Everyday information behavior during the "new normal" of the Covid-19 pandemic: approaching the notions of experiential and local knowledge

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Everyday Information Behavior during the "new normal" of the Covid-19 pandemic: approaching the notions of experiential and local knowledge

Abstract.

Purpose. This research deals with everyday information behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic at the "new normal" stage, focusing on the notions of experiential knowledge, i.e. knowledge acquired by first-hand experience or in personal interactions, and local knowledge, as perception of local environment.

Methods. Seventeen interviews were carried out in February-May 2021, in a district of the city of Madrid (Spain). Interview transcripts were analyzed according to grounded theory, to identify major themes of experiential and local knowledge, and their interconnection.

Findings. Participants' stories show that experiential knowledge cooperated with information originating from government, scientific authorities, and mainstream media, in patterns of convergence and divergence. While convergence produces "thick knowledge" (knowledge perceived as solid, real, and multidimensional), divergence leads to uncertainty and collaboration, but it also supports a critical stance on authorities' information. In addition, participants' perceptions of local knowledge emphasize its human component. Local and experiential knowledge are exchanged both explicitly and tacitly.

Originality. The paper presents a first approach at understanding experiential and local knowledge and their function during the health crisis, characterizing them as alternative information systems and as topics deserving major attention in research on IB and crisis management.

Keywords. Information Behavior; Experiential knowledge; Local knowledge; Covid-19 pandemic; uncertainty; noise; multimodality

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has allowed to study Information Behavior (IB) in everyday life and people information practices during a health crisis (Pan et al., 2020). At the beginning of the crisis, the intense communication activity on social media and the increased search activity on the internet have provided researchers with massive datasets, allowing to discover topics of concern for people in different parts of the world (Zhao *et al.*, 2020; Shen *et al.*, 2020), describe the spread of disinformation (Singh *et al.*, 2020), and establish connections between web activity and other events, such as daily cases in specific regions (Husnayain *et al.*, 2020). In the first months of the pandemic, several surveys conducted about preferred information sources showed an increase in information use and consumption especially of public

broadcasting, newspapers, and information from authorities (Dreisiebner *et al.*, 2021), and the connections between information use and preventive behaviors (Liu, 2020; Granderath *et al.*, 2020). According to a review of HIB research carried out until March 2021 (Montesi, 2021), everyday IB during the first year of the crisis has allowed to measure the efficacy and scope of information campaigns by governments and authorities, but it has also raised questions about less studied phenomena, such as experiential knowledge and local knowledge. Indeed, during the crisis, information needs have been described as local, related to specific areas, produced by daily-life situations, and originating in social, family, and professional roles (Ke *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, experiential knowledge exchanged on social media has allowed to discover symptoms of Covid-19, such as anosmia, before formal evidence has been available (Sarker *et al.*, 2020), while at the beginning of the crisis it has made up for the unavailability of healthcare services (Zhao *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, in medical care, the need to take immediate action on scant evidence has revived case histories from the bottom of the evidence pyramid, revaluing experience (Atkinson *et al.*, 2021). In a complementary way, some studies have underlined the protective nature of the information obtained from other people especially in comparison with the dramatism of media (Tandoc and Lee, 2020; Chivers *et al.*, 2020).

The available evidence points to an evolving IB which has been changing at different pandemic stages, with more information needs in correspondence of the outbreak and a progressive reduction of such needs, produced often by information saturation and emotional burnout (Tang and Zou, 2021; Lloyd and Hicks, 2021). The present work aims to build on previous research on IB during the Covid-19 pandemic, by analyzing IB in the stage of the "new normal", with a special focus on experiential knowledge (EK) and local knowledge (LK). Methodologically, it aims at complementing previous large-scale and big-data research by providing a detailed account of experiences in a specific location, similarly to (Pine *et al.*, 2021). However, while Pine *et al.*, (2021) look specifically at risk-perception in everyday IB, this research delves instead into EK and LK in the context of everyday IB during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.1 Literature review

The concepts of EK and LK are really interconnected and sometimes used as synonyms of one another (Fazey *et al.* 2006). However, they will be treated separately in what follows, because, despite their interrelations, they are often discussed within different bodies of research. The notion of EK is addressed specifically in the framework of health and disease,

where it is at the forefront of research informing new models of patients' integration in the management of complex health-related problems (Pineo *et al.*, 2021). The concept of LK, on the other hand, appears often in the literature on adaptation to climate change, where it is also known as traditional, implicit, or indigenous knowledge (Naess, 2013; Nakanishi and Black, 2018). Both make up alternative knowledge systems to scientific knowledge, contributing to the formulation of strategies to deal with and understand disease, as well as the processes of adaptation to local environments affected by climate change, or other situations characterized by uncertainty (Fazey *et al.*, 2006). In information research, the two concepts are often used to label information which is not provided or obtained through formally structured and normative information sources, but it is rather described as embodied, situated, and originating from people's experiences and social practices (Genuis, 2012; Rubenstein, 2015; Lloyd and Wilkinson, 2016). A terminological clarification is needed because, whilst some sources speak of LK or EK, others use rather local information (Van Klyton *et al.*, 2020; Lee and Butler, 2019; Oh and Butler, 2019) and experiential information (Savolainen, 2021), raising the question of whether we should make a difference between one and the other. In this paper, LK and local information, on the one hand, and EK and experiential information, on the other, are used interchangeably, drawing on Frické's (2009; 2019) understanding of information as "weak knowledge", i.e. "true-beliefs" and "true-(community-accepted)-statements" not justified as strong knowledge. Fazey *et al.* (2020) contend that current knowledge systems, that they understand as "the practices, routines, structures, mindsets, values and cultures affecting what and how knowledge is produced and used, and by whom" (p. 5) should be more inclusive, egalitarian, and diverse. Whilst EK is accepted only when it does not depart from conventional ways of thinking (Blume, 2017), and LK allows to accommodate the "other" basically from a Western perspective (Julian *et al.*, 2019), they have not yet been given proper recognition in the definition and resolution of health and social problems (Popay, 2018). The purpose of this research is contributing to their understanding by approaching both notions in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.1.1 Experiential Knowledge (EK)

According to Blume (2017), EK first definition was given by Borkman in 1976, who, stressing differences with professional knowledge, characterized patients' disease experiences as holistic rather than specialized, and focused on immediate action instead of accumulation of knowledge. More recent work has emphasized EK contextual, subjective, unconscious, and emotional properties. In information studies, the

notion appears often describing information practices in the framework of disease, meaning either a *posture* towards information in sense-making processes (Genuis, 2012), reflected-upon personal experiences gathered in interpersonal interactions (Genuis, 2015), or a shared basis of fears and concerns underlying conversations on social media among patients and allowing the exchange of emotional support with information (Rubenstein, 2015). In Neal and McKenzie (2011), EK converts bloggers on a chronical condition into authoritative information sources who speak entitled by their experience of disease. EK appears also in parenting information practices, as information received from other mothers and families (Loudon *et al.*, 2016), and complementing scientific and medical advice (Zaslow, 2012; Montesi and Álvarez Bornstein, 2017). In (Khoo, 2014), experiential knowledge emerges as a new type of information in user-contributed content on social media along with advice, recommendations, opinions, and practice knowledge. Savolainen (2021) contends that experiential information is the information that individuals obtain from observing themselves and their everyday life-world, plus its cognitive interpretation and affective appraisal. However, EK is neither purely explicit, because it can be tacit (Gibson, 2016), nor purely personal, because it can be collaborative (Ma and Stahl, 2017). Fazey *et al.* (2006), classify EK into explicit, implicit, and tacit knowledge, depending on whether it has been articulated, it can be articulated, or it cannot be articulated. Finally, Julian *et al.* (2019: p. 211) understand EK as "ways of knowing, and stocks of knowledge, that are based on practice or being in a situation", such as a violent conflict - the topic of their research - and add the notion of "local" to EK, because it refers to all people directly affected by a localized event.

1.1.2 Local Knowledge (LK)

LK has a growing presence in the literature on IB, and several authors emphasize the importance of place in IB. The notion of the "local" appears often when immigrants' information practices are analyzed, and Caidi *et al.* (2013) point to the increasing use in the literature on immigrants' IB of the notion of "information environments", referring to the everyday context that frame immigrants' life in a new country. Lloyd (2017) places immigrants' IB within "information landscapes", that in the refugee youth's experiences described in (Lloyd and Wilkinson, 2016) consist of everyday, socio-technical, and institutional spaces. The idea of place is implicit in Pettigrew's "information grounds" (1999) that both Oh and Butler (2019) and Williamson and Roberts (2010) retake to understand respectively the "local information behavior" of international newcomer students and the development of a sense of place in an area with a high population turnover. Gibson and

Kaplan (2017) stress the interconnection between place and community, and the mutual influence of place and access to information, describing IB of place-based communities of parents of individuals with disabilities. Lloyd (2014) studies LK in the workplace of aged-care workers as a source of expertise, embedded in routines and practices. This body of literature does not usually connect with another substantial body of research on LK, that understands it in the framework of all practices intended to face climate change, especially in underdeveloped areas of the world. From this perspective, Pearson et al. (2021) define LK as a cumulative body of knowledge, practices and beliefs, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations about the relationship of living beings with one another and with their environment. Klenk *et al.* (2017) state that LK should not be considered as an object that can be extracted from the context and processes of its production, because it rather emerges from the interaction with the environment as social practice and the response to challenges brought about by climate change. Of the five most researched themes in Klenk *et al.* (2017) review of research on LK, this study focuses on people's perception of LK and what LK affords them in their adaptation to the pandemic. This includes information obtained by taking part in activities and social practices, by simply being and acting in a specific local setting and community. Pine *et al.*, (2021) call "vernacular information" the information gathered during the pandemic by simply observing shortage of food and goods at stores, new cleaning procedures in stores, and changes in traffic patterns. On his part, Savolainen (2021) speaks of sensory information originating in individuals' observation of their environment. According to Veinot and Pierce (2019), the relationship between IB and the environment is hardly ever studied at the social level, whereas materiality has been studied as a possible impediment to access, flow, and use of the information, more than as a vehicle of information. In this study, we address the question of how participants perceive the impact of the pandemic on other people's practice and behavior in public spaces, conceiving it as a dimension of participants' notion of LK.

1.1.3 Research purpose

The aim of this research is to study everyday IB during the Covid-19 pandemic in a local context, specifically a Madrid district– Tetuán -, at the "new normal" stage that, for this specific location, started approximately in June 2020, when many social and economic activities interrupted during the previous quarantine period were gradually resumed (Colaboradores de la Wikipedia, 2022). Many existing studies examine IB during the Covid-19 crisis through massive analyses of social media activity or through large surveys often

conducted in different countries (Al-Hasan et al., 2020), emphasizing the planetary pandemic situation, though paying little attention to more local contexts. In this research, participants were recruited in a specific location for a series of interviews. The Tetuán district has a population of 160.581 inhabitants and, according to statistics, it can be considered a diverse and cosmopolitan district –foreigners account for 20,4% of the population -, whose residents are as highly educated as the rest of Madrid, but of a lower socio-economic status than the city average (Madrid City Council, 2021; Andrino et al., 2021). The district stands out also for its birth rate (8,43%) that is also slightly higher than the Madrid average (7,78%).

A more specific objective is to characterize EK within everyday IB, that here we understand as knowledge acquired through either one's own or others' first-hand experience of the pandemic. Previous research on EK during the pandemic is based mostly on the analysis of communication on social media (Sarker *et al.*, 2020; Tandoc and Lee, 2020; Chivers *et al.*, 2020; Savolainen, 2021), whereas here we report participants' direct accounts and perceptions on the topic. Finally, a complementary objective is to characterize the concept of LK in the framework of the pandemic, gathering participants' impressions of their environment and of people's practice and behavior in such environment.

2. Methodology

Seventeen interviews were conducted in February to May 2021 – still "new normal" stage in Spain -, with residents of the Tetuán district of Madrid, where the author herself lives. This specific district was chosen to increase the chances of recruiting participants, but also because familiarity with people and places provided the researcher with knowledge to understand and contextualize references to places and practices within this location. Participants were recruited through *¿Tienes Sal?* – a social network that allows users to exchange messages with people living in their vicinity based on their postal code-, FaceBook groups, neighborhood associations (Madrid City Council, 2022), and by word of mouth, including snowball sampling. Some participants' data are reported in Table 1. Specifically, most participants were female (14), worked at the time of the interview (11), and lived in families with kids (10). Whereas participants' working situation may be interesting for its impact on daily life, in a previous survey carried out in April 2020 in the same district, people living in families with small children engaged in a more diversified set of information practices and were more likely than others to attach value to all information sources, including EK (Authors, 2020). In addition, one effect of the snowball sampling was the high presence of

people (5) related with the primary and preschool education sector. Even if participants were recruited based on convenience criteria, only people residing in the district were included, and they all volunteered to take part in the research because of their interest in information issues. In this sense, the sample may be skewed in favor of people highly active in information practices.

[Table 1. Data about participants]

The interviews were carried out on Google Meet videoconference platform and were video-recorded or audio-recorded. In recognition of the time spent taking part in the interview, participants received stationery material. The fact that the researcher herself was living in the district created a connection with participants, allowing to build rapport despite the online format (O'Connor et al., 2008). The semi-structured interviews were carried out based on an evolving script that changed especially at the beginning of the research according to emerging themes, a common practice in grounded theory research (Foley *et al.*, 2021), and additional questions were also asked building off the topics of the conversations. Interviews ranged between 30 and 60 minutes in length, with an average of 39:41 minutes and were semi-automatically transcribed. The global word count amounts to 102,068 words.
[Table 2. Interviews and transcriptions data]
Participants were sent the interview script in advance, so that they could get an idea of the interview purpose.

The two main topics of the research were addressed directly. Lloyd (2014) warns about the difficulty of capturing LK because of its social and embodied nature, though the methodological alternative she proposes (the "interview to the double") is applicable within workplaces or similar contexts only. As for LK, participants were asked whether the need to stay home because of quarantines and *cordons sanitaires* had improved knowledge of their local environment, and whether they noticed changes in people's practice on street and public places in the new normal. In addition, all spontaneous references in participants' narratives to specific localities and places were also coded. Such codification was facilitated by the author's local knowledge of the district. Probably, considering the embodied and highly contextual nature of LK, observation in real settings could be considered a more valid method to capture the complexity of such notion. However, the aim of this research is exploratory

and focused on general everyday IB, and interviews have also been used in previous research on LK (Lloyd, 2014; Bremer et al., 2017). As for EK, instead of asking directly about it, we asked participants about personal communications, to self-assess their knowledge of Covid-19 and the scientific knowledge acquired as a consequence of having lived through the pandemic. In this sense, we followed (Genuis, 2015), where EK is defined as reflected upon personal lived experiences gathered in interpersonal interactions, as a space for reflection and sense-making. In order to obtain as much feedback as possible, participants were also asked to compare information obtained in personal communications with information obtained from mainstream media whose use increased during the pandemic according to Dreisiebner *et al.*, (202) and Zimmerman (2021). Further questions were also asked, regarding: (a) the attitude towards the vaccination campaign that, at the time of the interviews, was at its beginning; (b) the experience of disinformation; and (c) the experience of conflicting information.
Interviews were analyzed through grounded theory (Pickard, 2013; Silipigni Connaway and Radford, 2016) with the support of the *Taguette* qualitative data analysis tool (https://www.taguette.org/). According to the constructivist variant of grounded theory that was adopted in this research, the interviews were conceived as emergent interactions (Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021), and the researcher took over a co-constructor role (Foley et al., 2021), cooperating with participants in understanding meaning and actions, and sharing her personal perspective, readings, and experiences. The researcher engaged at several rounds with the interviews, and themes were extracted inductively from data, though later they were also linked to relevant scientific literature (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Relevant themes emerged from the very first interviews as concepts or perspectives on the issues discussed. Accordingly, the interview script was slightly modified from one interview to the other, especially at the beginning, so that participants' replies could be more clearly conveyed to such emerging themes. The formal tagging was carried out on full transcriptions based on the preliminary set of themes that emerged during the interviews. During the coding process and by constantly comparing data, additional themes were discovered, while others were specified or renamed. *Taguette* was used to code and label the interviews transcripts after the first stage of the analysis. This software, though it is quite simple in its functionalities, enables to gather all interviews fragments coded under each of the specific themes identified – and this was its more notable function in the research process. Text fragments were sometimes labeled with more than one code when they touched upon different themes, in order to avoid losing contextual information (Lindgren *et al.*, 2020). The 32 themes identified during the coding process were arranged as relevant either to EK or LK, and connected with

one another, in a process that Foley and Timonen (2015) call "selective coding". However, the two notions are highly intertwined, and both are looked at in the global framework of everyday IB. Extracts from the interviews in the text have been translated from Spanish, and different participants are identified by their initials or some letters from their name. Quotes have been condensed in order to avoid repetitions and not meaningful words.

The issue of quality in qualitative research is still an open debate. Nonetheless, Charmaz and Thornberg's (2021) guidelines were followed, especially in terms of methodological self-consciousness and reflection, familiarity with and critical view of relevant literature, and transparency and justification of choices made along the research process. Additionally, and according to Charmaz (2014), research pursued credibility, by constantly comparing participants' accounts; originality, by approaching dimensions of IB scantly researched; resonance, by co-constructing and labelling with participants concepts and themes that made sense and echoed previous research; and finally, usefulness, by adding to the existing body of literature.

3. Results

The results are presented under two sections, beginning with themes related to EK and its role in building up the needed knowledge base to face the pandemic, and continuing with salient elements of LK and, in general, of knowledge and information linked to specific localities and places.

3.1 Characteristics of EK

3.1.1. Multiple perspectives

When asked about the information obtained in personal interactions, eleven participants mentioned different perspectives and points of view, as well as variety and diversity of contents, especially in comparison with the monothematic nature of the information obtained from mainstream media, such as the television or newspapers. Some participants point to the univocal and monothematic nature of media information, when they comment with surprise that the media does not report on the situation in close countries - either physically, such as Portugal, or culturally, such as Latin Americans-, and neglects completely developing countries - such as India or Africa. Several interviewees report learning of the situation in

close countries through their personal networks, because part of their family lives there or because of other more distant relationships. Apart from its univocal and monothematic character, five participants emphasize the negative component of messages transmitted by news media, and Jl. finds this negative emphasis exhausting: "*It is exhausting, isn't it? It is disheartening only seeing bad news, bad news, bad news…"*

The variety of perspectives of the information carried by personal communications provides also diversified contents, whereas it is a common complaint that newspapers and television only inform about one single recurring topic, the pandemic, especially at the beginning of the crisis, as in Je.'s experience: *"It seems to me that we've been subjected to a bombardment of information always about the same thing... They are repeating you, repeating you and, based on that repeating, well... your world... your world is the pandemic."* While mainstream media centers on one single topic, personal interactions accommodate more diversified themes, accounting for all spheres of personal life during the pandemic, with conversation topics ranging from information about one's health, children, travelling, politics, or cooking, as An. explains.

The variety of perspectives of the information exchanged in personal communications affords some participants a more complex vision of reality and truth. De., for example, understands the complexity of controversial decisions made during the pandemic, such as the suspension of bars and restaurants activity, because she looks at it from the point of view of the people involved, and concludes: *"And so, in the end, looking a bit at all points of views is what makes you see a more… well… a more truthful reality."* On her part, An. describes the collaborative process by which she and her friends dismantle fake news, drawing together their different skills, knowledge, and perspectives. In this sense, information obtained in personal interactions has the potential to integrate the "other" in participants' worldview. However, such difference of perspectives, when personal communication occurs on social media rather than in direct interactions, is also perceived as disinformation. In Di.'s opinion, although social media provides participation to a greater number of people, it really inhibits her capacity to take part, because it conveys excessive and polarized information and discourses.

3.1.2. Emotions and modality

The information transmitted by mainstream media does not always allow to regulate participants' emotional response to information, because it is perceived as repetitive and monothematic, but also catastrophic, negative, and multimodal, when it hinges upon shocking

audiovisual content. Exposure to images, other audiovisual content and messages that are perceived as repetitive and monothematic, especially on television news reports, produces a feeling of exhaustion and saturation that forces several participants to set boundaries. Participants report on different defensive strategies, such as eliminating television entirely from their day-to-day lives, or limiting their exposure exclusively to headlines. Alternatively, they also opt for a reduction in "modality" and choose monomodal media, such as newspapers or the radio, moving from the passive reception of television messages to a more active, although defensive role. The preference expressed by several participants in favor of the radio as a monomodal information medium – it is only listened to - allows to acquire valuable information in a short time and while other tasks, such as cooking, are carried out. Conversely, the information received in direct personal interactions does not produce an uncomfortable emotional response to the information received, having instead a reassuring power. This reassuring effect is not necessarily conveyed through words, but it may be transmitted also tacitly in a face-to-face approach, as it emerges from the re-encounter between Bl. and her older aunt: *"Look, my aunt is in a nursing home… She has been given her two doses of the vaccine in January, and I was seeing her on Tuesday… and then I told my brothers: 'it's been so reassuring for me to see the aunt!' It was like saying: 'for her this is over'."*

Nonetheless, when personal communication occurs on social media it can also destabilize. If talking among close friends about vaccines or other topics related to the pandemic helps to gather filtered information and ideas, as Sl. explains, the simple participation in chats of the WhatsApp type can also expose to an avalanche of news and links, including unwanted content of questionable quality, if not clearly hoaxes, as in Lo.'s account: *"It was like kind of a volcano and the information came out like crazy, with no checking."*

3.1.3 Noise in personal communications

Although it is quite widespread in the group the positive perception that personal communications provide information from a variety of perspectives, some participants deny their informative character, or even dismiss them completely, while others point to the presence of "noise" in this type of interaction, especially if people echo what they have heard or read elsewhere, often in mainstream media, contributing, sometimes, to the spread of disinformation. Jl. is skeptical about the information exchanged in personal communications: *"The information that comes to me first-hand is basically disinformation. So, I don't usually pay much attention to it, because I notice that people trust what the neighbor tells them more*

than to look for their own answer." On the other hand, Lo. differentiates the information that people share based on their first-hand experience from the information "recycled" from mainstream media, corroborating the idea of noise in personal interactions, but making an exception for authentic personal experience. Finally, for Ag., the diversity of personal situations and accompanying emotions conveyed in communication with other people about the pandemic may itself generate noise, though it makes him conscious of the difficulties that the pandemic is creating at all levels.

3.1.4 Knowledge obtained from the experience of the pandemic

In addition to characterizing the information obtained in personal communications, participants also self-assessed the knowledge gained as a consequence of having lived through the pandemic, and specifically about Covid-19. In this sense, participants' narratives allow to see patterns of convergence and divergence between both their own and others' EK, on the one hand, and scientific knowledge, authorities' and media information, on the other. Convergence occurs when scientific knowledge and authorities' information are corroborated by first-hand experiences and social practices, and divergence when participants assume a critical stance based on their own and other people's experiences. In a convergence pattern, social interaction helps to integrate the scientific terminology participants hear or read on mainstream media and in authorities communications, when they communicate with each other. Being used in daily conversations, terms such as *"viral load", "pandemic", "long haulers",* or *"symptomatology"* become part of participants' knowledge base. However, what the majority of participants tend to perceive as the most robust knowledge acquired is prevention measures or *"defense"* information, in one participant's words (Je.). In a sense, prevention and protection measures can be considered the EK that the "experience" of the pandemic has most clearly contributed, because the effectiveness of such measures has been verified first-hand. In Bl.'s words, it represents the only knowledge she's acquired: *"I mean, they've taught you three things, which are distance, cleanliness, and face masks, and that's what I do, apart from those three things, I don't have any more knowledge."*

Such defensive knowledge originates first from media and authorities, though it becomes part of participants' knowledge base when they verify first-hand that it works. Resulting from the convergence of different sources, participants perceive it the as something that has been gained "collectively", and some participants tell their stories in plural when they acknowledge that the experience acquired allows confirming that prevention measures do

work, as in this fragment: *"I would say, perhaps, following the basic rules, for the time being, it has gone well for me, hasn't it? Or it has gone well for us in the family, right?"* (Te.)

It is also based on a "collective" dimension of EK that some participants, on the other hand, justify their doubts regarding vaccines, because their own and other people's experiences show that vaccines do not always work, and that it takes time to develop effective treatments for diseases such as VIH. In this sense, the official discourse does not converge with experience, and even if skeptical participants do not reject vaccination, this collective knowledge allows them to assume a critical stance towards vaccination or, in general, towards authorities' information. Es. explains that the information she receives from her personal network, and the different experiential perspectives added to her own personal experience make her question about vaccination. *"They [my friends] compare with other types of vaccines. And then it makes you think: 'well it's true, well, the years I got the flu shot, I was worse than the years I didn't get the shot. And if this is going to be counterproductive?'"* So, when convergence with information transmitted by authorities does not occur, because people's experiences do not align with authorities' information, participants adopt a dubitative stance, such as in the case of vaccination, without questioning necessarily authorities' recommendations.

Finally, this collective, collaborative, and convergent dimension of EK enables to adapt and adjust the information available at a given time to specific situations. So does it emerge from the story of a nurse (Be.) during the first days of the pandemic, when, as she explains, health staff was able to keep providing assistance, with definitive institutional guidelines pending, and drawing on what other nurses who had been in the Covid ward shared, once they were back to their usual work location: *"Well, that was information that I had in words; yes, indeed, it was a bit informal... there, in the room we have, right? The truth is that first the information came to me at work and then I searched for what clashed or what didn't fit together… or what was not clear to me."* In Be.'s account, her colleagues' EK was then complemented searching for convergence with other sources. In Ag.'s story, on the other hand, the direct interaction and the exchange of personal information in a more informal context allows to complete normative regulations on the use of face masks within a private home, negotiating with his friend's mother whether to keep a safe distance or to wear the face mask.

Knowledge about Covid-19 reported by participants comes mainly from their personal experience because they had caught the virus or had close contacts with others who had been infected, and in general it contributes to a better understanding of symptoms and long-term

effects. Personal experiences, when it comes to symptomatology, corroborate and converge with the information obtained by other sources, turning statistics into a closer and more direct reality, as Te. concludes, after reporting the experiences of two persons diagnosed with long-term Covid-19: *"These personal experiences, well, a person who's been infected, who's a long-hauler, I get it more directly than... when they tell me about it in the news, when they tell me the statistics... You have it as more direct, right?"*

While personal and close contacts' experiences confer veracity to statistics and information from mainstream media and authorities, they also make it possible to appreciate very different responses to the virus, and clearly transmit the difficulty of knowing the virus itself, the disease, and its manifestations. In the account below, Fr. explains that she developed a less frequent symptomatology which delayed the diagnosis of Covid-19 and put her life in danger: *"It's kind of weird, because… when I had the Coronavirus and they told me: 'if you don't have a cough….' I went to the outpatient clinic, and I told the woman that I was dying of body aches, of back pain, and she told me: 'Do you have a cough?' And I said: 'No'. And she told me: 'Go away, because you don't have the Coronavirus'."* In this sense, experiences complement general statistics about symptomatology and sequelae of the infection by both converging, when they provide substance and veracity to quantitative data, and diverging, when they point rather to exceptions and inconsistencies.

3.1.5 Acceptance of uncertainty

Personal stories of infection and symptomatology are so diversified in participants' accounts, that they find it difficult to see a clear pattern, which leads them to regard uncertainty as something unavoidable. Bl.'s story exemplifies inconsistencies in her own close network: *"There's not a common thread… For example, I have two brothers married with children and one of my brothers is still on sick leave, but neither my sister-in-law nor my nephew have caught it. And in the other house, my brother and my sister-in-law have tested positive, but not my nieces… and that's my close network, you know. Well, that's it, then let it be what God wants."* In Bl.'s story, uncertainty represents knowledge in its own right, because it results from diverse and diverging information sources. By accepting uncertainty, participants also increase their capacity for resilience, because an uncertain scenery leaves room for possible improvements and allows to tolerate situations that are perceived as transitory for a longer time than expected, as Be. explains: *"So, as something temporary, it is very manageable, more than if in March, they tell me that after almost a year we are going to be more or less the same."*

Circumstances contributing to the acceptance of uncertainty are not only one's own and others' experiences of diversified cases and unpredictability, but also include the numerous episodes of conflicting information and information overload, phenomena that both occur with special intensity at the beginning of the pandemic. Participants' experiences in this regard are varied, though they tend to point to both conflicting information and information overload as factors corroborating uncertainty as unavoidable. Some participants consider conflicting information a consequence of the scarcity of knowledge, in a situation in which other material resources, such as face masks and hand sanitizer, are also lacking. In other cases, some interviewees consider that conflicting information arises from the pressure to inform, which generates a continuous stream of unverified news and "*counter-information*", in Te.'s words. Sometimes, conflicting information is looked at as typical of the discourse of social media, because of the great diversity of people and points of view it gives voice to, whilst at other times it is explained as a matter of temporal adjustment and progressive acquisition of knowledge. Finally, the perception of conflicting information produces, in some interviewees, confusion, anger, disappointment, doubts, and fatigue, because they feel forced to constantly update their knowledge base, as well as practices and behaviors based on such knowledge, with no certainty of doing it right, as Je. explains. The acceptance of uncertainty is then a process accompanied by entangled negative emotions that arises from diverse and inconsistent information experiences, and a sometimes divergent and other times convergent interplay of EK and information provided by authorities, the scientific community, and the media, under circumstances of overabundant and often contradictory information.

3.1.7 Predisposition towards trust

In a context of uncertainty and information dysfunctionalities (information overload, lack of information, contradictory information), when one's own and others' experiences point to the unpredictability of the virus, participants end up predisposing to "trust". The need to trust make participants willing to comply with directions from government and health authorities. Te. reports on her vaccination experience after a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, that was then temporarily suspended, because of uncertainties over its secondary effects, conveying the feeling of the need to trust: *"I didn't think about anything, right? Either 'I'll get vaccinated' or 'I won't get vaccinated'. I said: 'well, if they call me, I'll go', right?"* Such willingness to trust, in the case of the information coming directly or indirectly from the scientific community, is expressed by De., Jl., Lo., Es., and Bl. in terms of faith or belief, and

interview fragments include expressions such as "*blind faith*", "*belief*", "*hope*" and "*trust*" with reference to science and the scientific community.

The disposition towards trust appears after a process in which the active and intense search for information, very typical at the beginning of the pandemic, gives way to more passive informational practices, such as the mere exposure to information, as it emerges from the several accounts, including Ja.'s: *"I am no longer looking for information. In the last three or four months, I don't know if because of exhaustion or because things have been changing little."* After an initial eagerness to get informed, at a given time, participants reach saturation and not always because their information needs are met, but rather because they understand that uncertainty is unavoidable.

3.2 Local Knowledge

When asked whether the need to lead a more "local" life during the pandemic had increased knowledge of their local environment, most participants replied that their knowledge of the environment had not changed, and that they were already used to a local life, either because they were parents of small children, or they had been in the neighborhood for a long time. A few others, on the other hand, admit to having discovered parts of the neighborhood that they did not know, especially when they had gone out on street with no other purpose than walking and taking a breath, and had even got interested in its history. Finally, others take advantage of their LK as a tool against boredom, to "change scenery" more often, tour different areas, or detect subtle changes in the environment, such as the opening of a new restaurant.

3.2.1 The human component of the environment

It is very common that, when asked about their environment or neighborhood, interviewees mention other people, being these relatives, friends, and acquaintances, but also people known during the pandemic, especially associations or other types of groupings. In this way, they refer to the human component of the environment which is emphasized in Mi.'s account: *"How has it [knowing the neighborhood] helped me to overcome it? Well, because in the neighborhood there is everything, there are people, there are people I know, there are friends, there is everything..."*

The great connectivity experienced at the early stages of the pandemic, when communication with relatives and acquaintances was strengthened or resumed thanks to ICTs, extends also to the human component of the local environment, because, despite the social distancing

measures, new people are met and known in the local physical environment. When, at the beginning of the pandemic, contacts with relatives and acquaintances in Madrid and other parts of Spain are strengthened via ICTs, sometimes these contacts are perceived as *forced,* as in Ma.'s experience. At a more local level, during lockdown, participants get to know new people that are organized, for example, in associations with different purposes, such as humanitarian aid (An., Je., Ja.), or when they are linked to a physical landmark within the district, such as a cultural center or the building in which they live. Forced to spend all their time at home, Jl. and Pl. have the opportunity to meet the neighbors who live in their same building. Sl. discovers the Pilates classes that instructors of a local cultural center moved to YouTube during the first lockdown of 2020.

Complementarily, the landmarks or places that interviewees identify with their own name or through other geographical references are often public spaces in which people gather with different purposes, such as parks or squares, cultural centers, hospitals, and schools. Several stories speak of symbolic places in Madrid emphasizing emptiness, desolation and the absence of human life, or the fact that they have been converted to different functions. Fr. reminds with sadness the images of the Ice Palace, once a place of fun and entertainment, sadly converted into a morgue. If television and other media transmit images of empty spaces in the district and the rest of the city, accounts from other people corroborate such images and, in many cases, the EK shared during the pandemic consists of accounts of what happens in other places, both locally and in other countries, as explained in section 3.1.1. Bl. reproduces a friend's account of empty roads: *"A friend of mine has a pharmacy in Toledo, a town in Toledo. She said: 'you just can't imagine what a road is like when there is no one, any day, and when you go past someone, they are trucks,' she says. 'It's a horror'."* In this sense, relationships with people working in healthcare are especially significant, because they inform about what happens in hospitals, other health centers or in laboratories. Nine (9) participants expressly mention direct relationships with people linked to the health sector. Such contacts in the health sector play a role as information providers that gather both scientific knowledge and EK, but also as witnesses of the situation in hospitals, establishing a connection between people and places. People working in the health sector become information hubs in which scientific knowledge, EK, and LK converge.

Only secondarily to the human component of the local environment, participants mention spaces within the city, especially parks, open areas, such as squares, or less crowded areas, where they could go for a walk in the months of transition from lockdown to the new normal.

Shops, bars, or supermarkets are mentioned to a lesser extent, often emphasizing their function as meeting places. Significantly, those who live the lockdown or some stage of the pandemic outside of their usual environment experience a sense of distrust, especially in relation to the human elements of the new environment, or behave in a way that, later when they are back to their usual place, they regret. In Ma.'s narrative, the place has two dimensions, a physical and "bucolic" dimension, and the human dimension of the people living there, which confuses her, because their attitudes and beliefs are contrary to hers own. Similarly, Je. feels that having spent the summer holidays in a small town, outside his usual urban environment, has led him to underestimate the risks of infection: *"I took some liberties that now... yes, because even though it is a small town, well, there you related in a different way than here, didn't you?"* In both cases, social interaction and social practice out of home make participants diverge from what they are used to in their routine location.

3.2.1 The human component of the environment: between collaboration and conflict

When asked if they noticed changes in people's practice and behavior in public spaces, participants highlighted two main aspects. On the one hand, they mentioned dynamics of collaboration and conflict, and, on the other, they pointed to a loss of connectivity. Relaxation and a progressive reduction of fear were also perceived. Collaboration emerges, for example, when people are observed respecting the safety distance, both on street and on public transportation. On the underground, people sit leaving one seat in the middle between themselves and others. On street, people tacitly agree to situations in which it is possible to remove the face mask, since distances are respected, especially in natural environments with low human density, as in Lo.'s story: *"We went to walk on Monday… So, well, I began to see other hikers who were carrying the mask in their hands, so, yes, when you made eye contact with another, well, you put it on, and you passed with the mask on and then, well… they took it off again."* In a tacit and collaborative way, in public spaces people determine how to apply the general regulations to specific situations. Because before the pandemic people on street were perceived as highly competitive, this tacit collaboration surprises and produces amazement, as in Jl.'s story: *"I even posted a photo on Instagram because it's a bit of an impact... a shocking image, getting on the underground and seeing everyone respecting the safety distance, everyone was wearing the mask and it's an image that when you see it... it shocks you a bit."* On the other side, conflictive behaviors are perceived when people show

their unavailability to collaborate, and, at times, are characterized in ethical terms as polarity between good and evil or, in some narratives, in terms of disconnection and marginality.

3.2.2 Loss of connectivity

In public spaces, some participants point to a progressive loss of connectivity with other people, accentuated by distancing measures and by physical barriers, especially the use of face masks that prevent Es. to recognize and greet acquaintances on street. This loss of connectivity is perceived as specific of the new normal, because in the first stage of lockdown, participants live a moment of great connectivity with relatives and acquaintances via ICTs, while they establish new connections with strangers, through balconies and windows[1], and through the humanitarian and social work of associations. Pl.'s story describes this progressive change: *"There is a neighbor across the street whom I did not know, from across the street upstairs. And the man, well, he liked to see S***, because he had his granddaughters and he couldn't see them, right? And that thing that arose, that very nice people helped the neighbors and all that... later it's gone lost."* The very intense connectivity so typical at the beginning of the pandemic dilutes over time and progressively leads to cooled relationships with others, and some speak of "dehumanization". This pattern of progressive cooling parallels the search for information that is intense at the beginning, and, once it reaches its peak, it limits to more passive behaviors, such as the mere exposure to information. Thus, tacit interaction with people in public places follows the same pattern as the search for information, being very intense at the beginning of the pandemic and giving way, over time, to more passive behaviors.

4. Discussion

4.1 Limitations

The analysis of the 17 interviews conducted with residents of the Madrid district of Tetuán between February and May 2021 allows approaching the concepts of EK and LK in the context of everyday pandemic IB. Such characterization is simply an attempt at identifying emerging traits of two notions that have been scantly researched in information studies. In addition, it is based on a set of 17 interviews carried out in a specific location, and definitely

[1] In Madrid, during the months of March and April 2020, people used to lean out of the window at eight o'clock in the evening and honored the health personnel with applauses.

it needs further supporting evidence. Further limitations can be appreciated in other aspects of the research. The issue regarding the validity of interviews as a research method to approach an embodied and highly contextual notion such as LK has been already commented upon in the method section. Additionally, we chose a convenience sample, and a specific location that positioned the researcher to better understand references to places, but also affected results for its specific idiosyncrasies. In particular, the chosen location, a district within the largest Spanish city, was peculiar in its cosmopolitan composition, socio-economic status, birth rate and educational level. Some notions, such as the monothematic nature of mainstream media, have emerged thanks to many people being aware of broadcast news in their countries of origin, and might have not emerged in a more homogeneous location. While results are not representative of Spain, they might be transferable to other large Western cities. With these limitations and considering the explorative nature of the research, some characteristics of EK and LK during the Covid-19 pandemic can still be outlined.

4.2 Defense information

Firstly, the results of this research indicate that the most solid EK acquired during the pandemic includes the symptoms and effects of the infection, as well as prevention measures, also called "defense information", and sits at the convergence of information gained by first-hand experience or in personal communications, and information from authorities or the media. Therefore, previous research on EK in the framework of disease pointing to patients as experts in symptomatology is supported (Blume, 2017), though the specific case of the Covid-19 pandemic allows to identify sequelae and prevention measures as other areas in which people feel equally knowledgeable or even experts, as in previous research during epidemics (Jang and Park, 2018).

4.3 Diversity and noise

Experiences acquired first-hand or from others are characterized by great diversity, either in perspectives or contents, which is a highly regarded aspect of the information obtained in personal communications, especially in comparison with the monothematic information of mainstream media. Such diversity allows to accommodate different interrelated topics during personal interactions, while it affords to look at reality in a more complex way and from different perspectives. In (Ortiz-Myers and Costello, 2021) study of information practices of parents of transgender and no-binary youth too, EK brings new perspectives offering alternative transgender narratives. Nonetheless, diversity has its counterpart, because the

information obtained in personal interactions presents a certain degree of noise, when personal communications do not only convey experiences, but also echo information obtained from different media. Savolainen (2021) too points to undesired opinions and unrelated issues mixing up with personal experience in social media discussions during the crisis, whereas Lloyd and Hicks (2021) explain how continual exposure to experiences and viewpoints of others can result in a state of saturation. Globally, thus, noise in the information obtained via personal communication appears to contribute to the "noisy" and saturated conditions that Lloyd and Hicks (2021) identify as determinant for the emergence of information literacy safeguarding practices during the pandemic. Future research should focus on noise and better define a notion which is well-known in information retrieval systems and less studied within people's global information practices.

4.4 Uncertainty, trust, and collaboration

Another finding of this research points to uncertainty as one result of different information practices, predisposing towards collaboration and trust, and accomplishing a function in coping through the crisis. While participants prove the effectiveness of prevention measures through their own and others' experiences, they also discover the great variability and unpredictability of individual responses to the Coronavirus infection. In this sense, the information acquired first-hand and from others, in situations of information dysfunctionalities due to conflicting information, information overload and disinformation, corroborates uncertainty of one result of information seeking. In addition, assuming uncertainty predisposes towards confidence in government and health authorities' recommendations, encouraging collaboration and trust. Confidence has been highlighted as a recurring emotion in citizen discourse on social media about governmental interventions during the pandemic (Ke *et al.*, 2021). In the present study, we propose confidence as the result of different information practices, including those aimed at taking advantage of one's own experience and personal communications, which make people aware of situational and (un)available knowledge, in a context of converging and diverging information sources. EK contributes to uncertainty also in Boardman's (2014) study, where it may provide valuable insights in genetically risky reproductive decisions, but also oppressing demands. In Zimmerman's (2021) longitudinal analysis of health information-seeking behavior, participants during the Covid-19 pandemic rated a smaller percentage of information sources as less credible compared to a previous identical survey (53,77% and 32,18% respectively). Though the author speaks of an increased use of highly credible sources, such result may also

support this research finding of a predisposition towards trust as a result of frustrated attempts at obtaining consistent, reassuring, and definitive information. A second function of uncertainty is that it helps accepting as tolerable certain situations that, at first, are considered transitory - though later extend for a long time. This research confirms Baxter and Braithwaite's (2009) idea that uncertainty allows to create meaning by interacting with others and supporting creating processes, such as coping. In (Chen, 2022) too, even if uncertainty accompanies negative affect in fibromyalgia patients' experiences, its integration and acceptance afford successful coping. Future research should consider how to integrate uncertainty in public health communications and information systems design, considering its function in supporting collaboration and coping.

4.5 Emotions and multimodality

Consistently with previous studies (Tandoc and Lee, 2020; Chivers *et al.*, 2020), the information acquired in personal communications, unlike the information obtained through broadcast media, produces reassuring emotional responses. This reassuring effect is not necessarily conveyed through words, since it can be tacit, even when interacting with people on street and collaborating in adjusting authorities' regulations to particular situations and places. In (Gibson, 2016) too, experiential tacit knowledge inspires hope in parents of children with Down syndrome, because it allows to envisage life in a family with a child with such disability. In previous studies, the reassuring effect of personal communications occurred also in communications on social media (Chivers *et al.*, 2020), whereas, here, the information obtained interacting on social media produces in many cases negative feelings, when participants experience situations of information overload and disinformation. The information acquired from broadcast and social media differs from information acquired in personal communications because of a higher "emotional load", using impactful multimodal content, especially images, and a polarized discourse, especially on social media, with an emphasis on negativity. It is also from the perspective of multimodality and emotional impact that Ma and Stahl (2017) describe anti-vaccination discourse on FaceBook as sentimental, insular, and discouraging debate. In this study, protective strategies against the emotional load of both mainstream and social media do not simply consist in information avoidance but include others such as limiting exposure time or reducing modality by choosing mono-modal media such as newspapers and the radio. In this sense, the connection between information overload and information avoidance, that in (Soroya *et al.*, 2021) is mediated by information anxiety and in Lloyd and Hicks (2021) emerges as a purposeful safeguarding strategy, can be

further enriched and described, pointing to multimodality, polarity and negativity as additional triggers of information overload.

4.6 Convergence and divergence

A further result of this research points to an EK collective and collaborative dimension, which enables individuals to engage with scientific knowledge and information from authorities in dynamics of convergence and divergence. The EK base that participants develop during the pandemic builds up by integrating different perspectives in the interaction of individuals with each other and with the environment. Ma and Stahl (2017) too use the expression of "collaborative experiential knowledge", referring to participants' reliance on "second-hand knowledge" shared by strangers in a FaceBook antivaccination group. In Oduntan and Ruthven's (2020) vision, such collective and collaborative dimension may be the result of a shared common situation in which individual experiences and contextual conditions produce common situational information needs. Because of this collective dimension, participants can position themselves against higher information systems in patterns of convergence and divergence. When they raise questions about the effectiveness of vaccines or when they remind the difficulties of developing effective drugs for other diseases, EK allows them to assume a critical stance towards science as the dominant epistemological position in today's society (Atkinson *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, Genuis (2012) uses the term of "posture" in sensemaking processes, differentiating an experiential and an analytical posture on health information. On the other hand, one's own experiences and those of others converge with data and statistics when stories of real people confer them veracity. In this sense, EK appears as voices and narratives, in opposition to scientific knowledge that looks for universal or generalizable patterns (Julian *et al.*, 2019). Both Fazey *et al.* (2006) and (Tengö *et al.*, 2014) defend EK cooperative role, because it complements scientific knowledge by providing an alternative perspective on quantified data, and fine-grained information about the interaction of local and macro phenomena. Such integration and cooperation emerged during the pandemic, when anosmia, that firstly appeared on social media as a common low-level symptom in patients' reports, was complemented with statistical evidence to be recognized as a typical Covid-19 symptom (Atkinson *et al.*, 2021). Shin and Shim (2019) label "thick knowledge", i.e., correct, comprehensive, and multidimensional knowledge, the knowledge produced by experts and lay people together about the use of complementing and alternative medicine. In this study, convergence of EK with official and mainstream media information produces "thick knowledge", i.e. knowledge

that participants perceive as multidimensional, real and solid, insofar as it results from convergence of multiple sources, counts on a veridical factual base, and is effective in practice.

A final implication of EK collective and collaborative dimension is that it complements information provided by authorities when it is not specific enough to make decisions on a day-to-day basis. In these cases, tacit or explicit negotiations with others allows to adjust the information to particular cases and situations, looking for compliance with rules and taking into account the specificities of the situation. Personal interaction as a space for negotiation and adjustment of health professionals' recommendations is a well-known fact in the literature on the search for information of cancer patients (Rubenstein, 2012) and natural disasters (Burke *et al.*, 2010). According to Moldovan-Johnson *et al.* (2014), turning to non-medical information sources (family, friends, and media) after medical consultations allows to complement, validate, or challenge medical information. In the context of the present research, personal interactions, as a space of information exchange, assist in cases when authorities' information is not specific enough, especially at the beginning of the crisis.

4.7 EK and LK as human information systems

Participants' perception of their environment appears characterized mainly by its human component, and only secondarily by urban or natural elements of the district, something that also emerges in studies carried out on IB and place (Gibson and Kaplan, 2017), and especially of immigrants' IB, where the informational capacity of people is measured based on their relationships (Oh and Butler, 2019). This scale of references can be interpreted as a scale of needs where the priorities are covered firstly by people (Oh and Butler, 2019). Such perception differs from perceptions of LK reported in Klenk *et al.* (2017), that, despite LK manifesting differently across time and place, tend to include the recognition and awareness of environmental changes and weather conditions. In the present research, the natural dimension of the environment has a marginal consideration in participants' accounts. The experiences of those spending part of the pandemic outside their usual location supports participants' perception of the dominant human component of the environment, because it is people, their behavior, attitudes, and social practice that produce a fracture, using Lloyd's expression (2017), more than the physical components of places. Cox and Fulton (2021) suggest that individuals and places should be seen as interwoven, being embedded in the context, and this study supports this integrative vision.

The importance of the human component of the environment is confirmed in numerous references to places that are described either as empty or crammed. In addition, places explicitly named in the interviews are mainly public or meeting places. Reports from hospitals or contacts working in healthcare that emerge in the interviews establish a connection between EK, acquired by healthcare workers, and LK – about what happens in hospitals. Similarly, Lupton and Lewis (2021) report on the high value placed on EK of people working in key sectors during the pandemic. This human connection through personal networks also allows many participants to discover the situation of the pandemic in culturally or geographically close countries that are neglected by broadcast media. In some way, reports from other locations (hospitals, nearby countries, etc.) exemplify Cox and Fulton's (2021) idea of places as actively constructed within social practices including IB. According to Pine *et al.* (2021) first-hand accounts from people on the frontline allowed participants in their study to realize the real risk of the crisis, whilst communications about what was happening in different locations provided cues about the nature and magnitude of risk. In this study, the ability of participants to connect with other people provided them with alternative information sources, which complemented, directly and realistically, information from authorities and mainstream media, affording thus a more complex look at the crisis.

Information exchange on street and in other public spaces is mainly tacit and relies on people's behavior and practice, in particular on whether they collaborate in respecting basic prevention measures (face mask and distance, especially) or refuse to do so. Likewise, this tacit information has strong emotional connotations, because it produces amazement or indignation, depending on whether others are observed collaborating in the implementation of prevention measures or not. As in personal communications, in public spaces people tacitly cooperate in adjusting prevention measures provided by the authorities to specific situations and contexts. According to (O'Donovan, 2021) the pandemic has put the focus on individual health heavily relying on others to minimize the risk of infection, what she calls interdependence, explaining the importance attached to this collaborative attitude.
During the different stages of the pandemic, from its beginning to the new normal, participants perceive people around them in public spaces according to different degrees of connectedness, and such perception evolves along the same dynamics as the active search for information. If the initial stage of the pandemic is characterized by great connectivity, either technology-mediated or not, during the transition to the new normal, participants perceive a loss of connectivity because greetings and small talks are often lost, while distancing

measures and the use of face masks inhibits the recognition of people on street. In this way, in the participants' stories, as the active search for information evolves from a stage of great intensity to more passive and low-intensity information practices, connectivity with others in public spaces follows the same pattern. Lloyd and Hicks (2021) describe such transition in terms of resistance to information as a safeguarding practice from the noisy environment of the initial stages of the pandemic. Gibson and Kaplan (2017), on the other hand, looking at the information practices of parents of children with disabilities, conclude that the local parent network is an information seeking system in which information deserts or gaps do not relate to broadband or ICTs access, but rather occur when people do not find information where they expect to find it. From this point of view, the loss of local connectivity perceived during the new normal stage may have created information droughts if not deserts, with unknown social consequences. In the research cited by Pearson *et al.* (2021), LK is considered to make communities more resilient to climate change and other challenges by supporting social cohesion. If information exchange keeps people connected and make them more resilient to crisis, future research should investigate information practices at the community level and situated in specific places, in order to understand the interplay of information practices and other social dimensions.

5. Conclusions

This research has explored EK and LK during the new normal of the Covid-19 pandemic. By conveying multiple and sometimes conflicting perspectives, both present certain degree of noise, contributing to the noisy information-overloaded climate of the pandemic. However, real personal experiences, either one's own or from other people, also reassure and position individuals to engage with scientific knowledge and information proceeding from authorities, in dynamics of convergence and divergence. When EK and LK converge with other information sources, they allow individuals to achieve "thick knowledge", i.e. multidimensional knowledge that they perceive as solid, real and multidimensional. In this sense, EK and LK appear as information circulating in a knowledge system in its own right, both explicitly and tacitly, and contributing to people's resilience practices during the health crisis. In addition, both make people conscious of their limitations, leading them to accept uncertainty, and inducing to trust and collaboration. Both deserve thus a higher consideration and should be given proper attention in research on crisis management and IB.

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