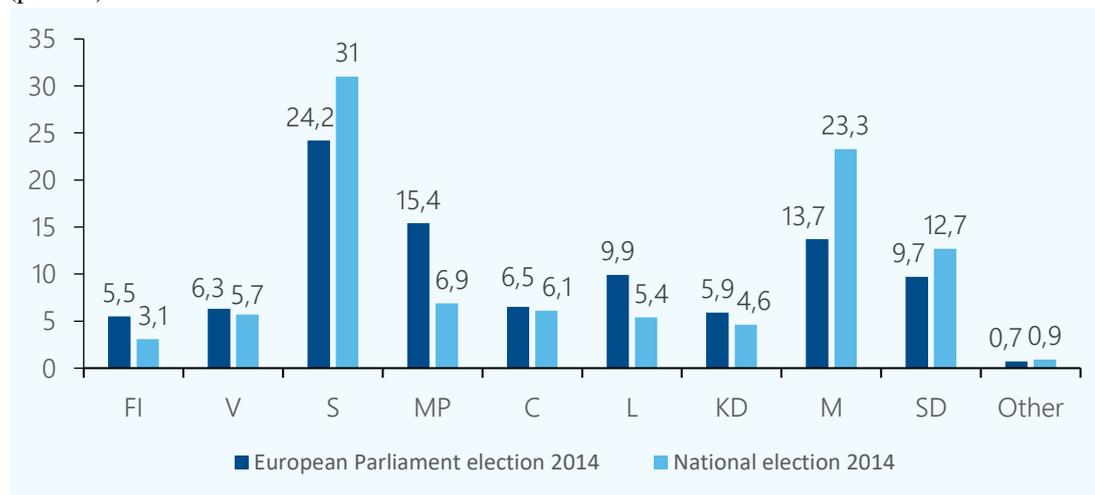


Different Elections, Different Voting Patterns

Ever since the first European Parliament elections in 1979, there has been a pattern in which voters vote differently in European Parliament elections and national elections. The turnout is lower, large and governmental parties tend to be disadvantaged in the European Parliament elections, while smaller, newer and more challenging parties can benefit. Sweden is no exception, which can be illustrated by the election outcome from 2014 (see figure below), when the elections were separated by only 112 days. The Social Democrats and the Moderates received a poorer result in the European Parliament elections, while the Green Party and the Liberals had a better result, and the new party Feministisk Initiativ came in. There are several reasons for this pattern. The traditional image is based on the theory of the second rank, where the idea is that voters vote differently because the European elections do not result in government formation. When less is at stake, there are fewer voters, and national issues dominate. Dissatisfied voters can then punish the incumbent government by voting for another party. Alternatively, they can vote for the party they are actually closest to without having to think strategically regarding barriers and government formation. Analyses of Swedish electoral behavior in 2014 show, however, that voting for different parties can also be explained by the fact that individual candidates are more important for choice of parties in the European elections. The elections are also about different issues, and there are therefore voters who believe that different parties are best in the parliamentary elections versus the European Parliament elections (Berg & Oscarsson 2015).

Figure 1. Election results in the European Parliament elections and the parliamentary elections in 2014 (percent).



Källa: [Valmyndigheten](#) (2019) "Valresultat", hämtad 2019-04-02

Kommentar: Underlaget till figuren är inhämtat från Valmyndigheten och är uttryckt i procent. Partierna är förkortade enligt följande: FI=Feministiskt initiativ. V=Vänsterpartiet. S=Socialdemokraterna. MP=Miljöpartiet. C=Centerpartiet. L=Liberalerna (vid valet 2014 var partiets namn Folkpartiet). KD=Kristdemokraterna. M=Moderaterna. SD=Sverigedemokraterna. Övr=övriga partier.

References

Berg, L & Oscarsson, H. (2015) *Supervalåret 2014. Demokratistatistik: Rapport 20*. Stockholm: Statistiska centralbyrån (SCB).