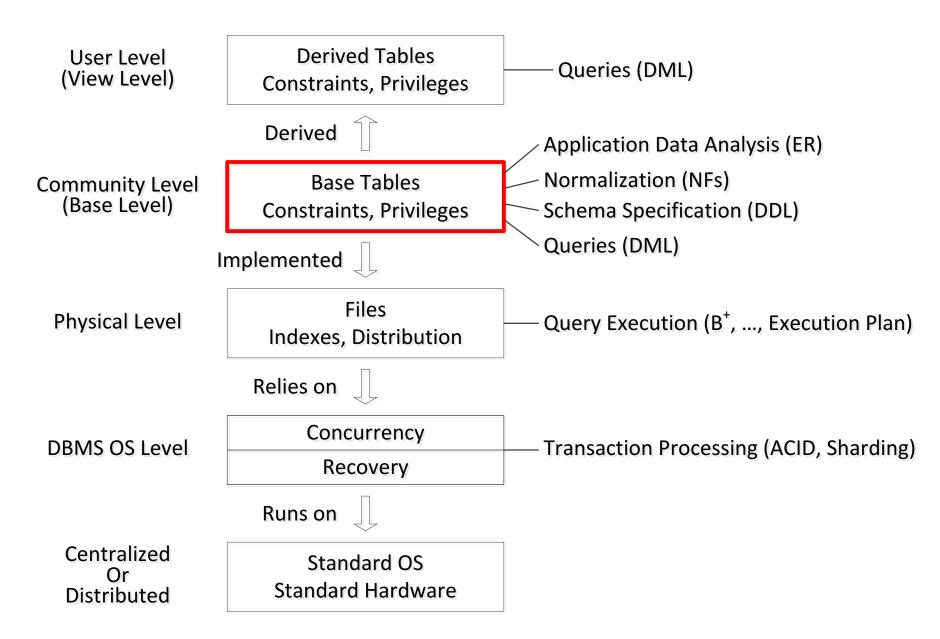
# Unit 4 Relational Algebra (Using SQL DML Syntax): Data Manipulation Language For Relations

# Relational Algebra in Context



# Relational Algebra And SQL

- SQL is based on relational algebra with many extensions
  - Some necessary
  - Some unnecessary
- "Pure" relational algebra uses mathematical notation with Greek letters
- I will cover it using SQL syntax; that is in this unit I will cover relational algebra, but it will look like SQL
  - and will be really valid SQL
- Pure relational algebra is used in research, scientific papers, and some textbooks (mainly because of inertia)
- But some may want to know it, and I provide at the end of this unit all the material from which one can learn it
- But in anything practical, including all relational commercial systems, you will be using SQL

# Sets And Operations On Them

- ◆ If A, B, and C are sets, then we have the operations
- $\bullet$  Union,  $A \cup B = \{ x \mid x \in A \lor x \in B \}$
- ♦ ∩ Intersection,  $A \cap B = \{ x \mid x \in A \land x \in B \}$
- ◆ Difference,  $A B = \{ x \mid x \in A \land x \notin B \}$
- In mathematics, difference is frequently denoted by a symbol similar to a backslash: A \ B
- ◆ × Cartesian product,  $A \times B = \{ (x,y) \mid x \in A \land y \in B \}, A \times B \times C = \{ (x,y,z) \mid x \in A \land y \in B \land z \in C \}, etc.$
- ◆ The above operations form an *algebra*, that is you can perform operations on results of operations, such as  $(A \cap B) \times (C \times A)$  and such operations *always produce sets*
- So you can write expressions and not just programs!

# Relations in Relational Algebra

- Relations are sets of tuples, which we will also call rows, drawn from some domains
- These domains do not include NULLs
- Relational algebra deals with relations (which look like tables with fixed number of columns and varying number of rows)
- We assume that each domain is linearly ordered, so for each x and y from the domain, one of the following holds
  - x < y</li>
  - $\chi = y$
  - *x* > y
- Frequently, such comparisons will be meaningful even if x and y are drawn from different columns
  - For example, one column deals with income and another with expenditure: we may want to compare them

# Reminder: Relations in Relational Algebra

- The order of rows and whether a row appears once or many times does not matter
- The order of columns matters, but as our columns will always be labeled, we will be able to reconstruct the order even if the columns are permuted.
- The following two relations are equal:

R	Α	В
	1	10
	2	20

R	В	Α
	20	2
	10	1
	20	2
	20	2

# Many Empty Relations

- In set theory, there is only one empty set
- For us, it is more convenient to think that for each relation schema, that for specific choice of column names and domains, there is a different empty relation
- And of, course, two empty relations with different number of columns must be different
- So for instance the two relations below are different



The above needs to be stated more precisely to be "completely correct," but as this will be intuitively clear, we do not need to worry about this too much

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# Relational Algebra Versus Full SQL

- Relational algebra is restricted to querying the database
- Does not have support for
  - Primary keys
  - Foreign keys
  - Inserting data
  - Deleting data
  - Updating data
  - Indexing
  - Recovery
  - Concurrency
  - Security
  - ...
- Does not care about efficiency, only about specifications of what is needed, so do not worry about efficiency now

## Operations on relations

- There are several fundamental operations on relations
- We will describe them in turn:
  - Projection
  - Selection
  - Cartesian product
  - Union
  - Difference
  - Intersection (technically not fundamental)
- The very important property: Any operation on relations produces a relation
- This is why we call our structure an algebra

# Projection: Choice Of Columns

R	Α	В	С	D
	1	10	100	1000
	1	20	100	1000
	1	20	200	1000

◆ SQL statement

SELECT B, A, D FROM R;

В	A	D
10	1	1000
20	1	1000
20	1	1000

 We could have removed the duplicate row, but did not have to

# Intuitive Explanation (Formally Not Permitted)

- R is a file of records
- ◆ Each record is tuple
- Each record consists of fields (values of attributes)
- Execute the following "program"
- 1. Create a new empty file
- 2. Read one-by-one the records of the file
- 3. Keep only some specific fields of each record and append this "modified" record to the new file

#### Selection: Choice Of Rows

R	Α	В	С	D
	5	5	7	4
	5	6	5	7
	4	5	4	4
	5	5	5	5
	4	6	5	3
	4	4	3	4
	4	4	4	5
	4	6	4	6

#### ◆ SQL statement:

**SELECT**\*

(this means all columns)

FROM R

WHERE  $A \le C$  AND D = 4; (this is a predicate, i.e., condition)

Α	В	С	D
5	5	7	4
4	5	4	4

# Intuitive Explanation (Formally Not Permitted)

- R is a file of records
- ◆ Each record is tuple
- Each record consists of fields (values of attributes)
- Execute the following "program"
- 1. Create a new empty file
- 2. Read one-by-one the records of the file
- 3. Check if a record satisfies some conditions on the values of the field
- 4. If the conditions are satisfied append the record to the new file, otherwise discard it
- Note: If the condition is empty, it is satisfied by every record

#### Selection

 In general, the condition (predicate) can be specified by a Boolean formula with

NOT, AND, OR on atomic conditions, where a condition is:

- a comparison between two column names,
- a comparison between a column name and a constant
- Technically, a constant should be put in quotes
- Even a number, such as 4, perhaps should be put in quotes, as '4', so that it is distinguished from a column name, but as we will **never** use numbers for column names, this not necessary

#### Cartesian Product

R	Α	В
	1	10
	2	10
	2	20

S	С	В	D
	40	10	10
	50	20	10

 ◆ SQL statement SELECT A, R.B, C, S.B, D
 FROM R, S; (comma stands for Cartesian product)

Α	R.B	С	S.B	D
1	10	40	10	10
1	10	50	20	10
2	10	40	10	10
2	10	50	20	10
2	20	40	10	10
2	20	50	20	10

# Intuitive Explanation (Formally Not Permitted)

- R and S are files of records
- ◆ Each record is tuple
- Each record consists of fields (values of attributes)
- Execute the following "program"
- 1. Create a new empty file
- 2. Outer loop: Read one-by-one the records of file R
- 3. Inner loop: Read one-by-one the records of file S
- 4. Combine the record from R with the record from S
- 5. Append to the new file the new "combined" record

# A Typical Use Of Cartesian Product

R	Size	Room#
	140	1010
	150	1020
	140	1030

S	ID#	Room#	YOB
	40	1010	1982
	50	1020	1985

#### SQL statement:

SELECT ID#, R.Room#, Size FROM R, S WHERE R.Room# = S.Room#;

ID#	R.Room#	Size
40	1010	140
50	1020	150

# A Typical Use Of Cartesian Product

◆ After the Cartesian product, we got

Size	R.Room#	ID#	S.Room#	YOB
140	1010	40	1010	1982
140	1010	50	1020	1985
150	1020	40	1010	1982
150	1020	50	1020	1985
140	1030	40	1010	1982
140	1030	50	1020	1985

This allowed us to correlate the information from the two original tables by examining each tuple in turn

# A Typical Use Of Cartesian Product

- This example showed how to correlate information from two tables
  - The first table had information about rooms and their sizes
  - The second table had information about employees including the rooms they sit in
  - The resulting table allows us to find out what are the sizes of the rooms the employees sit in
- We had to specify R.Room# or S.Room# in SELECT, even though they happen to be equal because we need to specify from which relation a specific column in the output is drawn
- We could, as we will see later, rename a column, to get Room#

ID#	Room#	Size
40	1010	140
50	1020	150

#### Union

R	A	В
	1	10
	2	20

S	Α	В
	1	10
	3	20

◆ SQL statement

**SELECT**\*

FROM R

**UNION** 

**SELECT\*** 

FROM S;

Α	В
1	10
2	20
3	20

Note: We happened to choose to remove duplicate rows

◆ Note: we *could not* just write R UNION S (syntax quirk)

# **Union Compatibility**

- We require same -arity (number of columns), otherwise the result is not a relation
- Also, the operation "probably" should make sense, that is the values in corresponding columns should be drawn from the same domains
- Actually, best to assume that the column names are the same and that is what we will do from now on
- We refer to these as union compatibility of relations
- Sometimes, just the term compatibility is used

#### **Difference**

R	A	В
	1	10
	2	20

S	Α	В
	1	10
	3	20

◆ SQL statement

**SELECT\*** 

FROM R

**MINUS** 

**SELECT**\*

FROM S;

Α	В
2	20

- Union compatibility is required
- ◆ EXCEPT is a synonym for MINUS

#### Intersection

R	Α	В
	1	10
	2	20

S	Α	В
	1	10
	3	20

SQL statement

**SELECT\*** 

FROM R

**INTERSECT** 

**SELECT\*** 

FROM S;

Α	В
1	10

- Union compatibility is required
- ◆ Can be computed using differences only: R (R S)

# From Relational Algebra to Queries

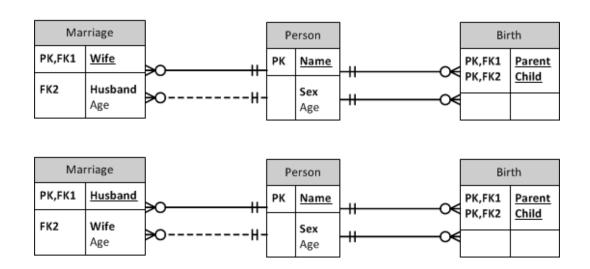
- These operations allow us to define a large number of interesting queries for relational databases.
- In order to be able to formulate our examples, we will assume standard programming language type of operations:
  - Assignment of an expression to a new variable;
     In our case assignment of a relational expression to a relational variable.
  - Renaming of a relation, to use another name to denote it
  - Renaming of a column, to use another name to denote it

# A Small Example

- The example consists of 3 relations:
  - Person(<u>Name</u>,Sex,Age)
    - This relation, whose primary key is Name, gives information about the human's sex and age
  - Birth(<u>Parent,Child</u>)
    - This relation, whose primary key is the pair Parent, Child, with both being foreign keys referring to Person gives information about who is a parent of whom. (Both mother and father could be listed)
  - Marriage(<u>Wife</u>, Husband, Age)
    - This relation, whose primary key is Wife, gives information about who is married to whom, and what is the Age of the marriage. Wife and Husband are foreign keys referring to Person.
    - Marriage(Wife, Husband, Age) is an alternative
  - For each attribute above, we will frequently use its first letter to refer to it, to save space in the slides, unless it creates an ambiguity
  - Some ages do not make sense, but this is fine for our example
- To make an example good for explaining the material, I am assuming here that all marriages are between two people of opposite sex

## Relational Implementation

- Two options for selecting the primary key of Marriage give a choice of one of two schemas
- The design is not necessarily good, but nice and simple for learning relational algebra



 Because we want to focus on relational algebra, which does not understand keys, we will not specify keys in this unit

#### Microsoft Access Database

- Microsoft Access Database with this example has been uploaded
- I suggest that you download and install Microsoft Access, but this is not required
- I used Access because it is a very good tool for quickly demonstrating (and learning) basic constructs of SQL DML, although it is not suitable for anything other than personal databases and even there is suffers from various defects
- ◆ I do not recommend using Access

#### Microsoft Access Database

◆ The database and our queries (other than the one with operator MINUS at the end) are on the NYU Classes web site

#### Note

- MINUS is frequently specified in commercial databases in a roundabout way
- I leave the discussion of how it is done to when we discuss commercial databases
- Our sample Access database: People.mdb
- ◆ I ran the queries in Microsoft Access and copied and pasted them in these notes, after reformatting them
- I copied and pasted screen shots of the results of the queries so that you can correlate the queries with the names of the resulting tables

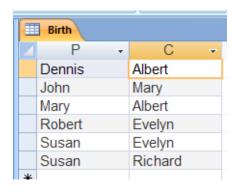
# Our Database

Person	N	S	Α
	Albert	M	20
	Dennis	M	40
	Evelyn	F	20
	John	M	60
	Mary	F	40
	Robert	M	60
	Susan	F	40

Birth	Р	С
	Dennis	Albert
	John	Mary
	Mary	Albert
	Robert	Evelyn
	Susan	Evelyn
	Susan	Richard

#### Our Instance In Microsoft Access





# A Query

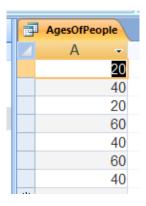
- Produce the relation Answer(A) consisting of all ages of people
- Note that all the information required can be obtained from looking at a single relation, Person
- Answer:=SELECT AFROM Person;

A
20
40
20
60
40
60
40

 Recall that whether duplicates are removed or not is not important (at least for the time being in our course, as we study relational algebra)

# The Query In Microsoft Access

- The actual query was copied and pasted from Microsoft Access and reformatted for readability
- The result is below



# A Query

- Produce the relation Answer(N) consisting of all women who are less or equal than 32 years old.
- Note that all the information required can be obtained from looking at a single relation, Person
- Answer:=

SELECT N

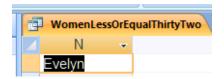
**FROM Person** 

WHERE A <= 32 AND S ='F';



# The Query In Microsoft Access

- The actual query was copied and pasted from Microsoft Access and reformatted for readability
- The result is below



## A Query

- Produce a relation Answer(P, Daughter) with the obvious meaning
- Here, even though the answer comes only from the single relation Birth, we still have to check in the relation Person what the S of the C is
- ◆ To do that, we create the Cartesian product of the two relations: Person and Birth. This gives us "long tuples," consisting of a tuple in Person and a tuple in Birth
- For our purpose, the two tuples matched if N in Person is C in Birth and the S of the N is F

## A Query

Answer:=

SELECT P, C AS Daughter

FROM Person, Birth

WHERE C = N AND S = 'F';

Р	Daughter
John	Mary
Robert	Evelyn
Susan	Evelyn

Note that AS was the attribute-renaming operator

# Cartesian Product With Condition: Matching Tuples Indicated



## The Query In Microsoft Access

- The actual query was copied and pasted from Microsoft Access and reformatted for readability
- The result is below.



## A Query

- Produce a relation Answer(Father, Daughter) with the obvious meaning.
- Here we have to simultaneously look at two copies of the relation Person, as we have to determine both the S of the Parent and the S of the C
- We need to have two distinct copies of Person in our SQL query
- But, they have to have different names so we can specify to which we are referring
- Again, we use AS as a renaming operator, these time for relations

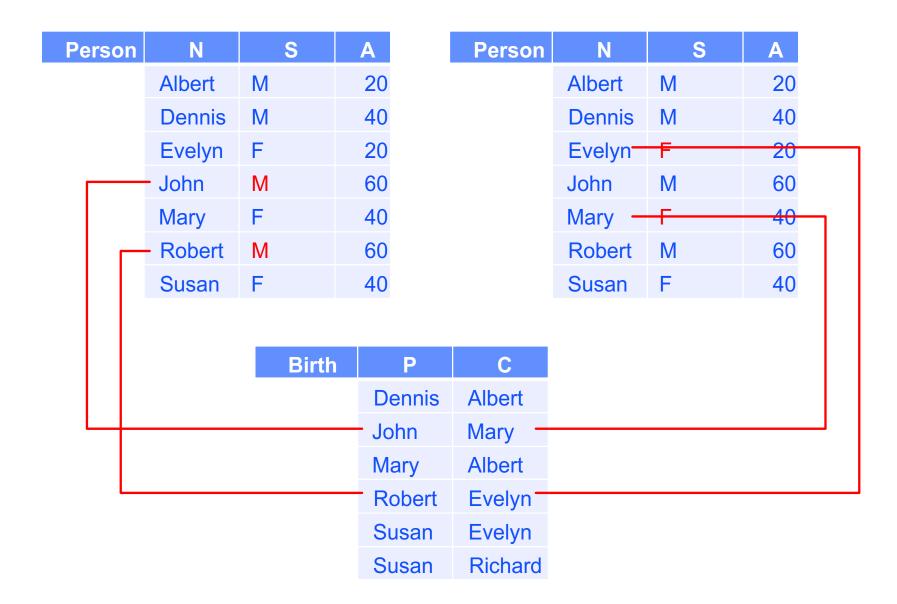
 Note: We could have used what we have already computed: Answer(Parent, Daughter)

## A Query

◆ Answer := SELECT P AS Father, C AS Daughter FROM Person, Birth, Person AS Person1 WHERE P = Person.N AND C = Person1.N AND Person.S = 'M' AND Person1.S = 'F';

Father	Daughter
John	Mary
Robert	Evelyn

# Cartesian Product With Condition: Matching Tuples Indicated



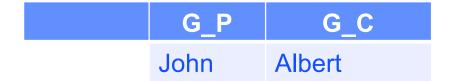
### The Query In Microsoft Access

- The actual query was copied and pasted from Microsoft Access and reformatted for readability
- The result is below



## A Query

- Produce a relation: Answer(Grandparent, Grandchild)
- A classroom exercise, but you can see the solution in the posted database

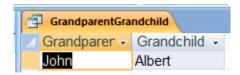


# Cartesian Product With Condition: Matching Tuples Indicated

Birth	Р	С	Birth	Р	С
	Dennis	Albert		Dennis	Albert
	John	Mary -	7	John	Mary
	Mary	Albert		-Mary	Albert
	Robert	Evelyn		Robert	Evelyn
	Susan	Evelyn		Susan	Evelyn
	Susan	Richard		Susan	Richard

## The Query In Microsoft Access

- The actual query was copied and pasted from Microsoft Access and reformatted for readability
- The result is below



#### Further Distance

- How to compute (Great-grandparent, Great-grandchild)?
- Easy, just take the Cartesian product of the (Grandparent, Grandchild) table with (Parent, Child) table and specify equality on the "intermediate" person
- How to compute (Great-great-grandparent, Great-great-grandchild)?
- Easy, just take the Cartesian product of the (Grandparent, Grandchild) table with itself and specify equality on the "intermediate" person
- Similarly, can compute (Great<sup>x</sup>-grandparent, Great<sup>x</sup>-grandchild), for any x

Ultimately, may want (Ancestor, Descendant)

# Relational Algebra Is Not Universal: Cannot Compute (Ancestor, Descendant)

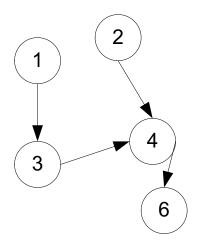
- Standard programming languages are universal
- This roughly means that they are as powerful as Turing machines, if unbounded amount of storage is permitted (you will never run out of memory)
- This roughly means that they can compute anything that can be computed by any computational machine we can (at least currently) imagine
- Relational algebra is weaker than a standard programming language
- It is impossible in relational algebra (or standard SQL) to compute the relation Answer(Ancestor, Descendant)
- But, there are enhancements to SQL, which allow to compute such a query, and we will cover that later

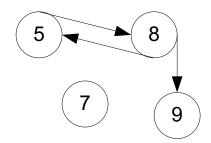
# Relational Algebra Is Not Universal: Cannot Compute (Ancestor, Descendant)

- It is impossible in relational algebra (or early versions of SQL, but we will see how to do it in Oracle later in the course) to compute the relation Answer(Ancestor, Descendant)
- Why?
- The proof is a reasonably simple, but uses cumbersome induction.
- The general idea is:
  - Any relational algebra query is limited in how many relations or copies of relations it can refer to
  - Computing arbitrary (ancestor, descendant) pairs cannot be done, if the query is limited in advance as to the number of relations and copies of relations (including intermediate results) it can specify
- This is not a contrived example because it shows that we cannot compute the transitive closure of a directed graph: the set of all the paths in the graph

## Relational Algebra Is Not Universal: Cannot Compute Transitive Closures

 Given Arc we would like to compute Path but cannot do it for arbitrary graphs using early SQL but can do it starting with the 1999 SQL standard and in Oracle





Arc	From	То
	1	3
	2	4
	3	4
	4	6
	5	8
	8	5
	8	9

Path	From	То
	1	3
	1	4
	1	6
	2	4
	2	6
	3	4
	3	6
	4	6
	5	8
	5	9
	8	5
	8	9

## A Sample Query

 Produce a relation Answer(A) consisting of all ages of persons that are not ages of marriages

SELECT A FROM Person MINUS SELECT A FROM MARRIAGE;

## The Query In Microsoft Access

 We do not show this here, as it is done in a roundabout way and we will do it later

## It Does Not Matter If We Remove Duplicates

### Removing duplicates

A		Α		Α
20		20		40
40	_	30	=	60
60				

### Not removing duplicates

Α				
20				
40		Α		
20	_	20	=	
60		30		
40				
60				
40				

### It Does Not Matter If We Remove Duplicates

- ◆ The resulting set contains precisely ages: 40, 60
- So we do not have to be concerned with whether the implementation removes duplicates from the result or not
- In both cases we can answer correctly
  - Is 50 a number that is an age of a marriage but not of a person
  - Is 40 a number that is an age of a marriage but not of a person
- Just like we do not have to be concerned with whether it sorts (orders) the result
- This is the consequence of us not insisting that an element in a set appears only once, as we discussed earlier
- Note, if we had said that an element in a set appears once, we would have had to spend effort removing duplicates!

#### Next

- SQL as implemented in commercial databases, using Oracle as example
- In that context, we will look also at
  - More complex expressions built of the operations we saw earlier
  - Extensions in SQL beyond what is expressible using the operations we saw earlier

## Key Ideas

- A relation is a set of rows in a table with labeled columns
- Relational algebra as the basis for SQL
- Basic operations:
  - Union (requires union compatibility)
  - Difference (requires union compatibility)
  - Intersection (requires union compatibility); technically not a basic operation
  - Selection of rows
  - Selection of columns
  - Cartesian product
- These operations define an algebra: given an expression on relations, the result is a relation (this is a "closed" system)
- Combining this operations allows construction of sophisticated queries

## Key Ideas

- Relational algebra is not universal: cannot compute some useful answers such as transitive closure
- We focused on relational algebra specified using SQL syntax, as this is more important in practice
- ◆ The other, "more mathematical" notation came first and is used in research and other venues, but not commercially

## Optional Material Relational Algebra Using Standard Relational Algebra Mathematical Notation

## Now To "Pure" Relational Algebra

- I am giving a description in several slides
  - Just the basic operations, as before
  - Other operations can be derived from the basic ones
- But it is really the same as before, just the notation is more mathematical
- Looks like mathematical expressions, not snippets of programs
- It is useful to know this because many more theoretical resources use relational algebra instead of SQL
- This notation came first, before SQL was invented, and when relational databases were just a theoretical construct

## $\pi$ : Projection: Choice Of Columns

R	Α	В	С	D
	1	10	100	1000
	1	20	100	1000
	1	20	200	1000

SQL statement

Relational Algebra

SELECT B, A, D FROM R

$$\pi_{B,A,D}(R)$$

В	Α	D
10	1	1000
20	1	1000
20	1	1000

 We could have removed the duplicate row, but did not have to

#### **o**: Selection: Choice Of Rows

R	Α	В	С	D
	5	5	7	4
	5	6	5	7
	4	5	4	4
	5	5	5	5
	4	6	5	3
	4	4	3	4
	4	4	4	5
	4	6	4	6

SQL statement:

Relational Algebra

 $\sigma_{A \le C \land D=4}$  (R) Note: no need for  $\pi$ 

**SELECT**\*

FROM R

WHERE  $A \le C$  AND D = 4;

Α	В	С	D
5	5	7	4
4	5	4	4

#### Selection

- In general, the condition (predicate) can be specified by a Boolean formula with
  - $\neg$ ,  $\wedge$ , and  $\vee$  on atomic conditions, where a condition is:
    - a comparison between two column names,
    - a comparison between a column name and a constant
    - Technically, a constant should be put in quotes
    - Even a number, such as 4, perhaps should be put in quotes, as '4' so that it is distinguished from a column name, but as we will never use numbers for column names, this not necessary

#### **×**: Cartesian Product

R	Α	В
	1	10
	2	10
	2	20

S	С	В	D
	40	10	10
	50	20	10

◆ SQL statement
SELECT A, R.B, C, S.B, D
FROM R, S

Relational Algebra R × S

Α	R.B	С	S.B	D
1	10	40	10	10
1	10	50	20	10
2	10	40	10	10
2	10	50	20	10
2	20	40	10	10
2	20	50	20	10

## A Typical Use Of Cartesian Product

R	Size	Room#
	140	1010
	150	1020
	140	1030

S	ID#	Room#	YOB
	40	1010	1982
	50	1020	1985

◆ SQL statement:
SELECT ID#, R.Room#, Size
FROM R, S

WHERE R.Room# = S.Room#

Relational Algebra

 $\pi_{\text{ID\#,R.Room\#,Size}}\sigma_{\text{R.Room\#=S.Room\#}}(R\times S)$ 

ID#	R.Room#	Size
40	1010	140
50	1020	150

#### **∪**: Union

R	Α	В
	1	10
	2	20

S	Α	В
	1	10
	3	20

SQL statement

**SELECT**\*

FROM R

**UNION** 

**SELECT**\*

FROM S

	Re	latio	าal A	lae	bra
--	----	-------	-------	-----	-----

 $R \cup S$ 

Α	В
1	10
2	20
3	20

- ◆ Note: We happened to choose to remove duplicate rows
- Union compatibility required

#### -: Difference

R	A	В
	1	10
	2	20

S	Α	В
	1	10
	3	20

SQL statement

**SELECT**\*

FROM R

**MINUS** 

**SELECT\*** 

FROM S

Relational Algebra

R - S

Α	В
2	20

Union compatibility required

#### : Intersection

R	Α	В
	1	10
	2	20

S	Α	В
	1	10
	3	20

SQL statement

**SELECT**\*

FROM R

**INTERSECT** 

**SELECT\*** 

FROM S

Relational	Algebra
$R \cap S$	

Α	В
1	10

Union compatibility required