

# The Relational Data Model

## 2. The Relational Data Model

- use a simple and uniform data structure: the relation
- has been implemented in most commercial database systems
- has a solid theoretic foundation.

# 2.1 Structures

- In the relational model, everything is described using relations.
- A relation can be thought of as a named table.
- Each column of the table corresponds to a named attribute.
- The set of allowed values for an attribute is called its domain.
- Each row of the table is called a tuple of the relation.
- N.B. There is no ordering of column or rows.

# Example

PLAYER					
Name	Position	Goals	Age	Height	Weight
Heady	Half-forward	17	24	183	83
Sumich	Full-forward	59	26	191	92
Langdon	Utility	23	23	189	86

PLAYER					
Name	Age	Height	Weight	Goals	Position
Sumich	26	191	92	59	Full-forward
Langdon	23	189	86	23	Utility
Heady	24	183	83	17	Half-forward

Above two tables are the same relation ---- Player

- Mathematically,
  - a *domain*  $D$  is a set of atomic values (having some fixed data type) which represent some semantic meaning.
  - an *attribute*,  $A$ , is the name of a role played by a *domain*,  $dom(A)$ .
  - a *relation schema*  $R$ , denoted by  $R(A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n)$ , is a set of attributes  $R = \{A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n\}$ .

**Composite and multivalued attributes are disallowed!**

- A *tuple*,  $t(A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n)$ , is a point in  $\text{dom}(A_1) \times \dots \times \text{dom}(A_n)$  where each  $\text{dom}(A_j)$  is the domain of  $A_j$ .
- A *relation* (or a *relation instance*) is a set of tuples: a subset of 
$$\text{dom}(A_1) \times \dots \times \text{dom}(A_n).$$
- A relation schema is used to describe a relation.
- The *degree* of a relation is the number of attributes of its relation schema.

# Relational Data Model vs ER Model:

- Relation schema (intension)  $\rightleftharpoons$  entity or relationship type schema (intension).
- attributes  $\rightleftharpoons$  attributes
- tuple  $\rightleftharpoons$  instance of entity/relationship
- relation (instance, extension)  $\rightleftharpoons$  entity/relationship extension
- composite and multivalued attributes are allowed in ER model, but not allowed in relational data model.

- *Keys* are used to identify tuples in a relation.
- A *superkey* is a set of attributes that uniquely determines a tuple.
- Note that this is a property of the relation that does not depend on the current relation instance.
- A *candidate key* is a superkey, none of whose *proper* subsets is a superkey.
- Keys are determined by the applications.
- E.g. if {Name} is unique then it is a candidate key for PLAYER; otherwise we need to use the whole tuple or create a candidate key, say PID.
- {Goals} usually cannot not be a candidate key since different players *might* have the same number of goals.
- {Name, Goals} is a superkey but not a candidate key if {Name} is a key.



- A *primary key* is a designated candidate key.
- In many applications it is necessary to invent a primary key if there is no natural one - often this would be a non-negative integer
- e.g. Person\_number.
- When a relation schema has several candidate keys, usually better to choose a primary key with a single attribute or a small number of attributes.

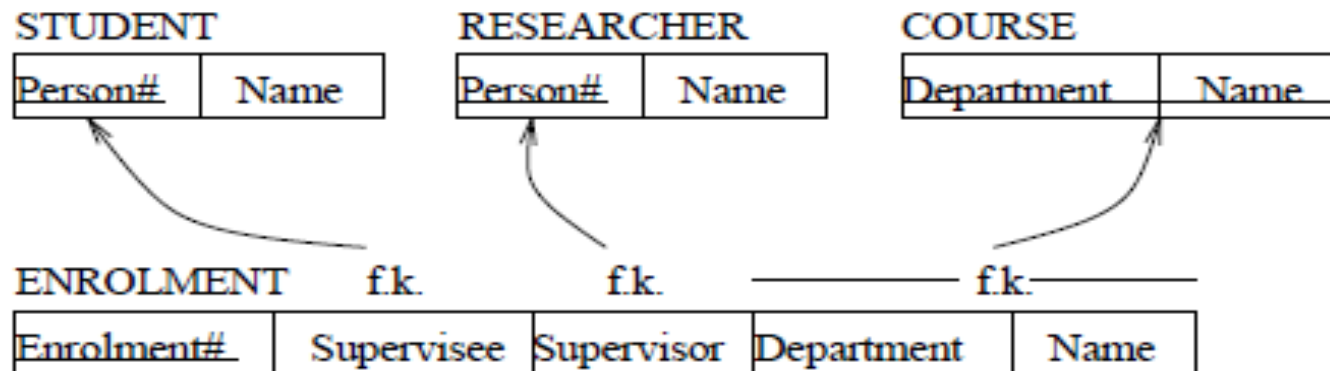
## 2.2 Integrity constraints

- There are several kinds of integrity constraints that are an integral part of the relational model:
- **2.2.1 Key constraint:** candidate key values must be unique for every relation instance.
- **2.2.2 Entity integrity:** an attribute that is part of a primary key cannot be NULL.
- **2.2.3 Referential integrity:** The third kind has to do with “foreign keys”.

- Foreign keys are used to refer to a tuple in another relation.
- A set,  $FK$ , of attributes from a relation schema  $R_1$  may be a foreign *key* if
  - the attributes have the same domains as the attributes in the primary key of another relation schema  $R_2$ , and
  - a value of  $FK$  in a tuple  $t_1$  of  $R_1$  either occurs as a value of  $PK$  for some tuple  $t_2$  in  $R_2$  or is null.
- *Referential integrity*: The value of  $FK$  must occur in the other relation or be entirely NULL.

## 2.2.4 Checking constraints on updates

- To maintain the integrity of the database, we need to check that integrity constraints will not be violated before proceeding with an update.
- Example: Suppose we have the following schema with foreign keys as shown:



<2, Dr. V. Ciesielski>

insert

RESEARCHER	
Person#	Name
1	Dr.C.C.Chen
2	Dr.R.G.Wilkinson

STUDENT	
Person#	Name
1	Dr.C.C.Chen
3	Ms.K.Juliff
4	Ms.J.Gledill
5	Ms.B.K.Lee

COURSE	
Department	Name
Psychology	Ph.D.
Comp.Sci.	Ph.D.
Comp.Sci.	M.Sc.
Psychology	M.Sc.

ENROLMENT				
Enrolment#	Supervisee	Supervisor	Department	Name
1	1	2	Psychology	Ph.D.
2	3	1	Comp.Sci.	Ph.D.
3	4	1	Comp.Sci.	M.Sc.
4	5	1	Comp.Sci.	M.Sc.

<Comp.Sci., NULL>

insert

STUDENT	
Person#	Name
1	Dr.C.C.Chen
3	Ms.K.Juliff
4	Ms.J.Gledill
5	Ms.B.K.Lee

RESEARCHER	
Person#	Name
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2	Dr.R.G.Wilkinson

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3	4	1	Comp.Sci.	M.Sc.
4	5	1	Comp.Sci.	M.Sc.

<5, 6, 2, Psychology, Ph.D>

insert

STUDENT	
Person#	Name
1	Dr.C.C.Chen
3	Ms.K.Juliff
4	Ms.J.Gledill
5	Ms.B.K.Lee

RESEARCHER	
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4	5	1	Comp.Sci.	M.Sc.



- *Insertions*: When inserting, we need to check
  - that the candidate keys are not already present,
  - that the value of each foreign key either
    - is all null, or
    - is all non-NULL and occurs in the referenced relation.

Examples:

1. Insert  $\langle 2, Dr.V.Ciesielski \rangle$  into RESEARCHER

Allowed? No. Violates a key constraint.

Action? Reject or allow the user to correct.

2. Insert  $\langle \text{Comp.Sci.}, \text{NULL} \rangle$  into COURSE

Allowed? No. Violates the entity integrity constraint.

Action: Reject or correct.

3. Insert  $\langle 5, 6, 2, \text{Psychology}, \text{Ph.D.} \rangle$  into ENROLMENT

Allowed? No. Violates a referential integrity constraint (There is no person number 6).

Action: Reject, correct or accept after insertion of person number 6.

- *Deletions*: When deleting, we need to check referential integrity – check whether the primary key occurs in another relation.

## Examples:

1. Delete tuple with Person# = 2 from RESEARCHER

Allowed? No. Violates the referential integrity.

Action: Reject, correct or modify the ENROLMENT tuple by

- deleting it (note that this requires another integrity check, possibly causing a cascade of deletions), or
- setting the foreign key value to NULL (note this can't be done if it is part of a primary key), or
- setting the foreign key value to another acceptable value.

## *Modifications:*

If the modified attribute is a

- primary key: this is similar to deleting and then reinserting.
- foreign key: check that the new value refers to an existing tuple.
- neither: no problems can arise.

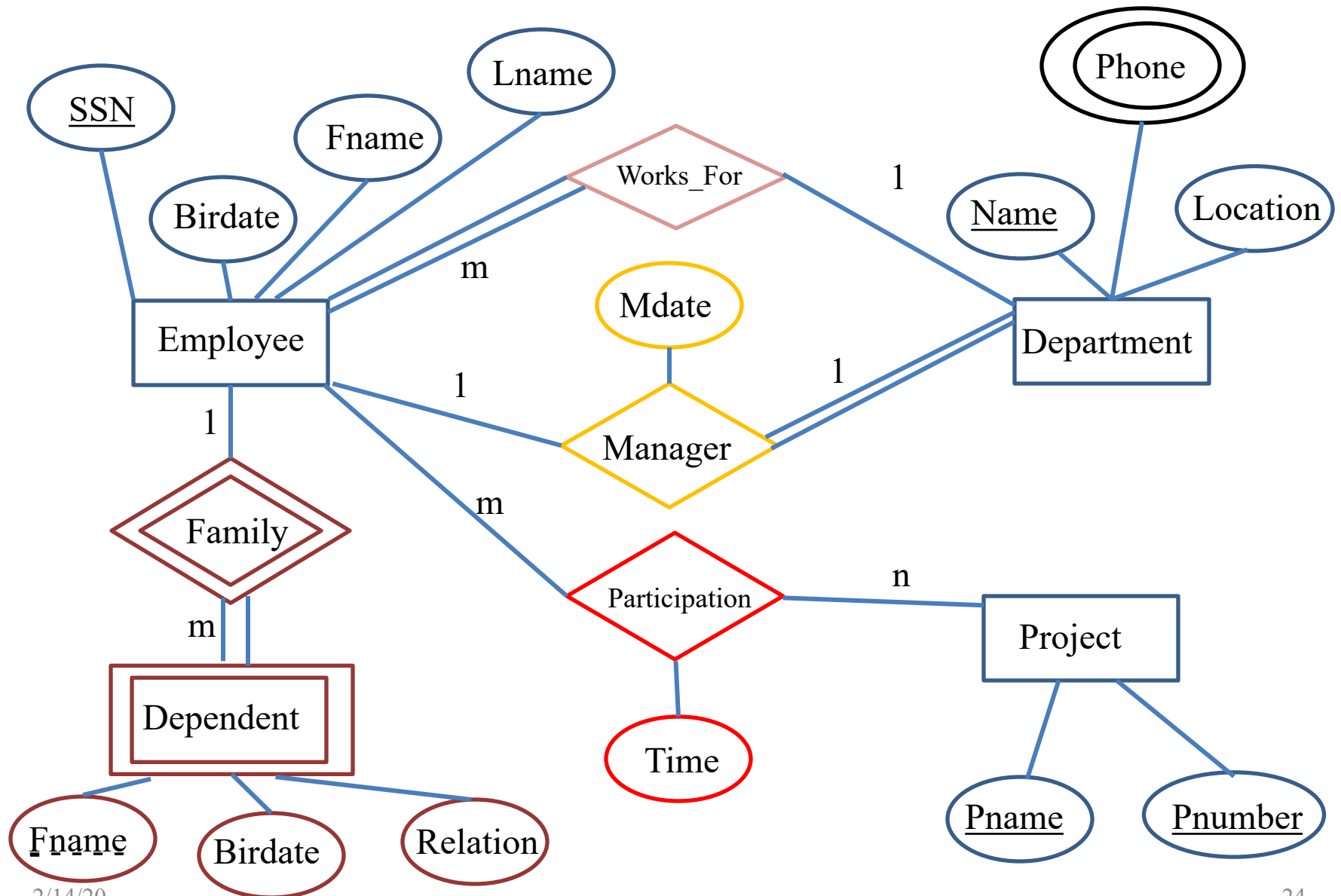
## 2.2.5 Relational database definition

- A *relational database schema*, is a set of relation schema  $\{R_1, \dots, R_m\}$  and a set of integrity constraints.
- A relational database instance is a set of relation instances  $\{r_1, \dots, r_m\}$  such that each  $r_i$  is an instance of  $R_i$ , and the integrity constraints are satisfied.

## 2.3 ER to Relational Data Model Mapping

- One technique for database design is to first design a conceptual schema using a high-level data model, and then map it to a conceptual schema in the DBMS data model for the chosen DBMS.
- Here we look at a way to do this mapping from the ER to the relational data model.
- It involves the following 7 steps.

- Example: ER  $\rightarrow$  RDB





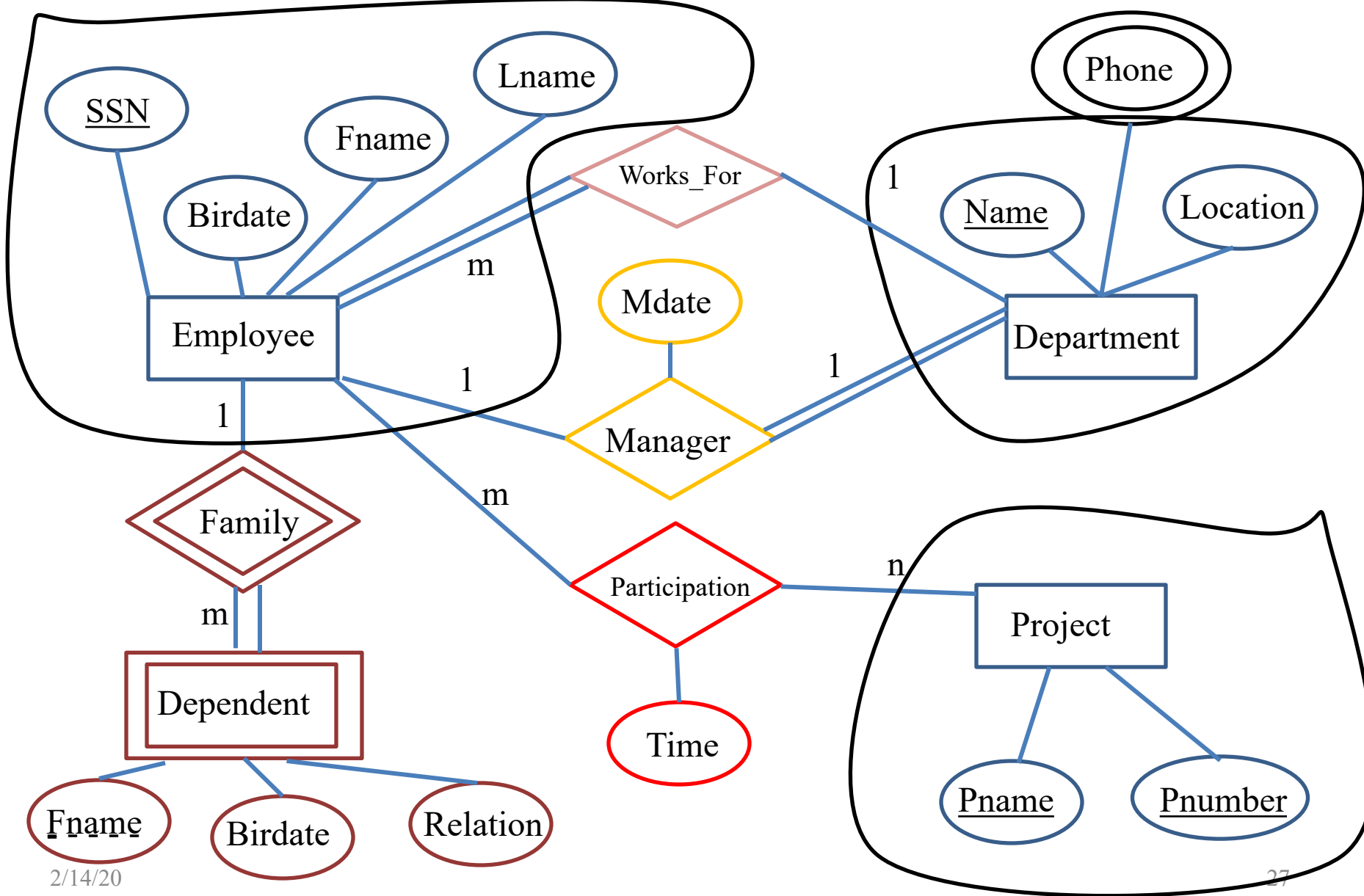
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- Step 1 : For each regular (not weak) entity type E, create a relation R with
  - Attributes : All simple attributes (and simple components of composite attributes) of E.
  - Key : Choose one of the keys of E as the primary key for the relation.

- Step 1a : For each specialised entity type E, with parent entity type P, create a relation R with
  - Attributes : The attributes of the key of P, plus the simple attributes of E.
  - Key : The key of P.

- Example: ER  $\rightarrow$  RDB



Employee

<u>SSN</u>	Fname	Lname	Birdate
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Department

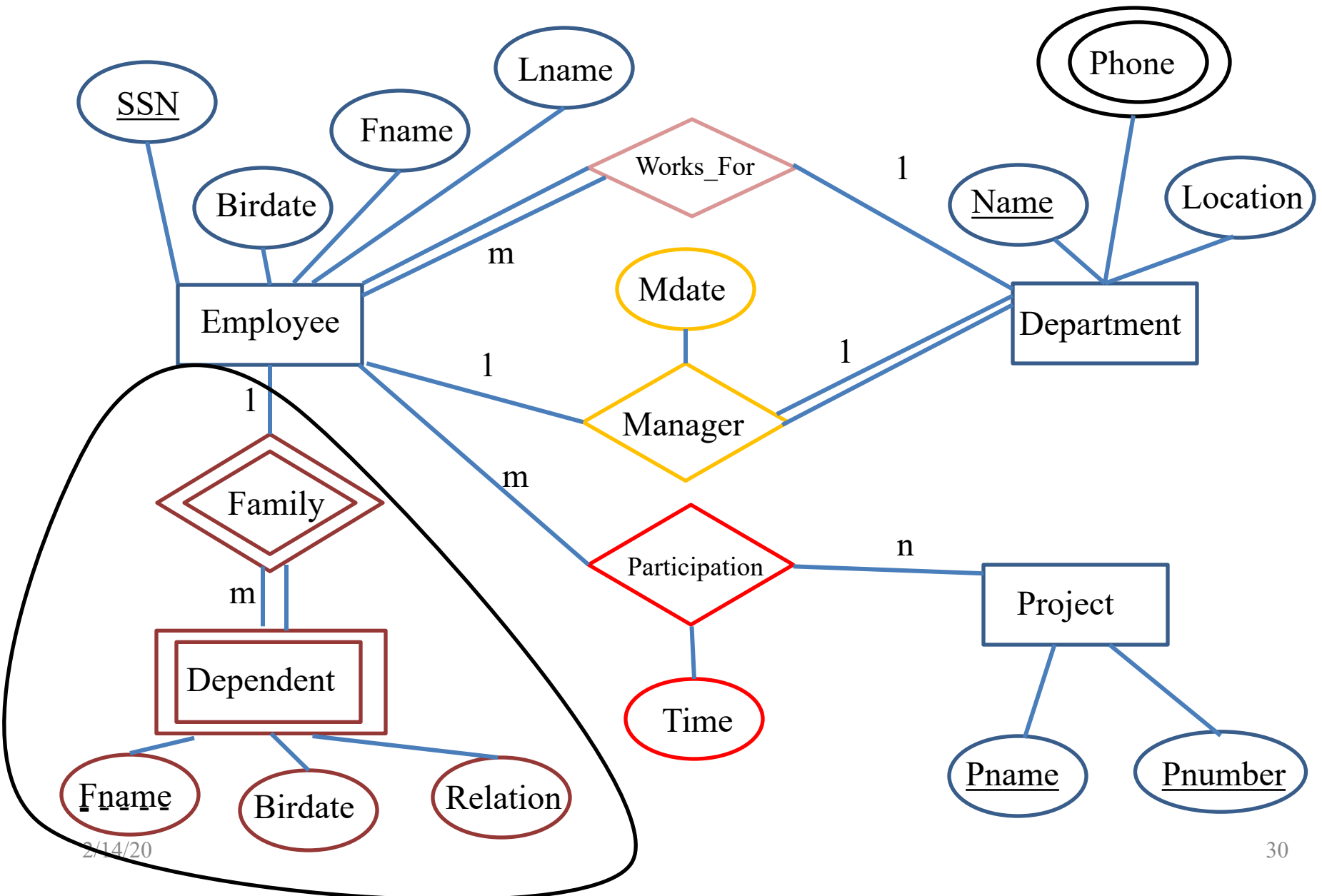
<u>Name</u>	Location
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Project

<u>Pname</u>	<u>Pnumber</u>
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- Step 2 : For each weak entity type W, with owner entity type E, create a relation R with
  - Attributes : All simple attributes (and simple components of composite attributes) of W, and include as a foreign key the prime attributes of the relation derived from E.
  - Key : The foreign key plus the partial key of W.

- Example: ER  $\rightarrow$  RDB



Employee

<u>SSN</u>	Fname	Lname	Birdate
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Department

<u>Name</u>	Location
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Project

<u>Pname</u>	<u>Pnumber</u>
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Dependent

<u>SSN</u>	<u>Fname</u>	Birdate	Relation
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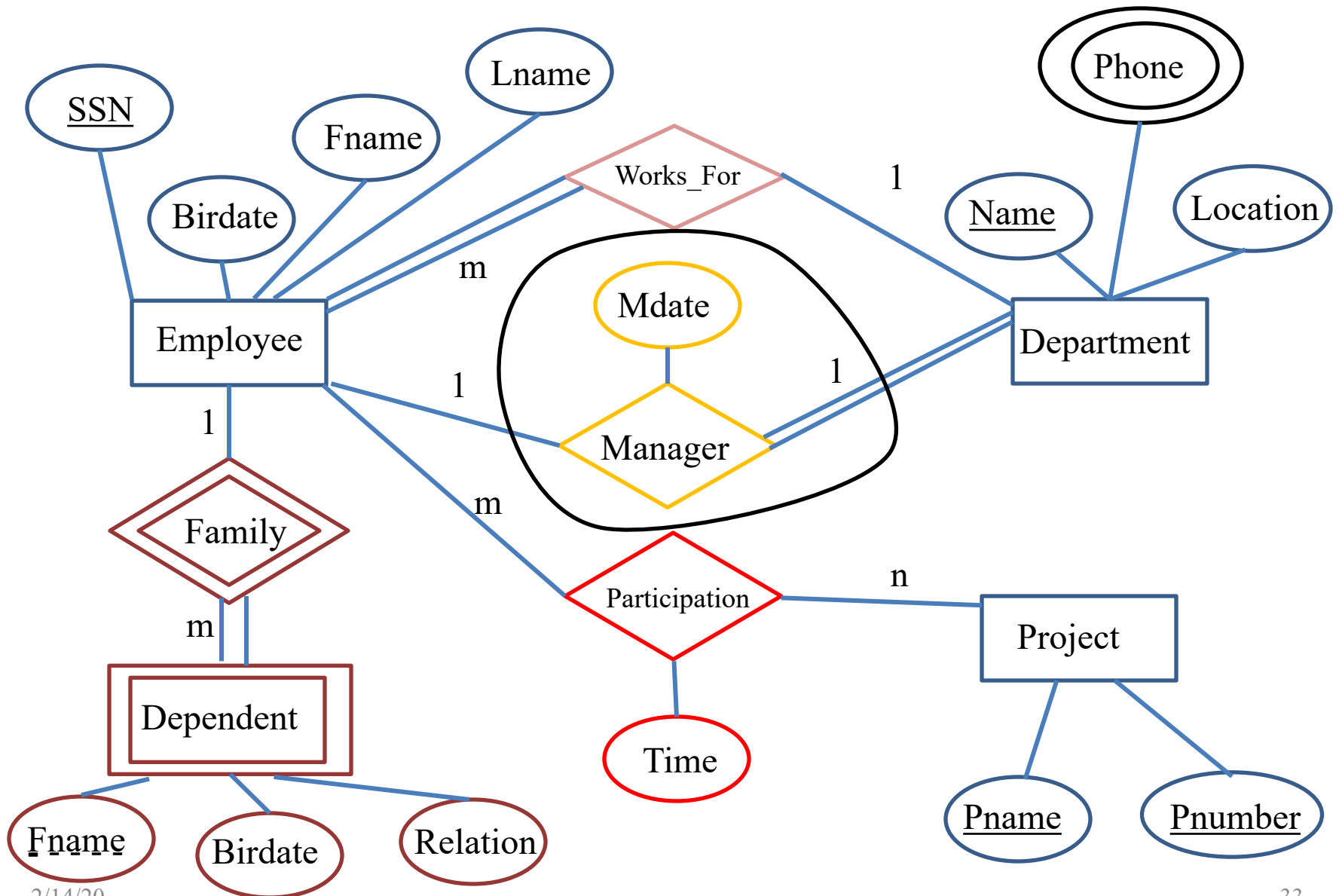


- Step 3 : For each 1:1 relationship type B. Let E and F be the participating entity types. Let S and T be the corresponding relations.
  - Choose one of S and T (prefer one that participates totally), say S.
  - Add the attributes of the primary key of T to S as a foreign key.
  - Add the simple attributes (and simple components of composite attributes) of B as attributes of S.

(Alternative: merge the two entity types and the relationship into a single relation, especially if both participate totally and do not participate in other relationships).



- Example: ER  $\rightarrow$  RDB



Employee

<u>SSN</u>	Fname	Lname	Birdate
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Department

<u>Name</u>	Location	MSSN	Mdate
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Project

<u>Pname</u>	<u>Pnumber</u>
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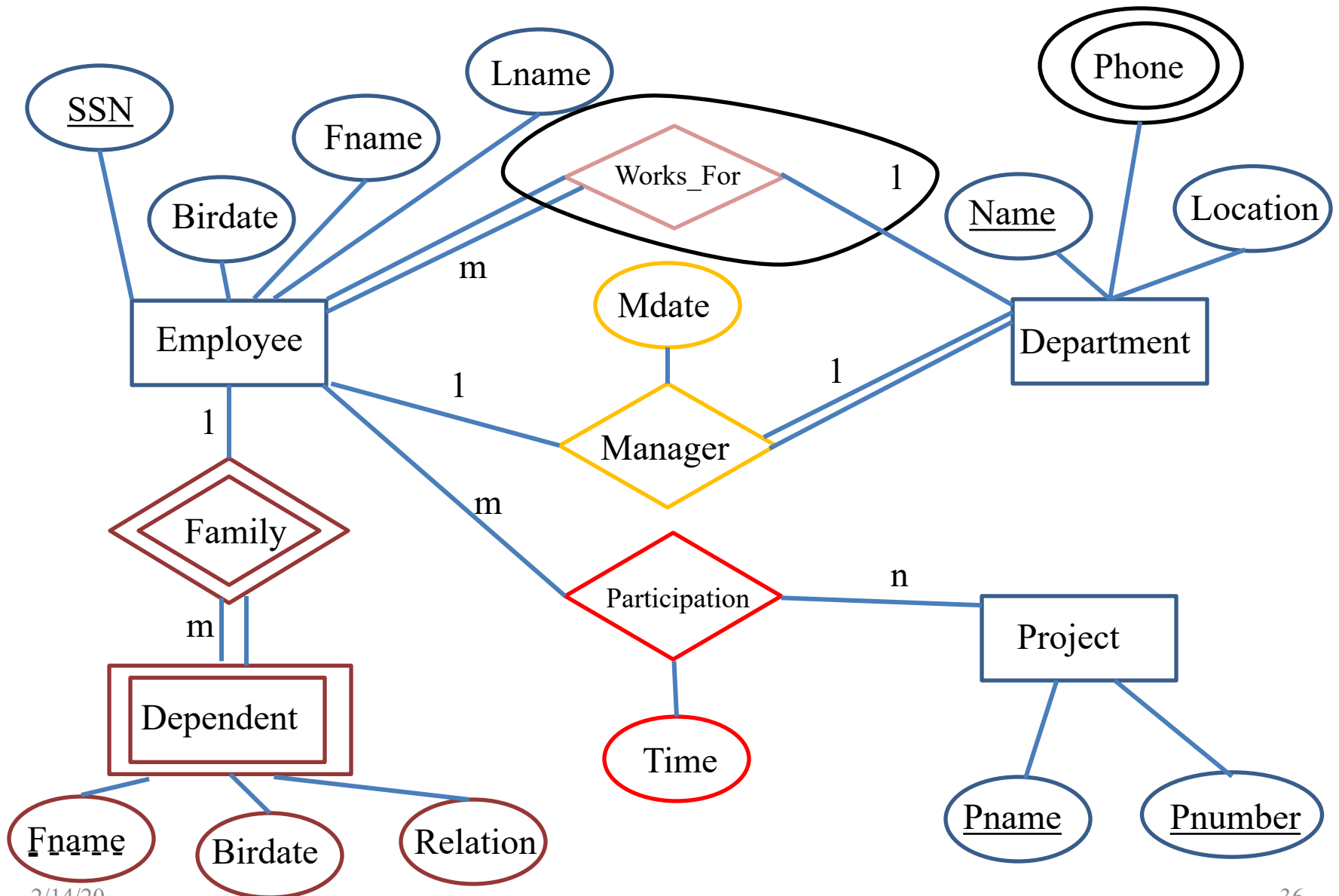
Dependent

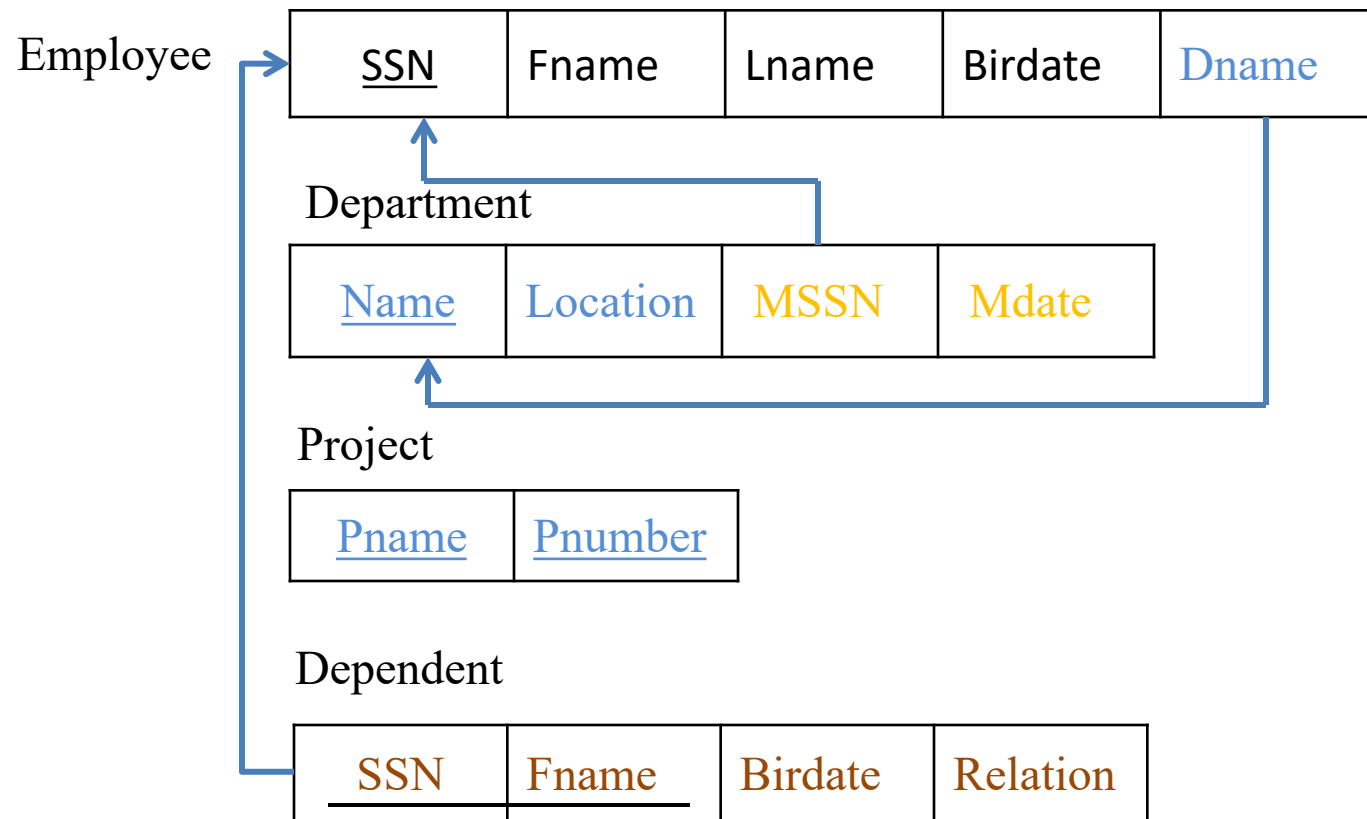
<u>SSN</u>	<u>Fname</u>	Birdate	Relation
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- Step 4 : For each regular 1:N relationship type B.
  - Let E and F be the participating entity types.
  - Let E be the entity type on the 1 side, F the one on the N side.
  - Let S and T be the corresponding relations.
  - Add the attributes of the primary key of S to T as a foreign key.
  - Add to T any simple attributes (or simple components of composite attributes) of the relationship.

(Notice that this doesn't add any new tuples, just attributes.)

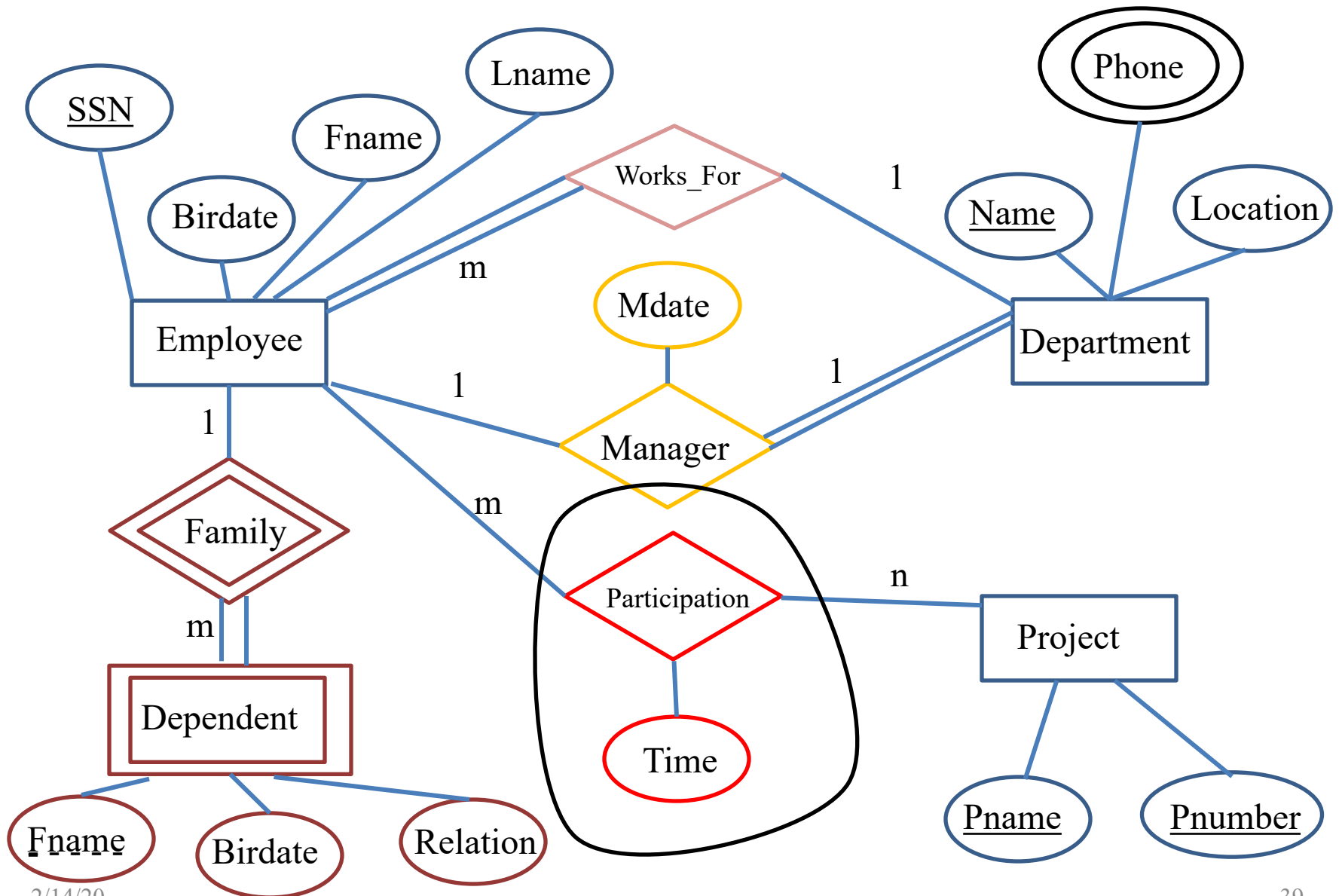
- Example: ER  $\rightarrow$  RDB

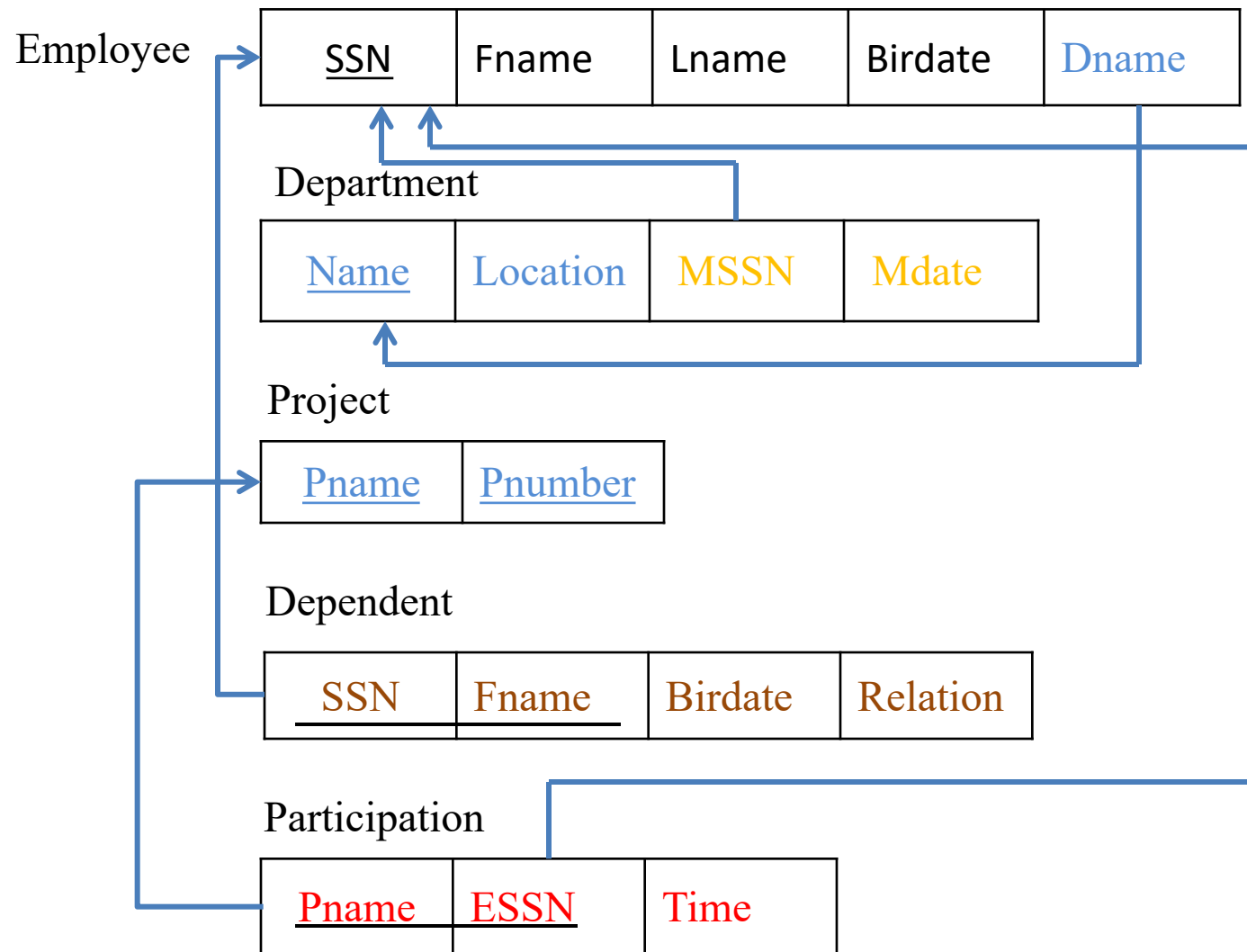




- Step 5 : For each N:M relationship type B. Create a new relation R. Let E and F be the participating entity types. Let S and T be the corresponding relations.
  - Attributes : The key of S and the key of T as foreign keys, plus the simple attributes (and simple components of composite attributes) of B.
  - Key : The key of S and the key of T.

- Example: ER  $\rightarrow$  RDB

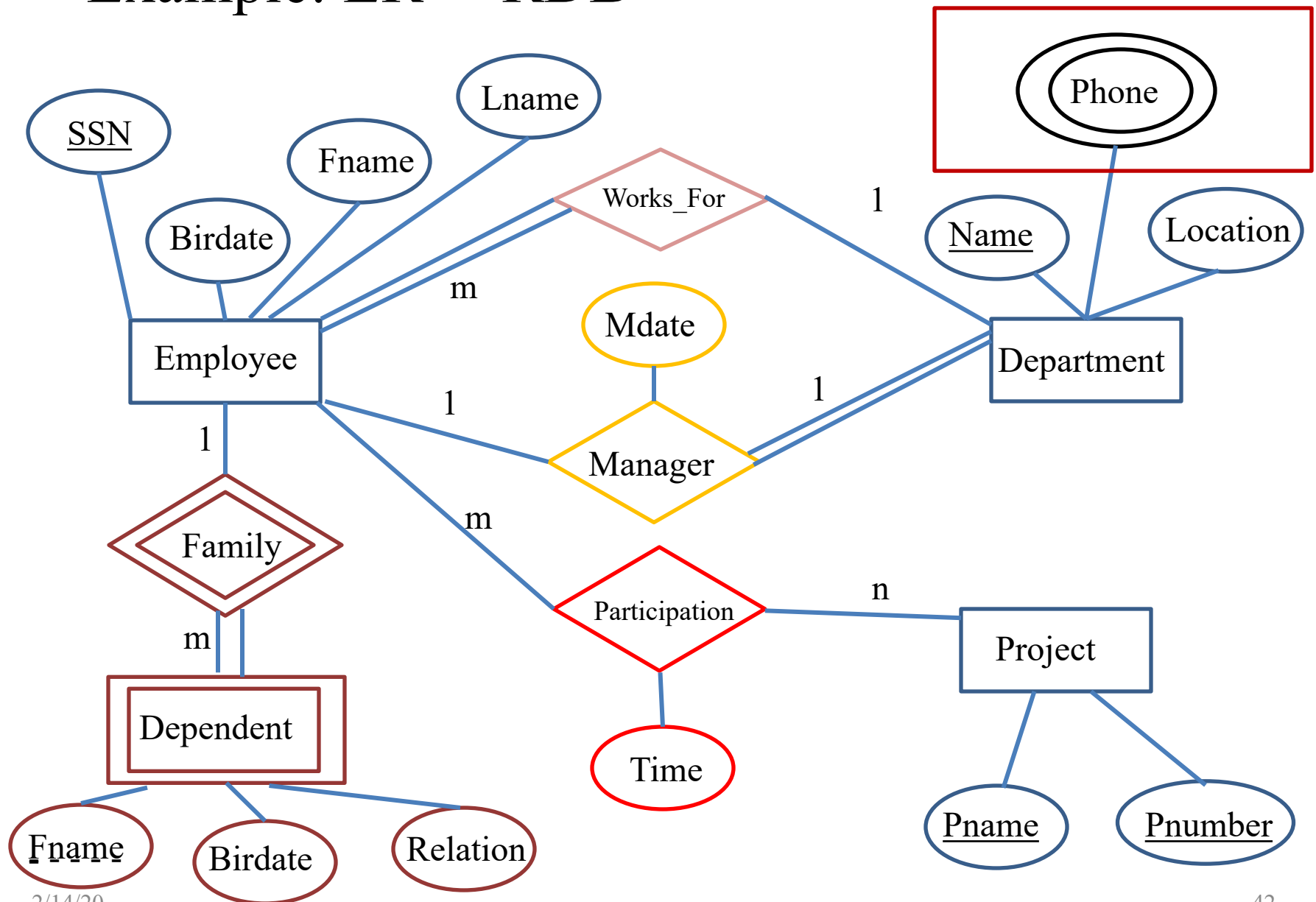




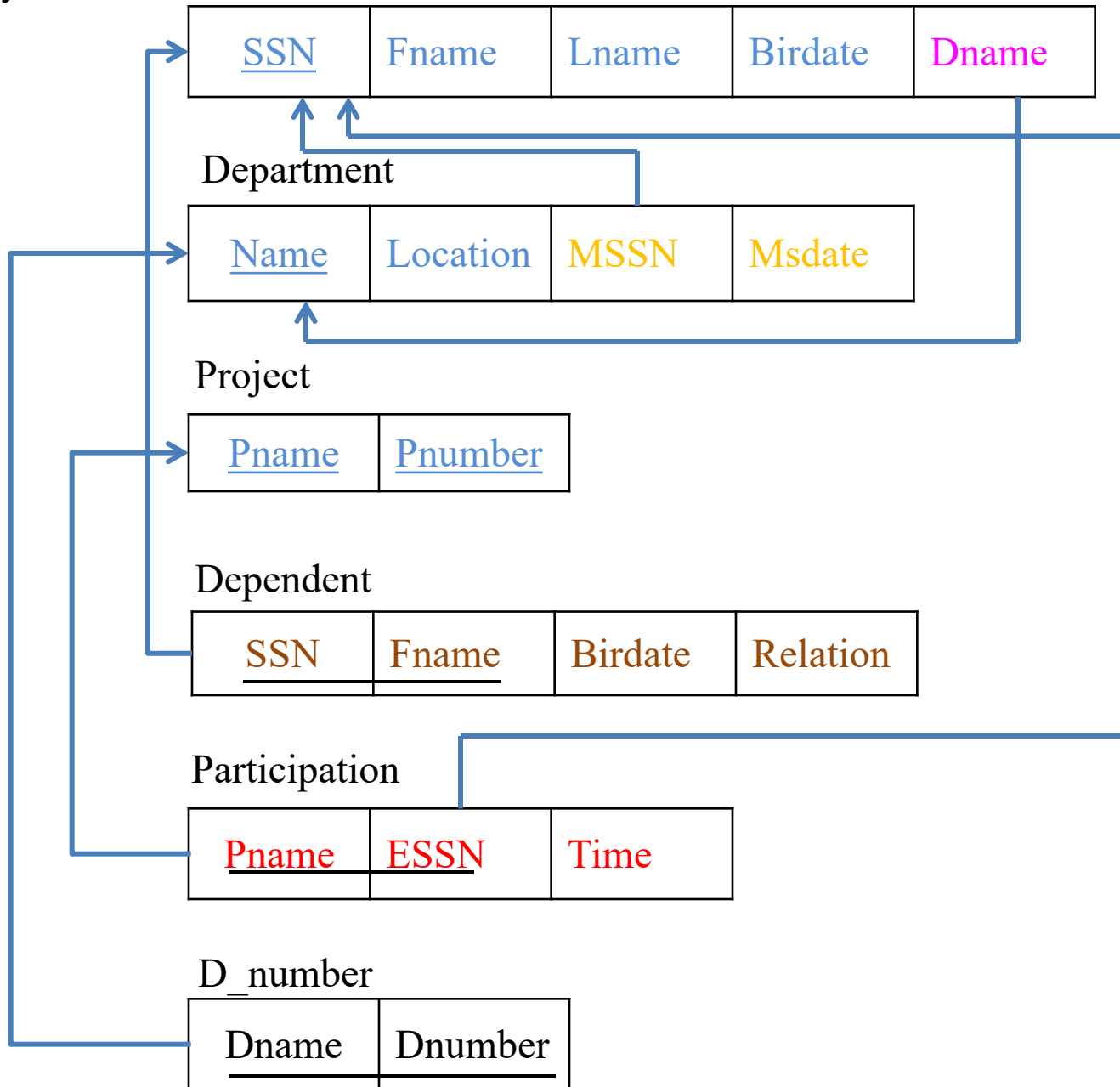


- Step 6 : For each multivalued attribute A. Create a new relation R. Let A be an attribute of E.
  - Attributes :
    1. A (if A is a simple attribute) together with the key of E as a foreign key.
    2. The simple components of A (if A is a composite attribute), together with the key of E as a foreign key.
  - Key : All attributes.

- Example: ER  $\rightarrow$  RDB



# Employee



- Step 7 : For each n-ary relationship type ( $n > 2$ ). Create a new relation with
  - Attributes : as for Step 5.
  - Key : as for Step 5, except that if one of the participating entity types has participation ratio 1, its key can be used as a key for the new relation.

