

# PREPARING FOR LEARNING IN TODAY'S WORLD: CHALLENGES AT THE HORIZON OF 2026

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Learning Development Institute  
www.learndev.org

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# 2026

Just a single generation ahead  
from where we are now.

But where did it start?



# The question of origin...and destiny

Science gets us a long way, but it

“opens onto undecidables where philosophical options and religious beliefs come into play through cultures and civilizations” (Edgar Morin: Seven complex lessons in education for the future [UNESCO] - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001177/117740eo.pdf>)

## How do we view the world?



# Hominid and human development

Hominid origin millions of years ago (perhaps five to ten million years) according to fossil evidence (see e.g. <http://www.becominghuman.org/>)

i.e. a quarter to half a million generations.

Human origin is more recent.

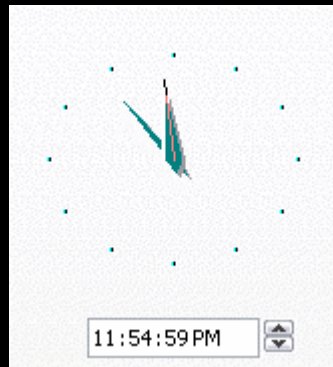
Fossil and genetic evidence shows that Africa played an important role at different moments and we must look at a period some 100 and 200 thousand years ago (see e.g. Templeton, A.R. (2002). Out of Africa again and again. *Nature*, 416, 45-51)

i.e. five to ten thousand generations.



Consider the evolution of the universe to have started a week ago. We are now approaching the end of the seventh day of 24 hours.

**Hominid development**  
just started five minutes ago:



**Human development**  
started a mere six seconds ago:

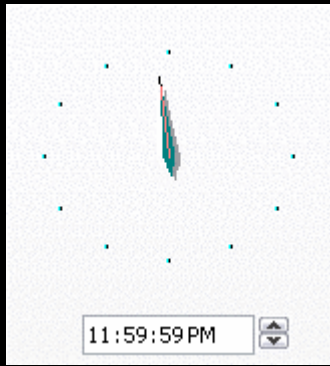


Are we marginal or significant (or perhaps both)?

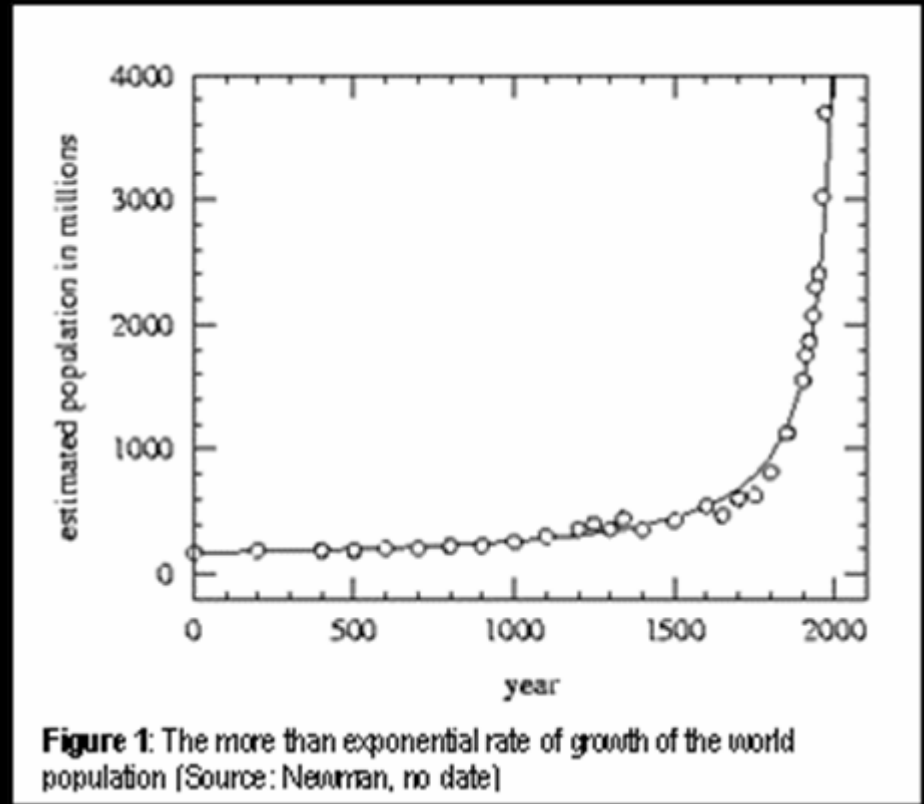


But it really becomes interesting only some ten thousand years ago

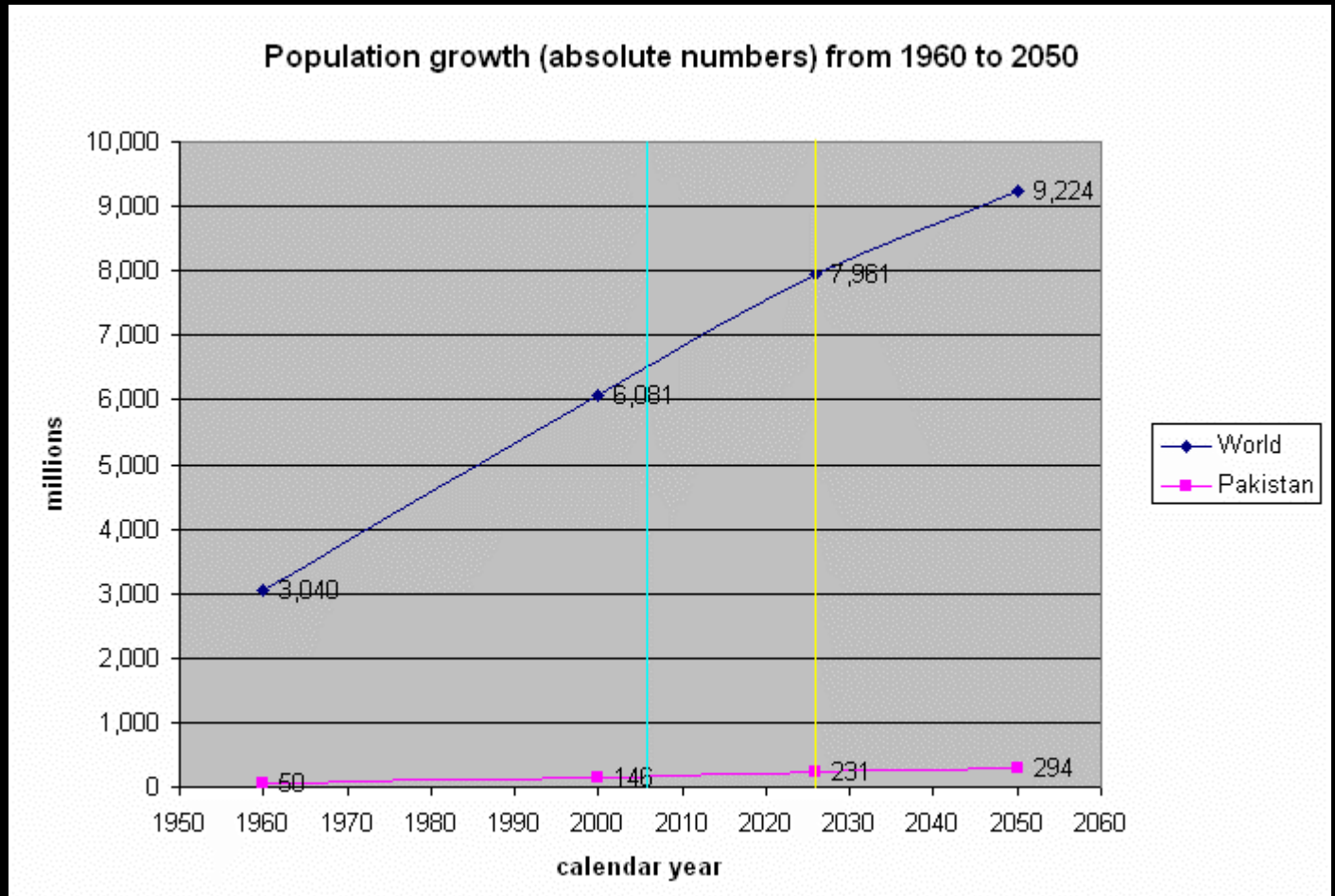
**Agricultural revolution** started half a second ago.



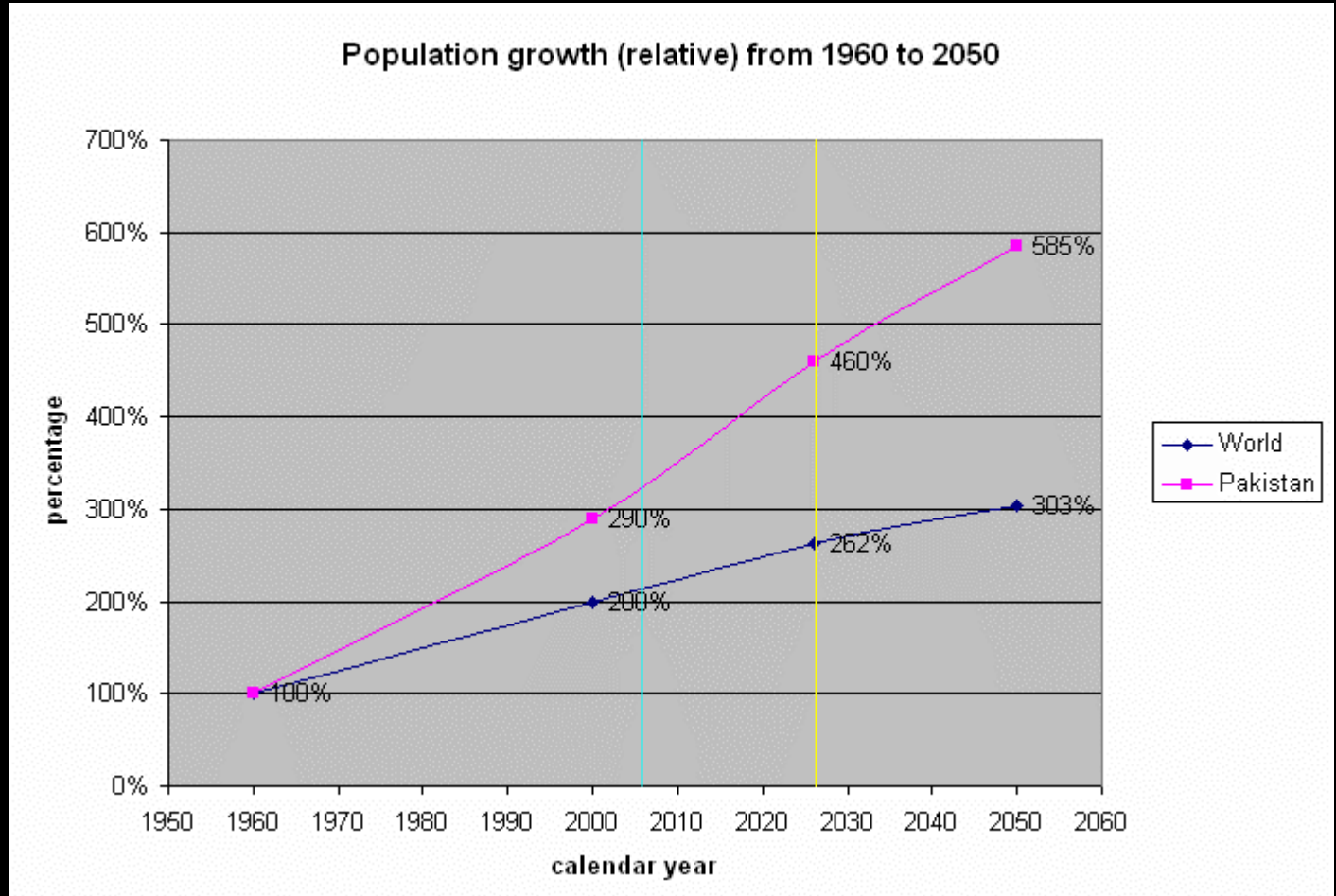
8000 BC	8 million
0	250 million
1600	500 million
1800	1000 million
1960	3041 million
2000	6082 million
2006	6525 million



# The move from now to 2026



# The move from now to 2026





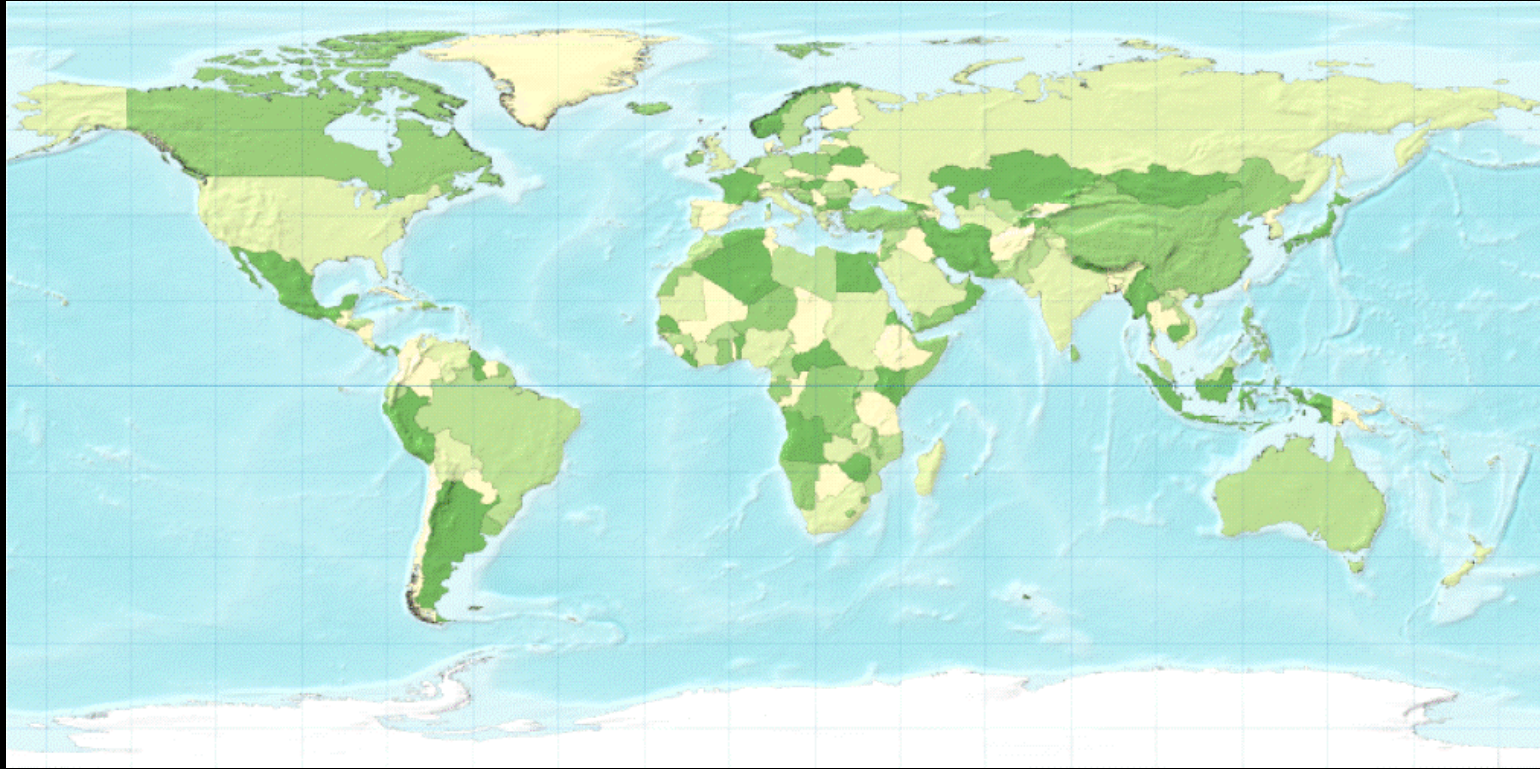
# The world: A distorted place to live in



Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>

# The world as we know it



Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>



# The world in population perspective

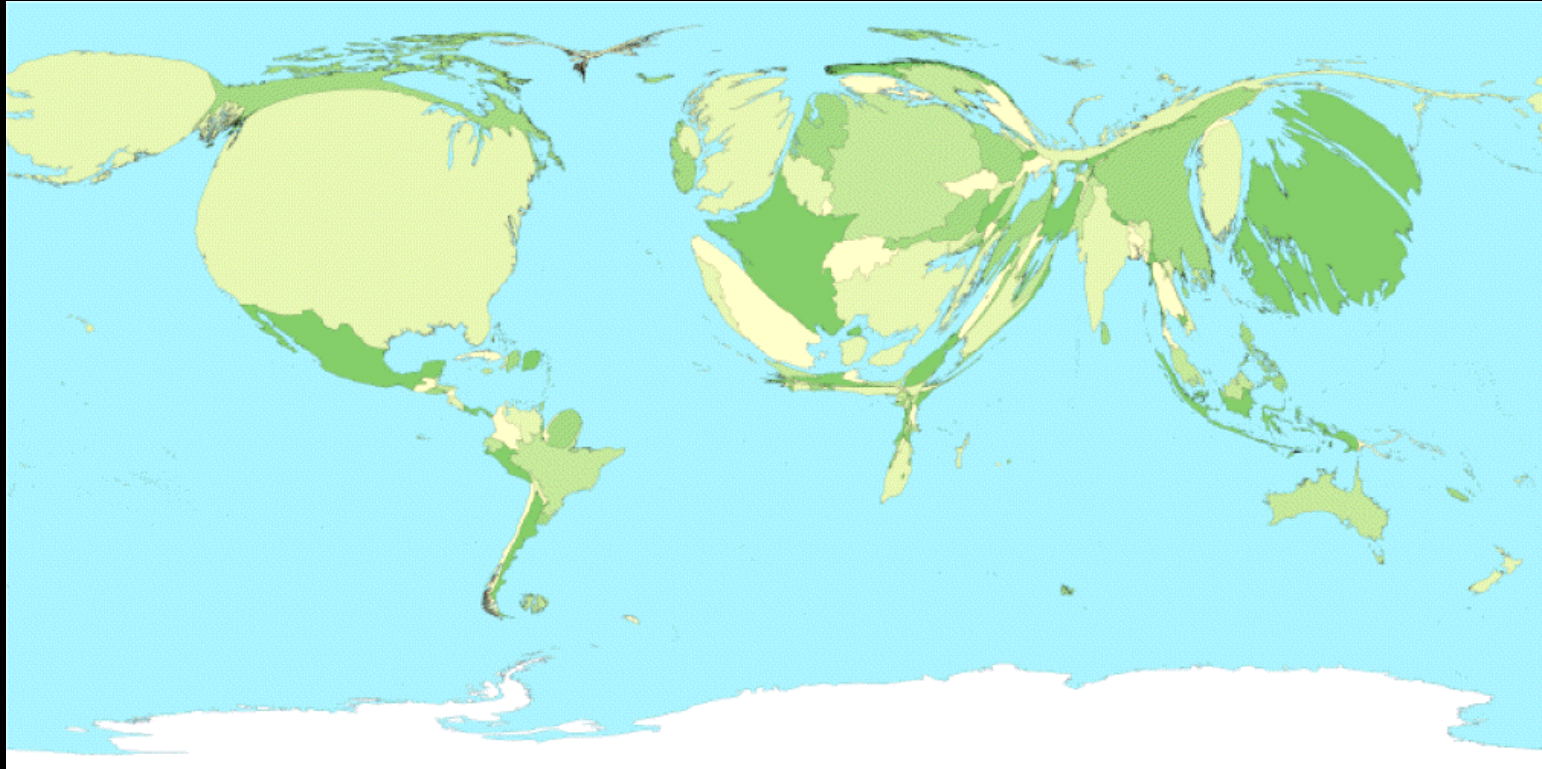


Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>



# The world by gross domestic product

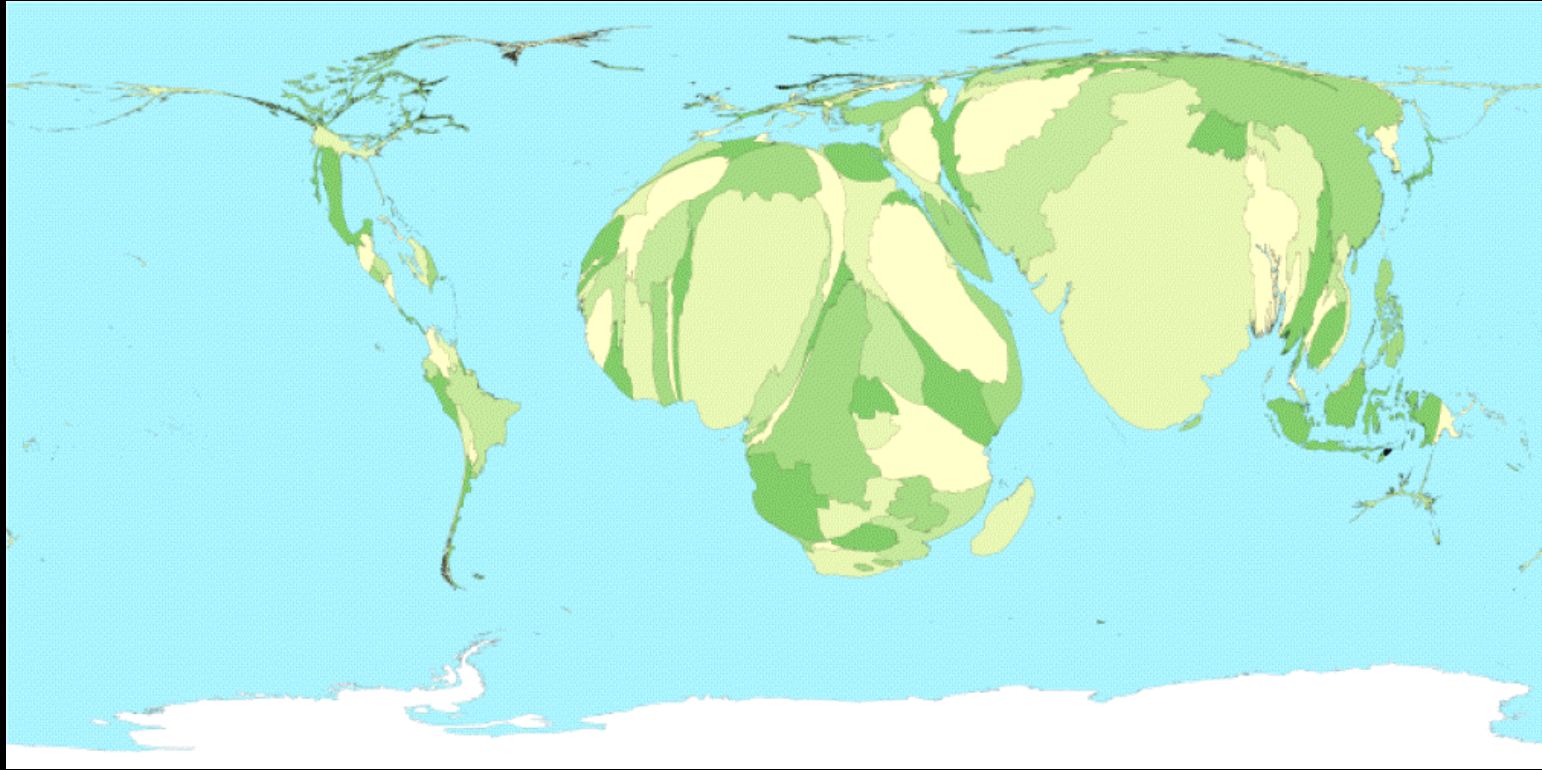


Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>



# The world in child mortality perspective

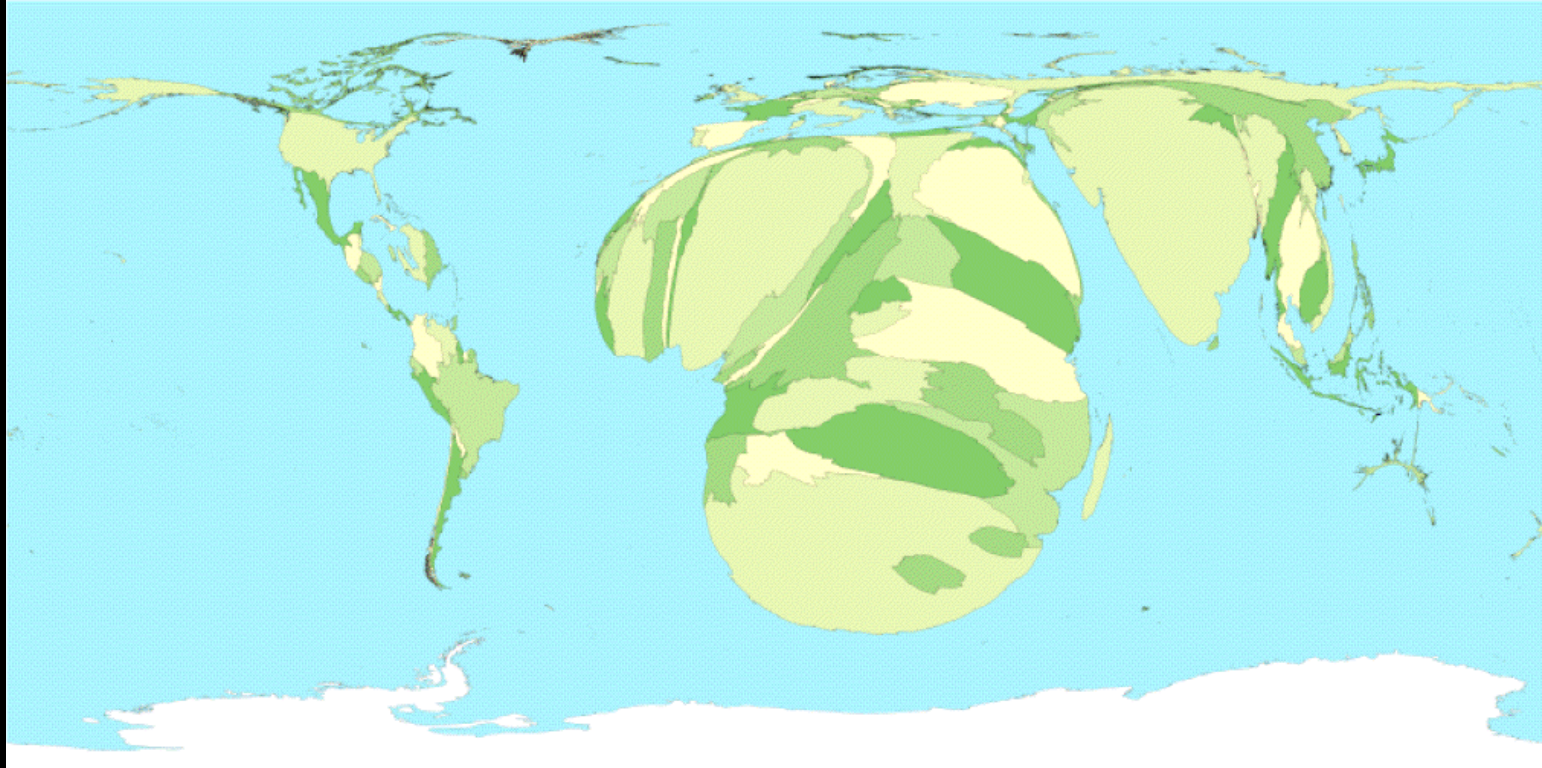


Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>



# The world in HIV/AIDS perspective

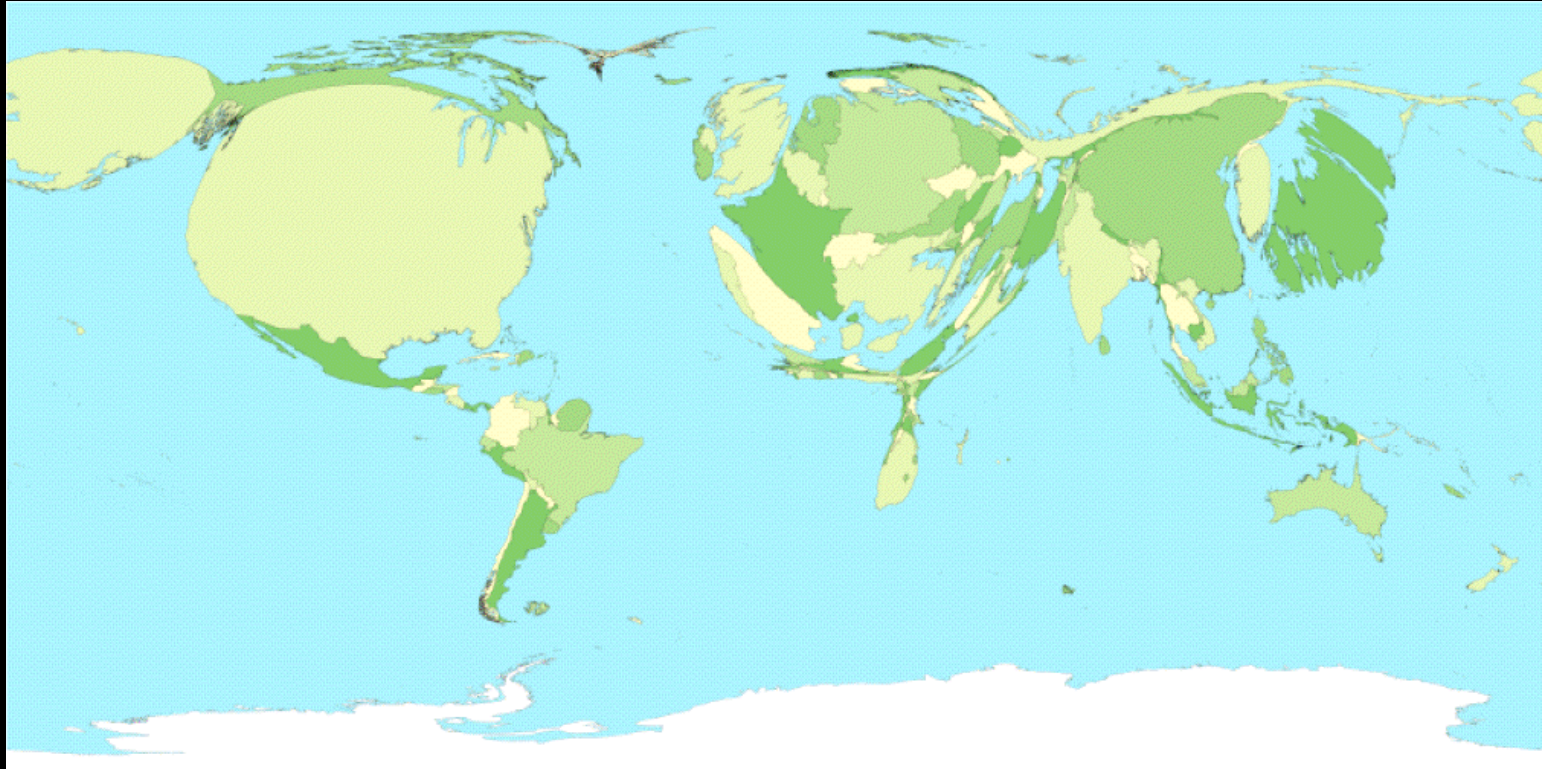


Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>



# The world by spending on healthcare

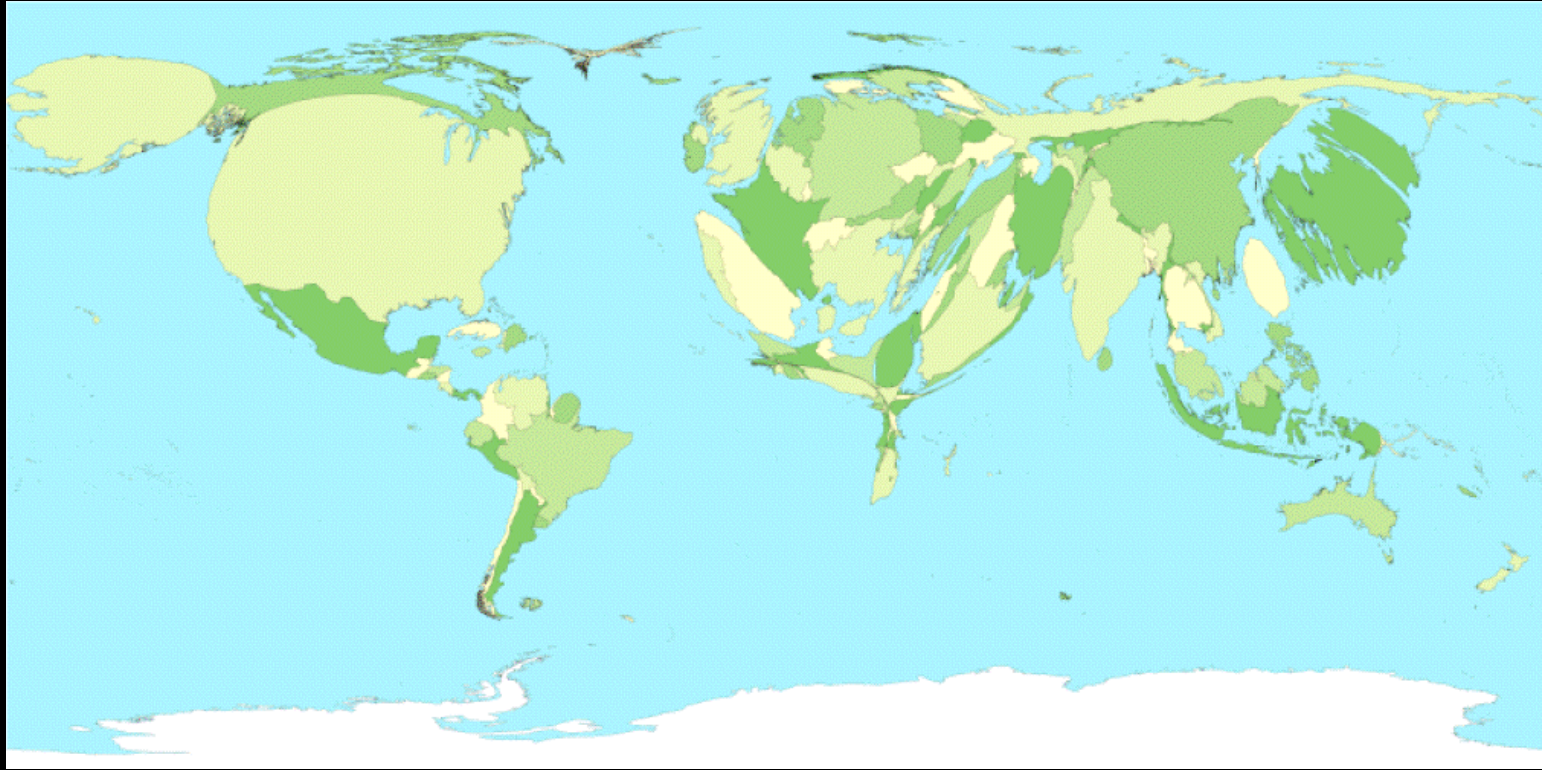


Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>



# The world by energy consumption



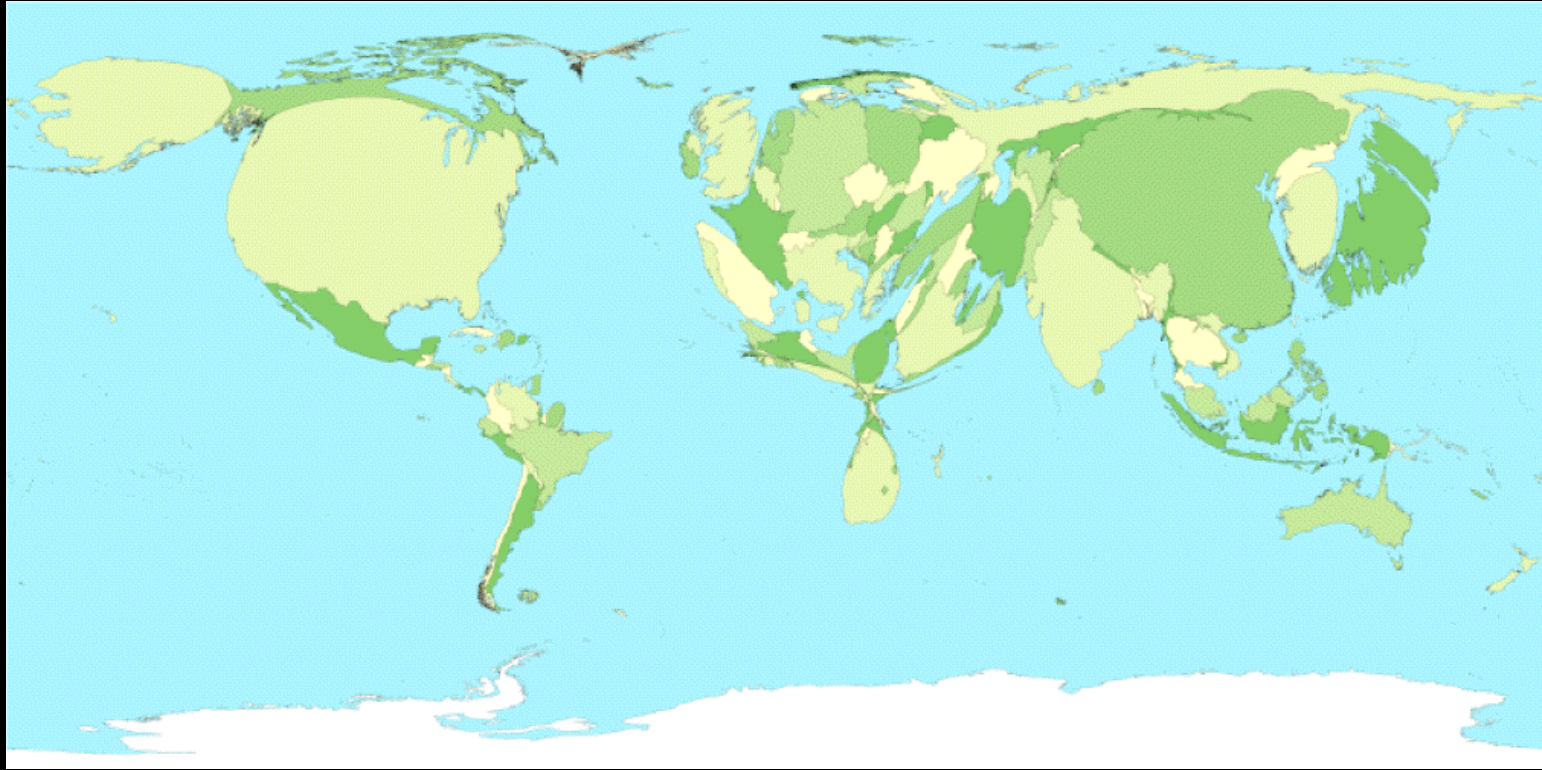
Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>





# The world by greenhouse gas emission



Source: Images of the social and economic world – Mark Newman

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mejn/cartograms/>



# Ecological footprint

Or how many planets do you need?

<http://ecofoot.org>

earthdaynetwork REDEFINING PROGRESS

## Ecological Footprint Quiz

Willkommen! Wählen Sie das Land wo Sie wohnen.

(ba) Bangladesh  
 (cn) 中国 | China  
 (il) Israel  
 (id) Indonesia  
 (in) India  
 (jo) Al Urdun | Jordan  
 (jp) 日本 | Japan  
 (kr) South Korea  
 (kw) Al Kuwayt  
 (lb) Lubnan | Lebanon  
 (my) Malaysia  
 (ph) Philippines  
 (pk) Pakistan  
 (sa) Al Arabiyah as Suudiyah  
 (sa) Saudi Arabia  
 (th) Thailand  
 (tr) Turkiye

English  
 Deutsch  
 Español  
 Français  
 Português  
 中文  
 Русский

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## Some challenges at the horizon of 2026

- ❑ Sharing a small planet and its resources among at least nine billion people by 2050 (almost eight billion by 2026).
- ❑ Doing the above in a sustainable manner, living in harmony with ourselves and our environment,
  - ❑ avoiding/minimizing dissipative conflict
  - ❑ nurturing our creative diversity
  - ❑ accommodating inventiveness
  - ❑ staying ahead in reflective power of our ability to innovate
  - ❑ rediscovering wisdom and elevating its place as an ingredient of our humanity to the next higher level.



# Pedagogical implications

(among other concerns, from the perspective of the rediscovery of childhood)

- ❑ Children are humans, not humans in the making.
  - ❑ There is incredible potential already in the newly born – and thus, by implication, also in the not yet born (e.g. Gopnik, A., Meltzoff, A. N. & Kuhl, P. K. (1999). *The scientist in the crib: Minds, brains, and how children learn*. New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc).
  - ❑ There lives a child in every adult.
  - ❑ Humans (children and adults) grow by exposure to and reflection on an ever increasing body of experience.
  - ❑ Nurturing our innate and evolving potential is a lifelong collective and individual challenge.
- ❑ Focus on existence in context (plurality of culture; history and evolution; physical, biological and social context)
  - ❑ Learning *between* us rather than *in* us (identity; community; appreciation of otherness; communication; affectivity).
  - ❑ Critical awareness within linguistically and culturally pluralistic world.
  - ❑ Mind over competency.
  - ❑ Awareness of one's belonging to a larger whole, i.e. one's home in the universe, place in evolution, spiritual connections.
  - ❑ Stories – including such stories as science provides – as supreme expression of wisdom.

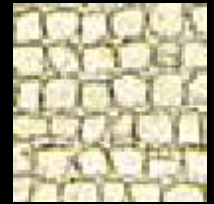
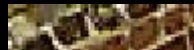


## Points of attention

- ❑ Look at totality of learning landscape. Different spaces of learning (family, school, media, etc.) are ecologically interrelated.
- ❑ Explore interstices (the spaces in between) in the learning ecology as well as indirect routes to solving some of the problems, e.g. improving school based learning may well depend on creating an educated family environment, which may in turn depend on how the media and the family interact with each other.
- ❑ Seek natural opportunities to integrate technology.
- ❑ Focus on ability to interact with knowledge rather than on 'having it.'
- ❑ Rethink curriculum from perspectives that overcome compartmentalization of knowledge.
- ❑ Ethics and esthetics are neither marginal nor an afterthought to what we should focus on in the development of humanity.
- ❑ Rethink learning.



# The little we know

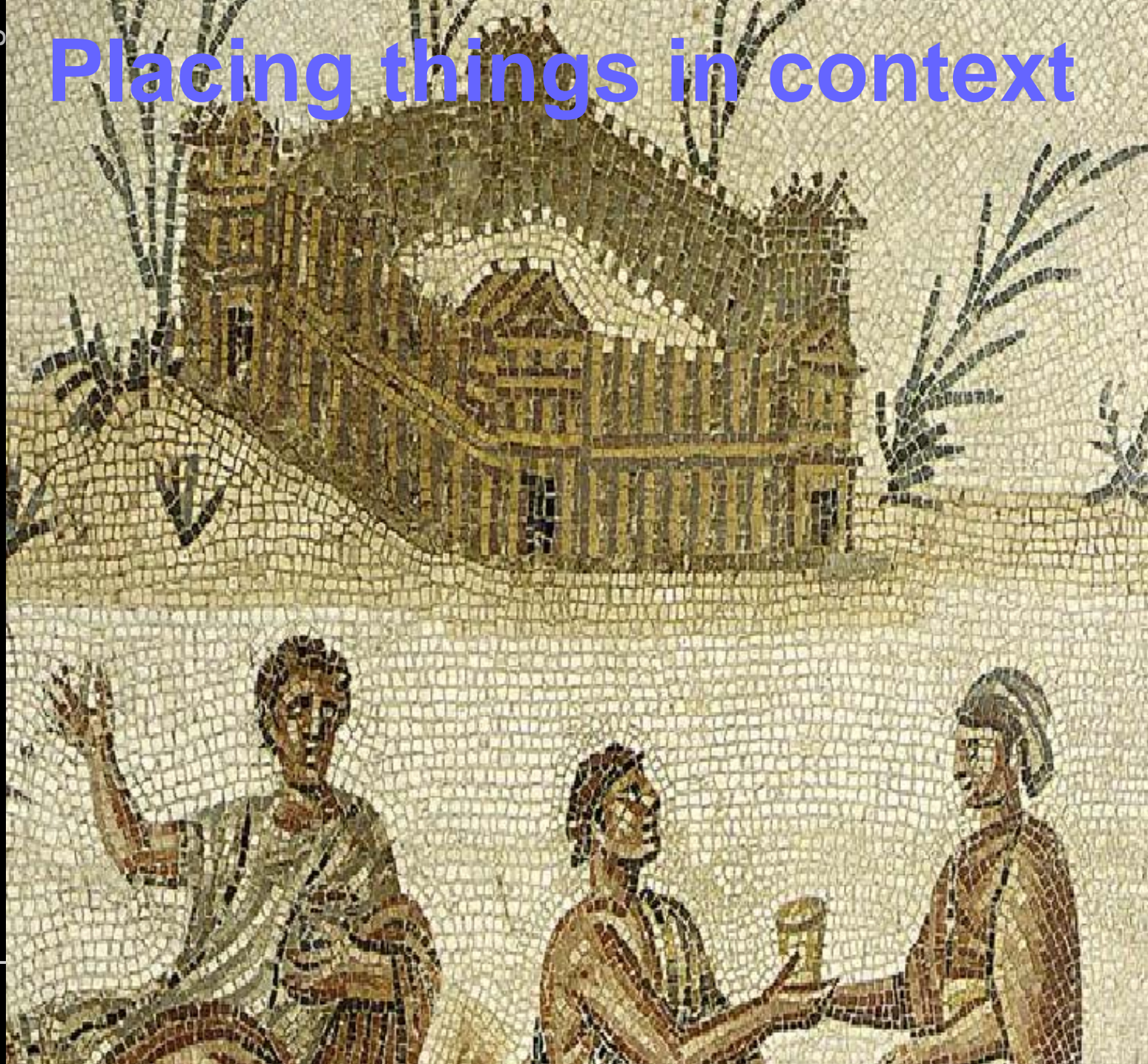


# Putting the picture together





# Placing things in context





# THANK YOU



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