Aggregate-Query Processing in Data Warehousing Environments

Ashish Gupta          Venky Harinarayan         Dallan Quass
IBM Almaden Research Center          Stanford University

Abstract

In this paper we introduce generalized projections (GPs), an extension of duplicate-eliminating projections, that capture aggregations, groupbys, duplicate-eliminating projections (distinct), and duplicate-preserving projections in a common unified framework. Using GPs we extend well known and simple algorithms for SQL queries that use distinct projections to derive algorithms for queries using aggregations like sum, max, min, count, and avg. We develop powerful query rewrite rules for aggregate queries that unify and extend rewrite rules previously known in the literature. We then illustrate the power of our approach by solving a very practical and important problem in data warehousing: how to answer an aggregate query on base tables using materialized aggregate views (summary tables).

1 Introduction

With the growing number of large data warehouses for decision support applications, efficiently executing aggregate queries (queries involving aggregation) is becoming increasingly important. Aggregate queries are frequent in decision support applications, where large history tables often are joined with other tables and aggregated. Because the tables are large, better optimization of aggregate queries has the potential to result in huge performance gains. Unfortunately, aggregation operators behave differently from standard relational operators like select, project, and join. Thus, existing rewrite rules for optimizing queries almost never involve aggregation operators.

To reduce the cost of executing aggregate queries in a data warehousing environment, frequently used aggregates are often precomputed and materialized. These materialized aggregate views are commonly referred to as summary tables. Summary tables can be used to help answer aggregate queries other than the view they represent, potentially resulting in huge performance gains. However, no algorithms exist for replacing base relations in aggregate queries with summary tables so the full potential of using summary tables to help answer aggregate queries has not been realized. This paper makes three contributions to efficiently answering aggregate queries:

- We propose a framework for treating aggregation operators as an extension of duplicate-eliminating projection operators.
- Using this framework we present more powerful query rewrite rules for aggregation operators than rules known previously.
- Utilizing our rewrite rules, we extend existing work on answering queries using materialized views by giving an algorithm for answering aggregate queries using materialized aggregate views.

1.1 Optimizing Aggregations

Viewing aggregation as an extension of duplicate-eliminating (distinct) projection provides very useful intuition for reasoning about aggregation operators in query trees. Rewrite rules for duplicate-eliminating projection often can be used as building blocks to derive rules for the more complex case of aggregation. In addition to the intuition obtained by viewing aggregation as extended duplicate-eliminating projection, modeling both with one operator makes sense from
an implementation point of view. Typically, in existing query optimizers both aggregations and duplicate-eliminating projections are implemented in the same module [G93].

We present a set of query rewrite rules for moving aggregation operators in a query tree. Other authors have previously given rewrite rules for pulling aggregations up a query tree [Day87, CS95] and for pushing aggregations down a query tree [CS94, YL94]. Our work unifies their results in a single intuitive framework, and using this framework we derive more powerful rewrite rules. We present new rules for pushing aggregation operators past selection conditions (and vice-versa) and show how selection conditions with inequality comparisons can cause aggregate functions to be introduced into or removed from a query tree. We also present rules for coalescing multiple aggregation operators in a query tree into a single aggregation operator, and conversely, rules for splitting a single aggregation operator into two operators.

1.2 Materialized Views with Aggregates

The new rewrite rules we present have enabled us to develop an algorithm for determining whether materialized aggregate views can be used to answer aggregate queries. The algorithm uses the rewrite rules to transform a query tree containing aggregation operators into an equivalent tree with some or all of the base relations replaced by materialized views. Previous work on answering queries with materialized views has dealt only with simple Select-Project-Join (SPJ) type queries and views without aggregation [CKPS95, LMSS94]. Our algorithm is a novel and important result for efficiently executing aggregate queries using preexisting materialized aggregate views.

Currently, to use a materialized view in a query, the view must be specified explicitly in the FROM clause. However, requiring that materialized views be specified in the FROM clause puts the onus on the query writer to be aware of all available views and to know whether using the views is more efficient than querying the base relations. A better approach is to allow the query optimizer to choose which materialized views are used in answering a query. Using our algorithm a query optimizer can transform an aggregate query tree over base relations into a query that incorporates materialized aggregate views and choose the most efficient tree. Our algorithm can easily be integrated into a conventional query optimizer using the approach for SPJ-type queries and views developed in [CKPS95].

1.3 Outline of Paper

Section 2 motivates our work with an example showing how an aggregate query tree can be transformed into a more efficient query tree that takes advantage of a materialized aggregate view. The example illustrates how our framework for reasoning about aggregation and the rewrite rules we present can be brought together into an algorithm for solving an important and practical problem.

The body of this paper is divided into three sections describing our three contributions. Section 3 presents our framework for reasoning about aggregation. The query rewrite rules are given in Section 4. The algorithm for transforming an aggregate query into one that uses materialized views is given in Section 5. It is possible to read later sections first, referring back to previous sections as necessary.

Related work is discussed in Section 6. We give our conclusions in Section 7. [GHQ95] is the full version of this paper and is available online.

2 Motivating Example

We give an example showing how a materialized aggregate view can be used to help answer an aggregate query. We do not explain the query rewrite rules or the algorithm used for transforming the query tree in this section. We revisit this example and explain the transformations involved when we describe our algorithm in Section 5.

EXAMPLE 2.1 Consider a data warehouse with historical sales data for a large chain of department stores. The data warehouse has the following relations.

\begin{verbatim}
item(item_id, item_name, category, manufacturer, our_cost)
store(store_id, street_addr, city, state)
sales(sales_id, item_id, store_id, month, year, sale_amt)
\end{verbatim}

The first attribute of each relation is a key for the relation. The item relation contains information about each item that is stocked. The our_cost attribute contains the wholesale cost of the item. The store relation contains the address of each store. The sales relation contains one tuple for every sale that is made. Due to periodic discount and clearance sales, the sale amount of items sold is not functionally determined by item_id. It is instead stored in the sales relation. The relations have the following characteristics.

- There are 1000 items in the item relation, 10 of which are in the toy category.
- There are 1000 stores in the store relation, 100 of which are in the state of California.
- There are 10 years worth of sales in the sales relation, from 1986 through 1995.
- On average each store sells each item 200 times a year, resulting in two billion entries in the sales relation.

Suppose one wants to know if toy sales made by stores in the state of California have been going up or
down during the past five years. This type of query, aggregating large amounts of data, is typical of decision support applications. The following SQL query can be written to calculate total sales of all toys in all California stores by year. The expression tree corresponding to this query appears in Figure 1. In the figure, each arc of the query tree has been annotated with the number of tuples flowing up the arc. We assume uniform selectivity of the selection conditions. The sizes of intermediate results is often a good predictor of query execution time, so we annotate the arcs to compare the query trees before and after using the materialized view. In the annotations, we abbreviate billion as “B,” million as “M,” and thousand as “K.”

```
SELECT year, sum(sale_amt)
FROM sales, store, item
WHERE sales.store_id = store.store_id
AND sales.item_id = item.item_id
AND sales.year >= 1991
AND item.category = "toy"
AND store.state = "CA"
GROUPBY year
```

Figure 1: Query tree to compute total toy sales for California stores by year

Now suppose a `yearly_sales` view is materialized, listing the total yearly sales by item and store for stores in the state of California. The view definition appears below. The tree corresponding to the view definition appears in Figure 2.

```
CREATE VIEW yearly_sales AS
SELECT sales.store_id, sales.item_id, sales.year, SUM(sale_amt) AS total
FROM sales, store
WHERE sales.store_id = store.store_id
AND store.state = "CA"
GROUPBY sales.store_id, sales.item_id, sales.year
```

Notice that the materialized view involves the relations `sales` and `store`, while the query involves the relations `sales`, `store`, and `item`. Starting with the query tree of Figure 1, by reordering the joins and using our rewrite rules (see Section 4.3) to push the aggregation down past the topmost join, the tree in

```
SELECT store_id, item_id, year,
    sum(sale_amt) as total
FROM yearly_sales
GROUPBY item_id, store_id, year
```

Figure 2: Query tree corresponding to yearly_sales view definition

Figure 3 is obtained. Using our algorithm for answering aggregate queries using materialized aggregate views (see Section 5), we can now transform this query tree into one that uses the `yearly_sales` materialized view, shown in Figure 4. Since the number of tuples in `yearly_sales` is several orders of magnitude less than the number of tuples in `sales`, the query tree using the materialized view is likely to be much more efficient than the query over the base relations. Using our rewrite rules and algorithm, a cost-based optimizer could generate both trees and select the best one.

```
SELECT year, sum(X)
GROUPBY year
```

Figure 3: Query tree after reordering joins and pushing an aggregation down past the topmost join

```
SELECT year, sum(total) as X
GROUPBY item_id, year
```

Figure 4: Query tree after integrating materialized view

3 GP Framework

This section defines GPs and then state some properties of GPs that are used in later sections.
3.1 GP Definition

A central theme of this paper is that algorithms for optimizing duplicate elimination can be extended to handle aggregation-groupby operators. Duplicate-eliminating projection, also referred to as \textit{distinct} projection, is the simplest form of aggregation because it can be expressed as a simple \textit{groupby} statement that does not compute any aggregates. Thus, we introduce a generalized projection operator (GP), denoted by the same operator $\pi$ as we use for \textit{distinct} projections. This extension of notation is appropriate, since a GP with no aggregate components behaves exactly like a \textit{distinct} projection, i.e.:

$$\text{select distinct } D \text{ from } R \equiv GP: \pi_D (R[D,S])$$
$$\equiv \text{select } D \text{ from } R \text{ groupby } D$$

In general, a GP takes as its argument a relation $R$ and produces a new relation according to the subscript of the GP. The subscript has two parts:

1. A set of groupby components. We refer to them as components and not attributes because they may be functions of attributes and not just attributes. For instance, the GP $\pi_D (R)$ is written as the following SQL query:
   $$\text{select } D \text{ from } R \text{ groupby } D.$$  
   Here $D$ is the only groupby component and $\mathbf{max}(S)$ is the only aggregate component.

For GPs that use only SQL aggregate components like $\mathbf{max}$ or $\mathbf{sum}$, the equivalent SQL query is obtained by copying the entire subscript of the GP as the select clause of the SQL query and by copying the groupby components as the arguments of the groupby clause of the SQL query.

We use a different symbol $\pi^{dup}$ to denote conventional projections that preserve duplicates. Section 4.3.2 discusses how to use GPs to represent these projections as well. Thus, GPs capture \textit{distinct} projections, aggregate computations, and duplicate-preserving projections.

Based on the aggregate components of a GP we classify GPs into two categories:

- \textbf{duplicate insensitive}: The generation or removal of duplicate tuples in their input does not affect the result of such GPs. E.g., \textit{distinct} projections and aggregations like $\mathbf{max}$ and $\mathbf{min}$.

- \textbf{duplicate sensitive}: Duplicates must be preserved in their input. E.g. aggregations $\mathbf{sum}$ and $\mathbf{count}$.

3.2 Properties

The following properties of GPs should be noted:

- If a GP uses only SQL aggregate components like $\mathbf{max}$ or $\mathbf{sum}$, then the GP can be expressed using one SQL aggregate query. In the general case GPs may have non-SQL aggregate components requiring multiple SQL queries to express them (refer to Example 4.1).

- The \textit{groupby} components of a GP are the key of the result. Thus, a GP outputs exactly one tuple for each value of the groupby components and produces no duplicates in its output.

- If the \textit{groupby} components of a GP include a key of the input of the GP, then we can always rewrite the GP to have no aggregate components.

3.3 Scope Of Results

We develop rules for transforming aggregate queries and for answering aggregate queries using aggregate materialized views. We consider queries and views whose query trees have the following nodes: selection nodes, cross-product nodes, and GP nodes. For ease of exposition we represent join nodes as a cross-product followed by a selection. The query trees we consider in this paper represent SQL queries having the \texttt{select, from, groupby, having} keywords. We do not consider correlated subqueries. The relations in the \texttt{from} clause can be base relations or views. The views can themselves be single block SQL queries with the same structure. The query tree may thus have nested aggregates. We consider aggregates where the aggregate over a set of tuples $S$ can be computed from aggregates over subsets of $S$. The SQL aggregates $\mathbf{max}$, $\mathbf{min}$, $\mathbf{sum}$, $\mathbf{count}$ are examples (we handle $\mathbf{avg}$ by expressing it in terms of $\mathbf{sum}$ and $\mathbf{count}$).

4 GP Transformations

4.1 Overview

This section considers three important query transformations

- pushing GPs down query trees.
- pulling GPs up query trees.
- coalescing two GPs into one, or equivalently, splitting up a GP into two.

These transformations are not independent of each other but are derived from the same underlying query equivalences.

We outline below our approach at deriving the transformation rules. We start by extending the rules for \textit{distinct} projections to duplicate-insensitive GPs. Then we extend the rules for duplicate-insensitive GPs...
to derive those for duplicate-sensitive GPs. Our approach enables us to derive more powerful rules than those previously known.

Duplicate-insensitive aggregation has two components: (a) fragmenting the input relation into groups of tuples (b) for each group computing the required aggregate function. A distinct projection involves step (a) only. When transforming an aggregate query, the GPs interact with other operators like selections, other GPs, and cross-products. The transformation rules for distinct projections address the interaction of step (a) with these operators. We extend these transformation rules to consider how step (b) interacts with these operators.

Note, step (a) is done on a tuple-by-tuple basis and thus is a tuple-based operation. On the other hand, step (b) deals with sets of tuples at a time and thus is a relation-based operation. Relational operators like selections and distinct projections are tuple-based and hence relation-based computations cannot be “folded into” them. Therefore, to obtain transformation rules for duplicate-insensitive GPs we extend the rules for transforming queries with distinct projections to handle this mismatch in computation types. In particular, for the push-down and pull-up transformations we augment the corresponding distinct transformations for the case where a selection predicate involves aggregate attributes. In the coalescing transform, we add rules for the case when an attribute created by an aggregate computation is used in another GP, since we want to move this computation into the other GP.

Now consider duplicate-sensitive GPs. Such GPs behave differently from duplicate-insensitive GPs only when duplicates are generated or destroyed. Of the relational operators, only cross product nodes introduce duplicates because a cross product node causes tuples on either incoming branch to get repeated many times, above the cross product. Thus, the transformations for duplicate-insensitive GPs are extended only for the cross-product node case to get the corresponding transformations for duplicate-sensitive GPs. The interaction of a duplicate-sensitive GP with other relational operators is similar to that of a duplicate-insensitive GP.

In this paper we also show a close relationship between duplicate-insensitive GPs and selection predicates which involve the arithmetic comparisons $\geq, \leq$. We use such comparisons to generate or remove aggregations like $\max, \min$ in certain cases.

### 4.2 Arithmetic Comparisons: The $\top$ And $\bot$ Functions

This section discusses the interaction of GPs with selection conditions that use arithmetic comparisons by discussing what happens if GPs are pushed below such selections. The ideas developed herein also apply to GP pull-up and coalescing.

Consider any attribute that occurs in a query tree. If the attribute is needed as an output of the query tree, we cannot delete any distinct value of this attribute by pushing GPs down. Similarly, all distinct values of an attribute are required if the attribute participates in an equality predicate ($\neq$). For instance, consider a generalized projection $\pi_A$ being pushed down a query tree below a selection predicate $\sigma_{B=C}$. Since we require all distinct values of $B, C$ to make the comparison, and we need all the distinct values of $A$ in the answer, a new GP $\pi_{A,B,C}$ is introduced below the selection predicate. However, if the attribute only occurs in an arithmetic comparison ($<$, $>$, $\geq$, $\leq$), we can do better. The following example suggests how.

**Example 4.1** Consider a GP $\pi_A$ being pushed down a query tree below a selection predicate $\sigma_{B \geq C}$. The GP $\pi_A$ says that above the selection predicate, only distinct values of attribute $A$ are needed. Let the selection predicate take as input the relation $R(A, B, C)$.

Eventually we want all these $A$ values that have associated with them a $B$ and $C$ value that satisfies $\sigma_{B \geq C}$. Now consider two tuples of $R$: $t_1 = (a, 40, 10)$ and $t_2 = (a, 30, 20)$. Since $t_1.B \geq t_2.B$ and $t_1.C \leq t_2.C$, whenever $t_2$ satisfies the selection predicate so does $t_1$. Now, both tuples contribute the same value of $A$ to the answer, and the answer does not retain duplicates. Thus, $t_1$ can be discarded even before the selection node, without affecting the final answer. We can thus prune the relation $R$ to remove irrelevant tuples such as $t_1$.

In the above example the attributes $B, C$ are merely “filters” and their actual values are not important. We create the new aggregate functions $\top, \bot$ when we push down GPs below selection nodes with such filters. In Example 4.1, on pushing $\pi_A$ below $\sigma_{B \geq C}$ we get the new GP $\pi_{A,T(B),\bot(C)}$. The GP $\pi_{A,T(B),\bot(C)}[R]$ says that we can discard any tuple $s$ in $R$, if there exists another tuple $t$ such that $s.A = t.A$, $s.B \leq t.B$, and $s.C > t.C$.

Consider now the GP $\pi_{A,T(B)}$. It says we can discard any tuple $s$ if there exists another tuple $t$ such that $s.A = t.A$ and $s.B \leq t.B$. In particular, this means that we only need to keep the $\max(B)$ value for each value of $A$. In other words:

$$\pi_{G,T(B)} = \pi_{G,\max(B)}$$

where $G$ is a set of groupby attributes. A similar equality relates $\bot$ and $\min$.

While the functions $\top$ and $\bot$ seem the same as $\max$ and $\min$ respectively, there are some important differences. Since $\pi_{A,T(B),\bot(C)}$ merely prunes the relation $R(A, B, C)$, we have the following important property of $\top, \bot$ operators:

$$\pi_{G,T(B),\bot(C)}(R(G, B, C)) \subseteq R(G, B, C)$$

where $G$ is a set of groupby attributes. The functions $\max$ and $\min$ do not satisfy this property. To see
this, consider $R(A, B, C) = \{(a, 40, 20), (a, 30, 10)\}$. 
$\pi_A \max_B \min_C(R(A, B, C)) = \{(a, 40, 10)\}$ which is not a subset of $R$. Thus in general, $\pi_A, \max_B, \min_C \neq \pi_A, \max_B, \min_C$.

We can replace $\top (\bot)$ by $\max(\min)$ in GPs that have no other aggregate components. In the presence of other aggregate components the rules for evaluating $\top (\bot)$ are more involved. The $\top$, $\bot$ operators and their algebra are explained in greater detail in [HG94].

4.3 GP Push-down

Now we discuss pushing GPs down query trees and examine the interaction of GPs with the different types of nodes in the query tree.

4.3.1 Duplicate-Insensitive GPs

Selection Nodes: Duplicate-insensitive GPs behave similarly to distinct projections if the selection predicate does not contain an attribute used to compute an aggregation. To see why, consider pushing a distinct projection $\pi_A$ down below the selection node $\sigma_{C = D}$. On push-down, we get the new projection $\pi_{A, C, D}$ and we keep the original projection above the selection node, since the attributes $C, D$ do not appear in the output. The new projection $\pi_{A, C, D}$ does a “partial” duplicate elimination: for each $C, D$ value we eliminate all duplicate values of $A$. The original projection $\pi_A$ then does the total duplicate elimination. The above technique of doing partial and total duplicate elimination is applicable to aggregations like $\max, \min$ too. By a similar reasoning, on pushing $\pi_A, \max_B$ below $\sigma_{C = D}$, we get the new GP $\pi_{A, C, D, \max_B}$. The new GP computes the partial maxima and the original GP, the total maxima. Thus when the selection predicate does not involve aggregation attributes, we have the same rule as distinct projections for all duplicate-insensitive projections:

**PDRule 1** When a selection predicate does not involve any attribute used in aggregation computation, we can push a GP $P$ below it. We add the attributes occurring in the selection predicate as groupby attributes, to get the new GP $Q$ and keep the original GP $P$ above the selection.

As a general rule, if the new GP, after push-down, is no different from the original GP then the original GP can be discarded on push-down because the partial aggregation is the same as the total aggregation. Thus, as a special case of Rule 1 we obtain the following query equivalence:

$$\pi_{G, H}(\sigma_{f(G)}) = \pi_{f(G)}(\pi_{G, H})$$  
(1)

where $G$ and $H$ are the groupby and aggregate components respectively.

By using push-down rule 1 and by adding attributes to the original GP to get the new GP, we may cause an attribute to appear in multiple components of the GP. We rewrite such GPs where possible by dropping the redundant component.

**EXAMPLE 4.2** Consider pushing the GP $\pi_{A, X=\max_B}$ below the selection $\sigma_{B = C}$. By push-down rule 1, we get the new GP $\pi_{A, B, C, X=\max_B}$. We rewrite this GP as $\pi_{A, B, C}$ since computing $\max_B$ is redundant.

In the presence of certain arithmetic comparisons, we can create and push aggregation computations (Section 4.2). In particular, we can add the $\top$ and $\bot$ functions as follows:

**PDRule 2** When a selection predicate is of the form $B \geq C$ or $B > C$, on pushing a GP $P$ below the selection, we get the new GP $Q$ which is $P$ with the additional components $\top(B)$ and $\bot(C)$. ◯

Push-down rule 2 extends previous work on pushing down aggregation computation and allows us to create aggregation computation in queries that had none to start with.

Example 4.2 also illustrates that in general it is not possible to push aggregate computations when the selection predicate involves an aggregation attribute. We cannot compute partial maxima, since we need all distinct values of $B$ for the selection. However in certain cases, by using the $\top$ and $\bot$ functions, we can indeed push aggregation computations even if the selection predicate involves an aggregation attribute. The following example illustrates this:

**EXAMPLE 4.3**

Consider pushing the GP $\pi_{A, X=\max_B}$ below the selection $\sigma_{B \geq C}$. By push-down rule 2, the new GP created is $\pi_{A, X=\top(B)}$, $\pi_{A, X=\bot(C)}$. Now since there is no other aggregate computation in the GP, we can replace the $\top$ by a $\max$ to get $\pi_{A, X=\max_B}$.

Example 4.3 leads to the following commutativity relationship:

$$\pi_{G, X=\max_B} (\sigma_{B \geq C}) = \sigma_{X \geq C} (\pi_{G, X=\max_B})$$

Note $G$ is a set of groupby attributes and $C$ is an attribute belonging to the set $G$. If the GP being pushed has other aggregate components, then the above relationship does not hold. A similar result holds for $\bot$ and $\leq, <$.

Cross-Product Nodes: For duplicate-insensitive GPs it does not matter if the aggregation computation is done above or below the cross product, since the presence of duplicate attribute values does not affect the result of such computations. The following example illustrates this fact.

**EXAMPLE 4.4** Let $\pi_{A, B, X=\max_C}, Y=\max_D$ be pushed through a cross product. Let attributes $A, C$ belong to the left branch and attributes $B, D$ to the
right branch. On pushing \( \pi_{A,B,X = \max(C), Y = \max(D)} \) we get \( \pi_{A,X = \max(C)} \) in the left branch and \( \pi_{B,Y = \max(D)} \) in the right branch and we drop the original GP.

We have the same rule as for distinct projections:

**PD Rule 3** On pushing a GP \( P \) through a cross-product node, we drop \( P \) and get the new GPs \( Q_{\leftarrow P} \) and \( Q_{\rightarrow P} \) on the left and right branches respectively. \( Q_{\leftarrow P}(Q_{\rightarrow P}) \) contains the components of \( P \) whose attributes are from the left (right) branch.

Push-down rule 3 also extends previous work on pushing down aggregations.

**GP Nodes:** If while being pushed down, a GP encounters another GP, we attempt to coalesce the two GPs into one. The rules for coalescing are given in Section 4.5. The interaction of GPs with conventional projections that preserve duplicates during push down is syntactic (renaming of attributes) just as with pushing distinct projections below duplicate-preserving projections.

### 4.3.2 Duplicate-Sensitive GPs

The output of a generalized projection is always a set, i.e., there are no duplicates. It is still possible to use a GP to write a conventional projection that outputs duplicates. We use \( \pi^\text{dup} \) to denote a conventional projection that preserves duplicates in its output. Consider now the GP \( \pi_{A,X = \text{count}(\_)} \) and the conventional projection \( \pi^\text{dup}_A \). We do not lose any information by dropping duplicates and incorporating a count column to indicate multiplicity because the two forms are equivalent. We introduce the “expand” operator \( e \) to express this equivalence:

\[
e_X(\pi_{A,X = \text{count}(\_)}) = \pi^\text{dup}_A
\]

Consider a relation \( R(A, B, X) \), for each tuple \((a, b, x)\) in \( R \), the expand operator \( e_X \) outputs \( x \) copies of the tuple \((a, b)\). Thus we do not need to change the output semantics of GPs to accommodate duplicates. GPs only produce sets as outputs (no duplicates). Duplicate semantics are simulated using count and the expand operator \( e \).

**Properties of the Expand Operator \( e \):** The expand operator helps us understand aggregations that are sensitive to duplicates in their input. Usually \( e \) is pulled up a query tree; so we mention some relevant properties of the expand operator.

It can be seen that the expand operator commutes (can be pulled up) with selection and cross product nodes. Also the expand operator can be discarded when it encounters above a duplicate-insensitive GP. The interactions of interest arise when an expand operator encounters a duplicate-sensitive GP. For the aggregate sum:

\[
\pi_{A,Y = \text{sum}(B)}(e_X) = \pi_{A,Y = \text{sum}(B) + X}
\]

since \( X \) just indicates how many times each \( B \) value is repeated. The aggregate count can be thought of as being sum(1) which gives us

\[
\pi_{A,Y = \text{count}(\_)}(e_X) = \pi_{A,Y = \text{sum}(X)}
\]

We use these results in explaining the push down algorithm for aggregates like sum and count. The expand operator also lets us create count aggregates anywhere in a query tree and can be used to reduce the size of intermediate relations when there are many duplicate tuples. Prior work on rewriting aggregate queries has not considered introducing aggregates in queries.

We now consider pushing a duplicate-sensitive GP down a query tree and examine its interactions with the different nodes present in the tree.

**Selection Nodes:** As mentioned in Section 4.1 duplicate-sensitive GPs follow the same basic algorithm as duplicate-insensitive GPs for selections. Push-down rule 1 thus applies to all GPs. However, as illustrated below, arithmetic comparisons cannot be used to create the \( T \) and \( \perp \) functions with duplicate-sensitive GPs. So we cannot use push-down rule 2.

**EXAMPLE 4.5** Consider pushing GP \( \pi_{A,\text{count}(\_)} \) below a selection node \( \sigma_{C \geq D} \). In this case for a given value of \( A \) we are not just interested in seeing if there exists some \( C, D \) that will cause the value of \( A \) to be selected. Instead we are interested in the number of times such a value will be selected. Adding \( \land(C) \) and \( \perp(D) \) to the projection pushed below \( \sigma_{C \geq D} \) allows us to determine only if there exists some \( C, D \) such that \( C \geq D \). In some sense we end up getting only a TRUE/FALSE answer for each \( A \) value where we want a number. So on pushing \( \pi_{A,\text{count}(\_)} \) below \( \sigma_{C \geq D} \) we get \( \pi_{A,C,D,\text{count}(\_)} \) as the new GP.

**Cross-Product Nodes:** When a duplicate-sensitive aggregation computation is pushed down one branch we have to account for the multiplicative effect of the other branch. Thus we cannot eliminate duplicates in the other branch if the GP is duplicate-sensitive.

**EXAMPLE 4.6** Let \( \pi_{A,A',X = \text{sum}(B)} \) be pushed down through a cross product where attributes \( A, B \) go down the left branch and \( A' \) down the right. Since sum requires duplicates be preserved in its input we cannot eliminate duplicates in the right branch, and so must push the conventional duplicate-preserving projection \( \pi^\text{dup}_{A'} \) rather than the GP \( \pi_{A'} \). But we can replace \( \pi^\text{dup}_{A'} \) by \( e_X(\pi_{A',X = \text{count}(\_)}(\_)) \). Thus we have the following expression after push down:

\[
\pi_{A,A',X = \text{sum}(L)}(\pi_{A,A',L = \text{sum}(B)}(\pi_{A,\text{count}(\_)}(\_)))
\]
Unlike with duplicate-insensitive GPs, we require the original GP to do the computation above the cross product. Now, pulling up the expand operator and merging into the GP above the cross product, we get

$$\pi_{A, A', X} = \text{sum}(L \star X) \cdot (\pi_{A, L} = \text{sum}(B) \times \pi_{A', X} = \text{count}(\ast))$$

Since $A, A'$ are keys of the left and right branches (being groupby attributes), $A, A'$ is a key of the relation above the cross product. Hence we can replace $\text{sum}(L \star X)$ by $L \star X$ above the cross product. □

The detailed algorithm for GP push down is in [HG94].

4.4 Pulling Up GPs

We are often interested in pulling GPs up query trees for a number of reasons. One important reason is to express queries with aggregations in a normal form (Section 5.4). The pull-up rules are derivable from the push-down rules we saw earlier.

Selection Nodes: From query equivalence 1 we have the following rule:

**PURule 1** A GP can always be pulled up above a selection if all the attributes in the selection predicate occur as groupby attributes in the GP.

From push-down rule 2 we have the following pull-up rule:

**PURule 2** If all the attributes in the selection predicate are groupby, $\land$, or $\lor$ aggregate attributes of the GP and if the $\land$ ($\lor$) attributes occur to the left (right) of $\geq$ or $>$ comparison in the selection predicate, we can pull up the GP.

Cross-Product Nodes: From push-down rule 3 we have the corresponding pull-up rule:

**PURule 3** If we have two GPs that are duplicate-insensitive on either branch of a GP, we can pull them up as one GP, by combining all their attributes.

We can derive the pull-up rule for duplicate-sensitive GPs from the push-down rule for duplicate-sensitive GPs. We state the rule without derivation.

**PURule 4** To pull up a GP above a cross product when the other branch of the cross product has no duplicates, we add all the attributes coming up the other branch as groupby attributes of the GP.

The above rule is very general and applies to all GPs but is less powerful than pull-up rule 3 for duplicate-insensitive GPs.

When the other branch in the cross product has duplicate tuples we cannot pull up GPs as we did above. This statement applies even to the simple distinct projection.

**EXAMPLE 4.7** Consider a cross product node with the distinct projection $\pi_{A, B}$ on the left branch and $R(C, D)$ on the right branch, where $R$ is some relation that may have duplicates. Then,

$$\pi_{A, B} (S(A, B, F) \times R(C, D)) \neq \pi_{A, B, C, D} (S(A, B, F) \times R(C, D)).$$

□

We can use the GP pull-up rule 4 if $R$ is made duplicate-free. There are many ways of making $R$ duplicate-free. One method is to add key attributes (or unique tuple ids) to $R$. This method of adding keys or tuple ids to relations with duplicates is similar to the ADDKEYS rule in the Starburst Query Rewrite facility [PHH92] and the rule given in [Day87]. Another option to making $R$ duplicate-free is to use the expand operator $e$. We can replace $R(C, D)$ with $e_X (\pi_{C, D, X} = \text{count}(\ast)(R(C, D)))$. We can now pull $e_X$ up above the cross product as mentioned in section 4.3.2. After we pull up $e$ we have $\pi_{C, D, X} = \text{count}(\ast)(R(C, D))$ on the right branch, which has no duplicates. With these modifications, we can apply pull-up rule 4. Note, when we have duplicate-sensitive GPs on each branch of the cross product, we pull them up one at a time, using pull-up rule 4.

4.5 Coalescing GPs

This section gives rules for combining two GPs into one GP (coalescing) and thus the reverse, splitting a GP into two GPs (splitting). Coalescing and splitting are valuable tools in rewriting query trees with aggregations. Coalescing has not been considered by researchers before.

When we attempt to coalesce two GPs, we try to move all the computation from the lower GP into the upper GP and then to drop the lower GP. We assume that all the attributes occurring in the upper GP are output by the lower GP, because otherwise the original query is incorrect. In Section 4.1 we saw that the difference between distinct projections and other duplicate-insensitive GPs was in the inability to move relation-based computations into tuple-based operators. In coalescing, this inability translates to additional rules when the upper GP contains an attribute created by aggregate computation in the lower GP. First the simple distinct projection rule:

**CRule 1** If the upper GP is duplicate-insensitive and all the attributes required by the upper GP occur as groupby attributes of the lower GP, we can discard the lower GP.

What happens if an attribute $A$ required by the upper GP is created by an aggregate computation at the lower GP? There are two cases to consider here: attribute $A$ is a groupby attribute of the upper GP or attribute $A$ is an aggregate attribute of the upper GP.

Consider the first case. As we saw in Section 4.1, groupby computations in a GP are tuple based, so we
cannot move the aggregation computation of the lower GP into a groupby component of the upper GP.

CRule 2 If a groupby attribute in the upper GP is created by an aggregate computation in the lower GP we cannot coalesce the two GPs.

Consider now the second case: an aggregate attribute in the upper GP is created by an aggregation computation in the lower GP. We can coalesce GPs when the lower GP does a partial aggregation computation and the upper GP, the total aggregation. So for the aggregates like sum, max, min where partial aggregation and the total aggregation involve the same aggregate function, we have the following rule:

CRule 3 If an aggregate attribute in the upper GP is created by an aggregation computation in the lower GP and if both aggregations are the same and are max, min, sum then we can do the aggregation computation in the upper GP.

When we do a partial computation of count, the total computation of count requires the use of a sum aggregation. We can use the same principle as coalescing rule 3 above, to remove the partial computation.

If we can move all the aggregation computation into the upper GP, using coalescing rule 3, we can drop the lower GP. Otherwise we cannot coalesce the two GPs and must let them remain as they were originally. It is incorrect to move some aggregation computation up and not others.

5 Answering Queries Using Materialized Views

We now present an algorithm for transforming an aggregate query tree over base relations into one that uses a materialized aggregate view.

Given an aggregate query tree Q and the tree corresponding to a materialized aggregate view definition V, if the algorithm determines that Q can be answered using V it returns a modified query tree Q' such that Q'(V) = Q. The aggregate query tree Q may be a subtree of a larger query tree, so in general the algorithm can be applied to several subtrees of a large query tree, resulting in the incorporation of several materialized views.

The GP framework and transformation rules have proven very useful in the development of our algorithm. Rewrite rules for moving GPs up a query tree allow us to transform the query and view definition into a normal form (described later) making reasoning about aggregation easier. Rewrite rules for pushing GPs down a query tree make it possible to obtain a tree rooted at a GP operator having the same base relations as the materialized view under consideration. Rewrite rules for pushing selection conditions through GPs and for splitting one GP into two GPs are used by the algorithm to transform the aggregate query tree into one that uses a materialized aggregate view.

Section 5.1 describes the class of queries and views handled by the algorithm. The algorithm is outlined in Section 5.2. Section 5.3 illustrates how the query tree of our motivating example (see Section 2) is transformed by the algorithm. Due to space limitations we are unable to present the full details of the algorithm. The details can be found in [GHQ95].

5.1 Preconditions on View V and Query Q

Our algorithm requires that the view and query be put into a normal form that has all aggregations and selections above all joins. The normal form makes reasoning about aggregation much easier than if the query had nested aggregations. The normal form consists of a selection over a generalized projection over a selection over a set of joins, i.e.,

\[ \sigma_{\pi} \sigma_{\ell} X \]

In the normal form \( \sigma_{\ell} \) and \( \sigma_{\pi} \) are conjunctive selection conditions, \( \pi \) is the GP, and the \( X \) symbol represents a set of join operations.

A large class of aggregate queries can be reduced to this normal form using the GP push-down and pull-up rules (see Section 4). In particular, select-from-where-groupby-having queries can be reduced to this normal form if the attributes in the groupby and having clauses appear in the select clause, no aggregate function definition uses the distinct keyword (e.g., \( \text{SUM(DISTINCT sale.amt)} \)), and the where clauses are conjunctive. In addition, queries that include in the from clause one or more nested aggregate views can be rewritten in this form if the aggregates can be pulled above the joins and coalesced into a single GP.

We require that view \( V \) and query \( Q \) use the same set of relations \( R_1, \ldots, R_m \) joined using the same join conditions. We refer to the GP and selection conditions in view \( V \) as \( GP(V) \), \( \sigma_{\pi}(V) \), and \( \sigma_{\ell}(V) \). Similarly for query \( Q \).

Due to the undecidability of the implication problem for the class of aggregations we consider [RSS89] there are cases where a query can be answered using a view that are not detected by the algorithm. However, the algorithm handles a very large class of queries and views that includes many common cases.

5.2 Algorithm

The input to the algorithm is a query tree \( Q \) and a tree for view \( V \). Both trees must have been reduced to the prescribed normal form of Section 5.1 using our transformation rules. Note, since \( Q \) can be a subtree of a larger query tree, the algorithm is applicable to a larger class of queries that cannot be completely reduced to this normal form. If \( Q \) is a subtree of a larger query tree, before applying the algorithm it is useful to push as many selection conditions as applicable from
the larger query tree into Q, because further restricting Q makes it more likely that Q is computable using V.

The output of the algorithm is either FAIL if the algorithm cannot determine that Q can be answered using V, or a modified query tree Q' over V instead of the base relations such that Q'(V) = Q.

Intuitively, Q' is derived by transforming Q such that the bottom portion of the tree is equivalent to the query tree for V \( ^1 \) and the upper portion becomes the query tree Q'. The steps of the algorithm are outlined below.

In Step 1 we push selection conditions from \( \sigma_b \) down through the GP to \( \sigma_l \) for both the query and the view. [GHQ95] gives a table, derived from the rules in Section 4, that enumerates the cases when selection conditions can be pushed down past GPs. Selection conditions are pushed down in preparation for Step 2.

In Step 2 we test whether the selection conditions in the resulting \( \sigma_l(V) \) are more restrictive than the selection conditions in the resulting \( \sigma_l(Q) \). If so, then tuples that could appear in the groups formed by GP(Q) would be filtered out by \( \sigma_l(V) \), and the algorithm determines it is not possible to derive Q'.

In Step 3(a) we transform query tree Q to include a GP operator similar to GP(V). If the groupby components of GP(Q) are a proper subset of the groupby components of GP(V) and \( \sigma_b(V) \) is empty, then the groups created by V partition the groups needed in Q. We can therefore combine the groups created by V into the groups needed by Q using a GP operator. We split GP(Q) into two GPs, \( GP_{bot}(Q) \) and \( GP_{top}(Q) \). \( GP_{top}(Q) \) does the same computation as the original GP(Q). \( GP_{bot}(Q) \) has the same groupby components as GP(V). An enumeration of the GP-splitting rules is given in [GHQ95].

If the groupby components of GP(Q) and GP(V) are the same, then \( GP(Q) \) is not split and \( GP_{bot}(Q) \) and \( GP_{top}(Q) \) in the remainder of the algorithm both refer to GP(Q).

If there are additional groupby components in GP(Q) then Q is grouping at a different (or finer) granularity than V, and the algorithm determines it is not possible to derive Q'.

In Step 3(b) we test whether each aggregate component of GP_{bot}(Q) is computable from the aggregate components of GP(V). If not, then the algorithm determines it is not possible to derive Q'.

In Step 4 we identify conditions in \( \sigma_l(Q) \) that are not implied by \( \sigma_l(V) \) and try to pull them up past GP_{bot}(Q). If a selection condition in \( \sigma_l(Q) \) is not implied by the selection conditions in \( \sigma_l(V) \) and it cannot be pulled up past GP_{bot}(Q), then tuples that could appear in the groups formed by GP(V) would be filtered out by the conditions of \( \sigma_l(Q) \), and the algorithm determines it is not possible to derive Q'.

In Step 5 we test whether the selection conditions in \( \sigma_b(V) \) are more restrictive than the selection conditions in \( \sigma_b(Q) \). If so, then tuples that could appear in the result of Q would be filtered out by the conditions of \( \sigma_b(V) \), and the algorithm determines it is not possible to derive Q'.

After Step 5 the view tree V is equivalent to the subtree of the transformed query tree Q rooted at GP_{bot}(Q).\(^2\) The algorithm returns as Q' the transformed query tree Q with the subtree rooted at GP_{bot}(Q) replaced by the materialized view.

We have omitted several enhancements that extend the algorithm to cover additional cases when Q' can be derived. The enhancements can be found in [GHQ95].

5.3 Example

We illustrate how the algorithm can be applied to the query and view from Example 2.1.

EXAMPLE 5.1 Consider again Example 2.1. A query is posed to compute total sales of all toys in all California stores for each year beginning with 1991. The initial query tree for the query appears in Figure 5 using our GP notation. Materialized view yearly_sales computes total yearly sales by item and store for stores in California (Figure 2). We want to determine if view yearly_sales can be used to answer the query.

Note that the query is over the relations sales, store, and item, while the yearly_sales view is only over relations sales and store. We reorder the joins in the query so that sales is joined first with store, then with item. To facilitate join reordering, all GPs are first pulled up above all joins in the query using the rules for GP pull-up. In our example the single GP is already above all joins. Next we use the GP push-down rules from Section 4.3 to push the GP down past the topmost join to the subtree that contains only the sales and store relations. We refer to the subtree rooted at this new GP as Q.

Before applying our algorithm we put the query trees in the normal form described in Section 5.1. V is normalized by pulling up the selection condition on

\(^1\) Actually, it is possible for the bottom portion of the query tree to return a superset of the tuples returned by V, so long as additional selection conditions in the upper portion of the query tree filter out the additional tuples.

\(^2\) It is possible for the subtree rooted at GP_{bot}(Q) to return additional tuples as mentioned in an earlier footnote.
state above the join (Figure 6). Q is normalized by pulling up the selection conditions on year and state above the join. Figure 7 shows the entire query tree after subtree Q has been normalized. Note that for our example σt(Q) is year >= 1991 AND state = “CA”, σt(V) is state = “CA”, and σh(Q) and σh(V) are both empty.

We now apply the algorithm. Step 1 can be skipped since σh(Q) and σh(V) are both empty.

All selection conditions in σt(V) are also in σt(Q) so the test in step 2 succeeds.

Step 3(a) identifies that the groupby components of GP(Q) (item_id and year) are a proper subset of the groupby components of GP(V) (item_id, year, and store_id). GP(Q) is split into GPbot(Q) and GPtop(Q) as shown in Figure 8.

The aggregate function Y = sum(sale_amt) of GPbot(Q) can be obtained from total = sum(sale_amt) of GP(V) so the test in step 3(b) succeeds.

Step 4 identifies that the condition year >= 1991 in σt(Q) is not implied by σt(V). Since year is a groupby component of GPbot(Q) the condition can be pulled up above GPbot(Q), yielding the query tree in Figure 9.

Both σh(Q) and σh(V) are empty so the test in step 5 succeeds.

At this point the subtree rooted at GPbot(Q) is identical to V, so the algorithm derives Q′ by replacing the subtree rooted at GPbot(Q) with view yearly_sales. Figure 10 shows the original query tree with subtree Q replaced by Q′.

The resulting query tree can be further transformed. For instance, the GP on the yearly_sales materialized view can be pulled up and coalesced with the GP at the top of the query tree to yield the tree shown in Figure 11.

6 Related Work

Answering queries using materialized views has been studied in [LY85, YL87, LMS94, CKPS95]. However, existing work has not considered queries that use aggregation. Aggregates are an important extension to
the previously considered queries because aggregations are at the heart of decision support and warehousing.

The query transformations we give unify and properly subsume the push-down transformations given in [CS94, YL94] and the pull-up transformations given in [Day87, CS95]. In particular, we give new transformations for the following cases:

- We use certain arithmetic comparisons to create aggregations in query trees that have none to start with and delete aggregations in those that do.
- By treating duplicate-insensitive GP s differently from duplicate-sensitive GP s, we can infer more powerful transformation rules for duplicate-insensitive GP s. For example, we can pull up two duplicate-insensitive GP s simultaneously past a cross product.
- We can introduce the count aggregation anywhere in a query tree using the expand operator.
- We can push aggregation down both branches of a cross product.
- We can coalesce and split aggregations.

[CS94, CS95] discuss how to integrate aggregation push-down and pull-up into a system-R style query optimizer.

7 Conclusions

In this paper we present a new framework for reasoning with groupby and aggregation in SQL queries. We generalize distinct projections to yield the notion of "generalized projections" that capture groupby and aggregation computations. GP s also capture arithmetic comparison operators that are not expressible as SQL aggregate computations. The GP framework allows us to obtain many new and promising results. In this paper, we discuss two sets of results that we have obtained using the GP framework.

For aggregate queries we derive transformation rules that unify and generalize previously proposed transformation rules. The new rules we derive include rules for coalescing multiple aggregate computations into single computations, introducing and eliminating aggregate computations using arithmetic inequality selection conditions, and pushing aggregate computations down both branches of a cross product (or join).

We give an algorithm for a hitherto unsolved problem, namely, how to use materialized aggregate views to help answer aggregate queries. This algorithm is very useful for decision support applications in data warehousing environments. The algorithm is developed using the new transformation rules that we obtain using the GP framework.

In [GHQ95] we discuss how the transformations given in section 4 can be used by query optimizers to reduce the cost of query evaluation. We pick the Starburst query optimizer [PHH92] and mention how and where our transformations can be used. We also briefly discuss how the expand operator can be used in query optimization when there are relations with many duplicates.

Acknowledgements

We thank Prof. Jeff Ullman and Prof. Jennifer Widom for the many discussions on the ideas presented above. We also thank Anand Rajaraman, Surajit Chaudhuri, and Waqar Hasan for feedback.

References


