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# “Ethnic Media, Identity, and Community: A Case Study of the “Koleso” Newspaper”

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

“Ethnic Media, Identity, and Community: A Case Study of the “Koleso” Newspaper”

by

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A THESIS

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to identify community and identity based connections that the “Koleso” newspaper creates for its readership - the Calgary Russian-speaking community.

By applying a variety of different research methods such as content analysis of the “Koleso” newspaper, focus groups and an interview with the Editor-in-Chief, within the core and ethnic identity theoretical framework, I demonstrate that the “Koleso” creates for its readership connections in time and space and preserve elements of their multiple identities.

The subject of Canadian ethnic media in general and the Russian ethnic print media in Canada in particular remains not well-enough researched. This thesis, therefore, contributes to an overall study of ethnic media by providing a unique perspective on a particular Russian ethnic publication and its influence on building multiple identities and connections with the Russian-speaking audience in Calgary.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background**

The Russian-speaking community in Calgary accounts for more than 30, 000 people (liveincalgary.com). Often members of an ethnic group “may be viewed as having a common language, culture, religion, and/or history” (Karim, 2012, p.169). When it comes to the Russian-speaking community in Calgary this is not exactly the case as it comprises multiple ethnic groups that may or may not share all or some of these attributes.

There are at least three generations in the Calgary Russian-speaking community whose identities were largely formed by their life experiences in the former Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, people found themselves living in a whole range of newly independent countries.

Kolsto (1996) undertook the project to research ‘identities projectories’ for Russians in the newly independent countries specifically focusing on the changing identities of those Russians who used to live not in Russia but in other republics of the former Soviet Union as ethnic minorities. When the country disappeared from the world map in 1991, many Russians in those republics faced the need to start changing their identities to adapt to new circumstances while the Russian Federation, the country of their origin, showed “a large degree of indifference to the plight of their ethnic brethren outside Russia” (Kolsto, 1996, p.17).

Having immigrated to Canada, sometimes through third countries, as Wetherell et al. (2007) note, people became “diasporized across multiple social and psychic ‘borders” (p. 143) looking for security and a sense of belonging while getting used to a new culture. Hall (n.d.) suggests that the cultural identity acquired by people “is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists,



transcending place, time, history and culture” (p. 225). Canadian immigrants look for information from various sources, and ethnic publications occupy an important place in this process. Empirical research shows that ethnic media have a whole range of different functions that Canadian mainstream media cannot fulfill - from providing information about the new landscape to helping eliminate the social isolation of the community members and preserving their cultural heritage (Matsaganis et al., 2011; Deuze, 2006; Lin, 2006; Kunal, 2008).

When it comes to the Russian-speaking community in Calgary, it used to have two Russian-language newspapers the “Koleso” and “Zapadnaya Canada”. “Zapadnaya Canada” for reasons unknown to me ceased to exist, whereas the “Koleso” newspaper is still available. My decision to choose the “Koleso” newspaper as the main topic of my research was shaped by the following two factors:

Firstly, based on the background information provided at the beginning of this chapter and from my own experience I knew that Russians have complex identities. Although many of us share the same ‘collectivist spirit’ that was forcibly drilled into our minds during the Soviet Union times, for that exact reason we do not favour a community spirit in the sense it is known in Canada. I argue, therefore, that the Russian-speaking community in Calgary is largely atomized and functions as separate (fluid) groups. From my casual conversations with a few Russian shop-owners I learned that many Russian-speakers come to their stores to pick up a fresh issue of the “Koleso” from time to time, but the fact that some of them knew the delivery dates and came specifically to take that newspaper surprised me. As a researcher I got interested in knowing the reasons for such deliberate interest in this newspaper and the role it plays in the life of the Russian-speaking community in Calgary.

Secondly, while defining the research questions, I completed preliminary research and discovered that the subject of Canadian ethnic media remains not well-enough studied (Karim, 2012; Matsaganis et al., 2011) and any contributions made to this field are valuable.

Moreover, the fact that in January 2011 the Privy Council Office allocated \$463,300 to conclude a contract on ethnic media monitoring and from March 2009 to May 2012 Citizenship and Immigration Canada spent \$745,050 in order for the Government “to hear voices of immigrant communities” (The Canadian Press, 2012) served as evidence of the importance of ethnic media for governmental institutions and any further research associated with that topic.

## **1.2. Purpose of the Study**

According to the Calgary Multicultural Centre, ethnic media helps “to preserve the mother language and traditions the immigrants brought to Canada and to keep in touch with their country of origin” ([www.calgarymulti.com](http://www.calgarymulti.com)). In addition, the stories published in ethnic media should help “to capture the rich and diverse values, viewpoints and passages of the people in our communities” (National Ethnic Press and Media Council in Canada).

Numerous case studies of ethnic media consumption and production (Lee & Tse (1994); Lindgren (2011); Jurva & Jaya (2008); Yu & Murray (2007) demonstrate certain similarities between ethnic publications, especially when it comes to providing their sustainability when they are run as “business ventures” (Yu and Murray, 2007, p. 105). However, each of these ethnic publications is as unique as its target audience and is shaped by the collective identities of that particular community.

Based on that, the purpose of my study is to examine the role that the “Koleso” newspaper plays in the life of the Russian-speaking community by answering two questions:

- Does the “Koleso” newspaper help the Russian-speaking community in its ever changing identity-building journey and if so in what sense?
- Does the “Koleso” newspaper provide any connections for its readers and if so what are they?

I found myself to be in a good position to research these questions. Luttrell (2000) describes a ‘good enough’ researcher as a person who is aware that “she or he has personal stakes and investments in research relationships; who does not shy away from frustrations, anxieties, and disappointments that are part of any relationship; and who seeks to understand (and is able to appreciate) the difference between one’s self and another” (p.13). The fact that I neither considered myself to be an avid reader of the “Koleso” newspaper nor knew the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” prior to this research helped me to be unbiased in my conclusions. Because I share the same life experiences as my research participants, including frustrations, anxieties, and disappointments, I was able to both appreciate and understand in full their viewpoints.

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

To the best of my knowledge neither the Russian-speaking community in Calgary nor the Calgary Russian ethnic publications have been researched in the past.

I hope that my research will contribute to an overall study of ethnic media by providing a unique perspective on a particular Russian ethnic publication and its influence on building multiple identities and connections with the Russian-speaking audience in Calgary.

I also hope that this paper will lay the ground for future research of any kind that might be undertaken in regard to the Russian-speaking community in Calgary. In addition, this thesis

could be helpful to a wide range of actors from individuals to the government establishments and non-profit immigrant organizations who wish to understand the factors that influence ethnic media consumption and production and its role in immigrants' lives.

#### **1.4. Thesis Organization**

In order to answer the above mentioned research questions I applied a comprehensive approach by reviewing literature and theoretical perspectives, holding focus groups with readers of the “Koleso” newspaper, conducting qualitative content analysis of the newspaper, and interviewing Mr. Kolesnikov, its Editor-in-Chief to report and discuss the results. This thesis is organized accordingly.

In Chapter 2 I review literature pertaining to ethnic media consumption and production as well as theoretical implications. I provide an overview of the ethnic media landscape, definition of ethnic media, explain the differences between the Canadian ethnic and mainstream media (Matsaganis et al., 2011; Yu & Murray, 2007; Karim, 2012), and discuss the issue of ethnic identity and sense of belonging within the framework of Identity and Ethnic Identity Theories.

Ethnic media consumption or production is never a one-way street. It involves at least two sides – consumers and producers and their interaction leads to the results that suit (or not) both of these groups. In Chapter 3 I provide an overview of a number of different methods that have been used to ensure that all sides concerned made their contributions to the study. I held focus groups with 17 people, interviewed Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” newspaper and made a qualitative content analysis of 103 issues of the the “Koleso” newspaper from 2009 to 2012 inclusive.

In Chapter 4 I report the findings from focus groups, content analysis of the “Koleso” newspaper and the interview with its Editor-in-Chief. Every part of this research is important for the study as it adds another layer to understanding the role that the “Koleso” newspaper plays in the Russian-speaking community in Calgary and connections it provides for them.

Based on the series of facts discussed in this chapter, I argue that the “Koleso”, being the only Russian-speaking newspaper in Calgary, provides social connections within largely atomized Russian-speaking community and helps preserve elements of their multiple identities in connection to the past, the present and the future.

In the last, Fifth Chapter, I discuss this statement and answer the afore-mentioned research questions through a discussion of the results and their implications within the theoretical framework.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE AND A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

In this chapter I review literature pertaining to ethnic media and ethnic audience within the framework of Identity and Ethnic Identity Theories.

In the first section of this chapter I provide an overview of ethnic media as well as Canadian ethnic media landscape which the “Koleso” newspaper is a part of. Ethnic media in Canada do not exist and operate in isolation. Like any enterprise ethnic media have been regulated by a number of organizations and rely on people and funding to survive. I explain what government and non-profit institutions guide and coordinate ethnic media in Canada and offer different definitions of ethnic media developed by scholars within the specific Canadian context. Furthermore, explanations of the differences between the mainstream Canadian media and ethnic media are outlined to help understand what specific communication, cultural or informational gaps ethnic media help to cover for immigrants.

In some places across Canada the number of certain diasporas is soaring, thus generating strong competition between multiple ethnic publications serving them. In the same section I review what challenges ethnic media face in Canada that ultimately impact publishers, the quality and content of publications as well as the audience. By providing this information I create a bridge from overall expectations of ethnic media in Canada to the specific case of the “Koleso” newspaper and its role for the Russian-speaking Calgary community.

Ethnic media, as any media, exist because of the audience. Every ethnic group has a specific set of needs and expectations from their ethnic publications (Matsaganis et al., 2011) which are discussed in the section about ethnic audience. It is important to understand that an ethnic media audience is not homogeneous. I explain how an ethnic media audience is

categorized in Canada and what types of consuming practices it applies towards ethnic media. I show that ethnic media impact differently various generations of immigrants as their core and ethnic identities both change throughout the course of time. This information creates a foundation for understanding the feedback from the participants of my focus groups who being part of ethnic media share similar practices and expectations.

We change our practices or needs in media consumption under the influence of internal and external circumstances throughout the life-cycle. The participants in my research project are no exception to these changes. In the section about theoretical perspectives on our core and ethnic identities I demonstrate how these two types of identities correlate taking into account that each individual plays a set of ‘roles’ within the social domain. It will further support my argument that ethnic media in general and the “Koleso” newspaper in particular preserve elements of immigrants’ multiple identities and serve as an anchor and roadmap for immigrants’ connections to the past, the present and the future.

## **2.2. Ethnic media**

### *2.2.1. General Context*

Among the main goals of ethnic media existence Karim (2012) identifies cultural expressions of the groups, something that the mainstream media often cannot provide. Matsaganis et al. (2011) note that ethnic media are usually produced by an individual or a group of people from an immigrant community to help understand “what’s going on around them” (p.15). The authors state that ethnic media’s purpose is to inform, educate, and offer tips about “correct behaviours” (p.15) as well as share values with immigrants about their new

environment. They claim that in times of uncertainty or crises ethnic media can even turn into ‘teachers’ by providing support and guidance to the audience.

Ethnic media help preserve the native language and enable immigrants to keep in touch with their country of origin which is another vital feature offered exclusively by ethnic media. The stories published in ethnic media “...capture the rich and diverse values, viewpoints and passages of the people in our communities”, states the National Ethnic Press and Media Council in Canada ([www.nepmcc.ca](http://www.nepmcc.ca)). Talking from a broader perspective and keeping in mind that multicultural policies could vary between the countries, Browne (1996) focuses on ethnic media’s ability to (1) rescue the language; (2) increase immigrants’ self-esteem; (3) combat negative images; (4) influence through cohesiveness; (5) serve as a visual symbol of diversity; (6) be an outlet of creativity and (7) generate work places for immigrants.

On one hand, under-representation of ethnic minorities in the mainstream media causes antagonism between the mainstream and ethnic media and is deemed to encourage ethnic media to keep its autonomy (Yu & Murray, 2007; Ojo, 2006; Matsaganis et al., 2011). On the other hand, as Wilson and Gutierrez (1985) suggest, "in the absence of alternative portrayals and broadened coverage, one-sided portrayals and news articles could easily become the reality in the minds of the audience" (p.41-42).

Couldry and Curran (2003) state that media power is frequently associated with social conflict, and while it is important to focus on the mainstream media, other types of media, in particular ‘alternative media’, should be taken into consideration. Some of them, they argue, can challenge “at least implicitly, actual concentrations of media power, whatever form those concentrations may take in different locations” (p.6).



Resources, along with other factors, play a significant role in ensuring ethnic media sustainability. Marketing and advertising are an essential part of this process as often ethnic print media owes the fact of its very existence to both business avenues. Ahadi and Murray (2009), for instance, draw our attention to the fact that such companies as Telus started using ethnic media TV slots for advertising their company's services. If for large ethnic media enterprises collaboration with advertisers is an integral part of their businesses, the owners of small and medium enterprises have to acquire and practice good marketing skills to attract them. As practice shows, quite often they may have neither adequate skills nor resources to do even basic marketing research.

#### *2.2.2. Canadian Context*

Ethnic media in Canada continuously attract the attention of a variety of different circles from the government to non-profit organizations. Every year people from all over the world come to Canada bringing their skills, talents, hopes as well as elements of their cultural heritage and traditions while demonstrating a strong sense of belonging to Canada (Wong, 2008). Ethnic media are produced "by and for (a) immigrants, (b) racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, as well as (c) indigenous populations" (Matsaganis et al., 2011, p.6) to keep in touch with people's roots while settling down in Canada.

According to the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada (NEPMCC) ([www.nepmcc.ca](http://www.nepmcc.ca)) there are 400 ethnic newspapers in the country. These publications are read by more than 12 million people including a generation that was born in Canada, but wants to feel connected to its heritage ([nationalethnicpress.com](http://nationalethnicpress.com)).

The Government of Canada sees ethnic media as “a window into the problems and concerns of minority communities” (Cohen, 2012). In November 2012, while talking to the media about \$750,000 spent to monitor ethnic media, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney emphasized the importance the Canadian Government attaches to ethnic media:

“I have to say the most important reading I do in the morning is the ethnic media scan because frankly, very few other people in government are as focused on that...I’m picking up stories, issues, voices and perspectives there that are often not reflected in so-called mainstream media and I think it’s very valuable”(www.cbc.ca, 2012).

Literature suggests a few variations of how Canadian ethnic media are defined. Each of those variations brings a different perspective to understanding of the discourse. For example, Kozolanka et al. (2012) call ethnic media ‘alternative’ accentuating their role in “public debate, the construction of community, and social justice across a range of social dimensions” (p.2). Under an umbrella of ‘alternative media’ in Canada the authors put (1) French and English language publications that are reflections of obvious linguistic but also political and cultural differences; (2) Aboriginal media that among other issues touch upon challenges between native people and the Canadian state; (3) ethnic media that allow people to maintain their heritage connections and traditions while creating “cultural hybridity” and the “transcendence of borders” (p. 5). As for the specific Canadian context, Kozolanka et al. (2012) speak to the vast size of Canada with many different regions and communities, and the proximity of the United States that, from their viewpoint, impacts Canadian media and culture in general and ‘alternative media’ in particular.

A number of broadcasting institutions in Canada such as the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) as well as the National Ethnic Press and Media Council and Canadian ethnic media Association

define ethnic media as the “third-language”, implying a publication or broadcast that is produced in any language other than English, French or Canadian Aboriginal (Yu and Murray, 2007; Fletcher, 1998; Geissler and Pottker, 2009).

Canada’s Broadcasting Act, most recently amended in 1991, calls for the media to “reflect the circumstances and aspirations, of Canadian men, women and children, including equal rights, linguistic duality and the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society, and the special place of Aboriginals within that society” (Justice Law Website). However, in spite of this law Mahtani (2001) says that ethnic minorities are either misrepresented or under-represented in the Canadian mainstream media, particularly in press, radio and television. Sometimes, we tend to forget that “the mainstream includes the ethnic majority in the society” but of course “the boundaries of mainstream society are broader” (cited in Matsaganis et al., p.10).

Describing the ethnic mediascape in Canada, Karim (2012) indicates that newspapers are the most common type of Canadian ethnic media. Clearly, newspapers across the country differ in quality, appearance, advertising and life-span subject to funding, the target audience, business acumen and professionalism of those who make them.

In the environment of tough competition among all types of ethnic media, sustainability proves to be an extremely important issue for all producers. Huston (2012) identifies two categories of ethnic media as business enterprises in Canada. Small to medium ventures are run by individuals or families. Large enterprises, on a higher scale, “demonstrate strong economic capability, competence and strength to identify and capitalize on new markets, services and opportunities to identify, capture and hold their major audiences” (Huston, 2012, p.4). For Kozolanka et al. (2012) the media capability and sustainability of Canadian ethnic media mean

the availability of resources and the ability to hire staff; the capacity to purchase new technologies and means of media production and distribution; the ability to “develop audiences” (p. 27).

Recently some promising ethnic media business development opportunities started emerging in Canada. Yu and Murray (2007) describe the examples of cooperation between the mainstream media and ethnic media in Vancouver. During the last federal election Channel M and CTV News as well as Ming Pao (a newspaper of the Chinese community in Vancouver) formed “a co-venture with CanWest’s *Vancouver Sun*” and “*Canada Express* launched a Korean-language publication translating CanWest's news feeds” (Murray et al., 2007, p.19).

In order for Canadian ethnic media to continue to thrive, obtaining stable funding through diverse opportunities is fundamental, especially for the owners of small and medium size media enterprises such as the Calgary-based Russian-language “Koleso” newspaper. The above-mentioned examples could be just a few of the channels to help secure the existence and continuous development of ethnic media in Canada.

### **2.3. Ethnic media audience**

The dynamics between ethnic minorities, community, media producers and policy makers as well as the role the media play in a multicultural and multilingual society has been studied at least since 1980s (Devroe, 2004). Nevertheless, as of today, studies of ethnic media audience “remain a rarity” (Cottle, 2000, p. 23). Cottle explains it by academic inertia which “conspired to ignore what ethnic minorities themselves might think, want or say about media representations, the media’s involvement in their everyday lives, or their media hopes for the future” (p. 24). Thankfully, this situation is gradually changing (Cottle, 2000, Matsaganis et al.,

2011). Cottle (2000) explains that firstly, due to globalization, the number of foreign workers with a specific set of skills that are brought into the country by corporations is growing, and so are their media requirements. Secondly, the concept of multiculturalism, practically applied by a corporate world, encourages the major media players to occasionally fund research of the ethnic media audience, again, to ensure that their requirements are met.

Ethnic media are produced for a particular community, usually by the representatives of the same community, taking into consideration the audience's interests, needs and requirements (Matsaganis et al., 2011, Browne, 2005). Matsaganis et al. (2011) break the ethnic media audiences into the following categories: (1) an ethnic community living within a certain geographic area, be it a city or a neighbourhood; (2) people who may be of different origins but from the same country and, therefore, would share a range of similar cultural characteristics, for example language; (3) the ethnic community living within one or different countries; (4) the host country; (5) ethnic minorities outside of the home country and ethnic minorities living inside the home country. The relationships between Canadian ethnic media and their audience, from Huston's (2012) perspective, are multidimensional. The author expands a circle of ethnic media audience by including:

- Canadian local communities
- Canadian regional and national communities
- International communities
- The mainstream media
- Government and community service agencies
- National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada
- Affiliate/parent media
- Wire services (news agencies), the Internet and social media

A successful collaboration and engagement between the audience and ‘alternative media’ is no longer facilitated by non-profit organizations only (Douze, 2006). Balnaves et al. (2004) note that the shift towards a more participatory role of the audience and media professionals is an example of “new humanism in the domains of public relations, journalism and advertising” (p. 192). It occurs because, as Couldry (2004) proposes, the audience develops and introduces its own practices. However, practice for Couldry (2004) is a framework within which a set of other practices reigns including, for instance, the practice of “media consumption”, the practice of “avoiding or selecting out” and the practice of “media inputs” (p. 120).

Considering the ethnic media audience within the realm of generations, Douze (2006) explains those practices and the reasons why the ethnic media audience uses them in the following way: the first and second generation immigrants use ethnic media mainly to obtain general information about their countries. The third generation may use ethnic media “to enable dialogue with parents and grandparents” (Douze, 2006, p. 273). The fourth generation may be interested in reading ethnic media to “search for roots” (Douze, 2006, p.273). But at the same time, as Huston (2012) suggests, it “may not include a profound understanding of the beliefs, norms and traditions of an ethnic background or fluency in a third language” (p.15). Douze argues that an approach to viewing the ethnic media audience from the generational perspective can explain both the growth and popularity of ethnic media.

There are limited studies available to show the impact of ethnic media on the audience. Mostly, the attention is being given to reflections of ethnic minorities in the mainstream media (Brown, 2011; Mahtani, 2001; Krishnan, 1998) or marketing and advertising efforts of ethnic media producers (Green, 1999; Tangate, 2004; Considine, 2003; Murray, 2002; Huston, 2002). Cottle (2000) indirectly touches upon impacts that ethnic media have on the audience by

suggesting that “the members of the media audience are variously invited to construct a sense of who ‘we’ are in relation to who ‘we’ are not, whether as ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’, ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’, ‘citizen’ and ‘foreigner’, ‘normal’ and ‘deviant’, ‘friend’ and ‘foe’, ‘the west’ and ‘the rest’.” (p.2) Construction of this sense leads to acquiring a sense of belonging that newcomers strive to obtain.

Another factor impacting the composition of the ethnic media audience may appear at a first glance bewildering. Immigration policies and procedures in Canada change from time to time bringing forward new requirements not only in terms of skills but also in terms of age groups (Mahtani, 2008). Taking into consideration the number of immigrants coming to Canada, these new requirements turn into the major factors influencing the Canadian demographic profile which makes “gatekeepers realize that media audiences are no longer monolithic” (Mahtani, 2008, p. 640). On the other hand, due to globalization, the ethnic media audience has access not only to traditional media tools such as newspapers, magazines, radio or television, but also to the Internet or satellite television (Gillespie and Cheesman, 2002; Srebreny, 2005). Karim (2012) specifically points out that within a highly-regulated broadcasting environment Internet-based media plays a more and more important role in the lives of the ethnic media audience. As Deuze (2006) puts it: “People have always ‘become the media’, but it is through the lens of increased visibility of minorities and their media in the Western world and the proliferation of internet use that this praxis reached a stage up close and personal to observers of media and society” (p. 275).

Karim (2012) suggests that ethnic media operate on multiple levels, thus creating a multifaceted picture of ethnic media and their relationships with the audience. Ethnic media, according to him, “occupy a diverse universe that offers a broad range of content” with the main goal to satisfy the informational cravings of their audiences (p. 181).

Hall (2006) represents the exchange of meaning between the media and the audience as a process of “production, circulation, distribution /consumption” (p. 163) - a dynamic circuit. When it comes to the participation of the ethnic media audience in the production of ethnic media as well as the use of ethnic media by the audience, Devroe (2004) suggests that there is a close connection between the process of an immigrant’s adaptation and media representation of ethnic minorities. Taking the process of creating meaning by television as an example, Hall (2006) describes the process of agenda-setting as part of the production process. Also, during the production process, an imaginary corporation pools together topics, agendas, “images of the audience” within a wider “socio-cultural and political structure of which they are a differentiated part” (Hall, 2006 p. 164-165).

In this sense I argue that the owner of any ethnic media publication, be it a newspaper or a magazine, be it one person or a few, is responsible for shaping and controlling not only the production process but also the content to ensure that “appropriate sensitivity when dealing with cultural, racial and heritage issues” is exercised (Murray et al., 2007, p.44)

#### **2.4. The Theoretical Framework: Core and Ethnic Identities**

An approach to the notion of ethnic identity is based on “symbolic interactionism and identity theory” (Stryker 1980; cited in Phinney, 1990, p. 501). Our identity is “fluid” (Khan, 2007, p.42) and can be referred to as “how someone identifies and defines oneself in relation to others” (Parekh, 2007, p.132).

Stryker and Burke (2000) note that identity theory has been gradually evolving with many scholars contributing to its evolvement. Stryker, for example, tested the formula that came as the result of George Mead’s study of the society and self: “Society shapes self shapes social



behaviour" (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 285) to conclude that a society is not homogeneous as it encompasses different social and professional groups, associations, organizations. Individuals also belong to different groups and associations and if people want to enter a new association or expand their social boundaries, their decision almost certainly will be influenced by larger social structures within which those associations and groups co-exist.

Stryker and Burke (2000) advanced identity theory in two directions. The first direction developed by Stryker is rooted in "structural symbolic interactionism" (p.285) with an aim to exploring the relationship between self and social structures. Stryker studied how our self influences our social behaviour and how social environment affects self. Burke with his colleagues concentrated on the second direction, researching the self-defining work that we do internally outside of social context. In identity theory usage, within the social domain we form relationships in which we play different social roles. Those roles, argue Stryker and Burke (2000) "are seen as expectations attached to positions occupied in networks of relationships" (p.286). The theory assumed that "the salience of an identity reflected commitment to the role relationships requiring that identity" (p.286). We cannot build any relationships in isolation. We have to be in a social environment in order to assume social roles either as part of our identity, whether ethnic or otherwise.

Ethnic identity theory has also been largely impacted by a social component of an individual's identity. French et al. (2006) suggest that within ethnic identity theory co-exist various ethnic identity models that reflect the nature of our society comprising people of different ethnicities. Phinney (1990) was the first scholar to introduce a model that can be applied to all types of ethnicities. Ethnic identity and sense of belonging is understood and explicated by individuals and groups in a variety of different ways. Those understandings are

usually based on an individual's experiences and identity perspectives. Phinney suggests three stages in the individual's exploration of his or her identity: unexamined ethnic identity (when an individual has neither positive nor negative perception of his/her ethnic group), ethnic identity exploration (when the individual is at the beginning of understanding of their belonging to a certain ethnic group) and achieved ethnic identity (when the individual has clarity about their belonging to an ethnic group).

According to Pendakur and Pendakur (n.d.) identity "as a social concept is a person's belief that he or she belongs to a social group, such as an extended family, a tribe, a nation, a religious, ethnic or linguistic minority" (p.2). Ethnic identity, note the authors, gives the right to an individual to belong to a certain culture while sharing the same cultural and physical characteristics such as language or skin colour.

The theoretical debates around ethnic identity are based on reviewing how ethnic identity contributes to the self (our identity) and why people defend it when they feel threatened (Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2012). Providing their theoretical perspective, Jaspal and Cinnerella (2012) argue that "the structure of identity should be conceptualized in terms of its content and value/ affect dimensions and that this structure is regulated by two universal processes, namely the assimilation–accommodation process and the evaluation process" (p. 505). During the assimilation–accommodation process, according to the authors, we adjust new information to our identity. During the evaluation process we evaluate information and how it impacts our identity structure and self-identification.

Jurva and Jaya (2008) as well as Huston (2012) consider self-identification as a sense of belonging to a certain group sharing the same social and cultural characteristics, thus creating a foundation for ethnic identity. "Ethnic identity is not constructed in a vacuum", add Merino and

Tileaga (2011). The authors point out that it is important to understand such social categories as ‘us’ and ‘them’ within the framework of intercultural and interethnic relationships as well as how the members of ethnic minorities construct their identities and most importantly use them.

Walters et al. (2006) who studied different factors influencing the assimilation and integration of immigrants in Canada and how they construct and display their ethnic identities through those processes, point out that the areas of employment, social and residential assimilation received much more attention than studying the factors that influenced construction of their “ethno-cultural identities” (Walters et al, p.3). While the literature suggests (Alba & Nee, 1997; Fong & Ooka, 2002) that economic factors play an important role in building relationships between constructing ethnic identity and assimilation, Walters et al. (2006) argue that economic integration does not contribute to much extent to constructing ethnic identities. Rather, such socio-cultural factors as language, religion, and the number of friends sharing the same ethnic identity play “a significant role in determining whether immigrants adopt the identity of their host society” (Walters et al., 2006, p.20).

Phinney et al. (2001) took ethnic identity theory as a basis to research the psychological impacts that immigration has on people and how it affects their sense of well-being and belonging. In the course of the study Phinney and her associates came up with more acculturation models within a theoretical framework. In particular, they talked about integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization showing that the process of acculturation is complex and that ethnic identity may evolve over the period of time as it depends on the social interaction that people have with the members of their ethnic community or families.

Martin and Nakayma (2007b) also consider socio-cultural characteristics to be the main dimensions of ethnic identity and sense of belonging. In particular, they emphasize the

importance of the following factors for both concepts which, from their perspective, reinforce each other:

- Cognitive dimension, when traditions, customs and values are shared within an ethnic group as part of common cultural heritage;
- Behavioural dimension, when the above knowledge of traditions, customs and values gets expressed via behaviour; and
- Affective dimension, when an individual has a sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group, sharing its history as well as traditions, customs and values.

Within the body of identity theory scholars came up with and described what I call ‘collective’ types of identities. For instance, Martin and Nakayama (2007b) draw our attention to such phenomena as “conglomerate” identities (Laitin, 1998, p. 31) which are formed when an ethnic group shares similar cultural experiences with a mainstream population in a particular country, for example Asian-American. The authors argue that the fact of acquiring a conglomerate identity affects the types of media ethnic minorities choose to consume.

In order to identify the importance of socio-cultural characteristics and ethnicity to ethnic identity, Frideres and Goldenberg (1982) analyzed eleven research projects mainly in Western Canada that focused specifically on the subject of ethnic identity within the Canadian context. The starting point for their analysis was the policy of the federal government to preserve Canadian identity to:

- Promote multiculturalism and cultural diversification through support to cultural groups in Canada in their development;
- Support those cultural groups in overcoming cultural barriers that they face in their integration to community; and
- Promote interchange between different cultural groups “as part of national unity” (Frideres and Goldenberg, 1982, p. 138).

Talking about the social cultural structure of an identity, with reference to Devos and Romanucci-Ross’s (1975) model, Frideres and Goldenberg specifically point out that individuals

may find connecting with their past, the present, or the future. They say: “The fact that someone has affiliations with, or belongs to a particular ancestry or origin reflects a past orientation. Ethnic and family identity are examples of such a past orientation” (p. 145).

A notion of multiple identities within identity theory framework was further developed by Burke and Stets (1999). They argue that each of us can display three types of identities: core identity (our self), role identity and social identity which functions on two different levels – primary and moral. However, our aptitude to ‘control’ how we display our multiple identities in a variety of different situations depends on our cognitive abilities which can be limited. The process of how our identity changes through a life-cycle has been at the centre of many identity theorists.

For instance, Erikson suggested that at each stage of the life-cycle we face different identity issues (Erikson, 1959). He identifies eight stages of our identity formation from infancy to old age. At each stage our identities are impacted by the social environment we live in. If we cope at each stage well, then we move to the next stage with virtue. If not, we carry on the luggage of accumulated issues that restrict our involvement.

Life-cycle needs for newcomers, once they have found themselves in a new sociocultural environment in Canada, also go through sociocultural changes. This process inevitably affects their identities and a sense of belonging that they try to acquire or maintain. As Bauman (2011) suggests, “One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure where one belongs” (p.18). In fact, it is common for people to hold multiple identities during different parts of an individual’s life, and “the way an individual defines and relates his identities is the result of complex interplay between his self-understanding and the manner in which they are treated by a wider society” (Parekh, 2007, p.134).

Ethnicity becomes salient when individuals move into the less secure world or if they move between their life-cycle stages (French et al., 2006). Ethnicity and ethnic identity, however, are not two sides of the same coin. In Canada, for example, the concept of race is based on “genetically determined features” such as skin color (Matsaganis, 2011, p. 13). As opposed to our ethnicity (language, history, religion etc.) which might be pre-determined, ethnic identity is something that we construct ourselves (Matsaganis, 2011). As Cottle (2000) suggests “in academic discourse, as in wider society, contending definitions of ‘race’, ‘racism’ and ‘ethnicity’ – to name but a few of the key terms with which we must grapple – currently struggle for theoretical and political recognition” (p.1).

Huston (2012) explains that in Canada the concept of ethnicity is constantly shifting. As an example, the author mentions a Canadian youth who may self-identify as being ethnic but “her/his ‘pop culture’ enculturation may not include a profound understanding of the beliefs, norms and traditions of an ethnic background or fluency in a third language” (p.15). In addition, Huston refers to children with mixed ethnicity who may choose to identify themselves with only one background and “have strong feeling of belonging” (p.15) to a particular ethnic group without necessarily accepting its cultural affiliations.

In understanding the changes in ethnic identity and belongingness to a particular community, Phiney et al. (2001) offer the following concept:

“One who has a strong ethnic identity but does not identify with the new culture has a separated identity, whereas one who gives up an ethnic identity and identifies only with the new culture has an assimilated identity. The individual who identifies with neither has a marginalized identity” (p. 496).

In addition, the authors suggest that subsequent generations of immigrants may experience a different sense of belongingness and connection with their past and present cultures,

traditions and values. In fact, as Huston (2012) argues many international students and families who found themselves to be away from their homes find a sense of belonging to community “through Canadian third language media” (p. 20). In other words, ethnic community newspapers are “constructing a dual sense of belonging: place-oriented belonging and people-oriented belonging” (Murray et al., 2007, p.30).

## **2.5. Summary**

In this chapter I discussed Canadian ethnic media landscape, the ethnic media audience as well as theoretical perspectives on identities and ethnic identities which are associated with both media and the audience.

As we can see from this review of theoretical perspectives, not only theories but the very notions of identity and ethnic identity are not set in stone. They keep gradually shifting and evolving in parallel with changes of dynamics in the society, new social norms, the roles and relationships they entail. Alexander (2007) suggests that for a long time identity was viewed as “internal and psychologically-driven” (p. 123) within social and cultural boundaries such as gender, class, race, language, social and other types of communities. However, increasingly academic definitions of ethnic identity started moving towards a more open approach within community cohesion when choice and lifestyle are also taken into consideration as “multiple forms of identification” (p.123).

From Wetherell’s (2009) perspective, research on identity is changing from “stasis ... the fixed traits and determining and unchanging essences” to defining “what a sense of identity allows and encourages and what follows from it rather than how it is formed and how it got to be as it is” (p. 2). Similar to identity, ethnic identity and the associated issues of self-definition “are

not given, finished, accomplished, once and for all time” (Wetherell, 2009, p. 4) and no longer is ethnic identity being seen and studied as a fixed object, “something that is simply given” (Merino and Tileaga, 2011, p.87).

The questions of inter-relations between ethnic media, the audience and their identities have been in the centre of the academic debates for a long time, and certainly will continue to remain acclaimed by the society in a foreseeable future. Information outlined in this chapter supports my statement that ethnic media, ethnic audience and notions of core and ethnic identities have multiple ties and influence each other.



## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The goal of my research was to define the role that the “Koleso” newspaper plays in the life of the Russian-speaking community in Calgary and determine how the “Koleso” newspaper helps the Russian-speaking community in its ever changing identity-building journey and if it provides any connections for its readers and if so what they are.

I decided to exercise a multi-level approach in my research in order to cover every possible angle of the research topic. As a result, a variety of different methods within a broader qualitative framework have been applied. I held four focus groups with the readers of the “Koleso” newspaper, interviewed Mr. Kolesnikov, the newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief and analyzed the “Koleso” newspaper content over four years from 2009 to 2012 inclusive. For each of these research segments I had different objectives in mind.

By conducting focus groups I wanted to obtain first-hand information not only about the newspaper content in general, but to get to know and understand the audience’s perceptions while they were ‘decoding’ (Hall, 2006) the newspaper’s content. In addition, the readers of the “Koleso” newspaper were invited to reflect on their perceptions of the content and identify to which parts of their lives it belonged and how and if it had impacted their identities.

I conducted the interview with Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” newspaper, to shed light on the content production and understanding of the audience gratifications that the Editor-in-Chief, as the only person managing the newspaper, has in mind.

Content analysis of the “Koleso” newspaper was aimed at defining the common themes in relation to time, space and needs involving both the readers’ perceptions and contributions to the Editor-in-Chief’s line of sight.

I combined the following three methods of analysis while conducting the research: Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Qualitative Thematic Analysis and Qualitative Analysis. Each of these methods will be discussed in relation to different research aspects further down the chapter. In addition, I will explain in more detail the design and planning procedures for each of the above-mentioned research streams.

### **3.2. The “Koleso” Newspaper Content Analysis**

I picked up the “Koleso” newspaper when a few years ago I visited one of the Russian food stores in Calgary and since then I have read it a few times when I happened to see it in the store. Therefore, when I started working on the study, it was important for me to get acquainted with its content in order to be able to write about it. In addition, I was guided by the following goals in this part of research:

- Identify the main clusters of themes so as to understand what connections they provide for the audience and in what sense they impact their identities;
- Determine how the written content, therefore the themes, have changed over time and what caused those changes.

In order to achieve the above goals, I wanted to analyze the newspaper’s content in its dynamic evolution, over a period of time. As a result, I decided to analyze the “Koleso” newspaper for the period of four years, starting from 2009 when the newspaper was established, to 2012 inclusive, 103 issues in total. I started initial analysis by simply scanning through every issue and when I reached the newspaper dated 2012, I had a good general understanding of how textual and visual content of the “Koleso” newspaper had been changing over four years. My

next step was to carefully scrutinize all articles from the very first issue in 2009 to start defining themes, coding them accordingly, noting changes in the content and analyzing them.

### *3.2.1. Defining the Themes, Coding and Analysis*

Gould and Company (2004) suggest classifying newspaper content by opinions, news and feature stories. Opinions refer to such items as letters to the editor, editorials or columns. News, from their perspective, is “straightforward articles which report on the latest events in the world” (p. 5) and feature stories are “more in-depth pieces, sometimes lighter pieces, and often profile stories” (p. 5). All these pieces are present in the “Koleso” newspaper along with advertising, memoirs, travel notes and interviews. When I was doing my own classification, I also linked them to time, place, space and theme clusters. In addition, I paid attention to the location of these items in the newspaper and what type of information was accompanied by the images or introductions.

I used the method of Qualitative Thematic Analysis in this part of the research. Qualitative Thematic Analysis similar to Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which I used to analyse focus groups, is aimed at creating theme clusters, but while IPA is based on people’s personal experiences, Qualitative Thematic Analysis deals with the text and images which are identified through coding (Seale, 2004).

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that this method is used for “identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organizes and describes your data in (rich) detail.” (p.6). Themes, according to these scholars, “capture something important to the data in relation to the research question and represent some level of patterned response or

meaning within the data set” (p.82). I followed six steps identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) to conduct Thematic Analysis as follows:

1. Get know the data
2. Come up with initial codes
3. Start looking for themes
4. Review themes
5. Define and name themes
6. Write about the findings

I combined the first two steps within one exercise as I found this approach to be more time-wise and result-oriented. Upon completion I came up with three overarching themes – Settling Down in Canada, Connections and Advertising. As I progressed with content analysis, I started coding the stories not only in relation to the themes, but also by their affiliation to time, place and space and potential impact on self and ethnic identity of the readers.

To ensure the validity of Thematic Analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend linking it to the theoretical approach that an overall analysis is based on, but also to review again the data to ensure that the themes accurately reflect the content as a whole. Keeping their advice in mind not “to get over-enthusiastic with endless re-coding” (p.21), I re-considered my themes against the overall content at least twice prior to proceeding with writing about the results.

### **3.3. Focus Groups**

Immigrants from different age groups, cultural and educational backgrounds display diverse preferences in terms of ethnic media consumption. These preferences depend not only on gender, class, race and “other identity markers” as Mahtani (2008, p. 642) suggests but also on time, space and audience needs. For some immigrants an ethnic community newspaper is a

source of education, information or entertainment. For others it is a means of keeping a connection to the host country, and to preserve identity and cultural heritage.

Sharing a common social and cultural background with my audience, I understand their traits and attitudes. For instance, I knew that due to political and social fatigue from their past living experience in the former USSR and then in the Commonwealth of Independent States, potential respondents could have been hesitant to participate in my focus groups. Therefore, I wanted to ensure that the focus group advertisement was as informative as possible to attract potential respondents. I did not offer substantial incentives apart from a free cup of tea or coffee, relying on those prospective participants who would be willing to make a meaningful contribution to the topic of ethnic media consumption by the Russian language speaking community in Calgary, a subject that has not been researched before.

### *3.3.1. Recruitment Process*

The advertisement was written in a friendly manner using plain Russian language with no academic jargon. For instance, the expression ‘focus groups’ was replaced with a phrase more appealing to the Russian-speaking audience, ‘group-setting friendly discussions’.

Firstly, the term ‘focus group’ was not in particularly wide use in the former USSR. Secondly, the term cannot be meaningfully translated into Russian, it can only be transliterated. As such, it sounds formal and the Russian-speaking audience from the former USSR, especially seniors, could have been discouraged to take part in the research. The advertisement was prominently displayed on one of the first pages of the “Koleso” under the title “University of Calgary invites you to take part in research”. Taking into consideration that the “Koleso” is distributed in more than 35 locations across Calgary, I expected to receive a reasonable amount

of responses from the readers. In more than a month after the ad had been published I received none.

From the beginning, along with the placement of the advertisement in the “Koleso”, I spread word of mouth among my colleagues and friends about the research and focus groups. Through snowballing I managed to generate a fair amount of interest and successfully recruited 17 people to take part in four focus groups.

It is well-known that the snowball method permits limited control over such factors as demographics, or educational or cultural background of respondents (Crossman, n.d.). However, sometimes it is the only method for recruiting participants, and it worked well in my case. I ended up having a good mixture of respondents belonging to different age groups, educational and professional backgrounds and time spent in Canada.

The Soviet Union, the country of origin of my respondents, was a multi-national state. It comprised 182 nationalities speaking 149 languages and dialects ([www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org)). I managed to achieve a good representation of different nationalities in my focus groups, people from Ukraine, Central Asia, Belarus and different parts of Russia.

According to Streeton et al. (2004), a snowballing technique allows researchers to reach “the hidden or hard-to-reach” (p.42) audience segments that otherwise could be challenging to reach. One particular group of respondents was recommended by Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso”. A group of seniors from one of the Jewish community complexes brought their distinctive perspective into the research speaking not only for themselves, but also for their children, grand-children and even great grand-children.

The term a “Russian-speaking respondent” that I use in this paper does not necessarily imply that a respondent was a Russian by descent. It implies exactly what the term says - my

respondent spoke Russian which may have been or not his or her native language. In the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet space, the Russian language served and continues to be a linguistic and cultural link between people of multiple nationalities.

### *3.3.2. Focus Groups' Profiles*

Owing to the fact that each of my focus groups comprised people from different paths of life and of a variety of different ethnic identities, each group described in this section brought their unique perceptions to the study.

#### *Group # 1*

The first group comprised a family of three people of Ukrainian origin, all females. All three participants have been living in Canada for different time lengths. Two employed participants belong to the age group of 25-44 and one retired respondent was 45-64 years old. As the native language for my respondents was Ukrainian, they spoke Ukrainian among themselves and used Russian in communication with me. One member of the family reads the “Koleso” occasionally and two read it on a constant basis or as they put it, ‘religiously’. Some focus group members, not all, speak English and use Internet.

#### *Group # 2*

All five participants of this group were female, 65+, pensioners, living in one of the complexes for Jewish seniors. The participants have grandchildren and great-grandchildren born in Canada. All the women are passionate readers of the “Koleso” newspaper and some of them contribute to the newspaper on a regular basis. They have limited English language skills and Internet abilities. All respondents knew each other well.

### *Group # 3*

There were five people in this group, four females and one male, all with IT background, employed, 25-44 years of age, fluent in English and Russian. People came to Canada from the former USSR, some from Belarus which was a part of the former USSR, some from different regions of Russia. As IT specialists, the members of this group considered all aspects of their readership including the “Koleso” through a digital prism. They were comfortable using computer language while describing their readership experiences and making suggestions on how the newspaper the “Koleso” could be made friendlier for users of mobile devices. The respondents have been in Canada for 6-10 years. All respondents were familiar with each other.

### *Group # 4*

There were four participants in this group: three males and one female, 25-44 years of age. Respondents came to Canada from different parts of the former USSR including Central Asian republics and Russia. One participant has arrived to Canada recently and three have been in Canada for 5-10 years. All respondents spoke Russian (some as their second language) and English, some fluent and some basic. They read the “Koleso” occasionally, and were able to elaborate on the content. Only two people from this group knew each other prior to the focus group meeting.

### *3.3.3. Data Collection, Coding and Analysis*

I met with my respondents in private houses and cafes. In all cases I was asked to provide a list of questions in advance because people wanted to ‘get prepared’ and ‘gather some thoughts’. A few days prior to each focus group, I sent by email a list of questions and a consent form which was translated into Russian and described in detail all aspects of the research. In one



case, when my respondents had limited access to Internet, I spent a considerable amount of time at the beginning of the focus group answering questions pertaining to the consent form (Appendix B) and the research.

I had five questions in total (see Appendix D) and the participants were not required to do any special preparations or readings as the questions were related to their personal experiences. All respondents, including those who read the “Koleso” sporadically, demonstrated a good knowledge of the newspaper’s content. They were able to refer to articles, stories and advertising from the “Koleso” to different stages of their lives in Canada and to articulate how their needs have been changing throughout their being in Canada. Even when some respondents could not have associated the content of the newspaper with them personally without being prompted, they drew on experience of their families, friends and colleagues to provide a reply.

Being fluent in Russian and English myself, I noticed that those respondents, who were fluent in English and had been in Canada for a while, peppered their speech with English words and idioms.

After transcribing the tapes, I translated all texts into English and added side notes and behaviour observations. In order to analyze my qualitative data I used the method of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which allows the researcher to dwell on people’s personal experiences “as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself” (Smith and Osborn, 2007, p.53). Fade (2004) suggests using two ways to make notes while doing IPA– in a margin and in the text. I used the second option. I ended up with having clusters of information divided by themes and in relation to time, space and people’s experiences and needs.

The goal of this part of my research was to determine types of connections that the “Koleso” newspaper provides for the Russian-speaking diaspora in Calgary, how the content of the newspaper may have impacted the readers’ identities and which ones - from the past, the present or the future. In the result of coding the following common themes were identified:

- Time and Space Connections
- Cultural Heritage
  - The Russian Language
  - Holidays/Community Events
- Advertising/Marketing

Each of these themes will further be elaborated in the Findings Chapter.

### **3.4. Interview with the “Koleso” Newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief**

The “Koleso” newspaper is owned and managed by Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief. It was important to interview Mr. Kolesnikov not only because he had founded the “Koleso”, but also because his vision and efforts directly impact the content, determine the development trends for his publication and shape connections with the audience.

I prepared a list of 13 open-ended questions (Appendix C) covering the above-mentioned aspects. The goal for this part of research was to understand motivations behind the “Koleso” launch, where the content comes from, how connections with the readers are maintained, how their needs are determined and met, and how and if Mr. Kolesnikov through his newspaper provides connections for the audience.

I contacted Mr. Kolesnikov by e-mail, explained the goals and objectives of my research, and outlined the benefits for participating. I attached to my e-mail the questions and the consent form that were specifically designed for the Editor-in-Chief (Appendix A).

As the name of the Editor-in-Chief is indicated in every issue of the “Koleso” newspaper it would have been difficult to ensure anonymity for Mr. Kolesnikov, and this fact was reflected in the consent form.

Mr. Kolesnikov contacted me the next day and agreed to be interviewed. It was semi-structured interview that lasted for almost two hours. The Editor-in-Chief provided candid replies to all questions with plenty of reflections and examples from personal experiences and some acute observations of the Russian-speaking community development in Calgary.

#### *3.4.1. Interview Analysis and Coding*

As the interview was recorded on a voice recorder, I had to transcribe it and then translate into English. Although the questions to the Editor-in-Chief corresponded with those intended for the focus groups, my primary goal was not only to detect the similarities, but to capture and incorporate appropriately important analytical and psychological reflections of the Editor-in-Chief which explained the choices he made while choosing the content and building his relations and that of his newspaper with the audience.

When answering each question Mr. Kolesnikov was covering many other associated or personal topics, sometimes leaping ahead of my questions. I encouraged such an approach which yielded many interesting observations that were subsequently included in the Findings Chapter. By using the method of qualitative content analysis, through coding the interview material I was able to reduce the volume of my initial data and identify prevailing themes. Mr. Kolesnikov provided a unique viewpoint on many issues associated with the newspaper and the readers and by incorporating it into the “Koleso” newspaper content analysis it helped me to create a multi-dimensional perspective of the topic under research and further support my statement.

### **3.5. Summary**

In this chapter I outlined three research methods that I have used for my study: the “Koleso” newspaper content analysis, interview with Mr. Kolesnikov, its Editor-in-Chief and focus groups with the newspaper’s readers and the representatives of the Russian-speaking community in Calgary.

I described how each of the methods was planned, implemented and contributed to an overall understanding of the research questions. Although three methods had different goals and objectives, this approach allowed me to collect as many details and general information as possible to answer the main research question of this paper about the role the “Koleso” newspaper plays in shaping and maintaining identities of the Russian-speaking diaspora in Calgary and the connections to time and space it creates for them.

I also would like to mention that both types of my respondents, focus groups and the newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief, were somewhat surprised and delighted that the “Koleso” and the members of the Calgary Russian-speaking community found themselves in the center of this study.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter I report findings from each of three research methods of my study: content analyses of the “Koleso” newspaper over four years, from 2009 to 2012 inclusive, an interview with Mr. Kolesnikov, the newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief and focus groups.

In order to create a cohesive picture rather than reporting about each part of my research individually, I have merged findings from all three research parts to demonstrate not only correlations but also points of arguments to support my statement that the “Koleso” newspaper, being the only Russian-speaking newspaper in Calgary, provides social connections within dispersed Calgary Russian-speaking community and help preserve elements of their multiple identities in connection to the past, the present and the future.

In the first section of this chapter I provide an overview of the “Koleso” newspaper and its readership: I show dynamic changes in the newspaper’s content from 2009 to 2012 inclusive, determine the main types of connections created between the newspaper and its readers including the respondents from focus groups, explain how the Editor-in-Chief maintains relationships with his readership and show what steps have been undertaken by Mr. Kolesnikov to secure a steady stream of information supporting those connections. Taking into consideration that the “Koleso” newspaper’s content is based on an overall vision of its Editor-in-Chief, findings reported in that section will help understand how Mr. Kolesnikov’s vision has been implemented. To illustrate findings in this section, I developed a diagram (Figure 4.1.) reflecting three types of the “Koleso” newspaper’s audience. The diagram helps visually demonstrate that although the interests of the “Koleso” newspaper’s readership are diverse and they may or may not consider themselves to be part of the Calgary Russian-speaking community, being united by a common cultural, ethnical

and historical background and sharing similar identities, they create connections to the newspaper on different levels.

Mr. Kolesnikov's thoughts and personal immigration experiences informed the newspaper's content related to the process of settling down in Canada. In the second section I show how the members of the Russian-speaking community in general and my focus groups' respondents in particular are supported by the "Koleso" newspaper in the process of their adaptation to Canada. That support is offered through description of the real-life experiences, stories and 'survival' tips shared by the newspaper's readers as well as selective news from across Canada or Calgary. Having multiple identities, the Russian-speaking community members settle down in Canada while keeping in touch with their roots. Findings from focus groups reported in that section outline particular aspects of the respondents' core and ethnic identities associated with the "Koleso" newspaper's content.

The next section outlines the "Koleso" newspaper's connections to its readers through time and space, how the "Koleso" meets the demands of its audience by reporting the news from the various local events and other topics of interest related to multiple identities of the Calgary Russian-speaking community.

In the last section I describe findings related to advertising that has the twofold role in the "Koleso" newspaper: it ensures its sustainability and performs a social function by connecting readers to each other and to the newspaper.

I conclude the chapter by summarizing key findings and outlining common themes that I have detected in consumption of the "Koleso" newspaper by its readers and focus groups' respondents to further support the statement that the "Koleso" newspaper provide social

connections to the Calgary Russian-speaking community while supporting them in navigating through their multiple identities.

#### **4.2. The “Koleso” Newspaper and its Readership**

The vision that an Editor-in-Chief brings into shaping a publication’s strategy is vital for success of a publication. The Editor-in-Chief is responsible for content, design, financial, printing and human resources issues. All of these activities are aimed at achieving one goal which is to attract, engage and hold the audience.

Describing ethnic media, Karim (2012) says that it could “range from small newspapers run from home basements to well-established and professionally run broadcast stations” (p.173). The Editor-in-Chief of an ethnic publication, and quite often it is one and the same person, “spends most of his time carrying out all the work” (Huston, 2012, p.86) while correlating his vision with financial, human or informational issues.

The “Koleso” newspaper is owned and managed by one person, Mr. Kolesnikov, who also is the newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief. Surprisingly the majority of my focus groups respondents were aware of the fact that the newspaper was the result of labour of one man with contributions from many readers.

Mr. Kolesnikov graduated from the Kazakhstan University, Faculty of Journalism with the major in Radio and TV Broadcasting. His immigrant story is quite typical, as he admits. After arriving to Canada, with intermediate English, he tried to utilize his skills in a variety of different jobs, including broadcasting, prior to establishing the “Koleso” newspaper targeted for the Russian-speaking audience in Calgary. Mr. Kolesnikov recalled:

*“I knew that any newspaper is inevitably influenced by its Editor-in-Chief. I decided to give it a try, although I have never dealt with the newspaper production before. It is important to know immigrants’ psychology and know their experiences, hopes and concerns in order to satisfy their needs, retain and attract the new audience. I had that knowledge.”*

He envisioned his newspaper to be as informative as entertaining, and to serve as a social hub for the Russian-speaking community. It took a substantial amount of time and commitment to gather information for the very first issue, find a printing house and make a layout. Today the “Koleso” newspaper, issued bi-weekly, is available for free at many public locations in Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer and Okotoks. Based on the information provided by the newspaper’s website ([webkoleso.info](http://webkoleso.info)), without mentioning particular names, I have made a summary of places, commonly attended by the representatives of the Russian-speaking community, where the “Koleso” can be found:

- Immigration Centre (Building 2 Street and 14 Ave SW, Downtown)
- Canadian Superstore (Shawnessy)
- Calgary Jewish Centre
- Russian and Ukrainian Churches
- Hair Salons
- Russian Food Stores and Cafes
- Polish Food Stores
- Liquor Stores
- Dental Clinics
- Acupuncture and Massage Clinics
- Footwear Stores
- Auto Services
- Various Russians-run Enterprises
- Offices of Russian-speaking Realtors ([webkoleso.info](http://webkoleso.info))

Discussing how my focus groups participants came across the “Koleso” for the first time, respondents from all groups except for group # 2 said that they picked it up at one of the Russian or Polish food stores. Two respondents from Group # 3 mentioned that they saw the newspaper



at the Canadian Superstore on the Calgary North “*where there are not that many Russians are living*”.

Since 2009 and until 2012, the period under analysis, the “Koleso” newspaper had increased its volume twice. It had started as a 16-page publication, expanded to 20 pages in 2010 and then to 24 pages in 2011. The content of the newspaper has been changing as well. Recruitment issues, financial challenges, demographic changes in the audience, participation of the Editor-in-Chief in a variety of different business and community events were among the major factors impacting the content development.

The foundation for the newspaper’s content was built during the first two years of the newspaper’s existence, in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Mr. Kolesnikov confirmed that:

*“...of course it is difficult to fill in 24 pages by original publications as I do this newspaper on my own. I know that it is not ideal, but I do not have any staff to help me and I am not in a position to hire more staff for the time being. In addition, marketing and advertising for Russian audience here is pretty limited. But I still manage to have enough information and materials to produce every other issue. If something changes, then I will consider changing the format of the newspaper as well.”*

There are certain columns in the newspaper that appear on a regular basis while others are published from time to time, when information is available. The Editor-in-Chief lays out the “Koleso” newspaper in the same manner as did publications back in the Soviet Union. On the front page of the newspaper people can traditionally find feature stories and trace the news on vital topics and then proceed with something less important towards the end of the newspaper usually given to jokes. Explaining his approach to the “Koleso” design Mr. Kolesnikov noted:

*“My newspaper starts from the business information and ends with something entertaining. I know that young people do not like reading long articles and I always say to my writers not to fit everything in one story. There can be a continuation so that people would look forward to reading about that particular topic”.*

On March 27, 2010 the website was launched in addition to the print version of the “Koleso” newspaper where all issues are now available for review. In an interview Mr. Kolesnikov mentioned that he favours a paper format of his newspaper saying that similar to a pocket book it can be taken by readers anywhere. However, in all groups except for the seniors, the participants discussed the benefits of having the “Koleso” in digital version vs. paper. The audience divided into two parts – those who would like to read the “Koleso” on Internet:

C1: *“If you have Internet at your disposal at anytime and anywhere, why would you go to pick up a paper copy of the “Koleso”?”*

C4: *“I don’t have time to read at home. I only have time in transit when I go to and from work. I also would like to read it on my cell. You can access the “Koleso” on-line, but I found the format to be inconvenient as I have move text in different directions all the time.”*

And those who like to hold the newspaper while reading it and who have no or limited abilities to browse Internet:

A2. *“Internet is one thing and the newspaper is different. The older generation brought in Canada by their children do not know how to use it. They sit at home and they are bored. They can read this newspaper in Russian and remember something from their past.”*

Throughout the first year, every issue surfaced the addresses from the Editor-in-Chief to readers. Mr. Kolesnikov used his messages to introduce different topics and new columns. He also invited readers to share their experiences and stories, send questions and photographs. Similar messages of encouragement have been added as a preface to the stories that, in Mr. Kolesnikov’s opinion, should have resonated well with his readers.

Based on the content analysis of the interview with Mr. Kolesnikov, focus groups and the “Koleso” newspaper, I have identified three types of readers which are reflected in the diagram below.

*Figure 4.1. The “Koleso” Newspaper’s Audience Circles.*



Among the focus groups respondents I had representatives of all three audience groups. One respondent contributes to the newspaper’s content on a regular basis by writing the poems. A group of seniors and those respondents who did not speak English considered themselves to be devoted readers with strong connections with the “Koleso” newspaper. All other respondents read the “Koleso” newspaper on an occasional basis, whenever they had a chance to pick it up or on purpose when they look for a specific piece of information.

According to Mr. Kolesnikov, from the very first issue and until now there are up to 18 original articles written by the readers. Referring to a saying that “immigration is a stress protracted in time”, Mr. Kolesnikov wanted his audience to conceive the “Koleso” more than just

a newspaper. He wanted his readers to communicate with the newspaper and him personally but also through the newspaper with each other. Building those relationships was one of the tasks to ensure the newspaper's sustainability.

In June 6, 2009, six months since the newspaper was launched, in his letter to the readers, Mr. Kolesnikov said:

*“Our newspaper is developing and in order to sustain this development, we need to know your thoughts and opinions about our work. What columns do you like or dislike in our newspaper and what are the topics you’d like us to cover? Our email address is the same: kolesoinfo@gmail.com. We are looking forward to getting your messages.”* (The “Koleso”, June 6, 2009).

One year later, summing up the “Koleso” newspaper’s achievements in the address to his readers, Mr. Kolesnikov particularly mentioned that his idea to form a “creative social club” engaging the readership was successful. He admitted that the first year was challenging for the newspaper from the financial point of view, but the newspaper has “survived” and evolved into an “interesting” publication thanks to readers, distributors and advertisers (The “Koleso”, January 14, 2010).

The Editor’s-in-Chief’s strategy to build relations with readers started bringing its dividends by the end of 2009. Contributions from the newspaper’s readership helped in shaping the content of the “Koleso” newspaper and also allowed the newspaper to survive in spite of organizational and financial challenges of 2009.

#### **4.3. Settling Down in Canada**

Successful acculturation in Canada largely depends on various factors including cultural, psychological and economic inputs. This section outlines how this process is reflected in the

“Koleso” and perceived by the newspaper’s readers. In a new environment, with no contacts, with limited abilities to adapt to a local job market, without a full understanding of what it means to be a ‘Canadian’, immigrants in general and the Calgary Russian-speaking community members in particular often struggle to adapt as well as to find a job.

Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” newspaper, explained his concept of immigration matching it with growth rings of the trees with one distinction: *“Trees have their growth rings inside and people outside.”* The first ring, according to him, personifies people with whom we communicate on a daily basis – our family and friends. The second ring includes those with whom you meet on a weekly basis. When as an immigrant you arrive to Canada, you may find yourself being positioned within the first ring for a long time. Alexander Kolesnikov noted: *“You cannot bring your childhood friends with you and you feel as if you had been pulled up and cut from the roots and there is a hole around you – emptiness.”*

In 2009, when the “Koleso” newspaper was still ‘recruiting’ readers as well as authors, in the columns, written by mortgage brokers, real estate and insurance agents, the readers were provided with information about the rules and regulations around a house purchase, auto insurance or the Canadian tax system and others. With so many unknown and unfamiliar topics for the newcomers, the list of subjects to be explained was virtually endless. Where it was appropriate, many of those articles contained some sort of comparison between a discussed Canadian topic with that from the former Soviet Union or Russia, to help link a reader’s past identities with the present experiences and fuel the future actions.

Ethnic languages “allow group members to create and maintain links in the ethnic community, as well as to connect with family and friends in the country of origin” (Jurva and Jaya, 2008, p. 115). The fact that all articles in the newspaper are published in Russian

established and maintained that connection with the “Koleso” newspaper’s audience for those who speak English or not.

The level of the English language among the Russian-speaking as well as any other groups of immigrants varies significantly from fluent to very basic. A number of articles in 2009 were aimed specifically at that particular audience with a limited language capacity explaining step-by-step how to start their own business in Canada. A series of publications were prepared jointly with one of the immigrant service organizations when the newcomers were invited to different workshops delivered in the Russian language.

The importance of the Russian language was also continuously emphasized by my focus groups respondents. For those respondents who had limited English language and Internet abilities, the “Koleso” newspaper was a major channel delivering information about the events in Canada, Calgary and their community:

B2: *“Many people, like in this building, cannot read in English because of their age and because they did not study it. The “Koleso” has all news we need - there are many interesting articles about Calgary life”.*

D4: *“For me it is crucial to read something in Russian language. The “Koleso” is probably the only thing that I read in Russian over a long period of time”.*

Those respondents who had their Canada born children or grand-children mentioned that they were eager to preserve the Russian language as part of their ethnic identities in Canada. Many respondents were clearly anxious that their second or the third generation may lose Russian after getting married to bearers of English or other languages and leaving the families where Russian is spoken on a daily basis:

B1: *“My grandson got married to a Canadian girl...when he comes to visit us, he speaks Russian but at home he speaks only English. And my great grand-son, I am not sure he will know Russian”.*

In the “Koleso” newspaper dated 2010, the topics pertaining to settling down in Canada remained the same, but the authors’ palette has changed. As a result, a new trend expressed in the form of many real-life stories told from the first person emerged and became one of the newspaper’s regular columns. The newspaper’s authors shared their Canadian experiences and lessons learned. Surprisingly, in spite of the stressful nature of those experiences, the stories were full of humour and positiveness. The longer immigrants live in Canada, the more accustomed they become towards many things from diversity to local traditions. For those immigrants who have been in Canada for a short period of time, the stories of such type would be beneficial as they contain the first-hand experiences. For those readers who have lived in Canada for a while, these stories would be the reminders of what they had been through.

A series of articles prepared jointly with one of the immigrant services continued beyond 2009, but they were targeted at specific audience segments, for example women, who were invited to various workshops to learn how to find a job, prepare a resume or find a mentor.

From 2010 to 2012, a regular column “Advice from a Psychologist”, along with general topics, shared practical tips on a range of diverse issues including how to better organize an immigrant’s life in Canada from the psychological perspective. These topics include the change in a family’s dynamics, preparation of a child for a Canadian school or finding a work-life balance. Those focus groups’ respondents who read the newspaper on a regular basis provided favourable comments about that particular column saying that the author uses the real-life examples from the past and the present explaining the differences in cultural perceptions and giving tips to build their *‘Canadian present and the future’*.

The stories about acquiring basic and important skills to construct new identities are balanced by the stories about the history of Canada and Calgary, thus creating a more familiar and understandable landscape for readers to settle down. Among such stories, for example, was an interview with a City of Calgary employee about the benefits of the Blue Cart program that was launched in 2009. In 2010 there was a series of publications covering Calgary's municipal elections including an interview with Rick McIver who was one of the Mayoral candidates at the time. After the elections, the newspaper published an article about the results and in particular told in detail about Mayor Nenshi in Calgary and Mayor Mendel in Edmonton. From 2009 to 2012 a series of articles about the history of Calgary Stampede, Hudson Bay Company, and the Canadian Armed Forces were published. Some changes to immigration or mortgage rules and legislation were highlighted as well.

According to Mr. Kolesnikov, one of the goals for his newspaper is to fill in the emptiness that the readers experience in the process of acquiring new identities in Canada. From the beginning he started building connections with readers by communicating with them through the "Koleso" newspaper, personally, electronically or via the phone.

Stories about the Russian-speaking community members serve as chronicles of their Canadian identity formation while demonstrating the multi-national community character. All publications about the Russian-speaking community are either based on people's experiences in the past, as an integral part of people's core and ethnic identities (the former Soviet Union and Russian cultural and historical heritage, commonly spoken Russian language), their present (immigrant's real-life stories, Canadian cultural and historical heritage that the Calgary Russian-speaking community members need to learn about and adapt to), or their future (how they use



the newly acquired information and skills or what skills or information they need to obtain in order to be more successful in a new environment).

Connections with the readers are built via the stories of a particular interest to them. Often, rather than publishing one story, the stories are broken into several parts and accompanied by a request to readers to send thoughts, opinions and questions to the newspaper which get published in the subsequent issues. For instance, in 2009 was published a series of articles about Lennikov, a former KGB (a Soviet Secret Service) Officer, who lived in British Columbia. Being a former KGB officer, Lennikov was under the threat of deportation for acting against a democratic country in the interest of the KGB, before coming to Canada. This case was extensively covered by the mainstream Canadian media. The Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” interviewed Lennikov and his family and published interviews as well as personal messages from Lennikov to the “Koleso” newspaper’s readers. Opinions on the situation as well as questions from readers were subsequently published in the newspaper.

As with other themes, the foundation for these stories had been created in 2009 and 2010, during the first two years after the newspaper’s establishment. In 2011 and 2012 more new topics were added to already existing regular columns such as “Economy”, “Real Estate”, “Four Wheels”, “Our Idols”, “Travelling around the World” etc. In addition to the news from across Canada, under a new column “Immigration” a compilation of different news related to immigration process, regulations and changes appeared. The emergence of a few Russian-speaking organizations/associations in which the Editor-in-Chief was involved or his engagement with community were among the factors that have influenced the additional content in 2011 and 2012.

In 2011, readers started generating the topics of discussion that led to subsequent publication of a series of articles based on them. For instance, one of the readers was looking for a private teacher of the Russian language for a child and that prompted a series of articles about the Russian-speaking children whose parents wanted to ensure their children's connections with their cultural and historical heritage. Later in 2011, another letter was published on the same topic when a reader expressed concern over the absence of a Russian language school in Calgary. Reporting about preliminary talks held with the Board of Education, the newspaper urged qualified teachers to come forward. All those focus groups' respondents who had small children but did not read the "Koleso" on a regular basis mentioned that they picked up the newspaper whenever they wanted to find information about the Russian language lessons or music lessons offered by a Russian-language speaker '*to keep in touch with our heritage*'.

In 2012 the "Koleso" newspaper published a swarm of different thought-provoking articles on the number of hot issues including the work of the Russian General Consulate or Chinese immigration to Canada. Every publication caught a buzz and caused disputes between readers whose opinions were then published as follow-ups to the articles. However, my focus groups respondents were virtually unanimous in saying that they did not want to read anything even remotely related to politics as "*we are tired of it.*"

When Mr. Kolesnikov attended different activities and events organized by the Russian-speaking organizations, the information stream on those topics increased accordingly. The new trend, when a series of articles telling about the events organized by the Russian-speaking community and attended by the Canadian government representatives, started appearing in the newspaper in 2010 and 2011. For example, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church named after St. Barbara in Edmonton was attended by Stephen Mandel, Mayor of Edmonton,

while Peter Goldring, the Parliament Deputy delivered a message from Prime Minister Stephen Harper and then Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach. Or, another example was the meeting of the Coordination Council of Russian-Speaking Compatriots of Canada in Quebec where the Russian Embassy in Canada and the Consulate General in Montreal defined steps and actions to be taken to promote Russian culture and understanding of Russia among the Russian-speaking diaspora and Canadians.

As the Russian-speaking business and cultural associations continued organizing themselves into one stratum, the “Koleso” newspaper informed the readers about the first meeting of the Russian speaking business and culture representatives organized by the Russian Business Culture Center of Alberta on September 18, 2010 with participation of the “Koleso” newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief. The meeting was also attended by Morris Flewelling, Mayor of Red Deer. However, later these articles stopped appearing in the newspaper.

And the last but not the least aspect of settling down in Canada covered by the “Koleso” is participation of the Calgary Russian-speaking community representatives in locally organized events such as International Dance Day in Eau Claire market, Calgary Folk Dance Festival, Heritage Day Festival, Lilac Festival and many others. The feature stories accompanied by pictures both in colour and black-in-white are published in the newspaper on an annual basis.

#### **4.4. Creating Connections through Time and Space**

All articles in the “Koleso” newspaper collide in time (past-present; present-future; past-present-future) except for those, clearly belonging to the past (stories about Soviet or Russian people of art and culture, sportsmen, politicians or public figures) or having neutral content (beauty, diet and healthy life-style tips or information about car shows and anecdotes).

According to Boyce-Davies, remembering is “the way to cross the boundaries of space, time, history, place, language, corporeality, and restricted consciousness in order to make reconnections and mark or name gaps and absences” (Boyce-Davies, 1994, p.12).

When answering the questions about connections that the “Koleso” newspaper creates for the readers, my focus groups respondents in their thoughts kept travelling through time and space connecting their past with the present and the future in Canada. Ultimately, their answers fell into two time categories: ‘my life before Canada’ and ‘my life in Canada’.

Respondents in group # 2 had a dynamic discussion around the above-mentioned two time aspects specifically pointing out how the time factor influenced their habits when reading the “Koleso” newspaper:

C2: *“At the very beginning we were attracted to the Russian ethnic media including the “Koleso”. Maybe it is not good to say that...but I do not care anymore what is happening there [in the former home country L.J.] unless it is something critical.”*

C3: *“I do not agree. I do not want to break with my past. I want to keep my memories. It is part of my identity. I want to cherish all that good that the Russian culture has to offer. For example, if the Russian ballet or opera come to Calgary, I would definitely take my family to watch it”.*

C1: *“I talked to my husband and he likes to read all stories in the “Koleso” about the 80s. How much we paid for an ice-scream at that time (laughing) – these are our memories. I like feature stories about the Soviet artists in the “Koleso”. We keep re-watching all popular Soviet movies from our childhood and I get ideas about the next movie we want to watch with our children by reading those stories.”*

C4: *“It appears to be a dilemma. On one hand many of us left hurdles behind and bad memories which we want to forget. At the same time, after being in Canada for 10 years where life is so busy and there is so much information, you do not have time to read a Russian newspaper unless you look for something specific.”*

Talking about their lives ‘before Canada’, the respondents admitted that whenever they happen to read the “Koleso”, they enjoy reading the stories about famous Soviet or Russian artists, composers, writers and heroes. The main motive for reading those stories, according to the participants, was lack of such type of information in local Canadian newspapers and their connection to their past, in particular their childhood:

*A2: “I call this newspaper ‘a guest from the past’ because they publish different stories about the Soviet movies or artists that we remember from our Soviet past. I do not think that the younger readers are fascinated by these stories because they do not know who ‘Shtirlits’ was (the name of a movie character from a popular Soviet series about the World War II-L.J.). I do not think they know any of those old artists who had passed away long time ago.”*

Throughout the discussions with my focus groups I have heard the word ‘nostalgia’ pronounced only once when one of the groups was answering the question about the role the “Koleso” plays in their lives and if the Russian-speaking ethnic media in Canada was needed:

*D3: The “Koleso” is needed for the seniors who have problems with English. I believe that the seniors are mostly impacted by nostalgia having lost their home country and feeling totally disconnected. They simply cannot assimilate here.”*

The issue of memory and connecting the past with the present and the future in my focus groups was a collective phenomenon. I relate it to the fact that people in at least three focus groups were from the same age brackets, thus sharing similar experiences. When one respondent remembered something in connection with the “Koleso” content, other respondents joined in sharing the same memory piece and adding more details.

According to Mr. Kolesnikov, the ratio of the articles about the present versus the past in his newspaper is 60:40. To maintain connections with the past, Mr. Kolesnikov chooses analytical publications, articles about the Soviet or Russian movie stars, famous writers, actors,

musicians, sportsmen, historical essays and features about notorious leaders of the countries of so called “socialist camp” such Erich Honecker, from East Germany, or Nicolae Ceausescu, from Romania.

To connect the “Koleso” newspaper readers with the present and to help them obtain new qualities to their identities, Mr. Kolesnikov publishes news from across Canada, interviews with Canadian public officials, municipal or federal elections, articles received from readers about the history of Calgary and Alberta. The articles about various Soviet and Russian holidays, interviews with veterans and reports on community events such as concerts dedicated to different civic and religious holidays and anniversaries serve as a ‘bridge’ between the past and the present.

As for building the audience’s connections to the future, Mr. Kolesnikov was not really sure how the newspaper helps. *“It all depends on people, on the community,”* he said.

Those respondents from focus groups who were fluent in English noted that they had used information from other sources to build their future plans. The respondents with basic or no English admitted that they had used and continue to use the “Koleso” to inform their future steps in Canada.

To commemorate the diversity within the Russian-speaking community, the newspaper covers celebrations of the coming of spring as per the Muslim calendar called Novruz, concerts at the Russian Centre in Calgary, events at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre or information from Calgary Jewish community.

Celebrations of holidays that the Russian-speaking community brought with them to Canada have been taking a central part in all issues. Mr. Kolesnikov noted:

*“I always make sure that we publish something about our holidays. We do not understand and do not celebrate such holidays as Valentine’s Day or St. Patrick’s Day. Not many people in our community celebrate Christmas. But we celebrate the New Year, Victory Day, February 23 or March 8 – these are our holidays.”*

In every single focus group the respondents dwelled on the theme of the Soviet and Russian holidays as an important element of their heritage, culture, traditions and childhood memories. Lvovich (2000) says: “Holidays are very important for us: they "glue" us to people around us by being a common experience, a socially meaningful historical event or a cultural/religious celebration. It is our common territory, the ground we all stand on. When we see people around us celebrating the same event, by shopping for their holiday dinner or for gifts, we feel secure and connected (n.p.).” The parents extended it into the future for their Canada born children as part of their heritage and identity:

D1: *“I have a small child, so maybe I will start looking for some celebrations of the New Year in the “Koleso” because I want my child to speak Russian and know our traditions.”*

Out of 17 people only two respondents participated in the events organized for and by the Russian-speaking community or, for instance, attended plays performed by the Russian Theatre in Calgary. However, all of them knew what types of holidays were highlighted in the “Koleso” newspaper and what types of community events were associated with them.

As I have mentioned, different nationalities within the Russian-speaking community in Calgary maintain their ethnic identities by celebrating Novruz (Arrival of Spring), Hanukkah, Catholic or Orthodox Christmas. However, there are a few holidays from the past that unite all members of the Calgary Russian-speaking community. Those holidays have a historical and sentimental value to my respondents, among them are December 31 (the New Year eve),

February 23 (Soviet analogue of Father's Day), March 8 (International Women's Day), and May 9 – Victory Day.

While at least three focus groups mentioned that they did not consider themselves to be part of the Russian-language community in Calgary, many of the respondents said that they read the “Koleso” in order to see how different holidays are celebrated by the ‘active’ community members:

A1: “ *I do not consider myself belonging to the Russian-language community, I do not know people from that community and I do not participate in **their** events, but I like that I can find information about the New Year celebrations by **that** community – it is interesting. People here either do not have such holidays as **we** do or celebrate them differently.*”

On the other hand I found that at times the coverage of holidays' celebration by the “Koleso” newspaper is not consistent in terms of volume and space. For example, Victory Day (May 8<sup>th</sup> in West), has always been one of the most important holidays in the former USSR. To commemorate this holiday and provide the link between the past and the present identities, in 2009 the newspaper published a peculiar mixture of stories about Canada in the World War II, a few articles about Russian intelligence agents and a story about Hitler's death.

2010 saw a more comprehensive approach when a congratulatory message to veterans was published along with the report about a conference organized by the Russian Embassy in Ottawa jointly with the representatives of a few other CIS Embassies and the Canadian Association of Veterans. In addition, readers were invited to share the names of veterans living nearby in order to prepare the articles devoted to the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Patriotic War (the name of the World War II used in the former USSR). In the Jewish Seniors' Apartments Complex a presentation of a book about the Holocaust victims was held. In Edmonton, on May



9<sup>th</sup>, in the Jewish drop-in center a concert was organized dedicated to the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WWII where the veterans were sharing their memories with children. On the same day, at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Calgary, veterans and other participants celebrated the Victory Day by singing the Soviet military songs and watching a documentary about that war. The reports about all these events were published in the newspaper with plenty of pictures.

In 2011 a congratulatory message to veterans, an invitation to a concert, a poem, was published along with a real story from one of the readers about a conversation that they had with a Canadian veteran met on a bus trip in British Columbia. In 2012 three pieces were published: an invitation to a concert, dedicated to the World War II, a congratulatory message to veterans and a feature story about the death of the German Air Minister Hermann Göring during the World War II.

As the “Koleso” newspaper started circulating in Red Deer, a few articles about the Russian-speaking Red Deer residents getting together and discussing their problems in the Russian language were published. Celebration of holidays that people used to enjoy in the former USSR and Russia was one of the main discussion topics by the community members.

Another example of holiday celebrations that have extensively been covered by the newspaper is New Year. In a few issues throughout the period under examination the newspaper explained the difference in celebrations of Christmas and New Year Eve for those recent immigrants who may have felt confused about the way Christmas is celebrated in Canada versus New Year and Orthodox Christmas.

“Yolki” (a Russian name for a Christmas tree), the Russian word for an event when children sing and dance in a ring around a Christmas tree, is an essential part of the Russian-speaking community cultural heritage. “Yolki” are organized in the Ukrainian and Russian

cultural and community centres from the middle of December to the middle of January. It is a bonding event not only for children but also for their parents. From my point of view it is one of the brightest examples when hundreds of the Russian-speaking community members celebrate their past in their Canadian present while helping their children to build multiple identities and get connected to their heritage and ethnic identity. These stories, accompanied by plenty of pictures, are published on an annual basis.

A few focus groups' respondents, especially those having small children, compared the New Year celebrations, the way how they used to celebrate, with the Canadian-style New Year:

*C3: "I have a girl who was born in Canada. Holidays in Canada are so different from those that we get used to celebrate in our childhood – songs and dances around Christmas tree, Ded Moroz (Father Frost) and other heroes of the Russian fairy tales. Our celebrations are very interactive. Last Christmas we went to a celebration where Santa Claus was sitting in a chair and there was a long line of kids with parents willing to take a picture with him. That was it. We do not consider ourselves to be part of the Russian-speaking community in Calgary, but after that, I was purposefully looking for advertisements of "Yolki" (Christmas Trees) in the "Koleso", so that my daughter could enjoy the New Year the way we did".*

Children have been an essential part of many events and stories dedicated to the New Year, Victory Day, March 8 or February 28. In addition, reports from the various photograph and art exhibitions, concerts for seniors and theatre studios performances have been published in abundance from 2009 to 2012. A children's page in the "Koleso" newspaper comprising poems and stories for children has been published in the newspaper from time to time, and in a few issues Mr. Kolesnikov published lists and introductory summaries of the most popular Russian books read by their parents in their childhoods.

In the Soviet Union the Russian Orthodox Church was officially separated from the State. Moreover, people could have been prosecuted for attending the Church. Only after the Soviet

Union broken down, did religion gain more a visible role in the country again. There are a few Russian Orthodox Churches in Calgary and information feeds from them about various religious holidays and events have been published on a regular basis in the “Koleso” newspaper since 2011. For example, St. Patrick’s Church heritage building was handed over in June 2011 to St. John Chrysostom Russian Orthodox Church. An appeal to all community members was published in one of the issues asking for help in the church’s building restoration and cleaning of graffiti in order to start using it for worship. This appeal was followed by a series of other publications sharing with the readers the news about restoration process as well as about different type of events that have been taking place in it.

Connections through time and space are created for and by the “Koleso” readers on a variety of different levels. Those connections are as unique as an individual reader’s identity. However, common themes raised by the “Koleso” and shared by the Calgary Russian-speaking community serve as a bridge with their past, present and future identities and connect them within the community.

#### **4.5. Advertisement as a Social Tool**

While advertising allows the “Koleso” newspaper to exist and is “the most important source of revenue” (Matsaganis et al., 2011), the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” newspaper sees advertising as more than just an opportunity to generate money but also as an additional connection to his audience.

Not all respondents knew the names of the regular columns in the “Koleso”, but the participants of three focus groups mentioned advertising in the “Koleso” as their source of information, entertainment and education – all at the same time.

Lee and Tse (1994) point out that advertising plays vital role in developing new “consumption habits” (p.1) of immigrants which, from their perspective, are connected to assimilation in the host country. In case of the “Koleso” advertising serves as a tool to preserve not only consumption but also communication practices that bring comfort, connect to the community and language through time and space:

*A2: The “Koleso” brings information that I can use in the future such as how to buy a house, how to find a Russian speaking dentist or a broker. For people like me who do not speak English at all, these advertisements are helpful. I think that this is one of those rare occasions when people read advertisement because they may find something useful.”*

*D3: “I am scanning the newspaper to see what types of events will be happening in the future. If I can take my child somewhere or if a popular artist is coming from Russia or any other country that I know.”*

Matsaganis et al. explain that there could be “not enough business and other organizations active in the area that would be interested in advertising their products or services, or that the businesses in the area are not generating enough income to warrant higher advertising expenditures” (p.118). In spite of the fact that more than 30, 000 Russians live in Calgary, Mr. Kolesnikov considers the media market for a Russian language publication to be small which means that there are not that many entrepreneurs who would be willing to pay a due amount for advertising. Therefore, having more media players in addition to the “Koleso” newspaper in this limited market would inevitably lead to fierce competition.

However, in the course of content analysis, I have noticed that every year since 2009, the number of businesses run by the Russian-speaking entrepreneurs and their variety has been increasing. For example, in 2010, in addition to advertisements by the realtors, mortgage brokers and insurance agents, ads from instructors and teachers of various schools and classes were published. In 2011 commercials and advertisements from travel and air tickets agencies, a flower

shop, translation and interpretation services, construction firms, dentists, realtors, beauty and hair salons were added.

Recalling the beginning of his enterprise, Mr. Kolesnikov referred to those naysayers who were saying: *“Why are you starting the newspaper? You will have no advertisers.”* The Editor-in-Chief shared his approach to conducting the business by saying: *“You cannot base your business only within one community because it demonstrates your incompetency.”* The newspaper advertises Polish, Bulgarian and Hungarian food stores in addition to the Russian ones because all of them are popular among the Russian-speaking community members.

In addition to producing revenue, advertising and marketing, according to Mr. Kolesnikov, encourages and promotes social connections between the readers. In every issue since 2009 the newspaper publishes editorials about mortgage, banking, insurance and other services that people coming from the former Soviet Union do not have much familiarity with in their past lives. From these editorials they are able to obtain detailed explanations about steps they need to take to buy a house, a car or to choose the right type of insurance. Alexander Kolesnikov said:

*“Many people tell me that previously they were unable to find even an accountant. I always encourage mortgage brokers, realtors, bankers, insurance or financial specialists to write columns and share tips and examples from their respective experiences. Frankly, these stories even in Russian remain difficult to understand for many people and I cannot imagine them reading that content in English. However, in most instances it is crucial to understand what you are reading or particularly signing. If you do not understand insurance papers, for example, you may obtain a very different coverage from what you were planning to obtain. ”*

According to Mr. Kolesnikov, 25% of the newspaper’s content is consumed by advertising and 75% by the other information. *“My concept is simple: newspaper plus advertising, not advertising plus newspaper,”* concluded Mr. Kolesnikov. The difference in the

newspaper's design of 2009 and 2012 is striking: if throughout 2009 and in the two January issues of 2010 the Editor-in-Chief's letters were published, later they were replaced by prominently displayed advertising pieces on the front page with a congratulatory message of some kind. If during the first year there were a few ads in one issue mainly accompanying editorials or published at the very end of the newspaper on one page, in 2010 and onward, specific newspaper pages have been given to ads.

In 2010, in addition to editorials and the advertising of services and products such as food stores, footwear stores, different community organizations started advertising themselves talking about the events organized by them. For example, there has been advertising of the Jewish Family Service Centre inviting potential participants to a talk about the history of the 'Soviet' Jewish immigration to Canada.

Connection with past identities for the Russian-speaking community is provided through cultural links with the bands and the artists that were popular in the former Soviet Union or are still popular in Russia. The "Koleso" newspaper publishes on a regular basis advertisement of those bands, artists and musicians when they tour Calgary.

Help in forming new identities comes through advertising of different local events such as International Dance Day, Canada Day or Heritage Day and encouraging community members to take part in them in order to better learn Canadian culture and celebrate diversity. Those parents who want to ensure that their children keep connections with their cultural heritage, can find contact details of the Russian language teachers or music, sport instructors who speak Russian or receive information about exhibitions, premiere in the Russian theatres in Calgary and Edmonton, exhibitions and performances for children and adults alike.

There are a few advertisements of different pharmaceutical distributors and those Russian food stores that sell medical products produced in Russia – something that people used to consume before coming to Canada. Those advertisements are accompanied by advice on how to get well without going to a doctor. Mr. Kolesnikov concluded:

*“I know that we accumulate information on a subconscious level – as long as we keep consuming it. I invite professionals to write about those topics because I think they can share information from the professional viewpoint. When someone at some point will decide to buy a house or a car, they will remember what they had read in my newspaper.”*

My focus groups’ respondents raised the point over the advertising sustainability and if Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” newspaper, would be able to secure advertisements in the future as *‘this is how the newspaper exists and will survive’*. They also mentioned the fact that local English-language newspapers do not publish advertisements about community events tailored to the Russian-speaking audience, and they read the “Koleso” to fill that gap.

#### **4.6. Summary**

In this chapter of my thesis I reported findings based on content analysis of the “Koleso” newspaper, the interview with Mr. Kolesnikov, the newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief, and focus groups conducted with representatives of different strata of the “Koleso” readership.

The executed research allowed me to highlight the crucial role played by the Editor-in – Chief in developing every issue of the newspaper and to single out the goals, objectives and challenges met by the “Koleso” owner and publisher who run the only print ethnic media for Russian-speaking audience in broader Calgary.

In this chapter I outlined the professional and personal background of Mr. Kolesnikov, as the “Koleso” Editor-in-Chief, and specified his vision that is reflected on the pages of his publication and set the guidelines for its development. With a view to keeping the narrative of my research logical and consistent I found it useful not to present my interview with Mr. Kolesnikov as a single subchapter, giving the readers of my work a possibility to receive his remarks, comments and clarifications on different topics.

The findings of this chapter comprise a qualitative thematic analysis of the “Koleso” newspaper from its inception issue published in 2009 through the end of 2012. This approach allowed me to trace the evolution of the newspaper making its way from a trivial media outlet towards a “creative social hub”, as Mr. Kolesnikov defined it, along with the views of its publisher, calls of the time (launch of web-based version of the “Koleso”) and requirements of its audience.

In this chapter I found it important to accentuate the ways the “Koleso” newspaper, as ethnic media, is connected with its Russian-speaking audience given its diverse educational, professional and age brackets. My research allowed me to detect the interactive nature of these connections which seem critical for the “Koleso” Editor-in-Chief to acquire knowledge about his newspaper’s readership and pick up the content to be the right fit for their ethnically coloured needs.

Since the content of the “Koleso” is the very core of the newspaper, I have allocated due space in the above chapter to researching on what principles it was built, to what extent it reflected the intentions of the Editor-in-Chief and how it collided in time while delivering past, present and future-related stories.



Based on findings from focus groups, in the above chapter I argue that the content of the “Koleso” newspaper plays an important role and creates a road map for its readers in the process of their acculturation and successful settling down in Canada. This process evidently looks far from being simple to every immigrant entering Canada, but according to my research, the national and cultural heritage of the Russian –speaking community in Calgary complicates that issue even further but effectively offers unique topics to be covered in the “Koleso” newspaper.

To summarize the above, the following clusters of themes were mentioned by all focus groups in connection to the “Koleso” newspaper’s consumption, time and space.

*Table 4.1. Summary of the Themes Connecting Focus Groups to the “Koleso” Newspaper.*

Group №	Before Canada	In Canada (present)	In Canada (future)
#1	Articles about the Soviet Union, Russian artists, writers, sportsmen etc.  Travel stories of those readers who visited Russia or any other republics of the former USSR.  Holidays.	Advertisement: Russian businesses, Russian-speaking community events, new Russian ethnic food stores, dentists and family doctors, construction services, Russian language or music private lessons etc.  News from Canada (anything connected with immigration laws and changes to them).  Real-life stories of other immigrants.	Advertisement (see on the left).  News from Canada (anything connected with immigration laws and changes to them).  Real-life stories of other immigrants (how they found their jobs, learnt English, settled down).
#2	Articles about the Soviet Union, Russian artists, writes, sportsmen etc.  Holidays.	News from Calgary and Canada (in general).	News from Calgary and Canada (in general).
#3	Articles about the Soviet Union and Russian artists, writes,	Advertisement.  Holidays and community	Advertisement.  Real-life stories of other

	sportsmen etc.  Holidays.	events.  Real-life stories of other immigrants (how they found their jobs, learnt English, settled down).	immigrants (how they found their jobs, learnt English, settled down).  Holidays and community events.
#4	Articles about the Soviet Union, Russian artists, writes, sportsmen etc.  Holidays.  Travel stories of those readers who visited the former USSR.	Real-life stories of other immigrants (how they found their jobs, learnt English, settled down).	Holidays and community events.  Advertisement.

In my opinion, as the only print ethnic media for the Russian-speaking audience in broader Calgary, the “Koleso” newspaper managed to bridge the gap between its readers, separated by different values, political, cultural, and religious views and perceptions. This conclusion draws support from the findings of my focus group interviews, presented in the above chapter, and is backed by the outcomes on cultural heritage, including pieces on Russian language, holidays and advertising.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The goal of my study was to research the role of the “Koleso” newspaper in the life of the Russian-speaking community in Calgary by applying a ‘three-dimensional’ approach: analyzing the “Koleso” newspaper’s content, conducting an interview with its Editor-in-Chief and focus groups.

In this chapter I will discuss findings from each component of the study described earlier in this paper. My discussion will take place within the theoretical framework of Identity and Ethnic Identity theories.

Based on findings and their analyses I argue that the “Koleso”, being the only Russian-language newspaper in Calgary, provides social connections within the largely atomized Russian-speaking community in Calgary, and helps preserve elements of their multiple identities in connection to the past, the present and the future.

This chapter, according to the above discussion statement, is divided into two parts: Connecting the Audience with Core and Ethnic Identities; and Creating Social Connections for the Audience.

The first part offers background information about ‘mystery of the Russian soul’ that creates a spring board for further discussion of the “Koleso” newspaper’s role in mapping for its readers connections with their identities through time and space.

In the second part I discuss the Calgary Russian-speaking community in view of different phases of an immigrant’s integration, a three-generation model of language proficiency, explain the social role of advertisements in the “Koleso” newspaper and identify types of connections the “Koleso” creates for its audience.

I conclude the chapter by describing the limitations and delimitations of the study, prospective research projects that could be undertaken in association with the topic under research and improvements that could be made to the content.

## **5.2. Connecting the Audience with Core and Ethnic Identities**

Identity is one of those words that people find difficult to explain. On a daily basis we may have conversations about our identities without actually realizing it. Even less frequently do we discuss our ethnic identities unless we have a conversation specifically related to that subject. Identity as a concept and as a word is certainly not in common use by the Russian-language speakers. A popular web based dictionary used by the Russian-language professional translators offers more than 18 different Russian equivalents of that word. All of those words explain the same concept but sound different and quite scientific.

Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948), a famous Russian philosopher, in his book “The Fate of Russia” provides insightful observations about historically complex notions of the core and ethnic identities of Russians on both individual and national levels. The book comprises a series of articles written from 1915 to 1917 and is as relevant today as it was back in time. Berdyaev points out:

“There is a mysterious contradiction between the relationship of Russia and the Russian awareness towards nationality. This is a second antinomy, no less in significance, than that of the relationship to the state. Russia is the most unchauvinistic land in the world. With us nationalism always produces an impression of something non-Russian, imposed, something unperceived. The Germans, the English, the French are chauvinists and nationalists in the masses of their people, they are filled with national self-conviction and self-smugness. Russians almost seem ashamed, that they are Russians; foreign to them is national pride and often even alas foreign is a national sense of worth. An aggressive nationalism is altogether uncharacteristic for the Russian people, any tendency towards a

forceful Russification. The Russian does not shove, does not put on airs, does not despise others.” (Berdyayev, 1915-1917, paragraph 8).

Berdyayev’s statement about the Russian’s ‘self’ and ethnic identity supports my argument about the Russian-speaking community in Calgary being largely atomized and builds further understanding of the importance of the “Koleso” newspaper for the community. The content analysis of the “Koleso” newspaper demonstrates that Berdyayev’s thoughts about national pride, controversies of Russian character, perception of national, ethnic identity and the core identity values are still topical and mirrored on the pages of the “Koleso” newspaper. Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief knows his audience, differences in their opinions and self-perceptions and offers his newspaper as a tribune for some of those discussions raised by readers in relation to the role that Russia is thought to play in supporting its compatriots living abroad, connections to the cultural and historical heritage that the Russian government ought to provide, and the activities of the Russians diplomatic missions in Canada

Within this theoretical framework ethnic identity is seen as part of the self being closely connected to “inter-group relations” (Verkuyten, 2005), “linguistic behaviour” (Jaspal and Coyle, 2010) and “psychological well-being” (Phinney et al., 2001; Taylor and Brown, 1988). Matsaganis et al. (2011) argue that being an essential part of our core identities, ethnic identities within social constructions are fluid: they can change over the time, may “disappear, fade or resurge” (p. 13).

As I have mentioned previously, the Calgary Russian-speaking community comprises tens of different nationalities adding more complexities for Mr. Kolesnikov to address in order to attract and hold the audience. As the result, the “Koleso” newspaper publishes articles and news

from the Ukrainian, Jewish, Russian, Central Asian and other diasporas co-existing within the Calgary Russian-speaking community.

Each of these groups displays their ethnic and core identities in various forms and shapes described explicitly by the “Koleso” newspaper through stories and pictures from the concerts (popular Russian bands, singers, artists, composers from Calgary, Russia, Israel etc.) and charity events, civic holidays celebrations (New Year, Victory Day, March 8<sup>th</sup> etc.) and exhibitions, religious holidays events (Catholic or Russian Orthodox Christmas, Jewish Hanukah or Muslim Novruz) and festivals.

Alexander (2007) argues: “How we understand identity becomes crucial to how we understand community, ethnicity and diversity, how policy is formulated and the boundaries of citizen and nation drawn.” (p. 123). Within this theoretical framework identity is seen as something self-oriented, internal and psychologically-driven. Identity is more and more seen as not something set in stone but rather having multiple forms defined by “choice, lifestyle and performance” which could be experienced at the “intersection of internal and the external factors”(Alexander, 2007, p.123). Choosing the content for the “Koleso” and reading it, my focus groups participants and Mr. Kolesnikov were making choices based on their core and ethnic identities as well as perceptions. I argue that while internal factors influencing our identities may vary in each individual case, external factors such as immigration to Canada serve as a cohesive element uniting the readers of the “Koleso” without regard to their choice of media consuming practices.

In the Soviet Union and later in the former Soviet Republics choice was not an option for multiple things. Life was tough for many people who did not have authority or the ability ‘to make money’. Even having money did not mean that one was able to find food or visit places of

their choice. Many vital resources were scarce and people used their talents to look good, to eat well and to broaden their horizons based on what was available or what they were able to get access to. On top of that, the society or media audience had been “injected” by ideological propaganda for the span of decades through the means of mass communication entirely owned by the ruling authority – the Communist Party.

Despite the above mentioned challenges, the atmosphere of happiness was maintained throughout that time as well as a heavily promoted collective spirit. The Soviet Union demonstrated outstanding accomplishments not only in space exploration or the military field, but in sport, culture, art and literature. People had their heroes and took pride in their accomplishments. I anticipated that the majority of my focus groups respondents would be particularly attached to their identities from the Soviet past and my expectations were met. Karim (2012) says that many ethnic websites and blogs discuss “range of topics that include culture, literature, entertainment, politics, and current events in the countries of origin and settlement” (p. 179) and the “Koleso” newspaper is no exception in this regard. All focus groups mentioned favourably the articles about the Soviet sportsmen, actors, musicians, writers and poets published in the “Koleso” in abundance.

Emotion identity as part of identity theory takes a greater salience when individuals played roles within a social environment that brought them satisfaction and positive emotions (Turner and Stets, 2005). The focus group representatives, especially those who had to escape the Soviet Union due to repressions based on their ethnic identity, have not expressed any nostalgic feelings towards the hurdles and challenges described above. However, in people’s mind that time was profoundly associated with the happiest childhood memories full of fun brought by holidays or other events in their families.

The theme of holidays' celebrations was woven in all discussions related to people's past, present or the future. Gammelgaard and Zaric (2012), who researched developments in national holidays' celebration in West and South Slavic countries after the fall of communism point out, "national holidays provide a yearly recurrent opportunity for people upon the identity of the collective they belong to. When people talk and write about those reflections, they contribute to construction of collective identity, that is, they contribute to the question: "Who are we?" (p.5). In the case of the Calgary Russian-speaking community holidays from the past fulfill a function of the conduit to their present time in Canada bringing a sense of belonging to the same community while they adapt to Canadian holidays. Those respondents who have Canadian-born family members celebrate Canadian holidays as part of their relatives' identity and others *'because we now part of this country'*. Some senior members of my focus groups mentioned that their Canadian-born grand-children did not attend New Year celebrations organized by the Russian-speaking community in Calgary and practice Russian language only with their grand-parents and they felt sorry about that, although were ready to accept it as part of assimilation. Nevertheless the majority of respondents, especially those having children, are keen to stay informed through the "Koleso" about opportunities of 'Soviet' and 'Russian' holidays celebrations that they can attend with their children.

The same approach is applied to such cultural discourses as the Soviet and Russian literature, music and movies. Some of those artefacts were entertaining in nature, some devoted to those national holidays that the members of the community celebrate, for instance Victory Day, but all of them impacted my respondents' identities hugely. All of these artefacts had been handed down from generation to generation and the parents are keen for their children to know them. The "Koleso" newspaper tries to meet those expectations by publishing reading lists of



people's favourite books, music festivals and visiting actors or information about the movies.

Children of my respondents grow up in completely different environment and build their Canadian identities in many cases together with their parents.

Zizek (1993) explains that enjoyment is one of the ways to ensure a strong community spirit. Clarke et al. (2007) note that sharing emotions including enjoyment “is the way in which we imagine our community to be and therefore is often based on a nostalgic attraction to another way of life that never really existed or got lost” (p. 99). Interestingly enough, none of my focus respondents mentioned what needs to be done to make the Russian-language community in Calgary more cohesive and how to ensure that every new initiative would stay sustainable and attract new and more participants including themselves. Yet they had many valid comments on how to improve the “Koleso” to help Mr. Kolesnikov keep his newspaper evolving.

In identity theory self-categorization is important in defining our self as ‘an occupant of a role’ (Stets and Burke, 2000, p.225). Self-categorization is reflective as we constantly think about meanings and expectations connected with our roles within structured social structures be it our families, communities or professional associations (McCall and Simons, 1978; Turner et al., 1987; Stryker, 1980). Stets and Burke (2000) note that identity theorists identified that resources or ‘things’ that allow us to sustain ourselves and build our relationships with others, play a more and more prominent role in building our identity. I argue that for immigrants any alteration of meanings and expectations in terms of social structures and resources inevitably leads to changes in the self, the role and results in further variations to their identities. I know that self-reflection becomes for an immigrant second nature. This process is helpful in defining similarities but more importantly it allows detecting the differences that impact your role and ability to settle down in the new environment. I believe that the faster you start understanding

your new role while adding another ‘identity layer’, the less stressful your integration would be. Any resources in this process are valuable and needed.

My focus groups respondents were emotional about their past identities from expressing feelings of resentment to sharing tender recollections of their childhoods. Memories of the past have certainly not faded and they largely impacted their present identities thus affected their roles and behaviour. Those respondents who have been in Canada for a long time, are employed and have good English at the point of the focus groups had virtually no recollection of their challenges in Canada or were unwilling to share them in a group setting.

The “Koleso” newspaper supports intergenerational continuity within the Calgary Russian-speaking community helping both children and their parents in aligning their identities. The proportion of news from Canada versus Russia or sometimes other republics of the former Soviet Union in the “Koleso” newspaper is noticeably balanced in favour of the latter ones. Mr. Kolesnikov who went through immigration hurdles himself pays much attention to offering practical ‘survival’ tips from specialists including resume writing, job search, Canadian banking or insurance systems, stories of people sharing their immigrant’s mistakes and accomplishments. However, some of those stories are redundant for the existing readers of the “Koleso” as they get repeated from issue to issue over the years. Those focus groups respondents who speak English receive *Canadian news* from the mainstream Canadian media before some of it gets published in the “Koleso”, but for those respondents who speak Russian only the “Koleso” is the only opportunity to read about such developments as Canadian municipal, provincial or federal elections or such types of programs as Blue Card by The City of Calgary. One of the focus groups representatives called the newspaper “the guest from the past” and “the guest from the

future” implying that the newspaper provides those connections to their past identities but also helps them to acquire the skills that can be useful in the future.

As Clarke et al. (2007) mention, some members of the community may identify themselves so strongly with the community that community becomes for them a second family. It is unfortunate that I did not meet such types of people in my focus groups with the exception of the “Koleso” Editor-in-Chief. “While such a level of involvement in the community is rare”, note Clarke et al. (2007, p.95), “there is general admiration for those community members who put themselves forward.” While providing their constructive feedback about content of the “Koleso” newspaper from moving to a more efficient Intranet platform to high quality editing to ensure the ‘proper’ Russian language, the respondents of focus groups were acutely conscious that the “Koleso” newspaper was a full-time job for Mr. Kolesnikov with all those ups and downs that any job entails, the fact of the Editor’s-in-Chief self-devotion to the newspaper was acknowledged by all focus groups.

Ethnic identity maintained by the “Koleso” newspaper for its readers is an essential part of a national identity that the Editor-in-Chief attempts to create for his readers. As Huston (2012) argues putting “ethnic group identity before national identity” is the way to “distinguish and value ethnic identity within a national identity” (p.14).

### **5.3. Social Connections**

Creating social connections for the newcomers falls into a “survival category”. Immigrants create social connections on two levels: within their ethnic community or diaspora and within social structures of their host country. Immigrants’ skills to create social connections

are vital to establish a social network, get know the culture, find a job and ultimately integrate into the new society.

Essed (1996) describes three phases of immigrant's adaptation to new environment. During the first phase immigrants are "looking back". The amount of information they need to learn and the number of people they need to meet can be overwhelming. It is common for immigrants not only feel nostalgic but also to consider returning to their home countries. In the second phase, when immigrants more or less are settled down in the host country, they start questioning their initial thoughts about going back. They find the new environment more attractive, less hostile. During the third and the final phase called "here to stay" immigrants consider themselves to be part of the society and are ready to take "responsibility for their quality of life in that society" (pp. 59-60).

In my conversations with the focus groups participants as well as with Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the "Koleso" newspaper, all of these stages were recalled in one or the other way. Mr. Kolesnikov, for example, mentioned his personal difficulties with integration, but also a few individuals who struggled to assimilate into the local environment so much, they decided to go back to Russia.

The "Koleso" content analysis shows that building a social network within a short period of time and an employment are the most burning issues among new immigrants. The newspaper creates virtual social connections between the readers by publishing real stories of those who were successful in their job search, volunteering and participation in various community events. Those categories of the "Koleso" readers, who are employed and have been in Canada for a long time and have no problems with English, may not appreciate the importance of such articles. But

those respondents in my focus groups who were unemployed, new to the country, had no friends and did not speak English certainly did.

The concept of “social connections” is broad. In everyday life we turn this concept into a practical tool to connect with other people to either expand or sustain our social network. While we can be strategic in deciding who we would like to meet, many of us, including my focus group respondents, did not pay specific attention to types of connections we form while reading a newspaper, for example the “Koleso”, at our leisure. People follow a set of specific practices (Hall, 2006) while consuming the media “not just by explicit understandings, but also being governed by common rules and by sharing the common reference-point of certain ends, projects and beliefs” (Schatzki, 1996, p.89). The newspaper’s content that demonstrates those common reference-points should be attractive for everyone, at a first glance, but on a closer look we can find some variations.

Mr. Kolesnikov, as the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” newspaper, was confident that he knew those common reference points because he shared the same characteristics of personal identity and life experiences with his readers.

In Canada, with such a variety of different media outlets, it is the matter of making the choices *you* want. However, this principal works only if your proficiency in English is high enough to consume the English language media. This category, as my focus groups show, does not need any information from mortgage brokers, insurance or real estate agents who speak Russian because they can access such types of services in English thus expanding their choice significantly. Respondents from this group were making comments about objectivity of published information pertaining to the above-mentioned services. For those respondents who had poor English, connections with the “Koleso” was a two-way street as the newspaper was

their link to Canada, Calgary and the community. Obviously, the amount of connections they create with the newspaper is far broader than for their peers from the first group.

Language is an essential part of our self and our ethnic identity. Ethnic identities of the Calgary Russian-speaking community vary, but the Russian language being the common spoken language by the community members, serves as a multi-national connection between them and their historical and cultural heritage.

A “three generation” model of language proficiency described by Matsaganis et al. (2011) demonstrates that the first generation immigrants are fluent in their native language. Interestingly enough, in case of the Calgary Russian-speaking community those respondents who were fluent in English kept peppering their Russian speech with English words during focus groups conversations. I can describe the connection of this group of respondents to the “Koleso” more as a one-way street. People from this group do not need to feel connected to the newspaper at all times. They, nevertheless, use the newspaper to find specific information, for example, about holiday events for their children or new Russian food stores, because mainstream media do not publish it.

The second generation consists of families of mixed marriages, Canadian-born children and children whose identity has changed under the influence of their Canadian environment. This generation speaks the language of their host country as the first one. All of my focus respondents were aware of that fact. Many Russian-speaking parents had poor English-language proficiency upon their arrival to Canada and went through substantial challenges while trying to integrate into the local society. They do not want their children to go through the same challenges or even to display an accent to be identified as an immigrant. These parents go to great lengths for their children to know English as their first language and Russian as the second one. At the same time

some respondents expressed their concerns over the fact that the only opportunity for their grand-children to practice Russian was their visits to grand-parents.

Matsaganis et al. argue that the third-generation of immigrants most certainly will not speak the language of their origin country and by the fourth generation the family “will experience the language shift” (p.83).

The Russian language serves as a connection between the “Koleso” newspaper, its Editor-in-Chief and the readers. Finding the content for ethnic media is a challenge and the fact that the vast majority of articles published in the “Koleso” are written by its readers, ensures the newspaper’s viability. It means that as long as the newspaper has readers who are fluent in Russian, it will not be short of information. Following-up on the above mentioned ‘three-generation’ model, the contributors to the newspaper will remain the representatives of the first-generation immigrants. As one of the focus groups respondents put it: “Immigration will never stop to Canada. There will be many new people who will keep coming here from the former Soviet Union”.

Launching the newspaper in 2009 Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” wanted to create around his newspaper a ‘social hub’ for the Russian-speaking Calgary community. When asked to describe communication channels in his social club and the connections it creates with and for the readers, Mr. Kolesnikov said: “I do it firstly through advertising and marketing and secondly, through all kinds of events.”

Stable advertising revenue is one of the sources to ensure the “Koleso” newspaper’s sustainability. The focus groups’ respondents revealed a good understanding of the newspaper’s economics. In every focus group the subject of advertising was brought up in two aspects.

Respondents named it as one of the most desirable parts of the newspaper's content and mentioned its importance for the newspaper's sustainability.

Yu and Murray (2007) who undertook the study of the Korean ethnic media in British Columbia point out that ethnic media is subject to the same market and economics challenges as other media outlets. If other media publications can be subsidized by the government or other institutions, ethnic media in most cases rely on advertising dollars only. Yu and Murray explain: "The ethnic media reflect new demands created by an influx of new immigrants providing structure and market exchange of information essential to the growing 'ethnic enclave economy' (Murray and Yu, 2007, p.106). In the case of the "Koleso" newspaper advertising is more than just 'market exchange of information'. For me as a researcher the fact that advertising in the "Koleso" plays such an important role for the readers was a revelation. Mr. Kolesnikov was successful in creating a social hub around advertising as every focus group mentioned its informational, educational, cultural and social functions. Green (1999) explains: "An individual's identification with his or her group is likely to play an important role in how information is processed and how marketing-related decisions are made" (p. 49).

Both individual and ethnic identities are closely linked to food people consume, and ethnic food is an essential part of people's identities. "Ethnic foods are in fact a particular and complex category of market goods, which reflect shared definitions of a certain culture in terms of its beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours" (Carrus et al., 2009, p.66). Ethnic food brings not only sense of comfort but is closely associated with ethnic traditions. For instance, there are certain products and dishes that all immigrants from the former Soviet Union would have on their festive New Year tables. Advertising from existing and new Russian food stores is information that at least three focus groups participants looked for. Actually one focus group was



held in a private house where I was treated to a wonderful dinner comprising many products and dishes from one of the Russian food stores.

Yu and Murray (2007) advise that such “high-end products” as real estate, cars, banks and academic institutions are advertised to “specific consumer segments” (p.107). I do not necessarily agree with that. When you buy a house in an upscale neighbourhood is one thing, but when you need to start from somewhere without knowing how the banking system works or what are the mortgage rules is another thing. The same applied to cars and academic institutions. Those focus groups respondent who spoke English mentioned that they would not rely on this information from the “Koleso” because they would like to have a broader choice from the English-speaking mortgage brokers, travel or insurance agents. But for those of my respondents who were new to the country and did not speak English this information was crucial.

The “Koleso” newspaper, for example, does not publish advertising for the universities but education comes not only through those educational institutions especially if your English is far from the desired proficiency. This communication gap is filled to some extent through individual stories when people share their experiences of entering a Canadian University, completing their education and finding a job.

Events organized by and for the Calgary Russian-speaking community and on a larger scale by the Calgary community is another social connection provided by the “Koleso” newspaper. An in-depth research of relations within the Calgary Russian - speaking community was not part of my study, therefore it was difficult for me to determine if those community events were organized and attended by the same crowd every time or by different people, but my focus groups respondents and I as a researcher were excited to know that the community organized in the past such events as restoration of St. Patrick’s Church building, concerts

devoted to various ‘Soviet’ and religious holidays of all types from Victory Day to the International Women’s Day (March 8<sup>th</sup>), charity, exhibitions and performances by the Russian theatres, art studios etc.

My study demonstrates that the “Koleso” newspaper, being the only Russian-language newspaper in Calgary, certainly provides multiple social connections for its readers. However, as my focus groups show the views of different members or non-members of the Russian-speaking Calgary community on “The Koleso’s” role in their lives varied substantially. I concluded that these variations were based on the main three factors: the English language proficiency of respondents, the duration of their stay in Canada and freedom of choice in the media consumption.

#### **5.4. Conclusions**

The present thesis' contribution to literature is fourfold. Firstly, the study was unique in a sense that neither Russian ethnic media in Calgary nor the Calgary Russian-speaking community have been in the centre of academic research previously.

In my study I was addressing two main questions about connections that the “Koleso” helps to create for its readers and identities it helps to build and maintain. As the result of the “Koleso” content analysis, an interview with Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” newspaper I concluded that the “Koleso” newspaper provides social connections for its readers and helps to maintain their identities while they are acquiring new ones, but these connections depend on the whole range of circumstances discussed in this paper.

Secondly, the study revealed that the role of the Editor-in-Chief of an ethnic publication is wider than simply ensuring the sources of revenue. Throughout the thesis I have demonstrated

how the vision, common historical and cultural background shared by the Editor-in-Chief with his audience can be critical for ensuring the success of an ethnic publication.

In the case of the “Koleso” newspaper, the fact that its Editor-in-Chief shares the same historical and cultural heritage as his readers helps in shaping the content that is in demand by all three categories of the newspaper’s readers: contributors, devoted, and occasional readers. Each of these groups can find something of interest to them. Mr. Kolesnikov claims:

*“My newspaper helps to all those people who have problems with English language and because of that do not have access to local information. My newspaper allows them to know what is happening in Canada. I have gone through my own immigrant experience and, based on that experience, I determine the content as I know what the new immigrants would like to read in my newspaper.”*

Thirdly, the literature explores advertising largely from the revenue perspective, but my study demonstrates that it can also have quite substantial social functions as discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Lastly, the “Koleso” Newspaper’s Audience Circles diagram that I have developed to describe the circles of the “Koleso” readership is based not only on connections that the readers have with the newspaper and the level of their involvement, but also on the frequency of their interaction with it. It can be applied in principal to any other ethnic publication to determine and demonstrate the level of a community’s involvement with it.

Huston (2012) notes: “Traditionally Canadian third language media provide advertising, community information, news and commentary, support cultural sustainability and offer a necessary public forum for their respective communities, with content that is largely produced in Canada for domestic and interested global third language audiences.” (p. 31).

The “Koleso” newspaper complies with the above statement entirely. However, every ethnic publication is as unique as the community producing and consuming it and my study of the “Koleso” newspaper and its audience has proved it.

#### *5.4.1. Refining the Content*

As my study reveals, Mr. Kolesnikov’s goal to create a social hub has been successfully implemented, but the very meaning of the “social hub” is understood differently by the members of the Calgary Russian-speaking community from *“I read this newspaper only once in a while”* to *“We cannot live without this newspaper.”*

There were no respondents in focus groups that were indifferent to the “Koleso” newspaper’s content. Comments about refining the “Koleso” kept coming in throughout the discussions with all focus groups except for group of a seniors (# 2) who said *“we like the newspaper the way it is”*. The participants appreciated the fact that the newspaper published many stories and memoirs from the readers. Some of them said that owing to those memoirs they were able to virtually travel to some places that they have left or never visited.

Those groups that comprised respondents of different nationalities (Belarus, Ukraine, Central Asia) mentioned that it would be helpful to read more news from other republics of the former Soviet Union and not only Russia.

The majority of respondents mentioned that they see the “Koleso” as the main source of information about the Russian-speaking community and would appreciate having an Event Calendar that would summarize all community events for every subsequent month. In this regard, the participants were particularly interested in information about holiday celebrations to stay connected with their cultural heritage.

A few respondents said that the “Koleso” should ensure that realtors, insurance or mortgage brokers’ columns contain unbiased information. The majority of respondents called for expanding the content to include more analytical features. A few people mentioned that they enjoy reading a page for children and would like to see more children stories in the newspaper which they connect to the newspaper’s opportunity to add more readers to its audience.

I presume that for any ethnic newspaper it would be challenging to meet requirements of all audience segments as they differ so substantially in terms of age, gender, education or professional backgrounds, language or technical abilities, the duration of stay in Canada.

To summarize the above, those participants who spoke English and have spent a considerable amount of time in Canada said that they were eager to read the “Koleso” at the very beginning of their arrival to Canada from ‘*cover to cover*’. As time went by, their identities changed, they felt settled down, they admitted to not having so much need of the newspaper. They would go to pick up the “Koleso” either to find a specific piece of information or when they happen to be in a Russian or a Polish store or on purpose, at the request of their family members who do not speak English.

However, when asked if the “Koleso” or any other Russian newspaper in Calgary was needed, all of my respondents were unanimous in saying: “Of course, **we** need our own newspaper!”

#### *5.4.2. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study*

One of the strongest factors that limited this study was the disengagement of the Calgary Russian-speaking community. Being Russian myself I can say that it was an adventure on my side to undertake this study. When I shared my plan to research the “Koleso” newspaper and the

Calgary Russian-speaking community with one of the Russian food stores owners, they said: “I cannot imagine how you will recruit your focus groups!”

There are many reasons for that disengagement that I have discussed in this paper including political and social fatigue, an atomization and unwillingness to communicate with compatriots, high privacy levels, and fear of public discussions especially when the topic is unknown.

Although I have completed my study, I keep checking my University email account that had been specifically created for the study and was advertised in the “Koleso” newspaper. Four months later I still have not received a single message from a potential respondent.

The small size of my focus groups prohibited applying the received data to all 30, 000 Russian-speakers living in Calgary. Among 17 respondents that I had recruited for the study, I did not have so called ‘active’ members of the Calgary Russian-speaking community. By ‘active’ I mean those members who organize the various events, attend them on a regular basis and keep in touch with other members, and ultimately confirm that they consider themselves belonging to this community. The fact that I had four focus groups acting as separate entities rather than as the community members restricted me from identifying and creating another layer of connections between the “Koleso” newspaper and its audience.

In spite of the above-mentioned limitations through snow-balling technique I successfully recruited respondents of a rich diversity in terms of their ethnicities, life experiences and duration of stay in Canada. This diversity has been reflected in clusters of themes and multi-layered approaches to reading the “Koleso” newspaper that have been discussed in the study. The fact that the respondents possessed such diverse backgrounds allowed me to capture their

feedback about the nature of their connections with the “Koleso” newspaper and the family members whom they represented.

It is worth mentioning an impact on the quality of my study that was made by Mr. Kolesnikov, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Koleso” newspaper. I neither knew him prior to the study nor had any obligations to report about the progress or findings, yet he had chosen to share candid comments about his personal experiences, the newspaper and the Calgary Russian-speaking community which added richness to my study. It also allowed me to explain on a granular level how the vision of a publisher influences the nature of social connections in time and space between all three types of the “Koleso” newspaper audiences from contributors to occasional readers.

The fact that I have successfully completed my study should encourage any future academic research of that community.

#### *5.4.3. Future Research*

The Russian-speakers in Calgary, from my perspective, are largely atomized due to a number of factors largely based on their collective memories and past identities. For the benefit of looking at the ways how this atomization could be reduced, it would be worthwhile researching the younger generation of Russians immigrating to Calgary.

Russian immigrants as mentioned by Mr. Kolesnikov who studies his audience on a regular basis are getting younger and younger. 25-30 year old Russian-speaking immigrants come to Canada with perfect English and do not carry the baggage of the Soviet past. Do they consider themselves belonging to the Calgary Russian-speaking community? Do they form close bonds and connections with other community members? What are they? How these bonds help

them in settling down in Canada and keeping connections with their homeland? These would be the questions to ask in order to get a fresh perspective from that particular group of the Russian-speakers that would hopefully help inform future recommendations on how the Calgary Russian-speaking community could be strengthened furthermore.

Another discovery that I have made as the result of the study was a role that advertising plays in the life of the Calgary Russian-speaking community. As one of the respondents noted the “Koleso” newspaper, perhaps, is the only publication that is chosen by its readers because of advertising. Literature explores advertising largely from the revenue perspective, but my study demonstrates that it has broader functions than that. By exploring in more depth those functions, a future study can help publishers to better utilize this tool to reinforce connections with the audience, bring more value to readers as well as secure sustainability of ethnic media publications.



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## APPENDIX A

### **Consent Form: The “Koleso” Newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief**

#### **Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone and Email:**

Lolita Jukova, MA student, Communications, Department of Communication and Culture,  
[ethnic.media@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ethnic.media@ucalgary.ca)

#### **Supervisor:**

Professor Barbara Schneider, Department of Communication and Culture

#### **Title of Project:**

“Ethnic Media, Identity, and Community: a Case Study of the “Koleso” Newspaper”

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only a part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not include here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and if you do not understand any accompanying information, please ask for clarification.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of my study is to understand what drives the audience towards ethnic media and what role ethnic media play in the lives of immigrants and their ethnic communities; what needs they satisfy by choosing ethnic media and to answer the following two questions: does the “Koleso” newspaper help the Russian-speaking community in their ever changing identity-building journey and in what sense? Does the “Koleso” newspaper provide any connections for its readers and if so what are they?

#### **What Will I Be Asked To Do?**

*You will be invited to respond to a list of questions pertaining to your publication either in writing, verbally or both. This will take no more than 1, 5 hours of your time.*



### **What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?**

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw without penalty from the study at any time. Data collected up to the point of withdrawal will be retained for use. Data is being collected solely for the requirements of a graduate research and will be used in thesis. Due to the fact that the research is based specifically on the publication associated with you in your capacity of the Editor-in-Chief, you will be named in thesis in association with your contributions to the research. If you choose to be interviewed rather than replying in writing, an interview will be audio recorded.

### **Are There Risks or Benefits If I Participate?**

There are no minimal risks involved for the participant. The researcher may cover the costs of coffee/tea for the participant.

The benefits for editor-in-chief of the “Koleso” newspaper include:

- Receiving information about their audience’s needs and requests firsthand
- Getting know about the drivers behind their interest
- Raising profile of their publications in the community

### **What Happens to the Information I Provide?**

Participation is completely voluntary. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. Data collected up to the point of withdrawal will be retained for use. Data is being collected solely for the requirements of a graduate research and will be used in thesis.

The interview tapes and/or notes will be kept in a locked cabinet accessible only by the researcher and her supervisor. The data will be destroyed upon the completion of the project.

### ***SIGNATURES (WRITTEN CONSENT)***

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant’s Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant’ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions/Concerns?**

If you have any further questions or want clarifications regarding the research and/or your participation, please contact: Barbara Schneider, Professor and Course Instructor, at (403) 220-6460 or [baschnei@ucalgary.ca](mailto:baschnei@ucalgary.ca)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Senior Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782; email [rburrows@ucalgary.ca](mailto:rburrows@ucalgary.ca)

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Consent Form – Focus Groups**

#### **Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone and Email:**

Lolita Jukova, MA student, Communications, Department of Communication and Culture,  
[ethnic.media@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ethnic.media@ucalgary.ca)

#### **Supervisor:**

Professor Barbara Schneider, Department of Communication and Culture

#### **Title of Project:**

“Ethnic Media, Identity, and Community: a Case Study of the “Koleso” Newspaper”

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only apart of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not include here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and if you do not understand any accompanying information, please ask for clarification.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of my study is to understand what drives the audience towards ethnic media and what role ethnic media play in the lives of immigrants and their ethnic communities; what needs they satisfy by choosing ethnic media and to answer the following two questions: does the “Koleso” newspaper help the Russian-speaking community in their ever changing identity-building journey and in what sense? Does the “Koleso” newspaper provide any connections for its readers and if so what are they?

#### **What Will I Be Asked To Do?**

You will be invited to respond to a few questions on the subject in a group setting. This will take no more than an hour of your time.

#### **What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?**

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw without penalty from the study at any time in the course of the focus group. Data collected up to the point of withdrawal will be retained for use. Data is being collected solely for the requirements of a graduate research and

will be used in thesis. No personal identifying information will be collected in this study, however, absolute anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the group setting. The group session will be audio recorded.

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide your gender, age and academic major.

### **Are There Any Risks or Benefits If I Participate?**

There are no minimal risks involved for the participant. The researcher may cover the costs of coffee/tea for the participants.

The benefits for the participants include:

- Contributing to the research of ethnic media in general and the Russian ethnic media and diaspora in Calgary in particular
- An opportunity to express their opinions and be heard
- Networking
- Raising awareness about the Russian ethnic media and the Russian community

### **What Happens to the Information I Provide?**

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. Data collected up to the point of withdrawal will be retained for use. Data is being collected solely for the requirements of a graduate research and will be used in thesis. The interview tapes will be kept in a locked cabinet accessible only by the researcher and her supervisor. Only group information will be summarized for any presentation or publication of results. The anonymous data will be destroyed upon the completion of the project.

### ***SIGNATURES (WRITTEN CONSENT)***

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions/Concerns?**

If you have any further questions or want clarifications regarding the research and/or your participation, please contact Barbara Schneider, Professor and Course Instructor at (403) 220-6460 or [baschnei@ucalgary.ca](mailto:baschnei@ucalgary.ca)

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Senior Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782; email [rburrows@ucalgary.ca](mailto:rburrows@ucalgary.ca)

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

## APPENDIX C

### Questions to the “Koleso” Newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief:

1. Why did you decide to establish your newspaper?
2. How long your newspaper has been published?
3. Where is it available?
4. Can you describe your audience? (age, gender, education, interests, duration of stay in Canada/Calgary)
5. Do you maintain any connections with your audience and how?
6. Does your readership contribute to the content of your newspaper and how?
7. What those contributions are about – your audience’s past experiences, lives in Canada or something from their future?
8. Our identities change throughout our lives depending on life-cycle, space and time we find ourselves in. Do you think your newspaper help Russian immigrants to add/shape their new identities in Canada or maintain their existing identities and how?
9. How do you choose the content for your newspaper?
10. How the content of your newspaper has been evolving since its inception?
11. Do you consider your newspaper to be an educational, inspirational, entertaining tool for your audience? Why?
12. Can you provide an estimated breakdown of the articles/information in your publication devoted to the past experiences of your readership (former USSR or the CIS countries), the current state (provincial and federal news) or the future opportunities (plans, projections)?
13. What types of articles/information you publish to maintain/build those connections to the past, the present or the future? Can you give some examples?

## **APPENDIX D**

1. How did you find out about the “Koleso” newspaper?
2. Do you think it’s important to have the Russian language print media in Calgary and why?
3. What are the main reasons (informational, educational, entertaining or inspirational) for you to read the newspaper?
4. Do you look for any specific content (articles related to you past, present or future) while reading the newspaper?
5. What would you like to change in or add to the newspaper?

