

# Designing Effective PPPs in Education

Does governance design matter more than  
private provision?

Harry Anthony Patrinos  
[patrinos@uark.edu](mailto:patrinos@uark.edu)

# Motivation

- Federal school choice program approved (Mervosh & Goldstein 2025)
- School choice = education PPP (Iossa & Martimort 2015; Sappington & Stiglitz 1987; Shleifer & Vishny 1994)
- Evidence on outcomes is mixed
- Do outcomes depend on private provision or institutional design? (Fabre & Straub 2023)

# Theory

- School choice constrained by family budget (Friedman 1955)
- Quasi-markets: parents choose, schools compete (Le Grand 1991)
- Principal-agent problem: incentives, information, asymmetry (Holmström & Milgrom 1991; Epple et al 2017)

# Universal School Choice Systems

Country	Since	Value as % of public	For-profit	Selective admissions	Religious affiliation	Tuition top-up	In publicly funded private %	Students served (million)	PISA**
Chile	1981	100%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	60	4	412
Netherlands	1917	100%	No	Yes	Yes	No	95	1	492
Sweden	1992	~80%	Yes	No	Yes	No	25	1.1	482
Belgium	1958	100%	No	No	Yes	No	65	0.7	489
Ireland	1967	100%	No	No	Yes	No	95	1	492
Canada	1968-2016	35-80%	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes	5	0.3	497
USA	various	varies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	1.2	465

\*not in Quebec; \*\*PISA math score 2022

# Conceptual Framework

$$U = f(M, A, Q, P)$$

M = Competition

A = Autonomy

Q = Accountability

P = Information

Alignment = sum

Coherence = max-min

# Empirical Strategy



Comparative



Benchmarking



Descriptive

# Comparing across Dimensions

	Competition	Autonomy	Accountability	Information
Belgium	3	3	4	3
Canada	3	4	4	2
Chile	3	3	3	3
Ireland	3	3	4	3
Netherlands	3	4	4	4
Sweden	4	4	4	4
US	2	3	2	3

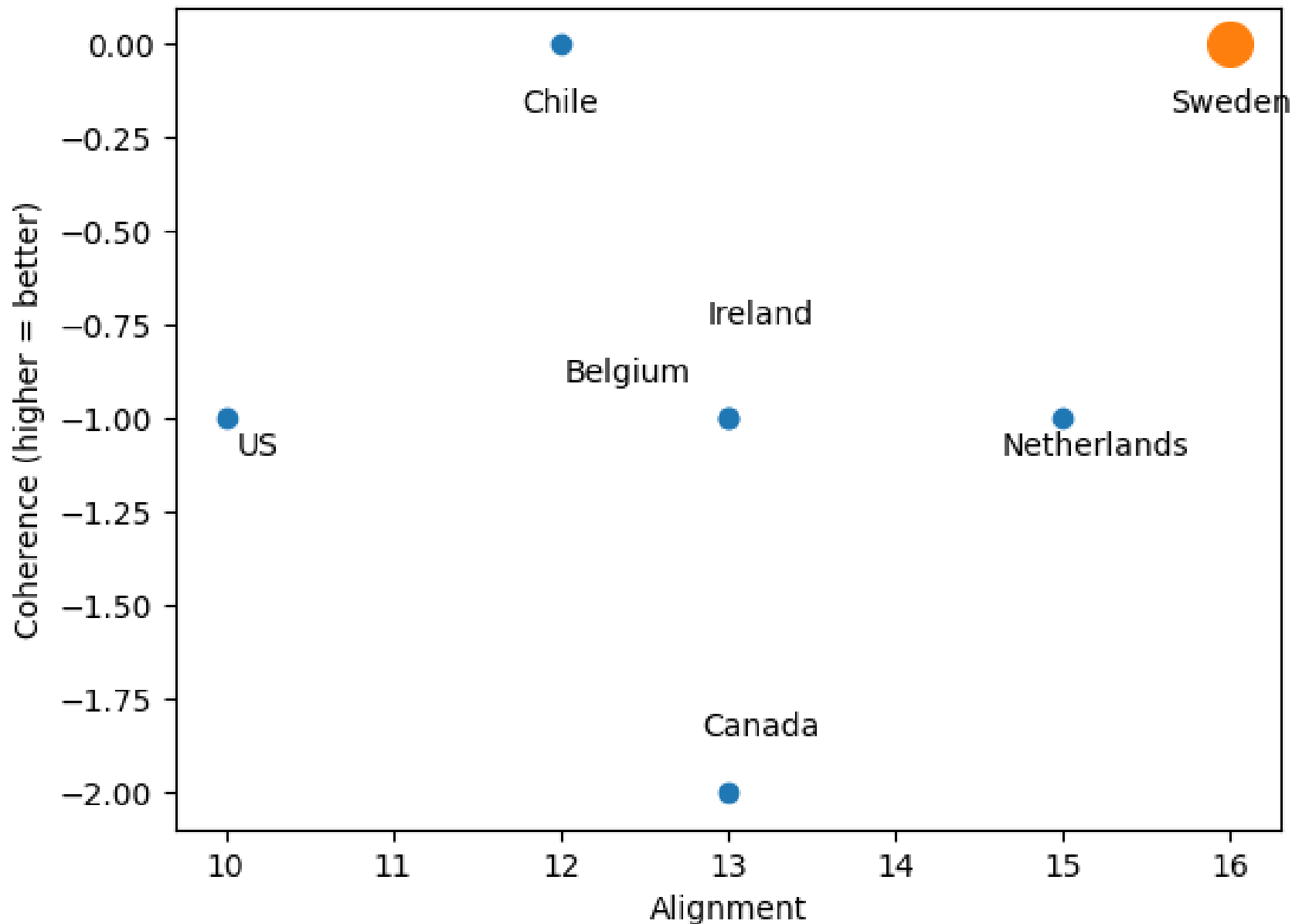
# Main Result: Sweden Stands Out

Sweden: Alignment = 16, Coherence = 0

Fully coherent system

Others show more dispersion or lower alignment

## Alignment vs Coherence: Sweden on the Frontier



*Sweden stands out: the only system combining maximum alignment and full coherence*

# Discussion

Institutional design > ownership

1. Is this the right measure?
2. How to make causal?
3. Can US achieve coherence?

Designing Effective Public-Private Partnerships in Education

Harry Anthony Patrinos

University of Arkansas

[patrinos@uark.edu](mailto:patrinos@uark.edu)

# Designing Effective Public-Private Partnerships in Education

Harry Anthony Patrinos

University of Arkansas

[patrinos@uark.edu](mailto:patrinos@uark.edu)