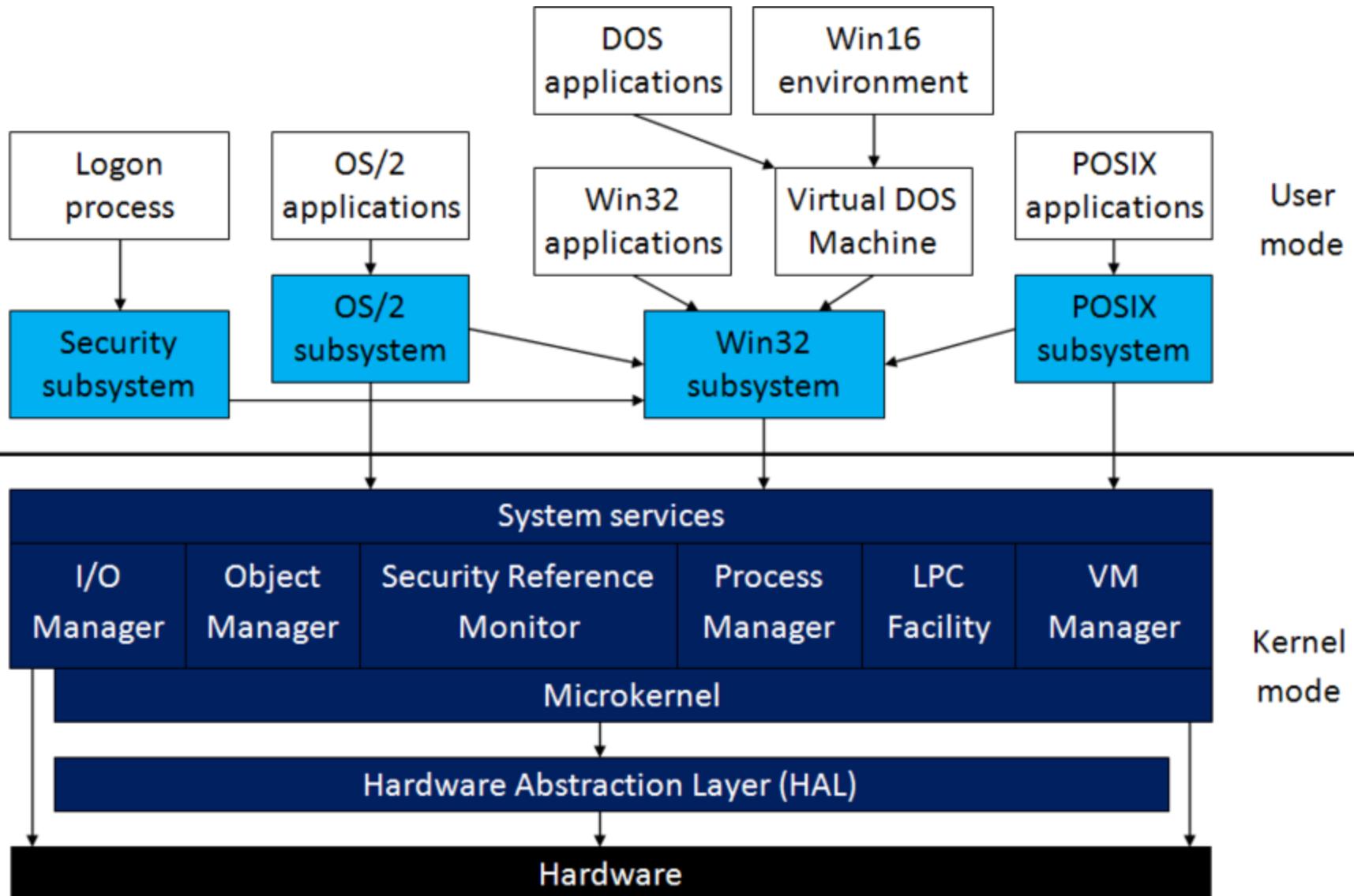


Containers

- ▶ Motivation
 - ▶ Give each process its own environment
 - Environment variables alone are not sufficient to solve the Dependency hell
 - Incompatible versions of installed libraries
 - Incompatible behavior of installed executables
 - Unexpected system configuration stored in user-accessible files
 - Some applications come from a different ecosystem
 - Different conventions regarding the filesystem
 - Different flavor of the OS
 - ▶ Improve isolation between processes
 - Processes may refuse to work with limited privileges
 - Create an illusion that they have privileges they actually have not
 - Avoid conflicts on well-known ports, implant a firewall between local processes
 - Create virtual networks and link processes to virtual NICs
- ▶ Linux Containers are not the first attempt
 - ▶ At least for some of the goals

Subsystems in Microsoft Windows

Microsoft Windows NT 3.1 (1993)



- ▶ (Windows) NT kernel was created to support several kinds of apps
 - ▶ (IBM) OS/2
 - ▶ (Microsoft) Windows 3.1 (binary compatible with non-NT “kernels”)
 - ▶ Legacy 16-bit Windows and DOS
 - ▶ POSIX
- ▶ The NT kernel always included support for namespace isolation and resource limiting
 - ▶ In limited use before 2016
- ▶ Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL, bash.exe) – 2016
 - ▶ Emulates Linux syscalls on a Windows kernel
 - Does not emulate Linux namespaces and cgroups – cannot support Linux containers
- ▶ Windows Containers – 2016
 - ▶ Part of the Docker team acquired by Microsoft in 2014
 - ▶ Docker-like images and containers for running Windows processes
 - ▶ Two modes of container execution
 - Process Isolation – the Windows kernel provides isolation
 - Hyper-V Isolation – each VM runs its own Windows Server kernel

▶ Windows Subsystem for Linux

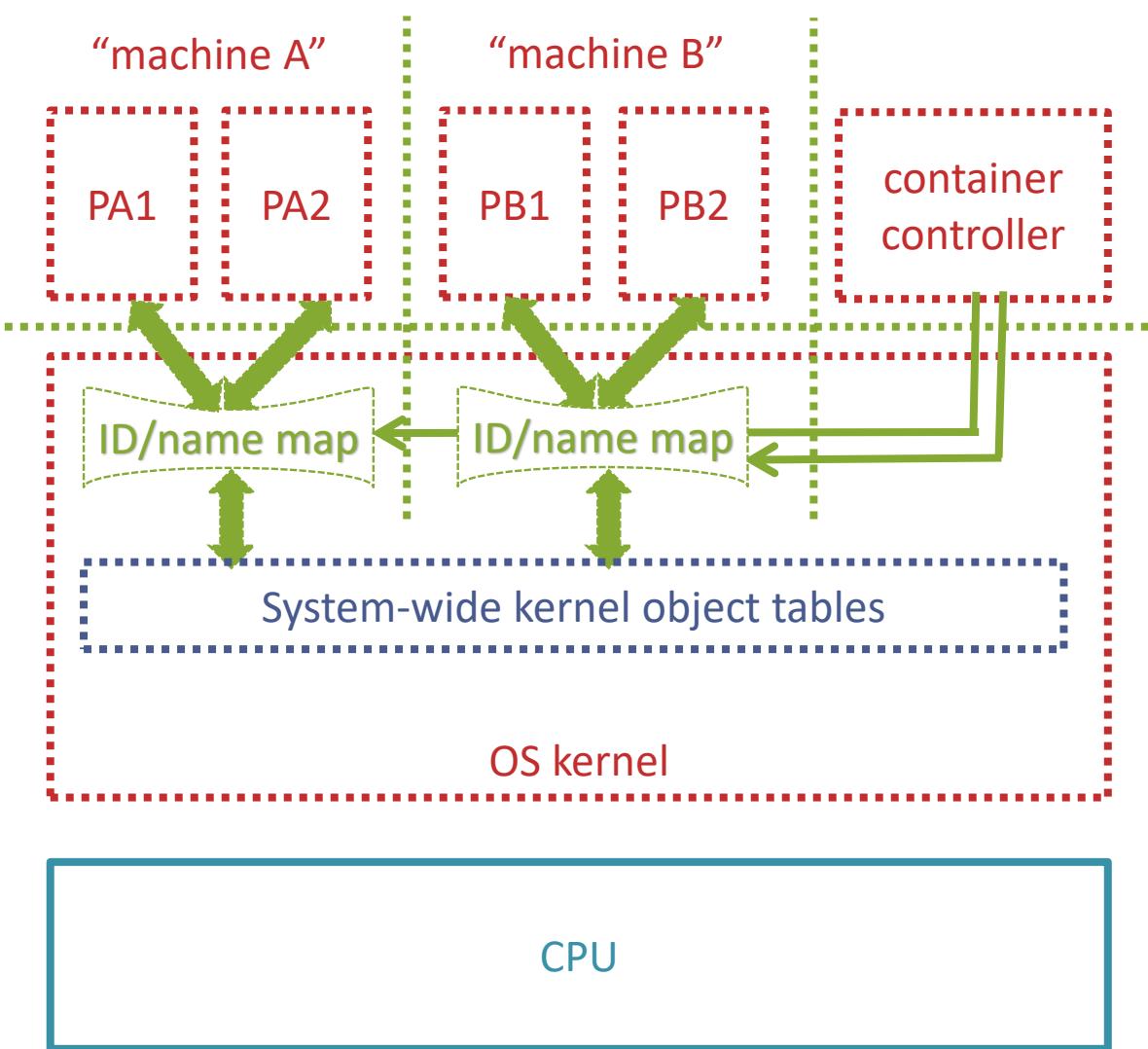
- ▶ WSL 1 (2016) - Emulates Linux syscalls on a Windows kernel
 - Does not emulate Linux namespaces and cgroups – cannot support Linux containers
 - Uses NTFS – lower performance than Linux, faster sharing with Windows
- ▶ WSL 2 (April 2020) – Runs a true Linux kernel in a Hyper-V virtual machine
 - Can support Linux containers
 - Native unix FS – faster local files, slower access to host Windows files than in WSL 1

▶ Windows Containers

- ▶ Inside a container, only Windows Server environment is supported
- ▶ Process Isolation - the Windows kernel provides isolation
 - Supported by Windows Server (since 2016), Windows 10 (since April 2020)
- ▶ Hyper-V Isolation – each VM runs its own Windows Server kernel
 - Supported by Windows Server (since 2016), Windows 10 (since September 2018)
- ▶ May be managed by Azure versions of Docker, Kubernetes, etc.
 - Management almost identical to Linux containers (when run inside Azure)
- ▶ Not nearly as successful as Linux containers
 - 28K Windows vs. 3.5M Linux containers on hub.docker.com (October 2020)

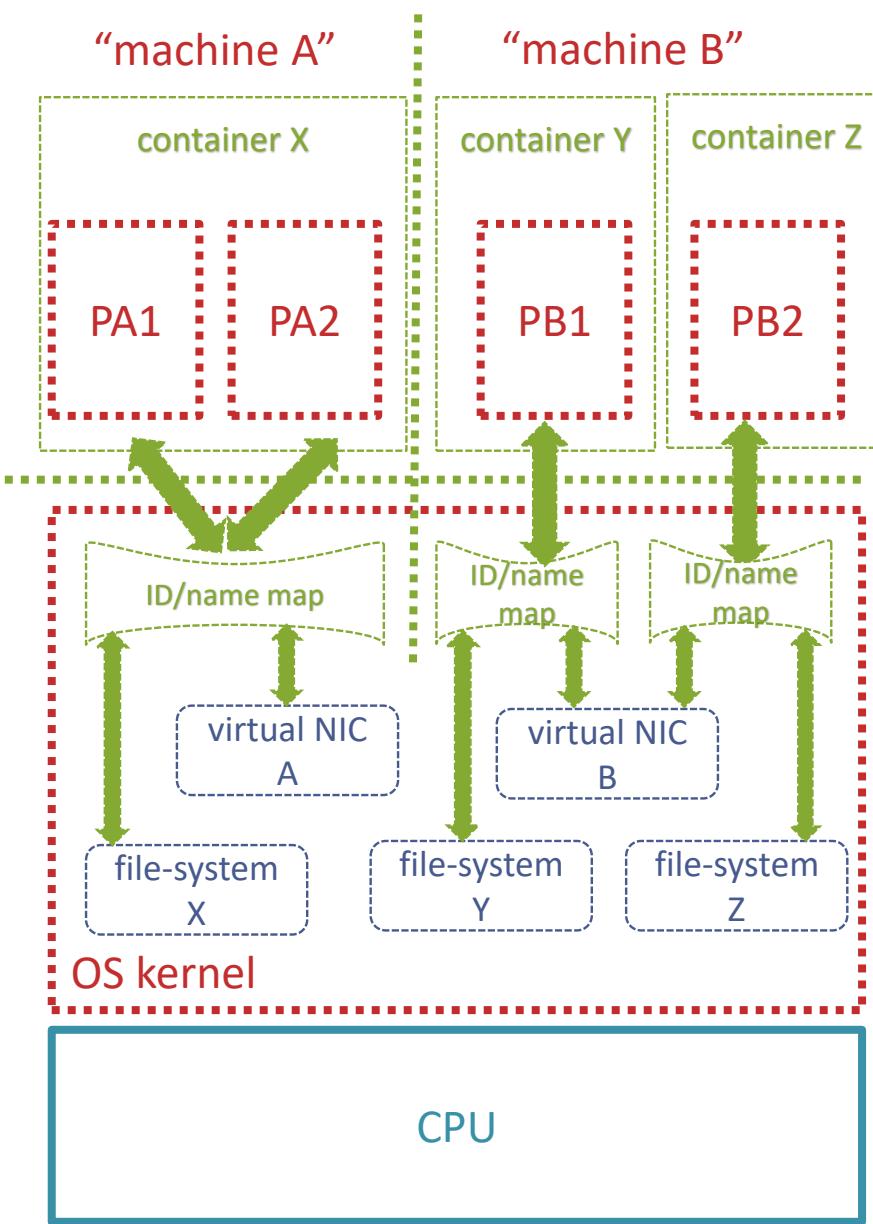
Containers (Linux)

Containerization



- ▶ Namespace separation
 - ▶ The upper layer of the OS kernel filters the syscalls and maps all the identifiers from process-specific to system-wide naming spaces (and back)
- ▶ Resource separation
 - ▶ The kernel maintains resource usage statistics for each set of processes and restricts them
- ▶ Container controller
 - ▶ Optional
 - ▶ Privileged process used to setup the kernel maps and react to events

Containerization – machines vs. containers



- ▶ **Container (simplified definition)**
 - ▶ a file system plus a configuration
 - ▶ when started, a configured command is executed
 - it starts an executable from the internal file system
 - this executable may later spawn more processes (via fork/exec/system)
 - ▶ a running container may contain more than one process
- ▶ OS kernel can map several containers to the same system resources
 - ▶ podman **pod** = set of containers
 - all containers in a pod share the same NIC (and some other namespaces)
 - each container has its own filesystem
- ▶ Some container systems allow direct access to host NIC
 - ▶ no virtual network/NAT = faster
 - ▶ decreased safety and isolation

- ▶ **Linux namespaces**
 - ▶ A namespace defines the mapping of identifiers
 - from the local view of the process
 - to the global identifiers used inside the kernel
 - applied on each SYSCALL to translate local ids to global and back
 - it may also define how new ids are created
 - some namespaces (NET, CGROUP) also configure the behavior of the kernel
- ▶ **cgroups**
 - ▶ A cgroup defines a unit of accounting
 - Processes in a cgroup share the same pool of resources
 - A cgroup may also define a policy applied by the kernel
- ▶ **USER and PID namespaces and all cgroups form hierarchies**
 - The root namespace is the 1:1 mapping applied to the *init* process and others
 - The root cgroup represents all the resources of the machine and kernel
 - Child namespaces/cgroups are subsets of their parents, with elements renamed
- ▶ **Other kinds of namespaces are not hierarchical**
 - Their elements may be unreachable from other namespaces

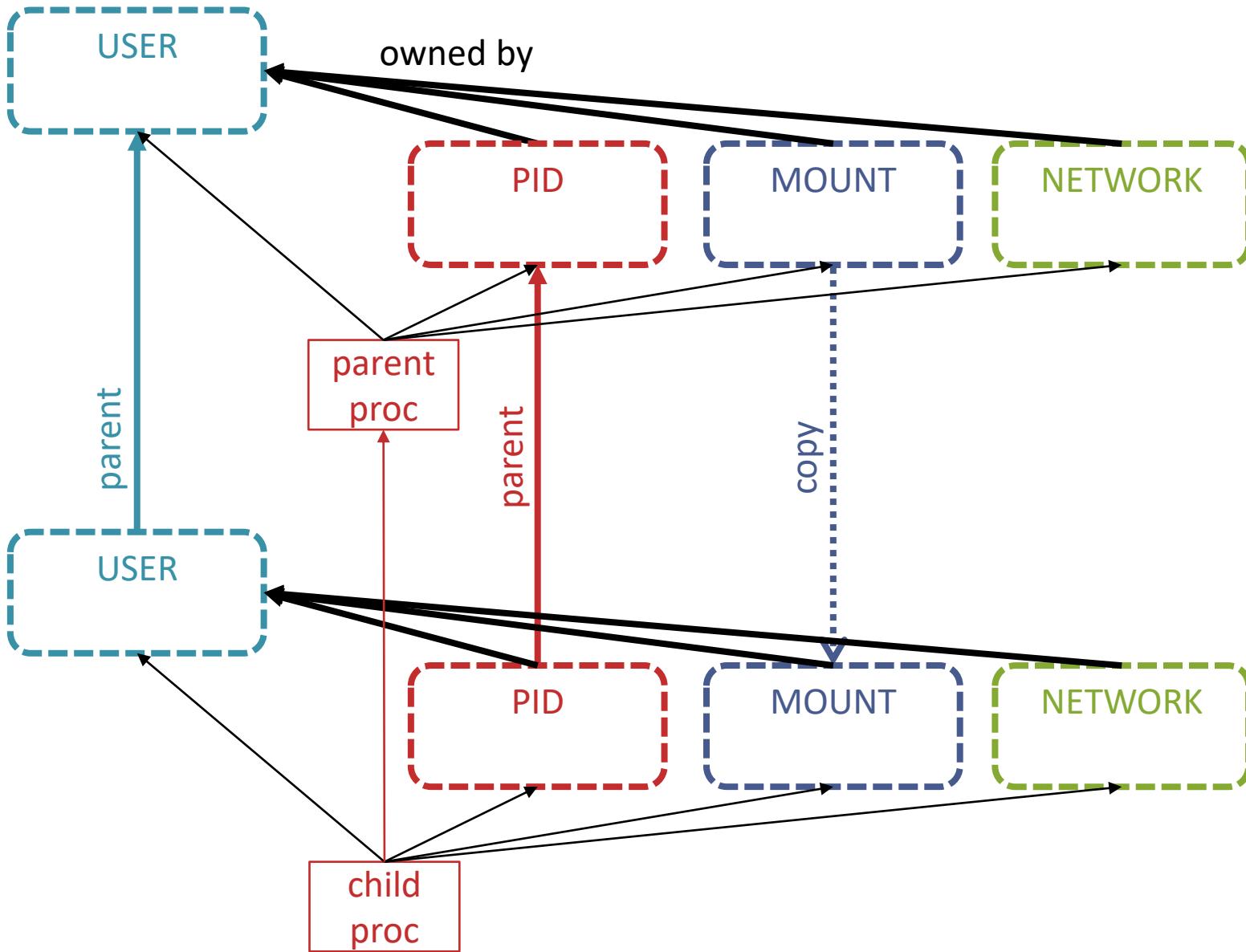
- ▶ The most important types of namespaces (in the order of appearance)
 - Mount - mounts, i.e. the complete filesystem
 - Linux 2.4.19 – August 2002
 - UTS - machine name, OS version, etc.
 - Linux 2.6.19 – November 2006
 - IPC - ids of message queues, semaphores, shared memory
 - Linux 2.6.19 – November 2006
 - USER - user and group ids (numeric)
 - Linux 2.6.23 – October 2007
 - changed semantics in Linux 3.5 - Jul 2012, finished in Linux 3.8 - Feb 2013
 - PID - process and thread ids (numeric)
 - Linux 2.6.24 – January 2008
 - Network - the complete configuration of networking (NICs, ports, routing, forwarding)
 - Linux 2.6.29 – April 2009
 - Cgroup - resource-sharing pool and the associated cgroup configuration
 - Linux 4.6 – May 2016
 - Time - adjustments to monotonic clock (to make container migration possible)
 - Linux 5.6 - March 2020

- ▶ cgroup version 1 was abandoned, version 2 is now in use
- ▶ a cgroup is a set of *controllers* and their configuration
 - io – accessible bandwidth of block device I/O (since Linux 4.5)
 - memory – process/kernel/swap memory (since Linux 4.5)
 - pids – max number of processes/threads created (since Linux 4.5)
 - perf_event – performance monitoring (since Linux 4.11)
 - rdma – access to DMA resources in the kernel and the hardware (since Linux 4.11)
 - cpu – CPU time allotment (since Linux 4.15)
 - cpuset – set of CPU or NUMA nodes available (since Linux 5.0)
 - freezer – suspending/restoring all processes in a cgroup (since Linux 5.2)
 - hugetlb – allocation of huge TLB pages (since Linux 5.6)
- ▶ other features attached to a cgroup
 - access to I/O devices
 - packet filtering may be based on the id of the originating cgroup

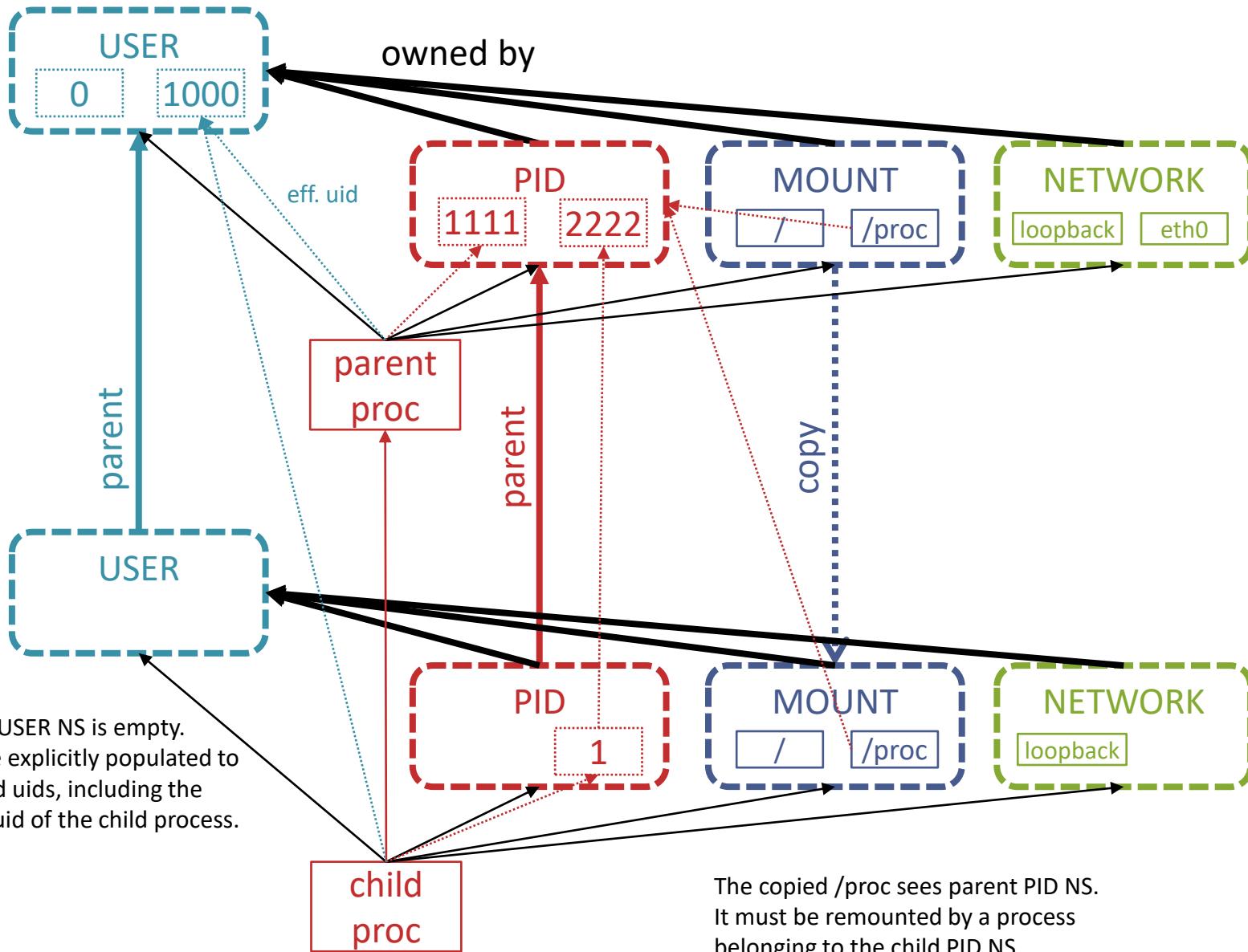
- ▶ A Linux process consists [mainly] of
 - ▶ **pid**, parent **pid**
 - ▶ effective **uid**, **gid**, *capabilities*, etc.
 - ▶ attached *namespaces* (one namespace per each type of namespace)
 - ▶ file descriptors (open files, pipes, semaphores, etc.)
 - ▶ virtual memory
 - ▶ state, CPU registers
- ▶ Processes are created by syscalls:
 - ▶ **fork** – copy everything (except pid/parent pid and the return value from fork)
 - ▶ **clone** – each of the constituents may be shared or copied or created new
 - behavior controlled by flags
 - example: sharing everything (except CPU registers) creates a thread
- ▶ The **exec** syscall is the only way to load an executable file
 - it replaces actual virtual memory with the new code and data, resets state
 - effective uid/gid/capabilities may change if the executable file has **suid** bit set

- ▶ **Linux namespaces are created by these syscalls:**
 - ▶ **clone** – for the namespace types selected by flags, new namespaces are created for the child process (the other types are shared)
 - ▶ **unshare** – for the namespace types selected by flags, new namespaces are attached to the calling process (the previous namespaces are detached but continue to exist)
 - ▶ The new namespaces
 - set as *owned* by the user namespace that
 - was created by the same syscall (if there was one)
 - was attached to the calling process before the syscall (otherwise)
 - user and pid namespaces are permanently set as *children* of the namespaces of the same type attached to the calling process before the call
 - the contents of the new namespaces after clone/unshare:
 - user, network, and ipc namespaces are empty
 - after clone, pid namespaces contain the newly created process with pid=1
 - other namespace types (mount etc.) are copies of the previously attached namespaces

The effect of clone on major namespaces



The effect of clone on major namespaces



- ▶ Namespace is discarded when
 - ▶ No attached processes exist
 - ▶ No child namespaces exist (for user and pid namespaces)
 - ▶ No owned namespaces exist (for a user namespace)
 - ▶ No bind mount exist that represents the namespace
 - Namespaces are represented by `/proc/<pid>/ns/*` virtual files, these may be duplicated by bind-mounting elsewhere
- ▶ Setting the contents of the new namespaces
 - ▶ may be performed by processes attached to
 - the parent namespace of the same type
 - the same namespace
 - ▶ usually performed between **clone/unshare** and **exec** calls, i.e. by the same code that called clone/unshare
 - this code is aware of both the existing parent and the desired child identifiers
 - ▶ often performed by manipulating `/proc/<pid>/*` files
 - other, namespace-specific ways exist (e.g. the MOUNT syscall)

- ▶ **procfs filesystem (since 1984)**
 - ▶ usually mounted at /proc
 - the contents reflects the pid namespace of the process that called mount
 - must be mounted again inside a container
 - ▶ contains virtual folders and files
 - enables communication between the kernel and user processes
 - reduces the number of syscalls required
 - allows passing more than the 6 64-bit parameters/results of a syscall
 - any access to /proc/* is done using universal OPEN/REaddir/READ/WRITE syscalls
 - standard mechanism of file access rights applies
 - READ/WRITE have a mechanism for large data transfers between process and kernel
 - ▶ in procfs, each filename has its own READ/WRITE handler
 - READ converts some kernel data to file contents, often in tab-separated decimal form
 - WRITE (if enabled) analyzes the text and sets the kernel data
 - often limited to single OPEN-WRITE-CLOSE syscall sequence
 - disadvantage: the kernel contains code for producing/parsing text and numbers
 - ▶ majority of the contents (but not all) presented as /proc/<pid>/*
 - some folders/files are presented relative to the calling process, e.g. /proc/self
 - ▶ example: the **ps** utility works by reading the virtual files in /proc

- ▶ Each process has a bit mask of (about 40) capabilities
 - A fine-grained replacement (since 1999) for testing effective uid==0
 - However, majority of privileged actions are still controlled by the CAP_SYS_ADMIN capability
 - The capabilities are bound to the user namespace attached to the process
 - Applicable to actions on and in namespaces *owned* by this user namespace
 - The process that enters (by clone/unshare) a newly created user namespace
 - Automatically holds all capabilities (wrt. this user namespace)
 - It may propagate these capabilities to child processes
 - It will lose the capabilities on exec, unless its effective uid (in its namespace) is zero
- ▶ User namespaces
 - Any process can create a user namespace
 - CAP_SETUID in the *parent* user namespace is required to setup a non-trivial user mapping
 - CAP_SETUID normally allows impersonation of anyone in the same namespace (e.g. by sshd)
 - the impersonation can also happen by mapping a user from a child user namespace
 - non-CAP_SETUID-equipped processes can only setup a trivial user mapping
 - map one (arbitrary) child uid to the effective uid of the process that created the namespace
- ▶ Non-user namespaces
 - CAP_SYS_ADMIN is required to create a non-user namespace
 - if a new user namespace is created by the same call, the capability is automatically assumed
 - otherwise, the invoking process must have had that capability before
 - A specific capability is required when
 - The id mapping associated with a namespace is defined (e.g. pid generators)
 - Objects in the namespace are created (e.g. network devices) or modified (e.g. firewall rules) in such a way that may affects all processes in the namespaces

- ▶ Technically, uid and gid mapping is limited to a (small) set of intervals of uids/guids mapped linearly from the child to the parent
 - The mapping is defined by writing /proc/<pid>/uid_map|gid_map
 - Unmapped child-namespace uids/gids cannot be used in any syscall (like setuid or chown)
 - Unmapped parent-namespace uids/gids (e.g. from a file system) cannot be presented to processes in the child namespace
 - Mapped as 65534 (usually decoded as "nobody" by /etc/passwd and /etc/group)
- ▶ Non-privileged processes may directly map only one child uid/gid
 - This child uid/gid may be 0 ("root")
 - It must be mapped to the effective uid/gid of the process that created the user namespace
- ▶ Indirect setup using **newuidmap** and **newgidmap** utilities
 - Available to any user for any user namespace created by this user
 - These executables have CAP_SETUID capability attached and may therefore setup arbitrary uid/gid mappings
 - However, these utilities allow only mappings that
 - Map at most one child uid/gid to the uid/gid of the calling user
 - All the other child uid/gid must map into the range(s) defined for the calling user by the /etc/subuid and /etc/subgid files
 - In default settings, each standard user has 65536 additional uids and gids reserved by the /etc/sub*id files
 - The rules ensure that different standard users can never use the same parent uids/gids
 - The additional uids/gids are not present in the (parent mount namespace) /etc/passwd or /etc/groups; therefore, they are displayed numerically by utilities like ls

- ▶ **unshare** utility can launch a new process into new namespaces
 - ▶ Namespace creation controlled by command-line options
 - ▶ User namespace - trivial mapping to self

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ unshare -c
```

- ▶ The above command launches bash into a new user namespace

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ ps -l
```

F	S	UID	PID	PPID	C	PRI	NI	ADDR	SZ	WCHAN	TTY	TIME	CMD
0	S	1000	344957	344929	0	80	0	-	2267	-	pts/3	00:00:00	bash
4	S	1000	350824	344957	0	80	0	-	2265	do_wai	pts/3	00:00:00	bash
0	R	1000	350881	350824	0	80	0	-	2521	-	pts/3	00:00:00	ps

- This namespace has trivial mapping of the current UID/GID to itself

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ cat /proc/$$/uid_map
```

1000	1000	1
------	------	---

- There is no new mount namespace - we can see the global filesystem

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ ls -ld /home/bednarek
```

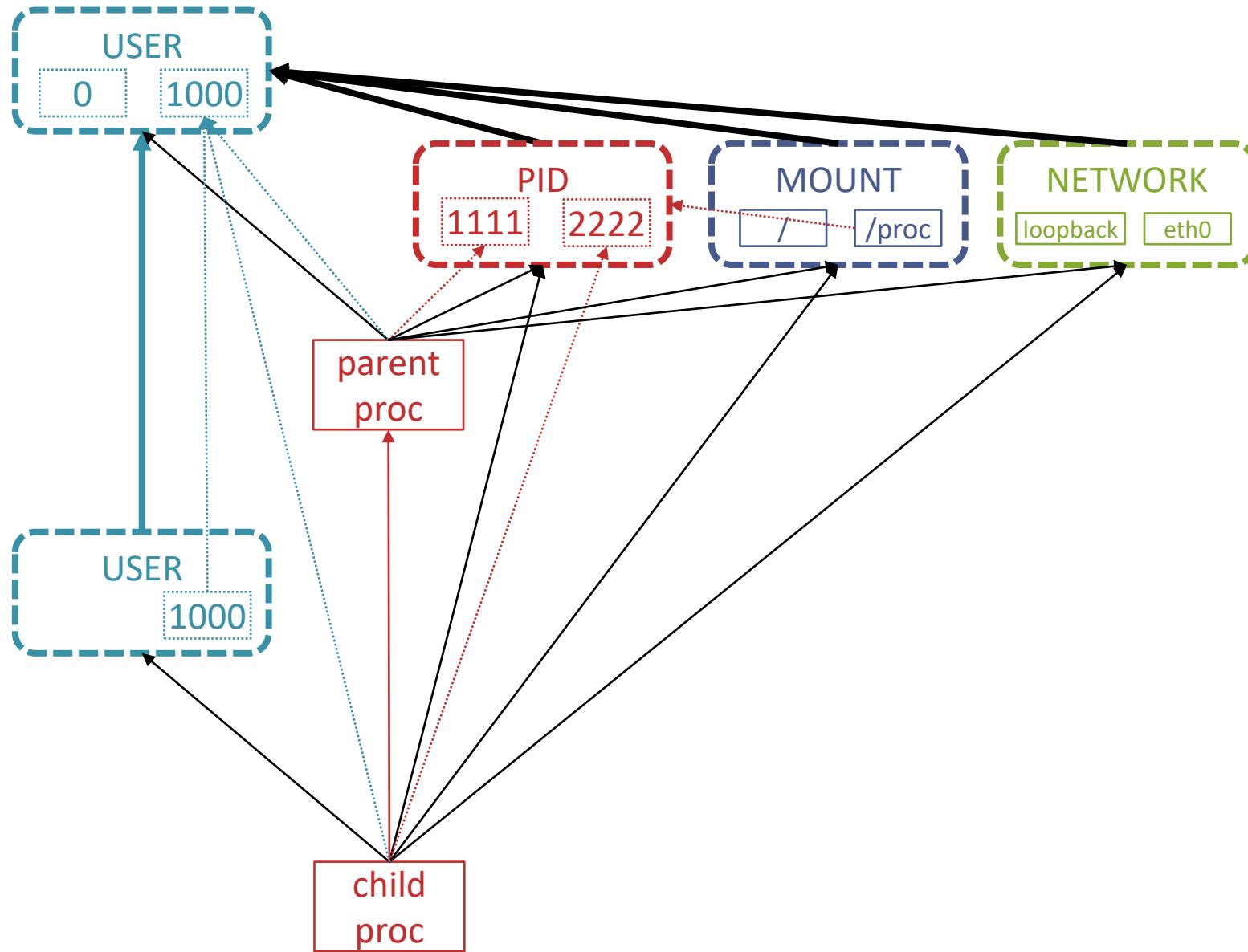
```
drwx----- 15 bednarek bednarek 4096 Oct 25 10:27 /home/bednarek
```

- However, unmapped global UIDs/GIDs are shown as nobody

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ ls -ld /root
```

```
dr-xr-x--- 5 nobody nobody 4096 Sep 20 22:56 /root
```

unshare -c



► User namespace - trivial mapping of local root to global self

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ unshare -r
```

- All the global user's processes are now shown with local UID=0

- We can see the parent bash because there is no new PID namespace

```
[root@rocky ~]# ps -1
```

F	S	UID	PID	PPID	C	PRI	NI	ADDR	SZ	WCHAN	TTY	TIME	CMD
0	S	0	344957	344929	0	80	0	-	2267	-	pts/3	00:00:00	bash
4	S	0	351664	344957	0	80	0	-	2265	do_wai	pts/3	00:00:00	bash
0	R	0	351707	351664	0	80	0	-	2521	-	pts/3	00:00:00	ps

- This namespace has trivial mapping of local 0 to the global UID/GID of the user

```
[root@rocky ~]# cat /proc/$$/uid_map
```

0	1000	1
---	------	---

- This user's files are now shown as owned by (local) root

- Actually, this is local UID/GID 0 incorrectly mapped through the global /etc/{passwd,group}

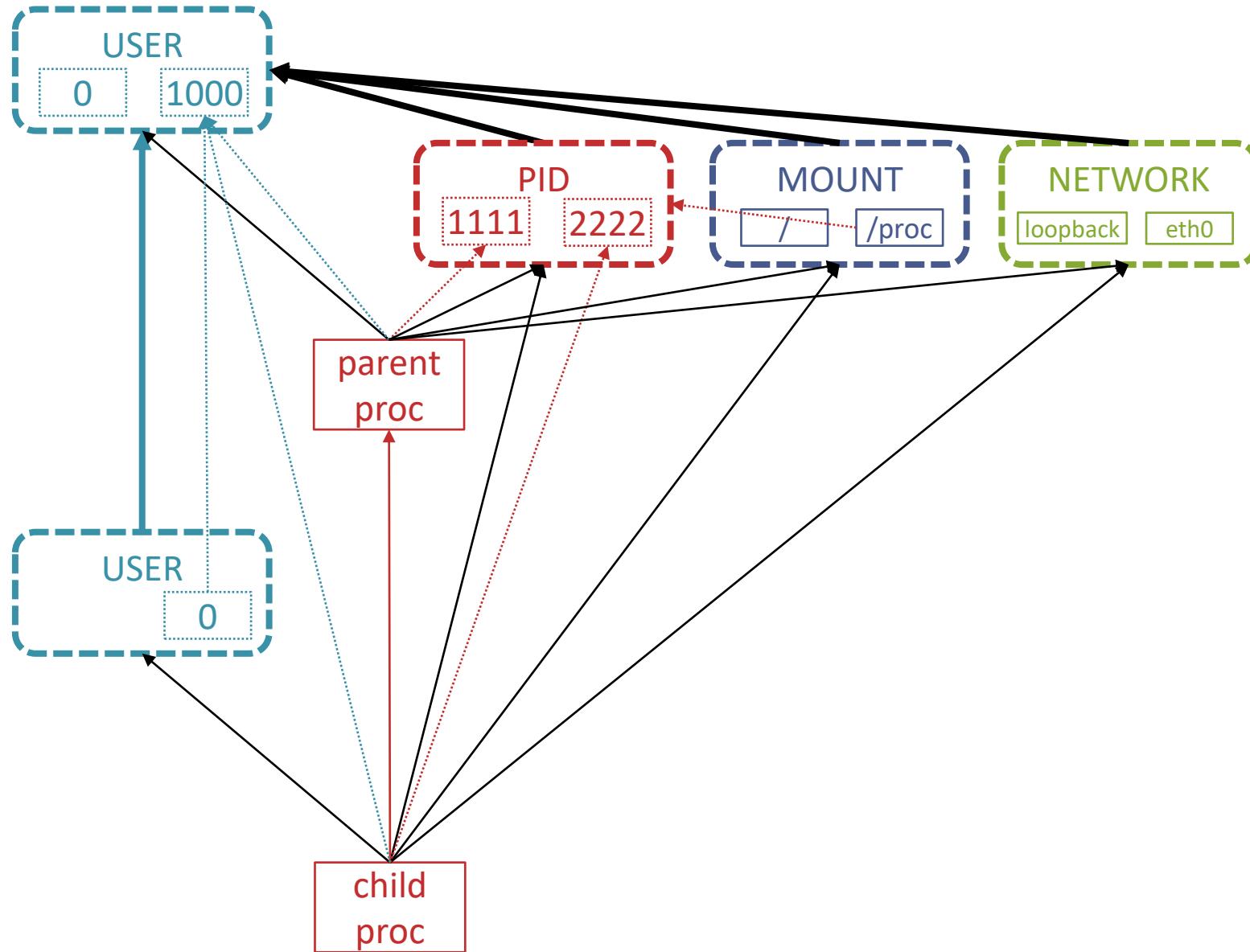
```
[root@rocky ~]# ls -ld /home/bednarek
```

```
drwx----- 15 root root 4096 Oct 25 10:27 /home/bednarek
```

- The true global root is shown as nobody

```
[root@rocky ~]# ls -ld /root
```

```
dr-xr-x--- 5 nobody nobody 4096 Sep 20 22:56 /root
```



Linux namespaces – unshare utility

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ unshare -U
```

- ▶ Creates a new user namespace with no mapping

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ cat /proc/$$/uid_map
```

- Even the actual user is mapped to UID=65534 (nobody)

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ ps -1
```

F	S	UID	PID	PPID	C	PRI	NI	ADDR	SZ	WCHAN	TTY	TIME	CMD
0	S	65534	344957	344929	0	80	0	-	2267	-	pts/3	00:00:00	bash
0	S	65534	352808	344957	0	80	0	-	2265	do_wai	pts/3	00:00:00	bash
0	R	65534	352872	352808	0	80	0	-	2521	-	pts/3	00:00:00	ps

- ▶ The mapping must be defined from a process in the parent namespace

- We need the SETUID capability in the parent user namespace

- We can map only to global UIDs/GIDs defined by /etc/{subuid,subgid}

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ grep bednarek /etc/subuid
```

```
bednarek:100000:65536
```

- The SETUID capability is attached to the newuidmap/newgidmap utilities

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ newuidmap 352808 0 1000 1 1 100001 999
```

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ newgidmap 352808 0 1000 1 1 100001 999
```

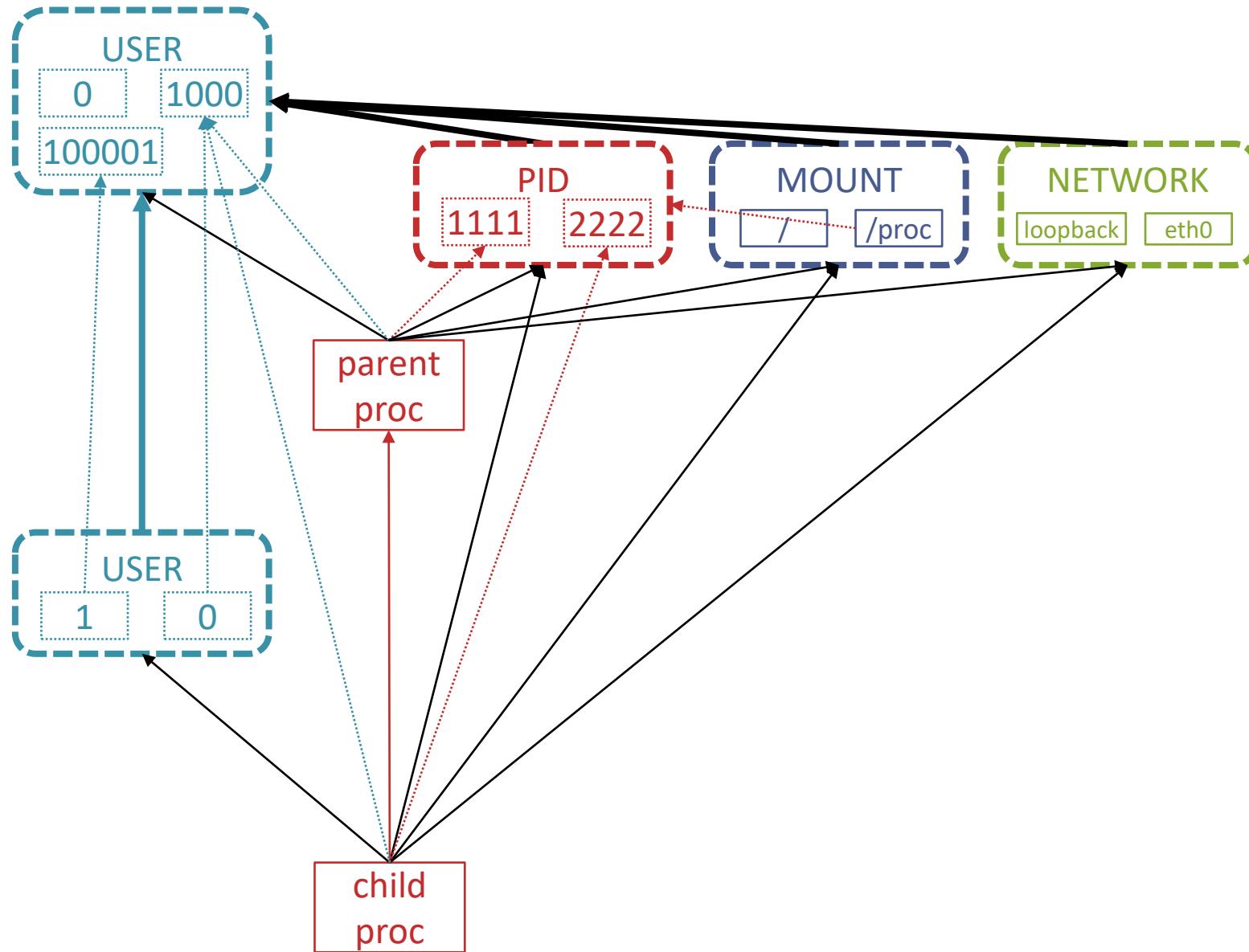
- ▶ Back in the local namespace, the new maps are visible

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ cat /proc/$$/uid_map
```

0	1000	1
1	100001	999

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ ls -ld /home/bednarek
```

```
drwx-----. 15 root root 4096 Oct 25 10:27 /home/bednarek
```



Linux namespaces – unshare utility

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ unshare -U
```

- Creates a new user namespace with no mapping
- The mapping must be defined from the parent process
- Back in the local namespace, the new maps are visible

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ cat /proc/$$/uid_map
```

0	1000	1
1	100001	999

- Note: The "nobody" is still here because the bash was not told to update the prompt
- We can now use all local UIDs between 0 and 999

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ mkdir test
```

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ chown mail:mail test
```

- We can execute **chown** because we are local UID=0 and have the local SETUID capability

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ ls -ld test
```

```
drwxr-xr-x. 2 mail mail 6 Oct 25 11:18 test
```

- Again, "mail" is mapped through global /etc/{passwd,group} to local UID=8, GID=12

```
[nobody@rocky ~]$ grep mail /etc/{passwd,group}
```

```
/etc/passwd:mail:x:8:12:mail:/var/spool/mail:/sbin/nologin
```

```
/etc/group:mail:x:12:postfix
```

- ▶ In the global namespace, the folder is seen with the global UID/GID

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ ls -ld test
```

```
drwxr-xr-x. 2 100008 100012 6 Oct 25 11:18 test
```

- If the local UID=8, GID=12 were not mapped, the **chown** above would have failed

► Root-full container

- The initial process of the container runs with $uid/gid == 0$ (as seen inside the container)
 - It also has all capabilities (wrt. objects in its namespaces)
- ▶ Created by root (sudo) user (of the parent namespace)
 - 1:1 uid/gid mapping or no user namespace at all
 - Dangerous, the only scenario available in the past
- ▶ Created by a non-privileged user
 - uid/gid 0 in the container maps to the creator user/group
 - other uids/gids in the container (if any) map to the creator's subuid/subgid set

► Root-less container

- All the processes of the container run with the same uid/gid $\neq 0$
 - They have no capabilities (therefore unable to create/impersonate other uids/gids)
- ▶ Created by root (sudo) user (of the parent namespace)
 - The only uid/gid mapped to a selected user/group
- ▶ Created by a non-privileged user
 - The only uid/gid mapped to the creator user/group

- ▶ The namespaces and cgroups are relatively old mechanism of the kernel
- ▶ Some parts were significantly redefined or extended more recently
 - PIDS, capabilities, ...
- ▶ Many container systems originally used older, less general kernel mechanisms
 - Instead of using the mechanism of owner namespaces, docker does this:
 - *docker* executable forwards the commands via a named pipe to the *dockerd* daemon
 - *dockerd* daemon uses root privileges to manipulate the namespaces and cgroups
 - Consequently, the safety of the system relies on the correctness of *dockerd*
 - However, *dockerd* was later reimplemented to more modern techniques
 - e.g. using *crun/runc* to actually start containers, not requiring root privileges
- ▶ *Red Hat* reacted by implementing *podman*, which implements docker commands through the modern kernel mechanisms, bypassing any daemon

- ▶ There are conflicting philosophies with respect to containers
 - ▶ Docker, Inc.: Containers are lightweight entities
 - A container shall typically contain only one process
 - Any connection between processes shall be handled outside the containers
 - Use Kubernetes to orchestrate these connections
 - To update the software in a container, drop the container and start another
 - Due to robustness and load-balancing requirements, the container must survive this anyway
 - ▶ Red Hat, Inc.: Containers are like computers
 - Many applications consists of several processes
 - apache, mysql, java, cron, ...
 - The applications are published with a sophisticated installation script
 - Nobody is going to rewrite installation scripts into Kubernetes configurations
 - Installation scripts shall work inside containers
 - Typical installation procedures shall work inside containers:

```
$ sudo yum install gcc
$ sudo yum upgrade
$ sudo systemctl enable sshd
```

▶ PID namespace

- This happens in a lightweight container *without* pid namespace, executing "bash":

```
# systemctl status
Failed to connect to bus: Operation not permitted
# sudo systemctl status
sudo: /etc/sudo.conf is owned by uid 65534, should be 0
sudo: /etc/sudo.conf is owned by uid 65534, should be 0
sudo: error in /etc/sudo.conf, line 0 while loading plugin "sudoers_policy"
sudo: /usr/libexec/sudo/sudoers.so must be owned by uid 0
sudo: fatal error, unable to load plugins
# ls /etc/sudo.conf -ln
-rw-r-----. 1 65534 65534 1786 Apr 24 2020 /etc/sudo.conf
# grep root\\|65534 /etc/passwd
root:x:0:0:root:/root:/bin/bash
nobody:x:65534:65534:Kernel Overflow User:/sbin/nologin
```

- The process PID=1 has two special roles
 - it controls daemons – published via a named pipe as the *systemctl* command
 - it collects zombies
- Inside a typical container, PID=1 is the main executable, often a shell
 - it cannot respond to the *systemctl* request
- *sudo* refuses to work because the true owner of *sudo.conf* does not exist inside the USER namespace of the container
- the *root* of the container namespace is not configured to have sufficient privileges

Linux namespaces – unshare utility - pid namespace

- Creating a new pid namespace - unsuccessful attempts

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ unshare -p  
unshare: unshare failed: Operation not permitted
```

- Creating any namespace other than user namespace requires CAP_SYS_ADMIN
- We can acquire this capability by entering a new user namespace (here with -r)

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ unshare -r -p  
-bash: fork: Cannot allocate memory  
-bash-5.1# echo $$  
373218
```

- A pid namespace requires a really new process, not just unsharing

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ unshare -r -p --fork  
basename: missing operand  
Try 'basename --help' for more information.  
[root@rocky ~]# echo $$  
1
```

- We are in the new pid namespace with PID=1

```
[root@rocky ~]# ps  
 PID TTY      TIME CMD  
344957 pts/3    00:00:00 bash  
373102 pts/3    00:00:00 unshare  
373103 pts/3    00:00:00 bash  
373148 pts/3    00:00:00 ps
```

- But ps is implemented using /proc, so we actually see the global processes
- Our bash with local PID=1 maps to global PID=373103

Linux namespaces – unshare utility - pid namespace

- Creating a new pid namespace - the correct way

```
[bednarek@rocky ~]$ unshare -r -p --fork --mount-proc
```

- The --mount-proc switch mounts a new instance of procfs to /proc
- Before that, the utility created a new mount namespace

```
[root@rocky ~]# echo $$
```

1

- Our bash is running with local PID=1

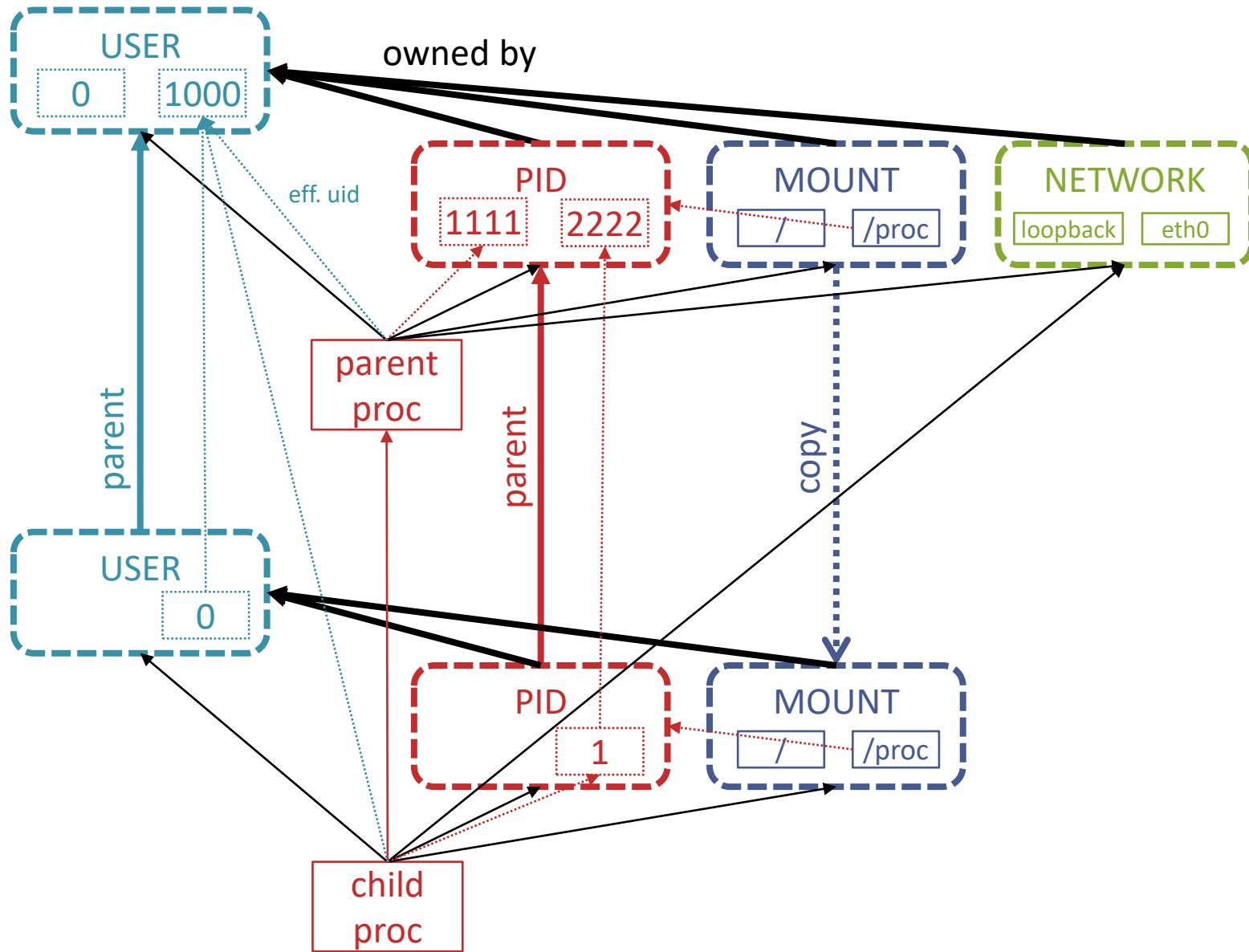
```
[root@rocky ~]# ps -el
```

F	S	UID	PID	PPID	C	PRI	NI	ADDR	SZ	WCHAN	TTY	TIME	CMD
4	S	0	1	0	0	80	0	-	2265	do_wai	pts/3	00:00:00	bash
0	R	0	33	1	0	80	0	-	2521	-	pts/3	00:00:00	ps

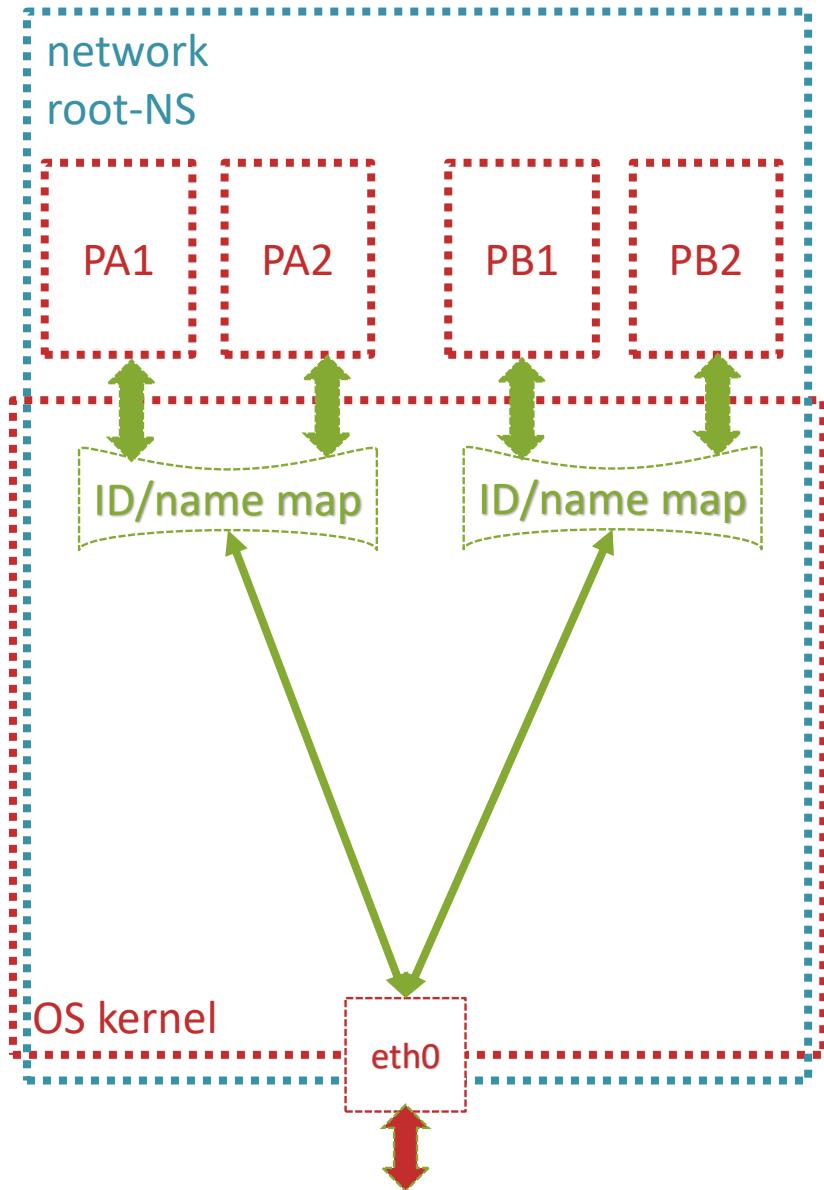
- We can't see any other processes than the PID=1 and the ps utility itself

- ▶ This is the minimum that a modern container system must do
 - At least when system container (with PID=1 and UID=0) is required
 - Create a user namespace and map UID=0 to the parent user
 - Create a mount namespace
 - Real containers would map their own filesystems here
 - Fork a new process into a new pid namespace
 - Mount a new procfs into /proc
 - Real containers usually also create a network namespace

unshare -r -p --fork --mount-proc

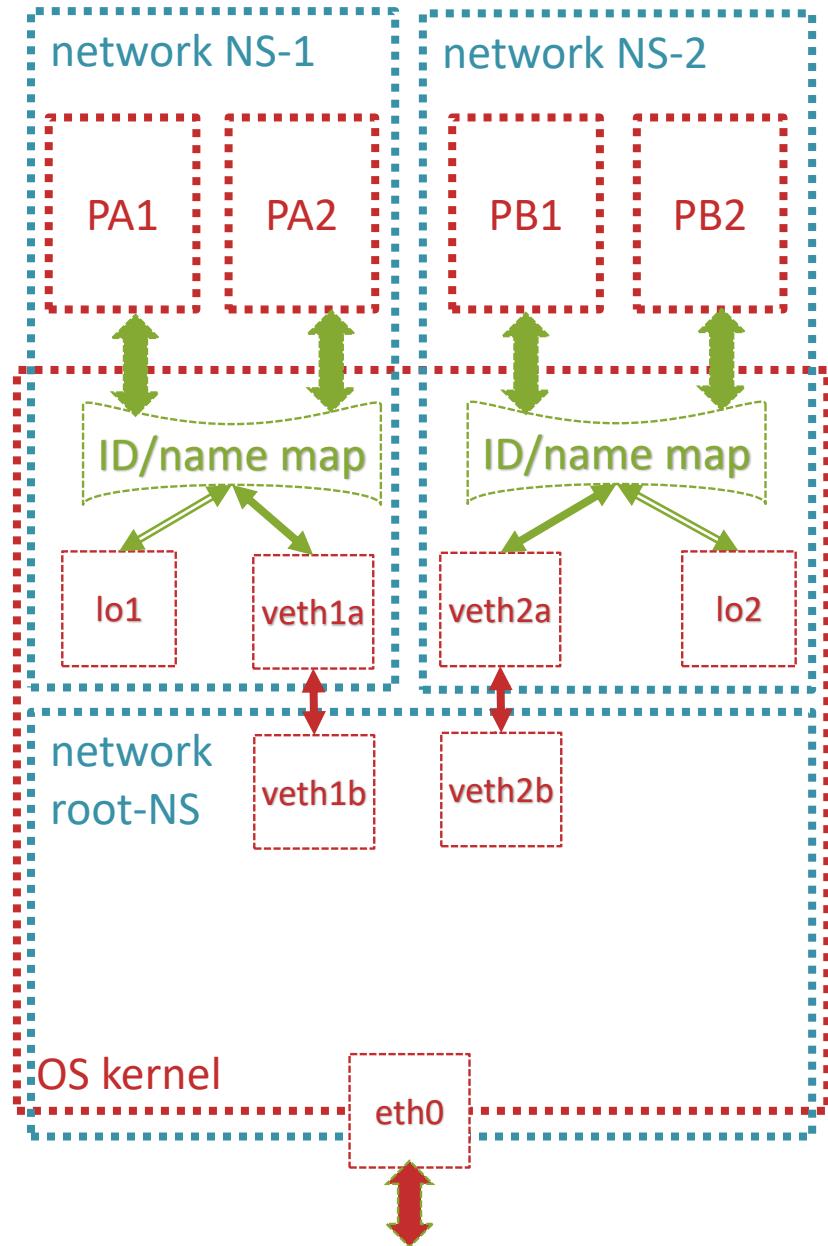


Containerization – without network namespaces



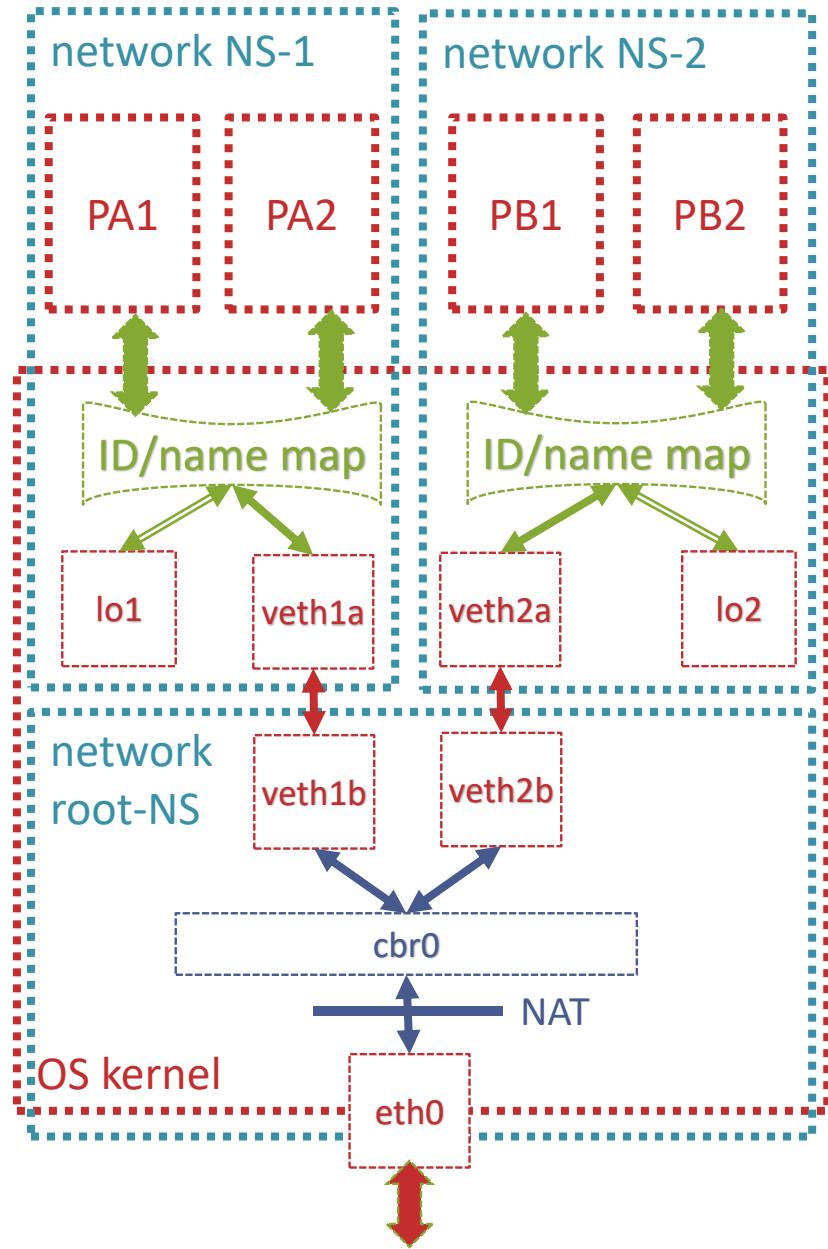
- ▶ Containers in host network namespace
 - ▶ Containers share network stack with the host
 - Potential port number conflicts
 - Unsafe
 - ▶ Called **host mode** in docker/podman

Containerization – network namespaces



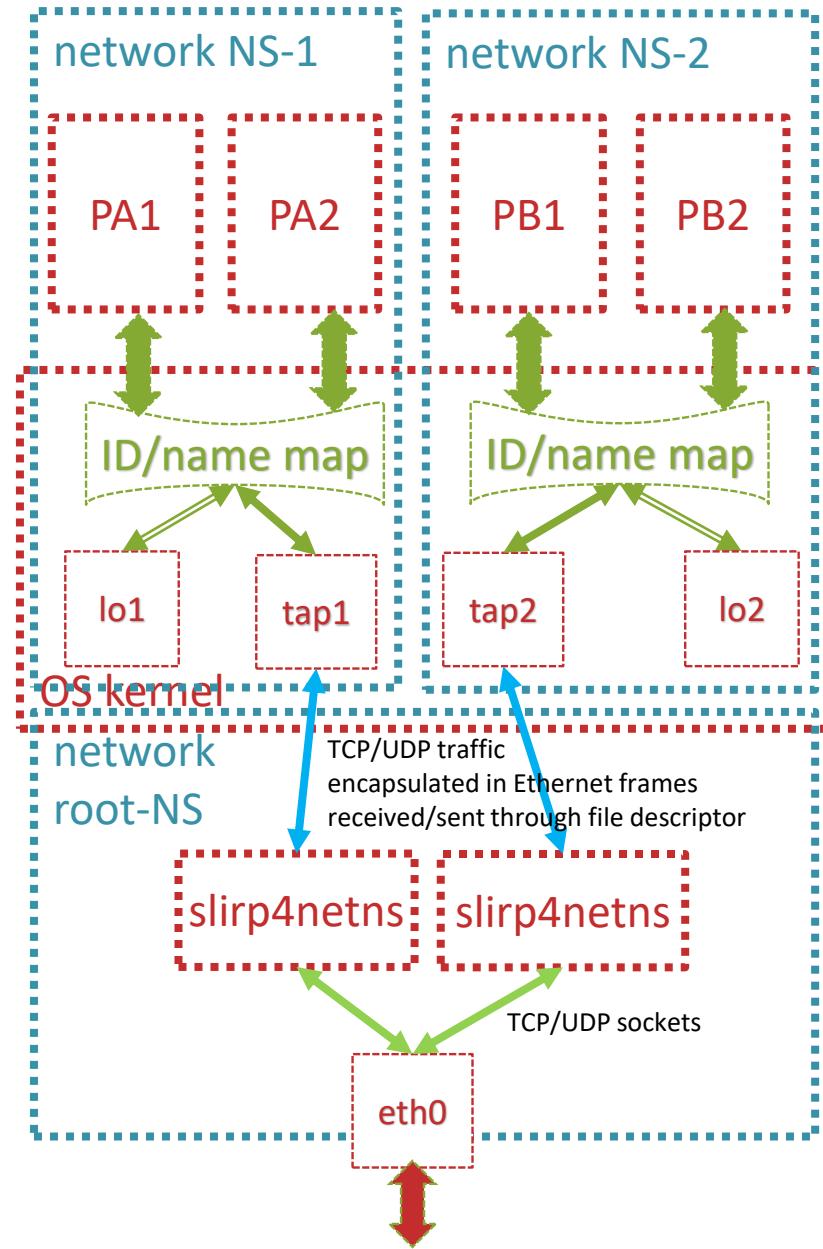
- ▶ Network namespaces are created empty
 - ▶ Devices, routing and firewall rules are bound to a NS
- ▶ veth – a pair of virtual Ethernet devices
 - ▶ packets sent through one side are received on the other
 - ▶ usually installed across network NS boundary
 - privileges required in both namespaces
 - non-root users must provide network access differently
- ▶ More than one container may reside in the same network namespace
 - ▶ Shared network address
 - Potentially conflicting ports
 - ▶ Example: podman pod

Containerization – network namespaces

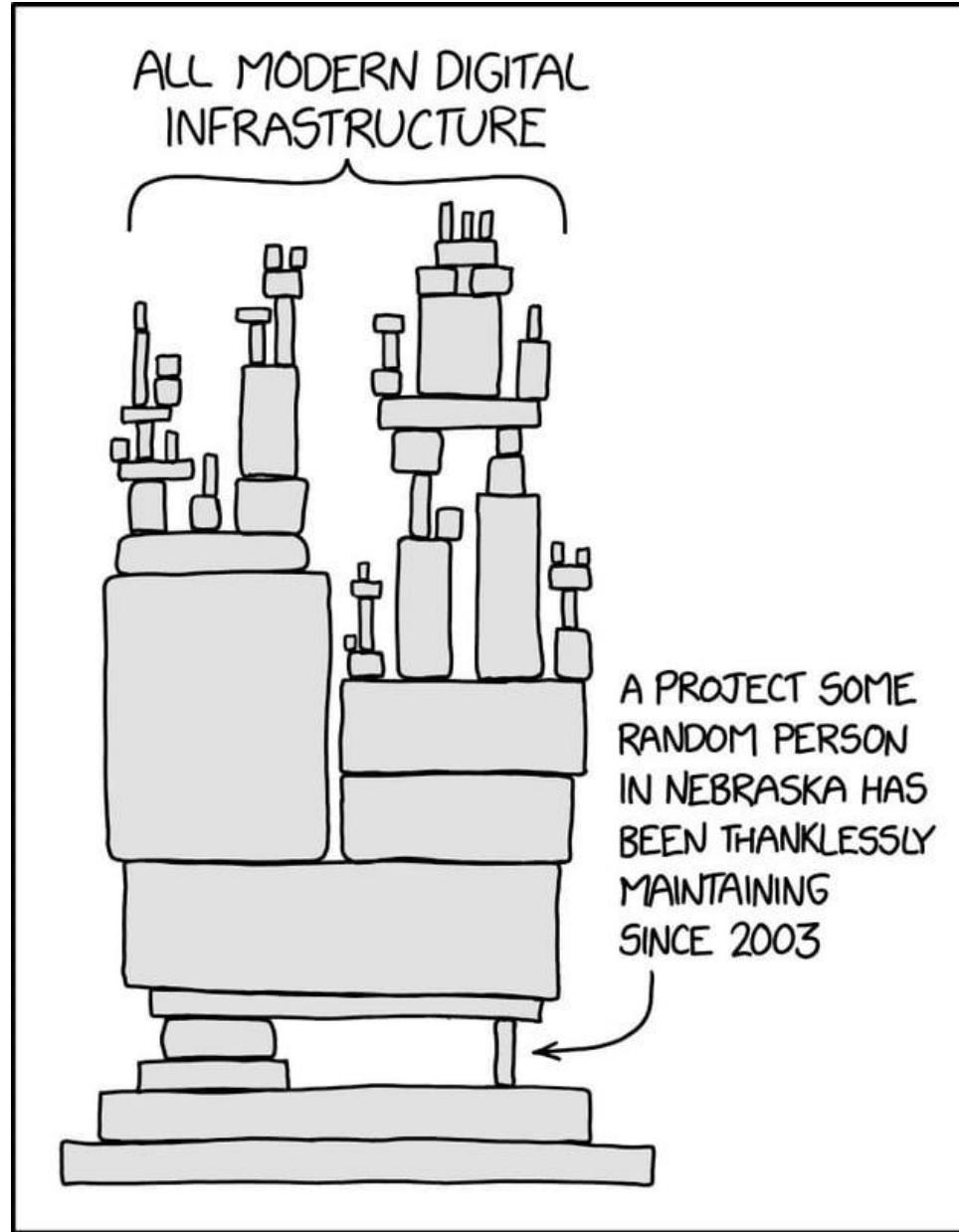


- ▶ Network namespaces are created empty
 - ▶ Devices, routing and firewall rules are bound to a NS
- ▶ veth – a pair of virtual Ethernet devices
 - ▶ packets sent through one side are received on the other
- ▶ The outer side of the veth pair
 - ▶ **Bridge mode** of docked/podman
 - Virtual bridge + routing involved
 - Standard parts of linux kernel
 - ▶ Virtual bridge
 - All outer sides of the veth pairs connected by a virtual bridge
 - Represented in the root NS as cbr0
 - ▶ Router + NAT
 - Packets are routed between cbr0 and eth0
 - Routing with NAT (usually the default)
 - Containers have private addresses
 - External access requires port forwarding
 - Routing without NAT
 - Containers have public addresses
 - External access may be blocked by host firewall
 - ▶ Visibility between containers
 - Configured by host or NS firewall

Containerization – network namespaces for non-privileged creators



- ▶ Network namespaces are created empty
 - ▶ Devices, routing and firewall rules are bound to a NS
 - ▶ Non-privileged creator cannot create a veth pair
 - due to insufficient privilege in the root NS
 - ▶ Non-privileged creator can create a TAP adapter
 - using root privileges in the child NS
 - the TAP adapter is connected to user-space stack
- ▶ **slirp4netns**
 - an utility developed from slirp (1996)
 - not seriously secure!
 - receive/send Ethernet packets via a TAP
 - send/receive unencapsulated TCP/UDP traffic
 - using unprivileged TCP/UDP ports
 - cannot use port < 1024
 - in effect, similar to a **NAT router**
 - but implemented quite differently
 - no container-to-container traffic
 - root-less container systems invoke this daemon automatically



- ▶ The userspace layer of containers
 - ▶ docker, podman, ...
 - ▶ An *image* is essentially a **read-only** filesystem
 - Plus some defaults and interface declarations
 - ▶ A *container* is an image plus
 - A **writable** layer above the image filesystem
 - This is destroyed when the container is deleted (but survives stops)
 - A set of mounts used to access some folders outside the container
 - This can survive deleting and recreating the container (e.g., from an updated image)
 - A set of ports mapped via virtual networks to the outside world
 - ▶ A *running container* is
 - A set of processes living in the namespace of the container
 - Created by forking from a single process, usually the *ENTRYPOINT* defined in the image
 - Optionally, *stdin/stdout/stderr* pipes attached to the processes

▶ Container image

- ▶ Logically, a filesystem that will be visible to a container when it starts
 - Additional folders are usually mounted into that filesystem
 - Virtual filesystems, e.g. procfs mounted at /proc
 - Selected host-filesystem folders to be read/written by the container
- ▶ Theoretically, the container may mount large parts of the host filesystem
 - E.g. all the operating system executables like /usr/bin
 - This is not the way how docker was designed to work
 - The image usually contains a complete copy of an operating system (except the kernel)
- ▶ Images are large (minimum bare OS = ~30 MB compressed)
 - Significant cost of storing and transporting images
- ▶ Many images are based on the same OS version
 - OS+DataBase vs. OS+WebServer
 - Significant parts of the filesystem are identical
- ▶ Identical parts shall be shared between images
 - Implemented by creating and storing images by layers
 - Not the best optimization possible
 - ReadHat+Oracle shares nothing with Ubuntu+Oracle

- ▶ The image is created by adding layers
 - To another image or to an empty filesystem ("FROM SCRATCH")
- ▶ Each layer can be
 - ▶ A set of files copied from elsewhere
 - ▶ The result of a command executed inside the partially built container
 - A temporary container started as if the previous layers formed a complete image
 - Anything written by the command is stored in a writable layer
 - Files/folders may be added/modified/removed
 - When done, the writable layer is frozen to read-only
- ▶ Each layer is
 - ▶ Identified by its checksum
 - ▶ Usually stored/distributed as single file
 - Often using tar+gzip
 - The base layer may be taken directly from an OS distribution
- ▶ Layers of an image linked together by metadata files
 - ▶ Usually conformant to the Open-Container-Initiative (OCI) standard

- ▶ Creating the filesystem from an image
 - ▶ When a container is created and/or started
 - Including the case of temporary containers during the creation of the image
 - ▶ The tar(+gzip) format is too slow for execution
 - Each layer is unzipped and untarred into:
 - A subtree in the host filesystem, or
 - A filesystem built inside a file in the host filesystem
- ▶ The layers (including the top-most writable one) must be combined:
 - ▶ *Flattening* - before starting the container
 - Applying changes by subsequent layers onto the base layer
 - Slow container creation, high disk-space consumption, fast container execution
 - Cannot easily extract the changes made by the container into a new layer
 - ▶ *Union filesystem – virtually, when the container runs*
 - A filesystem combining two other filesystems (e.g. overlayfs)
 - *Whiteout*: deleting in the upper filesystem hides a file from the lower filesystem
 - A container manager may share a read-only layer in more than one container
 - Quicker container creation, low disk-space consumption, slower container execution

- ▶ *Union filesystem*
 - ▶ A filesystem combining two other filesystems (e.g. overlayfs)
- ▶ *Each layer may be*
 - ▶ A subtree of a physical (host) file system
 - ▶ A separate file system over a virtual block device
 - Usually implemented in a binary file
- ▶ *Overlay FS, layer filesystems and virtual block devices*
 - ▶ Implemented in kernel when set up by privileged users
 - Permissions and owner UID/GIDs stored within FS
 - Container images cannot be shared between different host users
 - ▶ Implemented in userspace when set up by root-less users
 - Using Linux FUSE - FS requests redirected from kernel to user processes
 - Permission checking delegated to the userspace component
 - Container images may be shared if the layer FS is container-aware

Creating images by docker

```
FROM debian:trixie-slim
```

```
ENV NGINX_VERSION 1.29.2
```

```
ENV NJS_VERSION 0.9.3
```

```
ENV NJS_RELEASE 1~trixie
```

```
ENV PKG_RELEASE 1~trixie
```

```
ENV DYNPKG_RELEASE 1~trixie
```

```
RUN set -x \
```

```
  && groupadd --system --gid 101 nginx \
```

```
  && useradd --system --gid nginx --uid 101 nginx \
```

```
  && apt-get update \
```

```
  && apt-get install curl xsltproc nginx \
```

```
# ... and a hundred of other statements
```

```
COPY docker-entrypoint.sh
```

```
ENTRYPOINT ["/docker-entrypoint.sh"]
```

```
EXPOSE 80
```

```
STOPSIGNAL SIGQUIT
```

```
CMD ["nginx", "-g", "daemon off;"]
```

Dockerfile

- script to create a container image

- placed at the source folder

- direct filesystem modifications

- FROM - base image

- COPY - copy from source folder

- indirect filesystem modifications

- RUN

- create a writable layer on top

- run the specified command in WORKDIR

- freeze the writable layer

- setting startup process

- ENV – process environment

- For the next RUN or ENTRYPOINT

- ENTRYPOINT – process command

- CMD – default arguments

- May be modified when container starts

- metadata

- VOLUME – mount points

- EXPOSE – port list

- STOPSIGNAL – container stop

- ▶ **docker build**
 - ▶ read Dockerfile and other files
 - ▶ pull base image from a **registry**
 - ▶ produce container **image**
- ▶ **docker image push/pull**
 - ▶ push/pull image to/from a registry
- ▶ **docker create**
 - ▶ create a writable layer above an image
 - ▶ link mount points as specified
 - ▶ connect ports as specified
 - ▶ the result is a **stopped container**
- ▶ **docker start**
 - ▶ start the startup process
- ▶ **docker exec**
 - ▶ implant another process into the container namespaces
- ▶ **docker stop/kill**

- ▶ **image**
 - ▶ a combined filesystem
 - sequence of layers (binary blobs)
 - multiple images may share (lower) layers if created by the same commands
 - ▶ environment, startup command, mounts, ports
 - ▶ created by freezing a container
- ▶ **container**
 - ▶ similar to an image
 - the top filesystem layer is writable
 - ▶ may be **running** as a subtree of processes
 - ▶ namespaces and cgroups ensure the required execution environment

▶ Mount-points (VOLUME)

- ▶ When started, the internal mount-points are linked to files/folders on the host
 - Specified by options for *docker create* etc.
- ▶ Main purpose: Long-term persistency of data
 - Software in containers is usually updated by creating a new container from an updated image
 - The updated image may be created from the same Dockerfile
 - FROM and RUN commands may produce different outcome
 - The writable layer of a container cannot be reattached to different underlying image

▶ Ports (EXPOSE)

- ▶ The ports where the servers inside the container listen
 - Specified host NIC ports are forwarded (through NAT) to the EXPOSEd ports (associated to a virtual NIC of the container)
 - Specified by options for *docker create* etc.
 - Alternatively, the container may directly use the host NIC (deprecated)

▶ IPC

- ▶ Host's named pipes, devices etc. may be exposed to the container
- ▶ `stdin/stdout/stderr` of the container may be connected to host
 - `docker run -it`

```
services:  
  proxy:  
    image: nginx  
    volumes:  
      - type: bind  
        source: ./proxy/nginx.conf  
        target: /etc/nginx/conf.d/default.conf  
        read_only: true  
    ports:  
      - 8080:80  
    depends_on:  
      - backend  
  
  backend:  
    build:  
      context: backend  
    volumes:  
      - db-data:/var/lib/postgresql/data  
  
volumes:  
  db-data:
```

▶ docker-compose

- ▶ Built above docker
- ▶ Config: docker-compose.yaml
- ▶ Repository operations
 - Get image from repository
 - Build image
- ▶ Connecting containers to host
 - volumes, ports
- ▶ Combining more containers together (services)
 - Dependences
 - Healthcheck, restart