

# “Curbstoning”: case study of an elaborate interviewer falsification scheme and new procedures to prevent interviewer fabrication

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# Three philosophical pillars of SHARE

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## 1) Longitudinal

- ▶ we ask the same people every 2 years
- ▶ Supported by refreshment samples

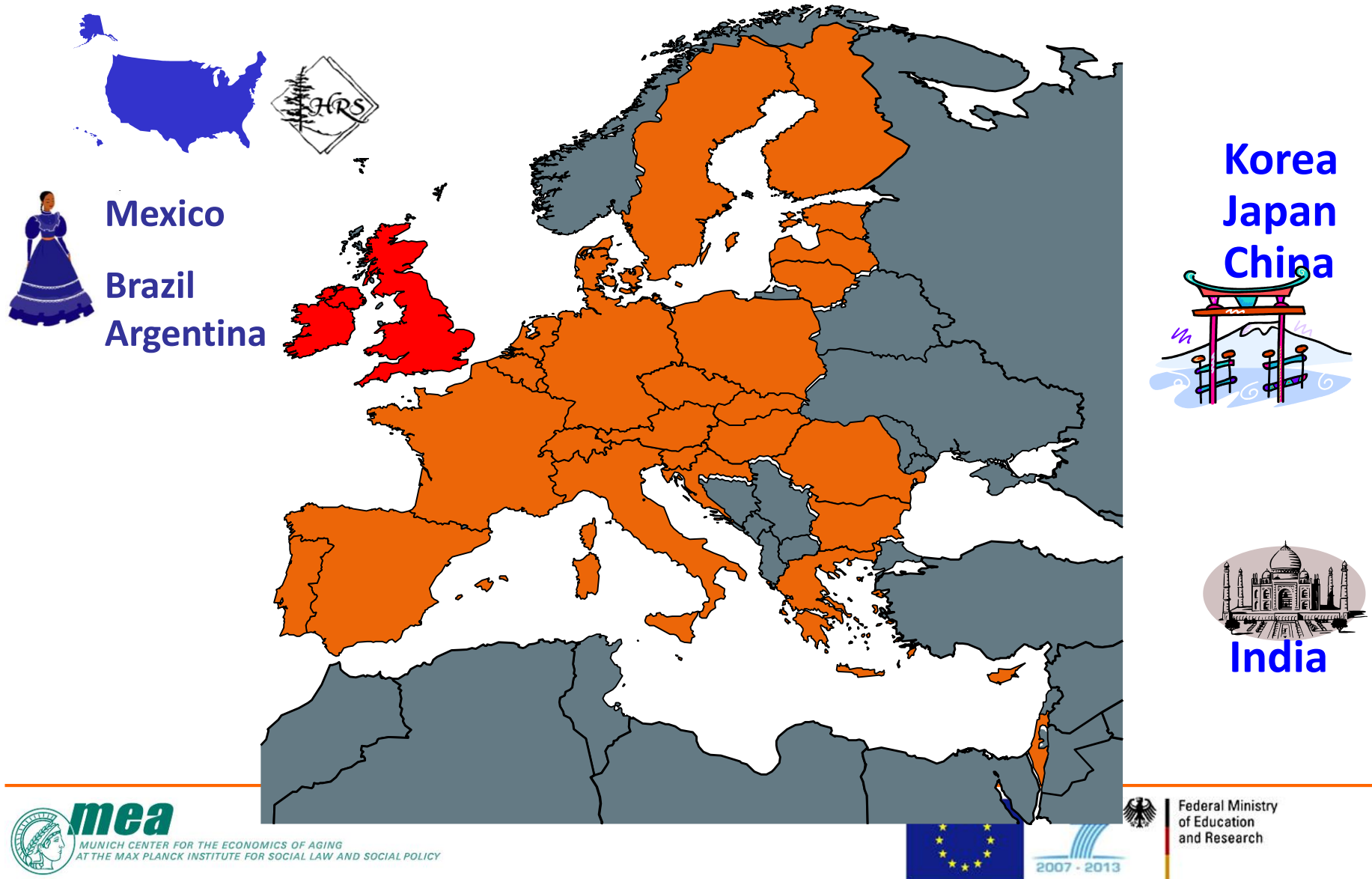
## 2) Multi-disciplinary

- ▶ Health
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Psycho-social measures
- ▶ Objective performance tests (grip strength, memory, peak flow, DBS)

## 3) Cross-national with strong input („ex-ante“) harmonization

- ▶ Wave 1 (2004): 11 countries
- ▶ Wave 7 (2017): 27 countries
- ▶ All countries use same software/questionnaire/schedule

# Coverage (2016) & partner studies



# Data quality of f2f interviews



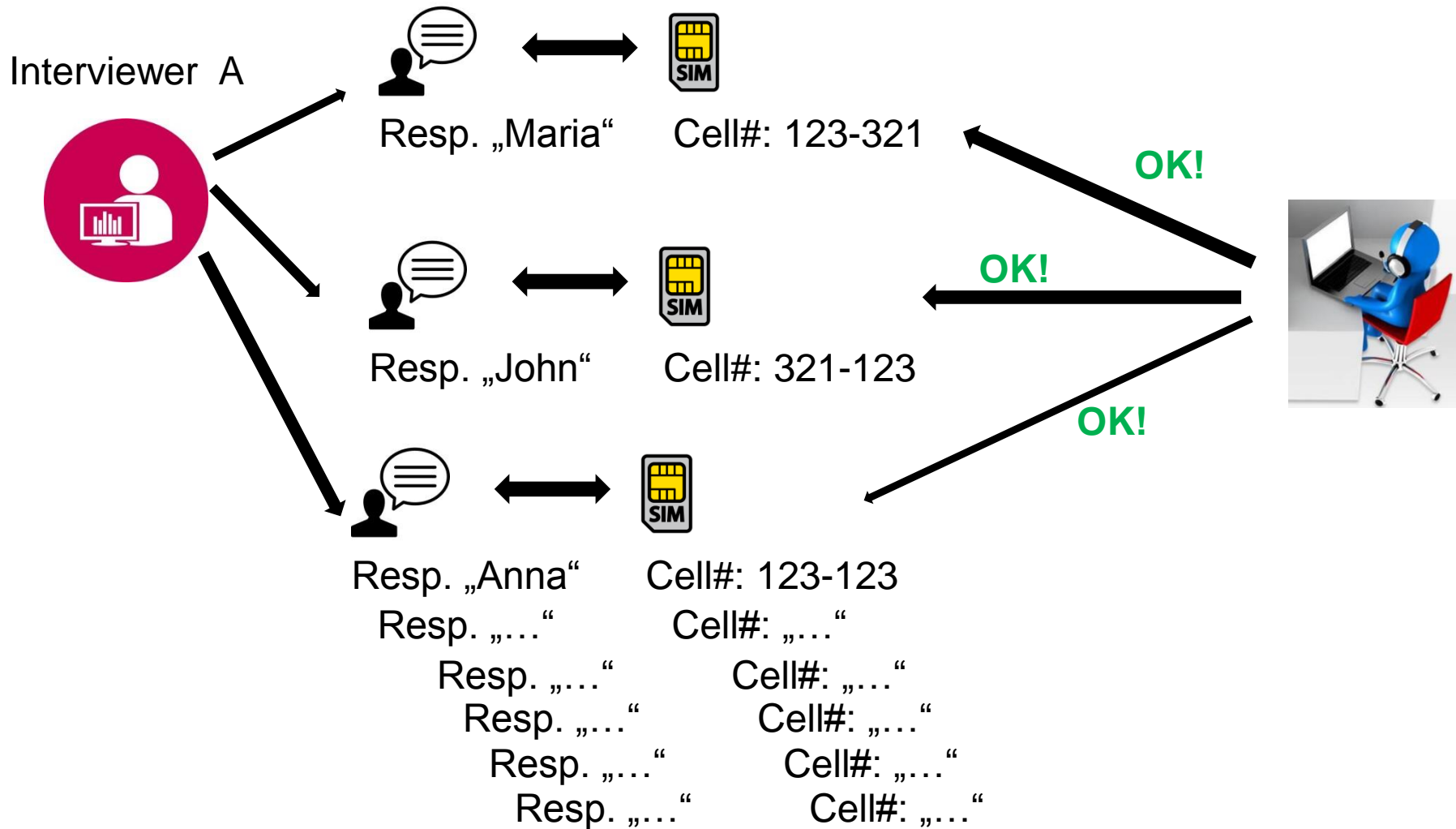
# Consequences of curbstoning

	... to interview data	...respondent /house hold in gross sample	...interviewer/survey agency
<b>During fieldwork</b>	Immediate deletion	New interview with respondent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Immediate suspension of interviewer from SHARE</li> <li>- No payment for fake interviews</li> </ul>
<b>After fieldwork</b>	Deleted from all releases	Remains in gross sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviewer is suspended from SHARE "forever"</li> <li>- Agency will be requested to pay back money received for fake interviews</li> <li>- Possibly exclusion of agency from future tenders</li> </ul>

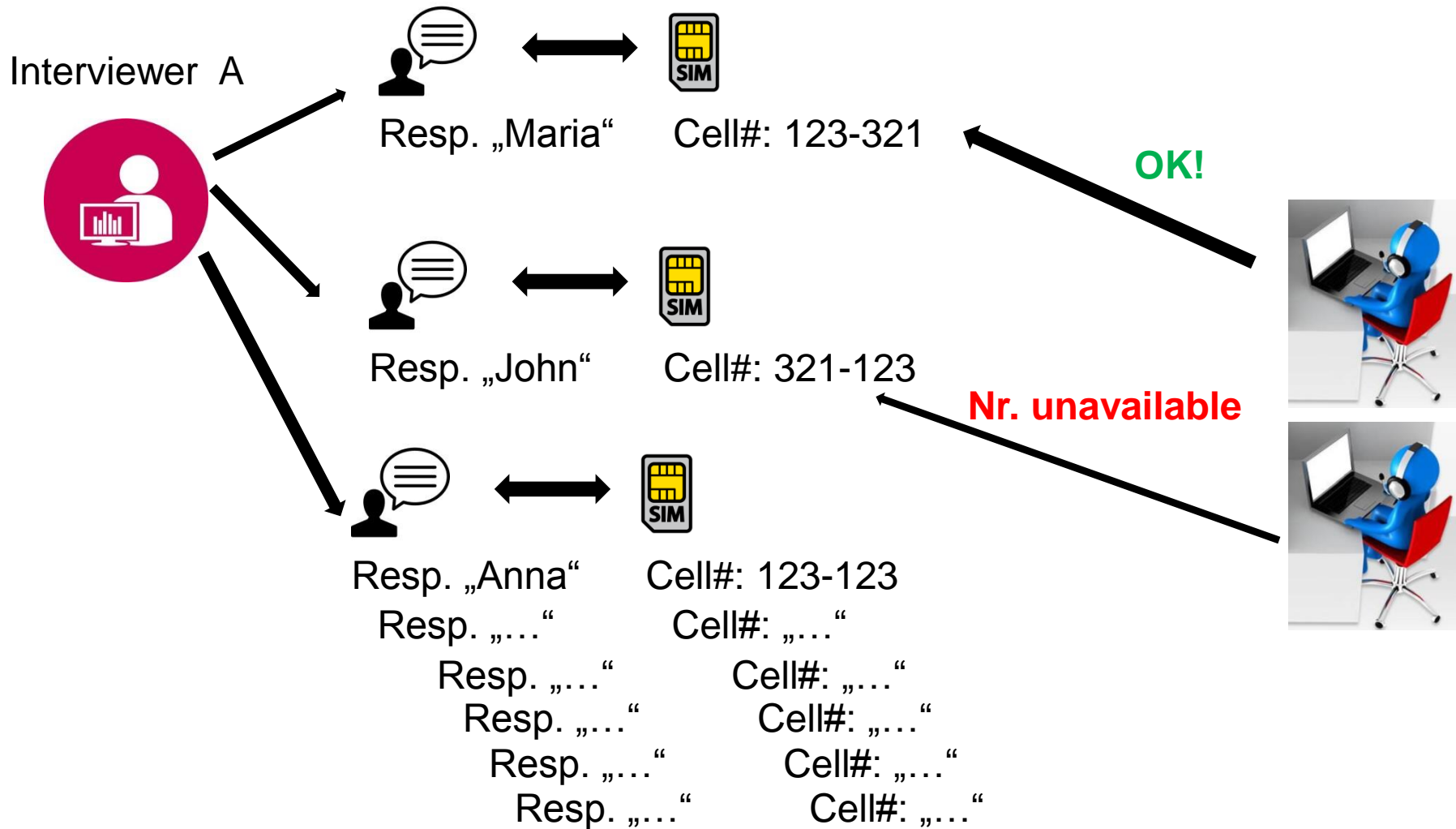
# „Ponzi scheme“ of wave 6

- ▶ One country with baseline interviews
  - ▶ 22% of net interviews were confirmed as fake (686 of 3174)
- ▶ Most information provided by survey agency itself!
- ▶ Sleuthing:
  - ▶ Fairly new interviewers (1 year on job)
  - ▶ Showed excellent performance on everything in all projects
    - ▶ Phone back checks 100% OK
  - ▶ But: started looking „too good to be true“ against historical data
    - ▶ ...Identical interview duration across many „respondents“
    - ▶ BUT: telephone back-checks came out perfect again...!?

# „Ponzi scheme“ of wave 6

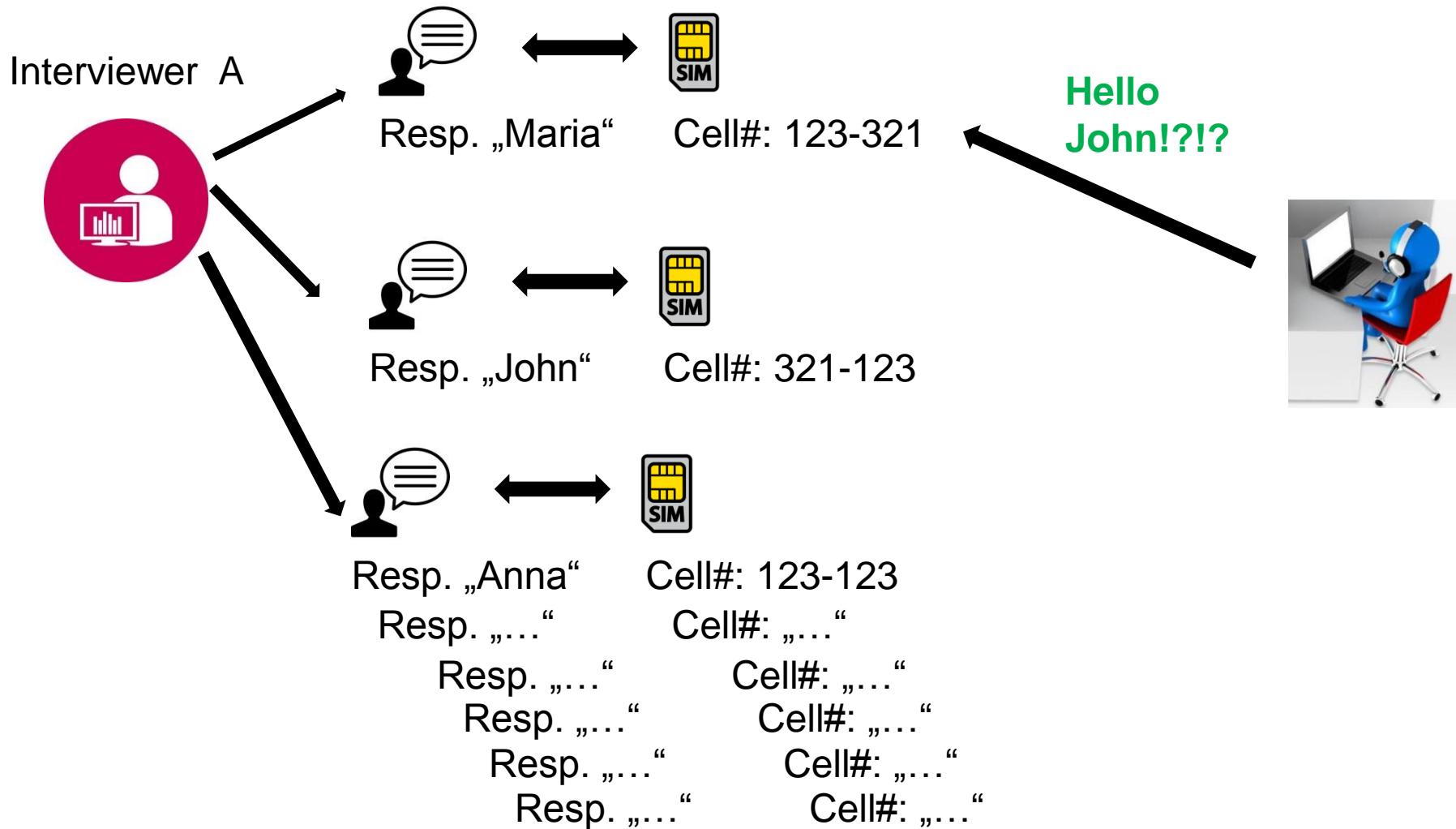


# „Ponzi scheme“ of wave 6

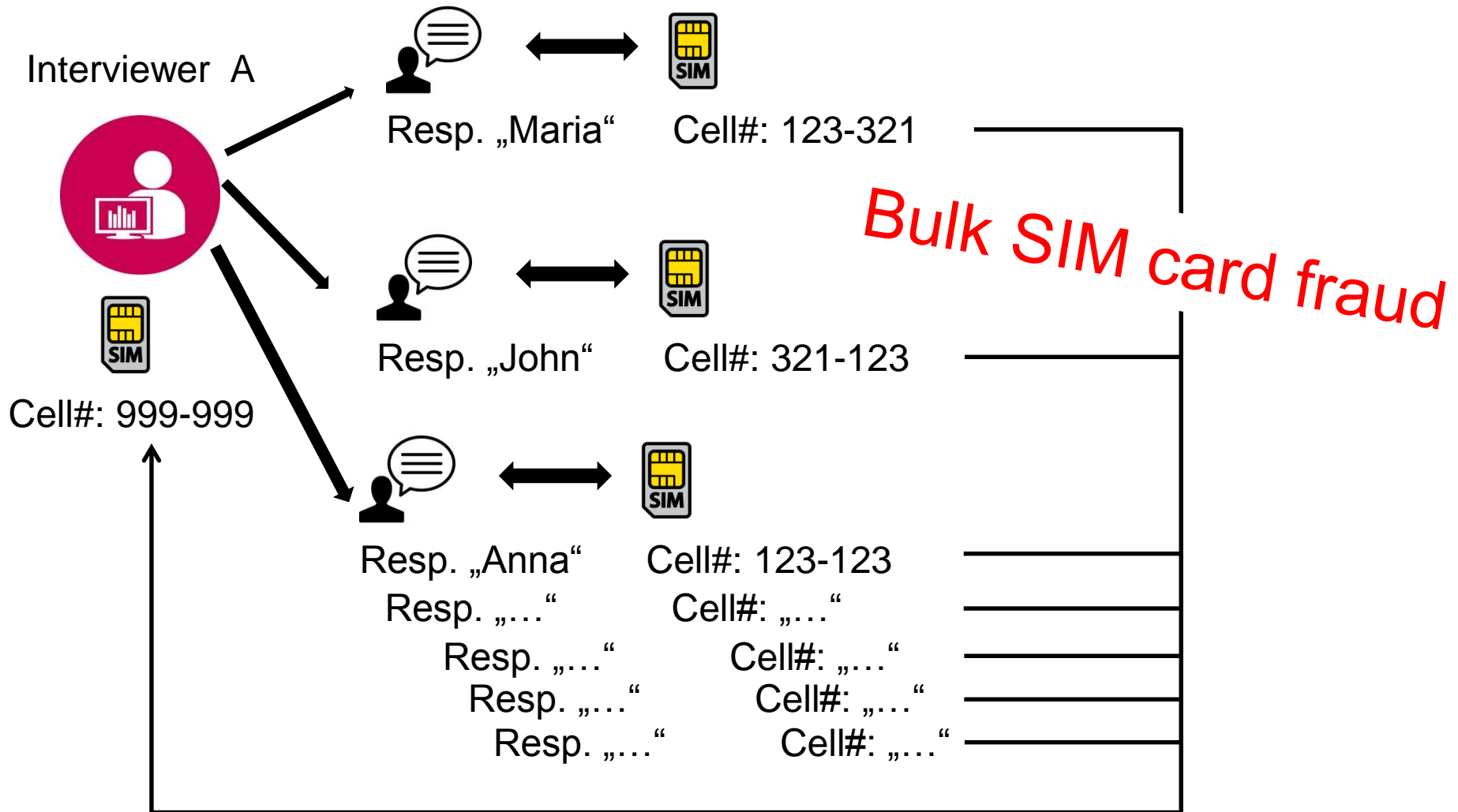




# „Ponzi scheme“ of wave 6



# „Ponzi scheme“ of wave 6



# New procedure for wave 7

- Goal: implement a new strategy to prevent the „worst case“ of data quality
- We focus on curbstoning only
  - In SHARE (near) impossible to define any data pattern to determine „good enough for publ. release“ (so-called „grey zone“)
  - Even generating initial suspicion not easy
  - Any suspicion must be corroborated
  - Please drop simplistic ideas on curbstoning (i.e. „very short interviews must be fake...“)
  - Much more prevalent in SHARE: interviewing the „wrong“ individual

# Telephone back checks

- ▶ Random phone back-checks always part of SHARE
  - ▶ But process and deliverable poorly structured
- ▶ NEW: keep track with our template, send back to SHARE Central
- ▶ Timing is crucial: identifying fakes as early as possible
  - ▶ NEW: we want all agencies to start early during fieldwork
  - ▶ First round: 4-6 weeks after first national training session

Laptop ID (org_si)	Day of the interview (intday_si)	Month of the interview (intmonth_si)	Year of the interview (intyear_si)	ID Interviewer (iwerid)	ID HH (hhidcom)	ID Individual respondent (pidcom)	Date of birth	Gender	Contact results	1) Has an interviewer interviewed you for the study „50+ in Europe“?	2) How long was the interview?	3) How/where was the interview conducted?	4) Did the interviewer use a laptop during the interview?	5) Did the interviewer use showcards during the interview?	6) Did the interviewer use a device to measure the strength of your hands?	7) Did the interviewer behave in a proper way?	8) If no: What was wrong with the interviewer s behaviour?	Results/con sequences
									1 - successful contact 2 - no phone number 3 - wrong phone number 4 - no one answered the phone 5 - R did not want to talk 6 - deceased	1 - yes 2 - no 3 - DK	minutes	1 - at respondents home 2 - at nursing home 3 - on telephone 4 - at another place	1 - yes 2 - no 3 - DK	1 - yes 2 - no 3 - DK	1 - yes 2 - no 3 - DK	1 - yes 2 - no 3 - DK		

# Cluster analysis by SHARE Central

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- ▶ Purpose: identifying fakes with statistical tool
  - ▶ Karin & Schuller & Michael Bergmann in this session
- ▶ SHARE Central will send out list with „suspicious“ laptop Ids (interviewers)
- ▶ Agency feedback to output of cluster analysis
  - ▶ review list
  - ▶ Back-check call
  - ▶ Track results in template
- ▶ Analysis & new policies are of experimental nature!

# New workflow for back-checks

**Survey Agency:**  
(random) back checks

**Share Central:** Runs Stata script & prepare template

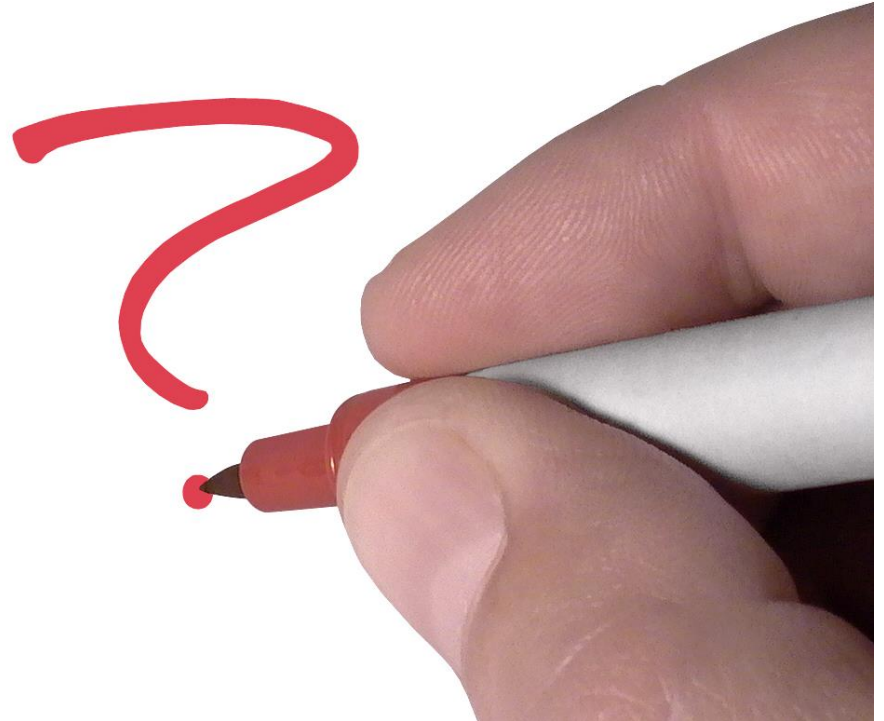
**Country team:**  
perform own activities (optional)

IWER  
suspicious?

**Survey Agency**  
checks all interviews  
of IWER

**Survey Agency**  
documents back checks in new template (SHARE Central input only)

Questions



# Summary on fieldwork monitoring

Source		Who	Feedback to SHARE Central
SD output		Day-to-day management of interviewers	Survey agency
Random back-checks	Identify fakes	Survey agency	Yes, via template
Cluster analysis	Identify fakes	Survey agency & SHARE Central	Yes, via template
Country team activities	Monitor country-specific data issues (e.g. LI), drop-off	Country team & survey agency	Only if grave problems

See Gregor's presentation & SD manual



# Output of SHARE Central

1. Fieldwork Monitoring Report (every other week)
  - ▶ Aggregate level (country) indicators
  - ▶ Sometimes amended by „special“ content
    - ▶ E.g. rate of active interviewers over time
  - ▶ Purpose: reporting only
2. Interviewer (laptop) statistics
  - ▶ New in wave 6, got mixed feedback
  - ▶ Purpose: help agencies manage interviewers
3. NEW in wave 7: cluster analysis to prevent curbstoning
  - ▶ Purpose: help agencies manage interviewers
  - ▶ Experimental character: not sure about feasibility
  - ▶ Part of back-check procedure

## 2. Interviewer (laptop) statistics

- ▶ How often should we provide them? Every 2 weeks? Or 4?
- ▶ Contains only stats on fieldwork progress
  - ▶ Rate of attempted HH
  - ▶ Rate of contacted (reached) HH
  - ▶ HH cooperation rate
  - ▶ HH refusal Rate

laptopid	Reached Panel HH	Panel HH cooperation rate	Panel HH refusal rate	Rate of attempted panel HH
ABCD	88%	47%	8%	100%
DCBA	94%	78%	7%	99%
CDAB	71%	90%	5%	71%

- ▶ to university teams & survey agencies
- ▶ Strictly as input for survey agencies
- ▶ No feedback to SHARE Central required

# Purpose & challenges

- ▶ Understanding the state of fieldwork at *any* given point in time
  - ▶ Track fieldwork progress
  - ▶ Intervene if necessary
- ▶ **Assessing measures of survey participation *as if* fieldwork was over today**
- ▶ Challenges:
  - ▶ Agree upon measures / common terminology
  - ▶ Determine *state* of households based on a *sequence of events*
    - ▶ May still change until the end of fieldwork

# Example: individual response rate

