Histor

Reindeer and people have a connection that is thousands of years old in what is today called Norway. First by hunting, then through domestication and herding. Archaeological sources such as hunting pits, stone carvings and settlement excavations speak to this connection. In 98 AD, the Roman historian Tacitus wrote about a strange people in Thule, who used fur clothes, hunted reindeer and travelled with skis. In the 800s the Norwegian chief Ottar visited King Alfred and the English court and Ottar related to the king about the Sámi and that reindeer were domesticated and managed in herds. This is the first written source of domesticated reindeer herding and is often referred to. However archaeological research is consistently pushing the date of domestication of reindeer and the development of reindeer herding further back in time. Writings after that time tell that the Sami are using domesticated reindeer for transport and milking. In the 16th 17th and 18th centuries, Sweden had imperial ambitions and this increased the tax burden on Sámi reindeer herding, which would appear to have stimulated a shift in reindeer herding practices. Sámi reindeer herders where nomadic and moved with their reindeer herds between winter and summer pastures. In the mountain areas an intensive reindeer herding took shape – where reindeer where monitored daily. The Sámi people lived and worked in so-called “siiddat” (reindeer herding groups) and reindeer where used for transport, milk and meat production. The Siida is an ancient Sámi community system within a designated area but it can also be defined as a working partnership where the members had individual rights to resources but helped each other with the management of the herds, or when hunting and fishing. The Siida could consist of several families and their herds.

Borders

Sámi reindeer herding in present Sweden, Norway and Finland has historically been and is in many ways still affected by the creation of national borders. Borders became barriers to reindeer herding which had, since time immemorial been a livelihoos that migrated between different areas. The first boundary which affected the Sámi reindeer herding was drawn between Norway/Denmark and Sweden/Finland in 1751. To this border agreement was made a substantial allowance of 30 paragraphs on the rights of the nomadic Sámi - later often called the Lapp Codicil (Lappekodicillen) or the Magna Charta of the Sámi.
The aim with the Codicil was to secure the future reindeer herding for the Sámi people affected by the border. The states agreed that regardless of state borders, the reindeer herding Sámi should be able to continue to migrate with their reindeer to the other kingdom in the same way as they had done before the border demarcation. The migrations have since 1919 been regulated between Norway and Sweden in different so called reindeer grazing conventions (renbeteskonventioner) which are based on the Codicil. The last convention was negotiated 1972 and was in force until 2005. Sweden and Norway are negotiating on a new convention.

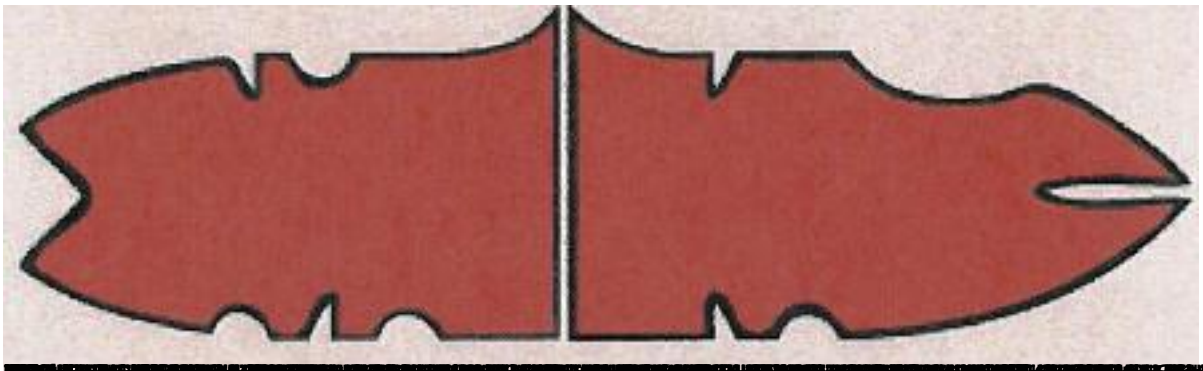
During the 1900’s meat production becomes increasingly important and reindeer herding becomes more extensive. In the 1960’s, the Sámi reindeer herders started to introduce new technologies – the so called snow mobile revolution in their work with reindeer. Later came other mechanical aids, such as ATV’s, motorbikes and helicopters. Today such tools are major

feature of modern reindeer herding. This has had a variety of impacts on reindeer husbandry and as herders no longer ski or walk with reindeer, the relationship has changed somewhat. Today's reindeer herding requires large areas, reindeer are often frightened and are forced to flee from natural pastures. Today's reindeer are not watched year-round and reindeer wander freely during certain periods.

However, reindeer husbandry would not be possible without the maintenance of traditional knowledge which dates back millennia and is transferred from generation to generation. Its significance remains for reindeer herders because it contains important knowledge about how for instance land should be used during times of extreme weather fluctuation, for example. Reindeer husbandry today in Sweden is a small industry on a national scale, but both in a Sámi and local context, it has great importance. Reindeer husbandry is not only important economically and in employment terms, it is also one of the most important parts of the Sámi culture. According to the reindeer husbandry act the Reindeer Husbandry should be economically, ecologically and culturally sustainable. In other words, reindeer husbandry in Sweden should be conducted in a way so it gives a reasonable number of entrepreneurs a good living.
(Rennäringslagen 1971:437) *(www.sapmi.se)*

Rights to own Reindeer

Contemporary reindeer husbandry in Sweden, is regulated by the Swedish reindeer husbandry act, Rennäringslagen 1971: 437 . According to this Act, the right to pursue reindeer herding only belongs to the Sami people. Only a person who is member of Sámi reindeer herding village (Sameby) has reindeer herding rights, in other words, may engage in reindeer husbandry in the Sámi reindeer herding village to which she/he belongs. The reindeer herding right, which is eternal, includes for example the rights of members to also hunt and fish within their Sámi reindeer herding village's area. These are immemorial rights, which mean that the Sámi have, over a long period used the land without anyone impeding them. Both reindeer herding and reindeer husbandry are terms often used in Sweden, where reindeer herding is the work with reindeer and reindeer husbandry encompasses reindeer herding, hunting and fishing because they all are important industries of reindeer husbandry. *(Rennäringslagen 1971:437)*



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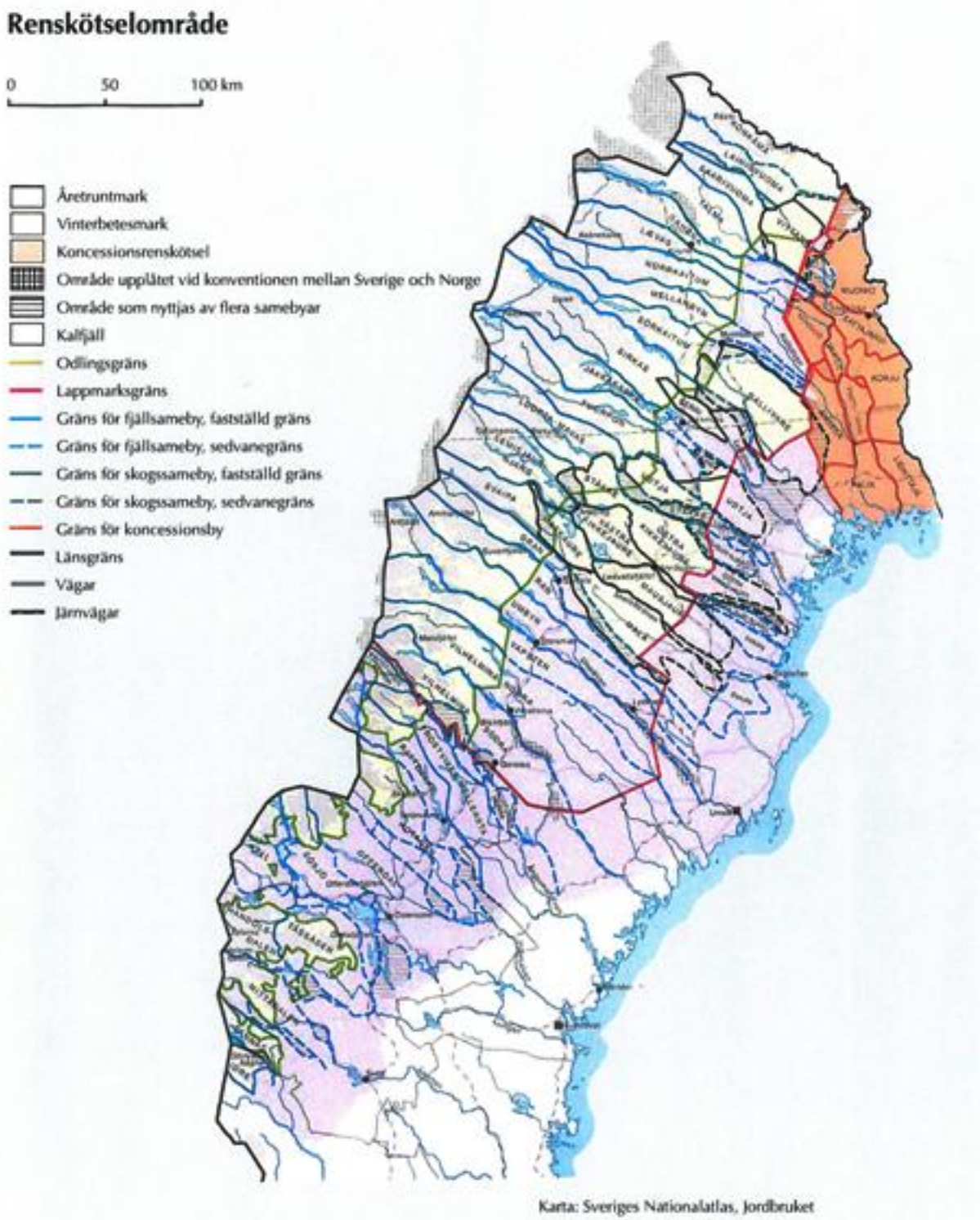
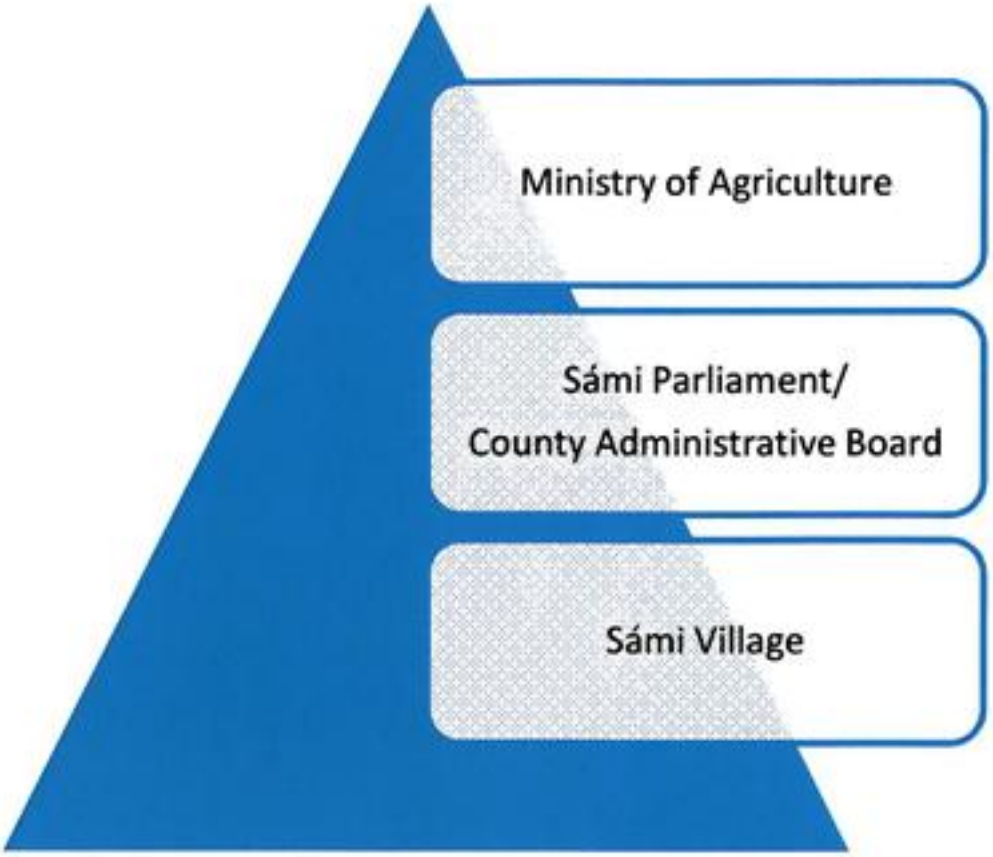
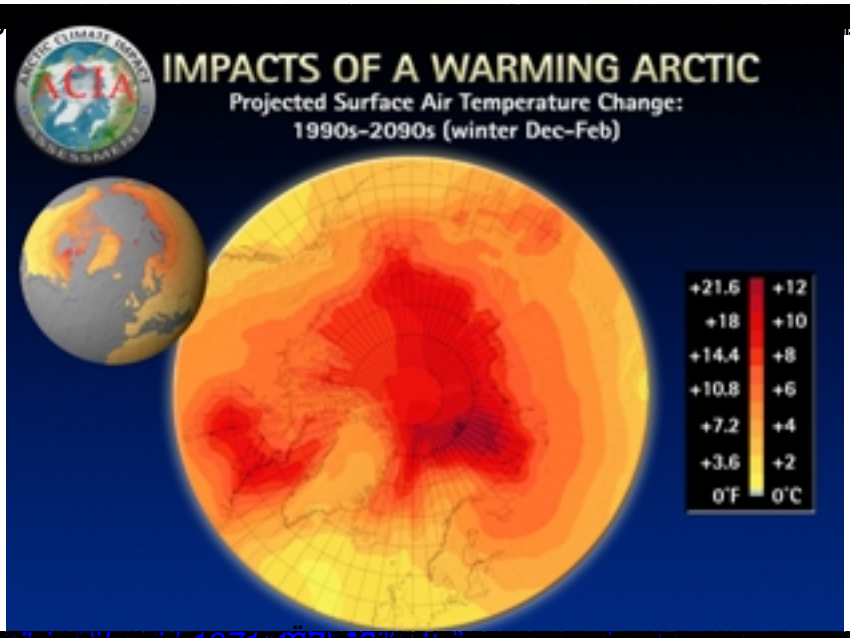


The management of Reindeer Husbandry is divided into 3 main levels; the national, the regional and the local level.





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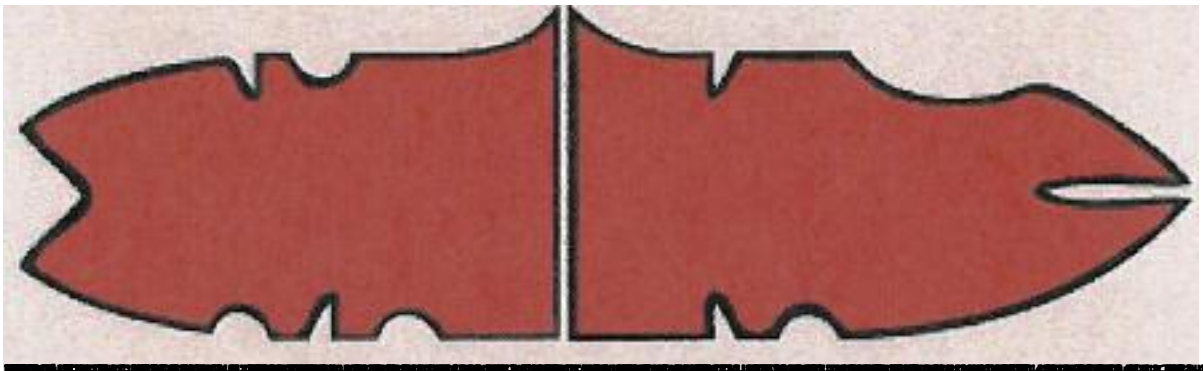

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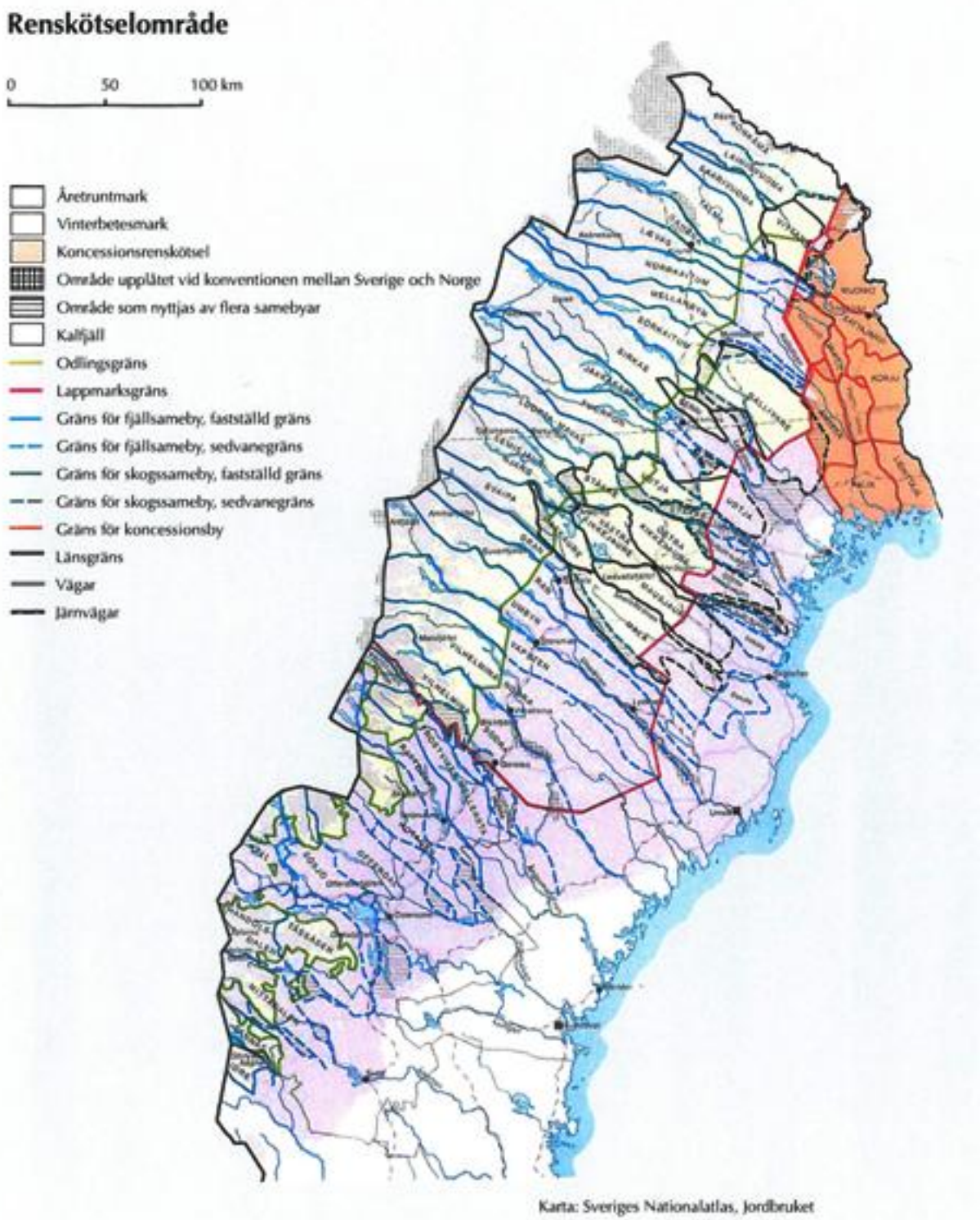

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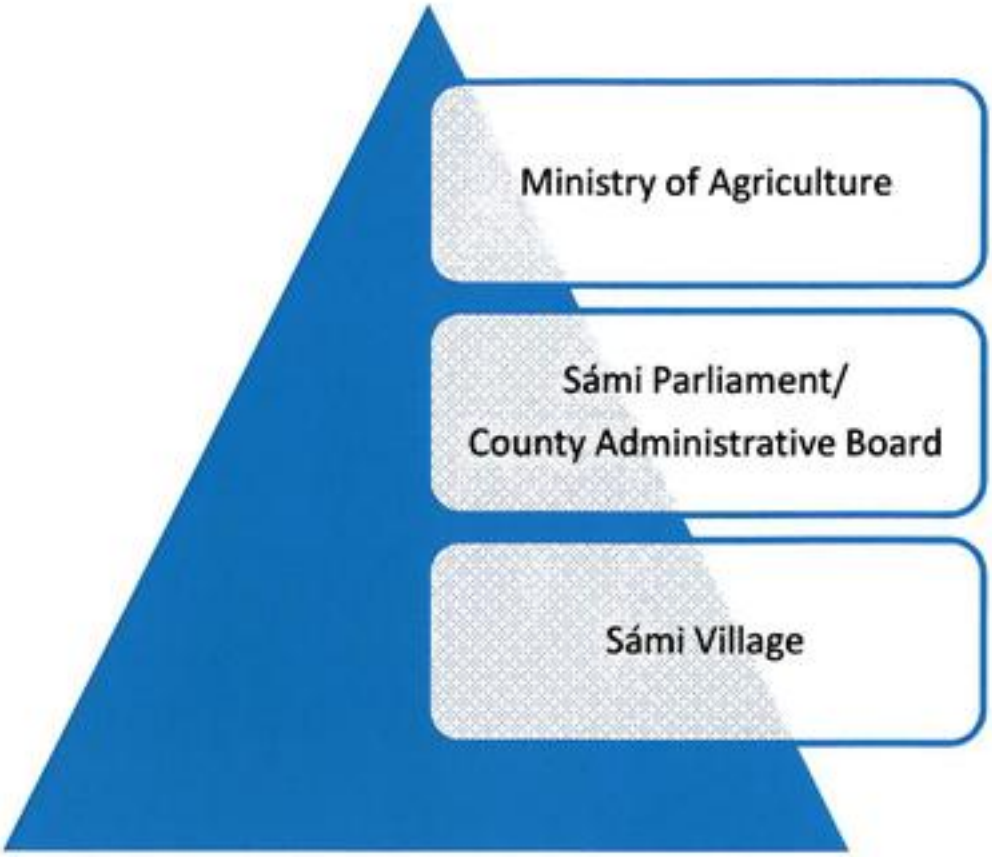

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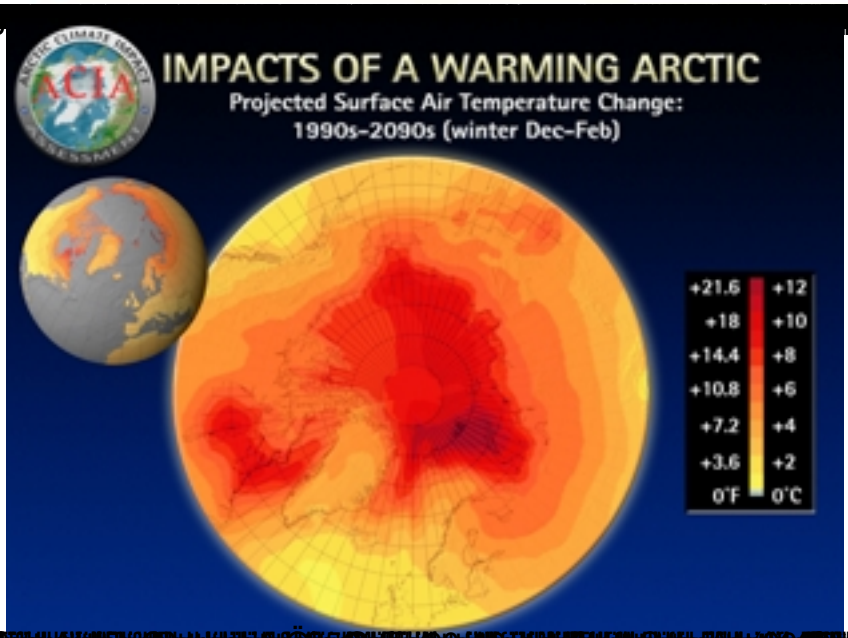

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