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Evolving Nordic security discourses: Russian action in Ukraine

Bakgrund/Frågeställning

The recent Russian attack on Ukraine represents a major geopolitical change to the established European security order. As a consequence, European actors across all sectors condemned Russian action. The Nordic Council is no exception. On February 24th, on the day of the attack, the Nordic Council president published a statement condemning Russian action. A week later the Presidium of the Nordic Council published a statement, condemning “Russia’s brutal, illegal, and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in the strongest possible terms”. The Nordic Council decided to set Ukraine on the agenda for the Theme Session held in Sweden, 21-22 March.

Eight years prior to this, in 2014, the Nordic Council Theme Session was held in Akkureyri, Iceland. Only about a month before the Session, Russia had illegally annexed the Ukrainian peninsula Crimea. The Nordic Council issued a statement calling on Russia to take measures to alleviate the situation. Prior to the Theme Session, the Nordic Council President and Vice President visited Poland and the Baltic states to offer support in regard to the tense situation in Ukraine.

The Russian illegal annexation of Crimea can in many ways be seen as a turning point in Nordic relations to Russia. Meanwhile, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a major turning point in international relations. The paper analyses, assesses and compares the responses by the Nordic Council to the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The primary source includes public statements and the Nordic Council Theme Session debates in Akkureyri 2014 and Malmö 2022.

The paper illustrates the impact of Russian action in Ukraine on Nordic parliamentary perceptions of the Nordic region in a global context through the application of discourse analysis. The Nordic region’s positioning vis-à-vis Russia seen through the situation in Ukraine is a central theme of the paper. The point of departure is that the Nordic security discourse has evolved from being based on primarily economic benefits of cooperation to realms of hard(er) security. This evolution is made possible by processes of securitisation and desecuritisation. This in itself is noteworthy, seen from in the light of existing academic literature on the Nordic region and asecuritisation.

Metod och Resultat

Konklusion