \end{bmatrix}.$$

It follows that if $\Delta_A \neq 0$, then from (2.1),

$$A^\# = \frac{1}{\Delta_A}\begin{bmatrix} 0 & R \\ S & 0 \end{bmatrix},$$

where

$$R = \begin{bmatrix} a_{14}(a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53}) & 0 & a_{16}(a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53}) \\ -a_{25}a_{51}a_{14} & a_{25}(a_{14}a_{41}+a_{16}a_{61}) & -a_{25}a_{51}a_{16} \\ -a_{35}a_{51}a_{14} & a_{35}(a_{14}a_{41}+a_{16}a_{61}) & -a_{35}a_{51}a_{16} \end{bmatrix}$$

and

$$S = \begin{bmatrix} a_{41}(a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53}) & -a_{41}a_{15}a_{52} & -a_{41}a_{15}a_{53} \\ 0 & a_{52}(a_{14}a_{41}+a_{16}a_{61}) & a_{53}(a_{14}a_{41}+a_{16}a_{61}) \\ a_{61}(a_{25}a_{52}+a_{35}a_{53}) & -a_{61}a_{15}a_{52} & -a_{61}a_{15}a_{53} \end{bmatrix}.$$

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3. $A^\#$ for a Matrix with a Path Graph. Let $k \geq 1$. For the path graph $D(A)$ on $n = 2k$ vertices, A is nonsingular and $A^\# = A^{-1}$ (and a graph-theoretic description of the entries of A^{-1} is known; see Theorem 3.5 below). So we consider the path graph $D(A)$ with an odd number of vertices, for which A is singular. For $n = 2k+1$, if $D(A)$ is the bipartite path graph, then its associated matrix A is as in (1.1) with

$$B = \begin{bmatrix} a_{1,k+1} & a_{1,k+2} & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & a_{2,k+2} & a_{2,k+3} & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & a_{3,k+3} & \ddots & & \vdots \\ \vdots & & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & a_{k,2k} & a_{k,2k+1} \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{R}^{k\times(k+1)} \tag{3.1}$$

and

$$C = \begin{bmatrix} a_{k+1,1} & 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ a_{k+2,1} & a_{k+2,2} & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & a_{k+3,2} & \ddots & & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \ddots & \ddots & 0 \\ \vdots & & \ddots & a_{2k,k-1} & a_{2k,k} \\ 0 & 0 & \cdots & 0 & a_{2k+1,k} \end{bmatrix} \in \mathbb{R}^{(k+1)\times k}, \tag{3.2}$$

where each specified entry a_{ij} is nonzero. Then rank $B =$ rank $C = k$, and the entries of the $k \times k$ tridiagonal matrix BC are as follows:

$$\begin{array}{lcll} (BC)_{ii} & = & a_{i,k+i}a_{k+i,i} + a_{i,k+i+1}a_{k+i+1,i} & \text{if } 1 \leq i \leq k \\ (BC)_{i,i+1} & = & a_{i,k+i+1}a_{k+i+1,i+1} & \text{if } 1 \leq i \leq k-1 \\ (BC)_{i+1,i} & = & a_{i+1,k+i+1}a_{k+i+1,i} & \text{if } 1 \leq i \leq k-1 \\ (BC)_{ij} & = & 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{array} \tag{3.3}$$

In Proposition 3.2 below, it is proved that the determinant of the matrix BC is equal to the sum of maximal matchings in $D(A)$. The following simple observations are used in the succeeding proofs.

LEMMA 3.1. *Let* $A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ *with* B,C *as in* (3.1) *and* (3.2)*, respectively, i.e.,* $D(A)$ *is the bipartite path graph on* $2k+1$ *vertices. In* $D(A)$ *and for* $1 \leq j \leq k+1$*, the following relations hold.*

$$\gamma[k+j,k+j+1] = \gamma[k+j,j] + \gamma[j,k+j+1], \; j \neq k+1. \tag{3.4}$$

$$P_A[j \to j+1]P_A[j+1 \to j] = \gamma[j,k+j+1]\gamma[k+j+1,j+1], \; j \neq k+1. \tag{3.5}$$

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A publication of the International Linear Algebra Society
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$$\gamma[k+1,k+j] \;=\; \gamma[j-1,k+j]\gamma[k+1,k+j-1] \;+\; \gamma[k+1,j-1],\; j\neq 1. \tag{3.6}$$

$$\gamma[k+1,j] \;=\; \gamma[j,k+j]\gamma[k+1,j-1],\; j\neq 1,k+1. \tag{3.7}$$

$$\gamma(i,j) \;=\; \gamma[k+1,k+i]\gamma[k+j+1,2k+1],\, 1\leq i<j\leq k. \tag{3.8}$$

In the following, $BC[j;\ell]$ denotes the principal submatrix of BC in rows and columns $j,\cdots,\ell$.

PROPOSITION 3.2. *For* $k\geq 1$, *let* $D(A)$ *be the bipartite path graph on* $2k+1$ *vertices, i.e.,* $A=\begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0\end{bmatrix}$ *with* B,C *as in* (3.1) *and* (3.2), *respectively. Then for* $1\leq t\leq k$, $\det BC[1;t]=\gamma[k+1,k+t+1]$.

Proof. We use induction on t. First note, from (3.3), that the $k\times k$ matrix BC can be written as

$$\begin{bmatrix} \gamma[k+1,k+2] & P_A[1\to 2] & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ P_A[2\to 1] & \gamma[k+2,k+3] & P_A[2\to 3] & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & P_A[3\to 2] & \ddots & \ddots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \gamma[2k-1,2k] & P_A[k-1\to k] \\ 0 & \cdots & 0 & P_A[k\to k-1] & \gamma[2k,2k+1] \end{bmatrix}. \tag{3.9}$$

If $t=1$, then $\det BC[1;1]=\gamma[k+1,k+2]=\gamma[k+1,k+t+1]$ as desired.

Now suppose that for $2\leq g\leq k$ the result is true for all $t\leq g-1$; thus, for example,

$$\det BC[1;g-1] \;=\; \gamma[k+1,k+g] \tag{3.10}$$

and

$$\det BC[1;g-2] \;=\; \gamma[k+1,k+g-1]. \tag{3.11}$$

(Note that $BC[1;0]$ is vacuous and $\det BC[1;0]=1$.) Letting $t=g$ and expanding the deter-

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minant about the last row of $BC[1;g]$,

$$\begin{aligned}\det BC[1;g] &= \gamma[k+g,k+g+1]\det BC[1;g-1] \\ &\quad - P_A[g-1\to g]P_A[g\to g-1]\det BC[1;g-2] \\ &= (\gamma[k+g,g]+\gamma[g,k+g+1])\gamma[k+1,k+g] \\ &\quad - \gamma[g-1,k+g]\gamma[k+g,g]\gamma[k+1,k+g-1] \text{ by } (3.4),\ (3.5),\ (3.10) \\ &\quad \text{and } (3.11) \\ &= \gamma[g,k+g+1]\gamma[k+1,k+g] \ + \ \gamma[g,k+g]\gamma[k+1,g-1] \ \text{ by } (3.6) \\ &= \gamma[g,k+g+1]\gamma[k+1,k+g] \ + \ \gamma[k+1,g] \ \text{ by } (3.7) \\ &= \gamma[k+1,k+g+1] \text{ by } (3.6). \qquad \square\end{aligned}$$

COROLLARY 3.3. *For $k \ge 1$, let $D(A)$ be the bipartite path graph on $2k+1$ vertices, i.e., $A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ with B,C as in* (3.1) *and* (3.2)*, respectively. Then* $\det BC = \gamma[k+1, 2k+1] = \Delta_A$.

In the following, $W(i)$ (respectively $W(i;),W(;j)$) denotes the submatrix obtained from a matrix W by deleting both row and column i (respectively row i, column j).

COROLLARY 3.4. *For $k \ge 1$, let $D(A)$ be the bipartite path graph on $2k+1$ vertices, i.e., $A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ with B,C as in* (3.1) *and* (3.2)*, respectively. For $1 \le i \le k$, let $D(A(i))$ be the associated digraph obtained by deleting vertex i from $D(A)$. Then $B(i;)C(;i) = BC(i)$,*

$$\begin{aligned}\det BC(1) &= \gamma[k+2,2k+1], \\ \det BC(k) &= \gamma[k+1,2k]\end{aligned}$$

and

$$\det BC(i) \ = \ \gamma[k+1,k+i]\gamma[k+i+1,2k+1],\ i \ne 1,k.$$

Proof. These results follow from the structure of B and C, and the fact that $D(A(1))$, $D(A(k))$ can be re-labeled to be bipartite path graphs on $2k-1$ vertices (along with one isolated vertex), while $D(A(i))$ for $i \ne 1,k$ consists of two disjoint path graphs that can be re-labeled to be bipartite path graphs on $2i-1$ and $2(k-i)+1$ vertices. $\square$

For $\Delta_A \ne 0$, Proposition 3.6 below gives the entries of $(BC)^{-1}$ in terms of path products and matchings in $D(A)$. The proof uses the following theorem, stated for tree graphs in [9] and for general digraphs in [11], which we restate here for digraphs $D(W)$ with tridiagonal W.

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A publication of the International Linear Algebra Society
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THEOREM 3.5. [9, 11] *Let W be an $n\times n$ nonsingular tridiagonal matrix with digraph $D(W)$, and let $W^{-1}=(\omega_{ij})$. Then*

$$\omega_{ii} \;=\; \frac{\det W(i)}{\det W}, \tag{3.12}$$

and

$$\omega_{ij} \;=\; \frac{1}{\det W}(-1)^{\ell}P_W[i\to j]\det W(i,\cdots,j), \tag{3.13}$$

where ℓ is the length of the path from i to j, $W(i)$ is the matrix obtained from W by deleting row and column i, and $W(i,\cdots,j)$ is the matrix obtained from W by deleting rows and columns corresponding to the vertices on the path from i to j.

In the next two results, we set $P_A[i\to i]=1$ and $\gamma(i,i)=\gamma[k+1,k+i]\gamma[k+i+1,2k+1]$.

PROPOSITION 3.6. *Let $A=\begin{bmatrix}0 & B\\ C & 0\end{bmatrix}$ with B,C as in (3.1) and (3.2), respectively, and assume that $\Delta_A\neq 0$. Then $(BC)^{-1}=(\beta_{ij})$ exists and is given by*

$$\beta_{ij} \;=\; \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{i+j}P_A[i\to j]\gamma(i,j). \tag{3.14}$$

Proof. From Corollary 3.3, $\det BC=\Delta_A$ and the assumption $\Delta_A\neq 0$ implies that $(BC)^{-1}$ exists. We apply Theorem 3.5 to the tridiagonal matrix BC as in (3.9). Let $1\le i,j\le k$.

If $i=j$, then by Corollary 3.4,

$$\beta_{11} \;=\; \frac{\gamma[k+2,2k+1]}{\Delta_A},\quad \beta_{kk} \;=\; \frac{\gamma[k+1,2k]}{\Delta_A},$$

and

$$\beta_{ii} \;=\; \frac{\gamma[k+1,k+i]\gamma[k+i+1,2k+1]}{\Delta_A},\;\; \text{for } i\neq 1 \text{ or } k,$$

which agree with (3.14).

If $i<j$, with $i\neq 1$ and $j\neq k$, then removing the vertices on the path $(i,\cdots,j)$ in $D(A)$ results in two disjoint path graphs on vertices $k+1,\cdots,k+i$ and $k+j+1,\cdots,2k+1$, respectively. As these can be re-labeled to be bipartite path graphs, Proposition 3.2 gives

$$\begin{aligned}\det BC(i,\cdots,j) \;&=\; \det BC[1;i-1]\det BC[j+1;k]\\ &=\; \gamma[k+1,k+i]\gamma[k+j+1,2k+1].\end{aligned}$$

If $i=1$, then $\det BC(i,\cdots,j)=\det BC[j+1;k]=\gamma[k+j+1,2k+1]$; if $j=k$, then $\det BC(i,\cdots,j)=\det BC[1;i-1]=\gamma[k+1,k+i]$. For all $i<j$, the (i,j) entry β_{ij} of $(BC)^{-1}$ is

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A publication of the International Linear Algebra Society
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computed, using Theorem 3.5, with the path product in (3.13) taken from the digraph $D(BC)$. From (3.9), the path product $P_{BC}[i \to j]$ is given by the product $P_A[i \to i+1]P_A[i+1 \to i+2]\cdots P_A[j-1 \to j]$ of $j-i$ path products in the path graph $D(A)$. This path product is equal to $P_A[i \to j]$. It follows from (3.13) and the above that

$$\begin{aligned}\beta_{ij} &= \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{j-i}P_A[i \to j]\gamma[k+1,k+i]\gamma[k+j+1,2k+1]\\ &= \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{i+j}P_A[i \to j]\gamma(i,j) \text{ by } (3.8).\end{aligned}$$

The proof for the case $i > j$ can be obtained by switching the roles of i and j in the above argument, completing the proof for $i \neq j$. □

The next theorem is the main result of this section.

THEOREM 3.7. *Let* $A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & B \\ C & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ *be a matrix of order* $2k+1$ *with* B,C *as in* (3.1) *and* (3.2), *respectively. Assume that* $\Delta_A \neq 0$. *Then the group inverse* $A^\# = (\alpha_{ij})$ *exists and*

$$(3.15)\qquad \alpha_{ij} = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^s P_A[i \to j]\gamma(i,j) & \text{if the path in } D(A) \text{ from } i \text{ to } j \text{ is of length } 2s+1 \text{ with } s \geq 0,\\ 0 & \text{otherwise.}\end{cases}$$

Proof. The assumption $\Delta_A \neq 0$ together with Corollary 3.3 imply that rank $BC = k$. In addition, CB is a tridiagonal matrix of order $k+1$ with a nonzero superdiagonal. Thus, rank $CB \geq k$ and since rank $CB \leq$ rank $B = k$, it follows that rank $CB = k$. Hence, rank$B =$ rank$C =$ rank$BC =$ rank$CB = k$, and by Corollary 2.3, the group inverse $A^\#$ exists with entries α_{ij} given by

$$(3.16)\qquad \alpha_{ij} = \begin{cases} ((BC)^{-1}B)_{i,j-k} & \text{if } (i,j) \in \{1,\cdots,k\} \times \{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\},\\ (C(BC)^{-1})_{i-k,j} & \text{if } (i,j) \in \{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\} \times \{1,\cdots,k\},\\ 0 & \text{otherwise.}\end{cases}$$

Let $(i,j) \in \{1,\cdots,2k+1\} \times \{1,\cdots,2k+1\}$. Note that $D(A)$ is the bipartite path graph on $2k+1$ vertices. The path from i to j is of even length if and only if (i,j) is in $\{1,\cdots,k\} \times \{1,\cdots,k\}$ or $\{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\} \times \{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\}$. It follows from (3.16) that $\alpha_{ij} = 0$ if the path from i to j is of even length or if $i = j$. Now assume that the path from i to j is of odd length. Then either $(i,j) \in \{1,\cdots,k\} \times \{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\}$ or $(i,j) \in \{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\} \times \{1,\cdots,k\}$.

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A publication of the International Linear Algebra Society
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Suppose that $(i,j) \in \{1,\cdots,k\} \times \{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\}$, and set $j' = j-k$. Then from (3.16) and (3.14),

$$\alpha_{ij} = ((BC)^{-1}B)_{ij'} = \frac{1}{\Delta_A}\sum_{m=1}^{k}(-1)^{i+m}P_A[i \to m]\gamma(i,m)a_{mj}.$$

Hence for $j = k+1$,

$$\begin{aligned}\alpha_{i,k+1} &= \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{i+1}P_A[i \to 1]\gamma(i,1)a_{1,k+1} \\ &= \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{i+1}P_A[i \to k+1]\gamma(i,k+1).\end{aligned}$$

Since $(-1)^{i+1} = (-1)^{i-1}$ and the path in $D(A)$ from i to $k+1$ has length $2(i-1)+1$, the theorem is true for $j = k+1$. Similarly, the theorem is true for $j = 2k+1$, so suppose that $j \neq k+1, 2k+1$. Then

$$\alpha_{ij} = \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{i+j'}(P_A[i \to j']\gamma(i,j')a_{j'j} - P_A[i \to j'-1]\gamma(i,j'-1)a_{j'-1,j}).$$

Suppose that $1 \leq i < j' = j-k \leq k$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}\alpha_{ij} &= \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{i+j'}P_A[i \to j](\gamma(i,j')\gamma[j',j] - \gamma(i,j'-1)) \\ &= \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{j'-i-1}P_A[i \to j]\gamma(i,j).\end{aligned}$$

Since the path in $D(A)$ from i to j has length $2(j'-i-1)+1$, the theorem is true for all such (i,j). Now suppose that $2 \leq i, j' \leq k$ and $i \geq j' = j-k$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}\alpha_{ij} &= \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{i+j'}P_A[i \to j](\gamma(i,j') - \gamma(i,j'-1)\gamma[j'-1,j]) \\ &= \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^{i-j'}P_A[i \to j]\gamma(i,j).\end{aligned}$$

Since the path in $D(A)$ from i to j has length $2(i-j')+1$, the theorem is true for all such (i,j), and thus for all $(i,j) \in \{1,\cdots,k\} \times \{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\}$.

The proof for $(i,j) \in \{k+1,\cdots,2k+1\} \times \{1,\cdots,k\}$ is similar. □

The next two results follow since an irreducible tridiagonal matrix with zero diagonal is permutationally similar to the matrix in Theorem 3.7.

COROLLARY 3.8. *Let A be an irreducible tridiagonal matrix of order $2k+1$ with zero diagonal and a path graph $D(A)$ on vertices $1,\cdots,2k+1$. Assume that $\Delta_A \neq 0$. Then the group inverse $A^{\#}$ exists and its entries are given by* (3.15).

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COROLLARY 3.9. *If in addition to the assumptions of Corollary 3.8, A is nonnegative, then $A^\#$ is sign determined. Specifically, $A^\# = (\alpha_{ij})$ has a diagonally-striped sign pattern with*

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha_{ij} &= 0 && \text{if } i+j \text{ is even} \\ \alpha_{i,i\pm t} &> 0 && \text{for } t = 1,5,9,\cdots \\ \alpha_{i,i\pm t} &< 0 && \text{for } t = 3,7,11,\cdots, \end{aligned}$$

where $1 \le i \le n$ and $1 \le i \pm t \le n$.

4. Relation of $A^\#$ with $A^\dagger$ for Tridiagonal Matrices. It is well-known (see e.g. [3], [7]) that if A is symmetric and $A^\#$ exists, then $A^\# = A^\dagger$, the Moore-Penrose inverse of A. To explore the relation between these two inverses for irreducible tridiagonal matrices with zero diagonal (which are combinatorially symmetric), we use the following notation from [4]. Let $U = \{u_1,\cdots,u_n\}$ and $V = \{v_1,\cdots,v_n\}$ be disjoint sets. For an $n\times n$ matrix $A = (a_{ij})$, $B(A)$ is the bipartite graph with vertices $U\cup V$ and edges $\{(u_i,v_j) : u_i \in U, v_j \in V, a_{ij} \neq 0\}$. For any $h \ge 1$ and any bipartite graph B, $M_h(B)$ denotes the family of subsets of h distinct edges of B, no two of which are adjacent.

THEOREM 4.1. *Let $k \ge 1$ and $A = (a_{ij}) \in \mathbb{R}^{2k+1\times 2k+1}$ be an irreducible tridiagonal matrix with zero diagonal and assume that $\Delta_A \neq 0$. Let $A^\# = (\alpha_{ij})$, $A^\dagger = (\mu_{ij})$ and $1 \le i, j \le 2k+1$.*
(i) *If the path from i to j in $D(A)$ is of even length or if $i = j$, then $\alpha_{ij} = \mu_{ij} = 0$.*
(ii) *If $\alpha_{ij} \neq 0$, then $\mu_{ij} \neq 0$.*
(iii) *If $\gamma(i,j) \neq 0$, then $\alpha_{ij} \neq 0$ if and only if $\mu_{ij} \neq 0$.*

Proof. By Corollary 3.8 and [4, Corollary 2.7], $\alpha_{ii} = \mu_{ii} = 0$ for all i. Let $1 \le i < j \le 2k+1$. By Corollary 3.8,

$$\alpha_{ij} = \frac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^s a_{i,i+1}a_{i+1,i+2}a_{i+2,i+3}\cdots a_{j-2,j-1}a_{j-1,j}\gamma(i,j) \tag{4.1}$$

if the path from i to j in $D(A)$ is of length $2s+1$ with $s \ge 0$, and $\alpha_{ij} = 0$ otherwise. According to [4, Corollary 2.7], $\mu_{ji} \neq 0$ if and only if $B(A)$ contains a path p from u_i to v_j

$$p: \quad u_i \to v_{i+1} \to u_{i+2} \to v_{i+3} \to \cdots \to v_{j-2} \to u_{j-1} \to v_j$$

of length $2s+1$ with $s \ge 0$, and $M_{r-s-1}(B(A))$ has at least one element with $r-s-1$ edges none of which are adjacent to p, where $r = 2k$ is the rank of A. Note that by the theorem assumptions on A, if a path p from u_i to v_j in $B(A)$ of length $2s+1$, with $s \ge 0$, exists, then the latter condition on $M_{r-s-1}(B(A))$ and the path p always holds. Furthermore, by [4, Corollary 2.7], if such a path exists, then μ_{ji} has the same sign as

$$(-1)^s a_{i,i+1}a_{i+2,i+1}a_{i+2,i+3}\cdots a_{j-1,j-2}a_{j-1,j}. \tag{4.2}$$

Since A is an irreducible tridiagonal matrix with zero diagonal, it is combinatorially symmetric (i.e., $a_{ij} \neq 0$ if and only if $a_{ji} \neq 0$). Thus, there is a path of length $2s+1$ from i to

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j in $D(A)$ if and only if there is a path of length $2s+1$ from u_j to v_i in $B(A)$. If no such path of odd length exists, then $\alpha_{ij} = \mu_{ij} = 0$, completing the proof of (i). If $\alpha_{ij} \neq 0$, then by (4.1), the path from i to j in $D(A)$ is of length $2s+1$ with $s \geq 0$. Thus, using (4.1), (4.2) and by combinatorial symmetry, $\mu_{ij} \neq 0$, proving (ii) and one direction of (iii). Lastly, if $\gamma(i,j) \neq 0$ and $\mu_{ij} \neq 0$, then $\alpha_{ij} \neq 0$ by a similar argument. This completes the proof of (iii) and hence the theorem for $i \leq j$. The proof for $i > j$ is similar. □

The following example illustrates that the condition $\gamma(i,j) \neq 0$ in (iii) above is necessary.

EXAMPLE 4.2. Consider the 5×5 tridiagonal matrix

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix},$$

having

$$A^{\dagger} = \frac{1}{3}\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 2 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 2 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 2 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 & 2 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

and

$$A^{\#} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 2 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\ 2 & 0 & 1 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Here the $(4,5)$ and $(5,4)$ entries of $A^{\#}$ are zero since $\gamma(4,5) = 0$, whereas the corresponding entries of $A^{\dagger}$ are nonzero.

Theorem 4.1 shows that for an irreducible tridiagonal matrix A, the nonzero entries of $A^{\#}$ are a subset of the nonzero entries of $A^{\dagger}$. However, this is not in general true for a matrix A with $D(A)$ bipartite, as is shown in the following example.

EXAMPLE 4.3. Consider the following 5×5 matrix A which has $D(A)$ bipartite, but not

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a tree graph:

$$A = \left[\begin{array}{cc|ccc} 0 & 0 & a_{13} & 0 & a_{15} \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & a_{24} & 0 \\ \hline 0 & a_{32} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ a_{41} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ a_{51} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}\right].$$

By Corollary 2.3, the $(2,4)$ entry of $A^{\#}$ is $-a_{15}a_{51}/a_{13}a_{32}a_{41}$, whereas by [4, Theorem 2.6], the $(2,4)$ entry of $A^{\dagger}$ is zero since there is no path in $B(A)$ from u_4 to v_2.

5. Conjecture. We conclude with a conjecture and some related remarks. Recall that if $D(A)$ is a tree graph, then all diagonal entries of A are zero.

CONJECTURE 5.1. *Let A be a singular matrix with a tree graph $D(A)$, term rank r and $\Delta_A \neq 0$. Suppose that there exists a path subgraph $p(i,j)$ on vertices $i, i_2, \cdots, i_{2s+1}, j$, where $s \geq 0$. Define*

$$\delta(i,j) = \begin{cases} \gamma(i,j) & \text{if the matrix associated with } D(A) \setminus p(i,j) \\ & \text{has term rank } r-2(s+1), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Then $A^{\#} = (\alpha_{ij})$ exists and its entries are given by

(5.1)
$$\alpha_{ij} = \begin{cases} \dfrac{1}{\Delta_A}(-1)^s P_A[i \to j]\delta(i,j) & \text{if the path in } D(A) \text{ from } i \text{ to } j \text{ is of length } 2s+1, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Note that $D(A)$ in Example 2.4 has a path of length 1 from vertex 1 to vertex 5. However, the matrix associated with $D(A) \setminus p(1,5)$ has term rank 0, whereas $r-2(s+1) = 4-2 = 2$. Thus, the $(1,5)$ entry of $A^{\#}$ is zero.

EXAMPLE 5.2. For $n \geq 3$, consider an $n \times n$ matrix with a star graph centered at 1, i.e., $A = (a_{ij})$ has $a_{1j}, a_{j1} \neq 0$, for $j = 2, \cdots, n$, and $a_{ij} = 0$ otherwise. Then from (1.1), $BC = \Delta_A$ is a scalar. Assuming that $\Delta_A \neq 0$, Corollary 2.3 gives $A^{\#} = \frac{1}{\Delta_A}A$. Note that for $j \neq 1$, the path from 1 to j is of length $2s+1 = 1$, where $s = 0$; thus $r-2(s+1) = 0$, which is the term rank of the matrix associated with $D(A) \setminus p(1,j)$. Hence $\delta(1,j) = \gamma(1,j) = 1$. This shows that (5.1) holds, and the conjecture is true for matrices having a star graph. Note also that for a matrix A with $D(A)$ a star graph, the above formula for $A^{\#}$ and [4, Corollary 2.7] give that the sign patterns $\text{sgn}(\Delta_A A^{\#})$ and $\text{sgn}((A^{\dagger})^T)$ are identical. If, in addition, A is nonnegative, then $\Delta_A > 0$ and $\text{sgn}(A^{\#}) = \text{sgn}(A) = \text{sgn}((A^{\dagger})^T)$, which is a special case of [1, Theorem 4].

Electronic Journal of Linear Algebra ISSN 1081-3810
A publication of the International Linear Algebra Society
Volume 17, pp. 219-233, April 2008

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The existence of $A^{\#}$ in Conjecture 5.1 follows from Proposition 1.1. In addition to matrices A that have a path or a star graph, we have verified with Maple that (5.1) of Conjecture 5.1 holds for all singular matrices with tree graphs of order 7 or less.

Acknowledgement. This research is partially supported by NSERC Discovery Grants. The authors thank the referee for an insightful report that greatly shortened the proof of Theorem 3.7 and led us to strengthen Theorem 2.2.

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