

National Research University  
Higher School of Economics

As a manuscript

Nikita Bolshakov

**Occupational Choice Factors of Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Students of Vocational  
Education Programs**

Thesis Summary for the purpose of obtaining PhD in Sociology

Academic Supervisor:  
PhD in Sociology  
Elena Iarskaia-Smirnova

Moscow, 2020

## **Problem Statement**

Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012 contributes to the revision of the main approaches to the analysis of disability. It pays great attention to the issues of education and employment of people with disabilities, which means that it is necessary not only to comprehensively support people with disabilities, but also to create a system that unleashes the potential of each individual through different institutions, including education and employment. At the same time, considering people with disabilities as a homogeneous group ignores special characteristics of certain categories and can therefore impose serious restrictions on their successful professional adaptation. One of such groups — the deaf and hard of hearing people (DHOH) — will be in focus of this study.

Currently, vocational training of the DHOH is being conducted in 74 specialties. The state program *Dostupnaya Sreda* (Accessible Environment) for 2016–2020 includes sections on the vocational education of people with hearing impairments, in particular, on translating already existing programs into sign language and adapting them to the needs of the DHOH. Over the past years, positive changes have occurred in the vocational education for the deaf, and in the coming years the number of available professions should be increased. However, representatives of vocational education institutions that currently DHOH say there is no competition in any specialized programs, while DHOH claim they face various legal and institutional barriers to obtaining quality education and adequate jobs.

In 2015, 1403 hearing-impaired students were studying in 68 educational vocational education institutions and 884 hearing-impaired students went to 112 universities. At the same time, the total number of students of higher educational institutions in Russia is 4766 thousand people, while in vocational education institutions study only 686,000 people. Thus, the choice of educational trajectory is not the same for the deaf and the hearing. While the deaf 1.6 times choose secondary vocational education, the hearing are significantly more likely to choose a trajectory involving higher education. It indicates high popularity of secondary vocational education for the DHOH and draws attention of researchers to this particular level of education.

At present, the special education system in Russia is being transformed as a result of the adoption of the new Law on Education. In recent years, the main concerns of parents and the deaf community have been associated with the introduction of inclusive education. Many activists opposed to the closure of correctional schools, and in some cities of the country rallies were held to preserve the existing education system for children with disabilities. Later it was decided to abandon the so-called "forced inclusion" and today parents of deaf children have the opportunity to choose between inclusive or specialized schools. However, the process of reforming the system of special education is not yet complete.

Under these conditions, it remains unknown how exactly one or another professional trajectory is selected, which factors are the most significant in the process of occupational choice and which barriers in particular become the most important on the path of professional adaptation of the DHOH. This research uses a mixed-method design. It was empirically based on the results of an all-Russian survey of deaf and hard of hearing students of secondary vocational schools, as well as interviews with representatives of this category. In addition, experts in the field of education and employment of people with disabilities were interviewed.

### **Elaboration of the Problem**

Despite the fact that the concepts of professional trajectories and occupational choice have been analyzed in the foreign (P. Bourdieu, M. Bloomer, S. Spilerman, J- R. Treanon, E. Hughes and others) and Russian sociology (G. Cherednichenko, D. Konstantinovsky, V. Shubkin, I. Frumin, D. Kurakin, D. Popov, Yu. Tyumeneva, Yu. Kuzmina and others), the application of these theories to people with disabilities was unsystematic. Various concepts related to the choice of a profession by people with disabilities are discussed in the works of psychologists, medics and educators, but all of them are more likely rehabilitational or didactic and do not take into account social determinants of this process.

The study of deafness and the community of people with hearing impairment constitute a separate direction in the West (Deaf Studies), but in Russia DHOH rarely came into the focus of sociologists. In a number of sociological works dedicated to social policy, people with hearing impairments are considered among other people with disabilities (S. Whitefield, G. Karpova, S. Kelly, E. Naberushkina, P. Romanov, V. Sobkin, V. Tkachenko, E. Iarskaia-Smirnova, V. Shmidt, etc.). A direct sociological analysis of the community DHOH is carried out by V. Palenny, K. Chupina, M. Yasin and other authors. However, in the presented studies, the issues of professional adaptation of people with disabilities were either not considered at all, or were only touched upon indirectly. All pedagogical and psychological works are more likely devoted to the development of normative documentation and methodological organization of labor training and vocational education for the DHOH, while the social aspects themselves have so far remained beyond the attention of researchers (I. Akimenko, V. Bazoev, V. Velgus, A. Gozova, A. Dyachkov, S. Zykov, L. Novoselov, G. Penin, I. Tsukerman, V. Chulkov etc.).

## **Aims and Objectives**

### **Aims:**

To find out the main factors that determine occupational choice of the DHOH who are understood as an internally heterogeneous group with special educational needs and socio-cultural characteristics in contemporary Russia

### **Objectives:**

1. To describe methodological features of sociological research of the DHOH.
2. To describe traditional and post-traditional approaches to the analysis of deafness at the theoretical and empirical levels in medical, social and cultural terms in the context of their influence on the education system of the deaf and hard of hearing people.

3. To describe the features of historical development and the current state of professional training system for the DHOH in Russia as factors that determine their occupational choice.
4. To systematize the factors of occupational choice of the deaf and hard of hearing at different levels.
  - 4.1. Identify key agents and the most significant characteristics of the occupational choice of the DHOH people.
  - 4.2. Identify and analyze the expectations of DHOH young people regarding the situation on the labor market, their own career prospects, employment opportunities, determine the role of these expectations as factors of occupational choice.
  - 4.3. Assess the expectations of the DHOH students about the role of different agents in supporting employment and ensuring independent living for people with hearing disabilities.
  - 4.4. To systematize the types of barriers in the process of occupational choice of the DHOH people, including on the basis of their student's perception.

### **Hypotheses:**

1. The social model of disability overcomes the limitations of medical and administrative models from a theoretical and methodological perspective. It makes possible the formulation of conceptual and applied goals of social policy for increasing of occupational choice of DHOH youth.
2. Macro-level factors related to the structural features of the education and employment systems and the legal sphere are the main barriers narrowing the occupational choice opportunities for DHOH youth.
3. Agents of the meso-level, like educational institutions and employment services, will play a more important role in employment than agents of the micro-level, like parents and acquaintances.

4. The key agents influencing the occupational choice of the DHOH at the micro-level are the parents who guide the child and pass on their professional status.
5. The subjective aspirations of DHOH students structure their occupational choice: their own career prospects, as well as the situation on the labor market in general, are assessed by students rather negatively.
6. Young people endow their experience of obtaining vocational education and making occupational choices with the subjective meanings of Deaf culture and affiliation with the deaf community.

### **Research Limitations and their Specific**

The lack of convincing statistical information on the number of DHOH in Russia has become one of the key limitations to this study and made it impossible to construct a representative sample. Russian statistics reflect the number of DHOH only with an official disability status, and data on people with disabilities are often not split by separate nosologies and represent “people with disabilities” as a generalized group. There is also no complete information on the characteristics of the age group of interest to us (16-30 years). Inability of constructing a representative sample does not allow extrapolating the results of this study to the entire population and is the main reason why the research is of an explorative nature.

An additional limitation of this study is that its author is hearing, although he knows the basic level of sign language, and is also integrated into the deaf community. The study was of a participatory nature: we tried not to limit the DHOH to the role of an empirical object, but to empower them with the rights of co-researchers and involve both in the development of the methodology and in the interpretation of the collected data. Even the problem of the research is based on the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community in Russia: issues of professional education are widely discussed within the community, both at the level of interpersonal communication and formal organizations.

## **Theoretical and methodological basis of the research**

The theoretical basis of the research comprises two key groups of theories: theories that consider the process of transition of an individual from a student to an employee in terms of occupational choice and professional trajectories, as well as deafness theories that consider various approaches to the concept of deafness and the impact of these interpretations on the social (and professional) the life of an individual. In addition, the study used the concepts of the ecosystem approach by U. Bronfenbrenner and the levels of educational inclusion by T.Booth and M.Ainscow.

If originally occupational choice was understood by psychologists and teachers as a spontaneous and individual process, mediated by personal characteristics of an individual. From the 1960s the concept of occupational choice was placed into the scope sociological tradition. The main interest in this topic was related to the fact that the situation of occupational choice has significant consequences for the further status of a person in the community, their income, welfare, lifestyle, etc.

The initial focus of sociologists has shifted towards the intergenerational transmission of inequality within the framework of the social structure, therefore, the works analyzed primarily the reproduction of parental employment patterns in the labor biographies of children. Later researchers included in the analysis such characteristics as gender, race and ethnicity, community size and family characteristics, as well as academic abilities of students and other characteristics. Psychological researches of the middle of the last century were focused on individual characteristics, interests, values and orientations that determine this situation of occupational choice. Later researchers realized that the situation of occupational choice is complex and is determined by various processes both at the level of an individual and a family, and in the society as a whole. In addition, the inclusion of such characteristics in the analysis allowed sociologists to shift their focus from the vertical hierarchy to the horizontal social structure.

Thus, some theories suggest that making professional choice decisions is a rational process in which young people assess their own abilities and interests and the range of

opportunities that are available to them. Other theories emphasize the limitations of individual choice by structural characteristics. In this study, we use theories that integrate the features of both approaches and consider individual choices in the context of structural constraints that shape the way deaf and hard of hearing youth perceive those choices. In addition to ascriptive factors such as gender, race, education, status, etc., career choice largely depends on the national contexts of education, social policy, the labor market. The influence of the family is determined not only by the status of parental employment, as noted above, but can also be reflected in two key areas: through the provision of additional opportunities, for example, financial, educational, informational, or through socialization, the transfer of various practices, values, and relationships between parents and children. Finally, contexts of family, work experience in adolescence and the local community play one of the decisive roles in the decision-making process on occupational choice. The prospects for occupational choice vary significantly among residents of rural and urban areas, among the general population and among various minorities, women and men, as well as, respectively, people with various forms of disability and without. At the same time, research disability is considered, as a rule, in the context of “health” and / or “rehabilitation”.

In this study we were interested in occupational choice of the DHOH in the context of long-term trajectories of professional development. . In the theory of P. Bourdieu, who introduced this concept into sociological discourse, individual trajectories are determined by social origin, which fixes the possible orientation of the trajectory and the position of the final achievement. However, today, thanks to the work of such researchers as M. Bloomer, P. Hodkinson, F. Bühlmann , L. Crockett, G. Elder, J.Z. Giele, A. Lesley, H. Krahn, S. Monchatre, etc., the idea of a “professional trajectory” and related concepts has somewhat expanded. This term is no longer interpreted unambiguously linearly, but is understood as a set of steps taken by an individual to realize his or her professional needs. Among the main researchers of professional and educational trajectories in Russia are D. Konstantinovskiy, G. Cherednichenko, V. Shubkin, as well as employees of the Institute of Education of the



Higher School of Economics implementing a number of projects to study educational and labor trajectories of young people.

The second important group of theories underlying this thesis are the works dedicated to the analysis of the concept of deafness. A radical revision of society's views on deafness during the 20th century was mainly due to a change in the scientific discourse around people with hearing impairments, which was the result of the a more active struggle of people with disabilities for their rights and their own identity, as well as of the development of the concept of independent life for people with disabilities. It is understood as the human right to be an integral part of the life of society and to take an active part in social, political and economic processes, freedom of choice and freedom of access to residential and public buildings, transport, means of communication, insurance, labor and education. By the beginning of the 21st century, several approaches to the understanding of deafness were formed in the social sciences. These approaches can be combined into several parallel models of explanation, which are produced by the socio-political context and differently interpret deafness. The key body of theoretical approaches that conceptualize the transition from traditional to post-traditional interpretations of disability is represented by the works of V. Finkelstein, C. Barnes, M. Oliver, as well as authors who developed views on deafness as a cultural construct: P.Ladd, J.Harris, P.Higgins, H.L.Lane and others. Among Russian researchers it is important to single out first V.Palenni, V.Bazoev and other authors.

Differences in views on deafness during the 19th and 21st centuries critically determined the position of DHOH in the social structure of the society, as well as their educational opportunities and professions. Until recently, the medical concept of understanding deafness remained dominant in the Russian education system, and the system of education of children with hearing impairments was aimed not so much at education as at socialization and adaptation of the deaf to life in society by teaching them speaking and lip reading. The transition of the Russian education system to an inclusive basis is the result of the development of a social model for understanding deafness based on the idea that people

with disabilities (including DHOH) need to be trained together with all other children to be fully included in the society.

The study of the DHOH as a key object of research also requires the development of a special analysis methodology. A very important feature of this group is the use of sign language as the main way of communication. Sign language is not just a form of expression of the Russian language, but is a special linguistic system with its own grammar and vocabulary. In this connection, understanding written language can be very difficult for deaf people who communicate mostly in sign language. Therefore, the theoretical basis of this study also includes works analyzing the ways of communication between DHOH and their connection with the perception of written and oral speech. In general, high level of community heterogeneity determines the choice of a mixed methodology and also explains the explorative character of the entire study.

In addition, within the group of the deaf and hard of hearing, separate subgroups with their own specific features and characteristics can be distinguished. The heterogeneity of the community of the deaf and hard of hearing in Russia is a poorly researched topic, which makes it difficult to obtain universal conclusions about the achievements of the deaf and hard of hearing in employment. Differentiation of this group is possible on such grounds as the degree and age of hearing loss, the use of cochlear implants and hearing aids, socialization among hearing or deaf people (including the role of schools and boarding schools), knowledge of sign language, the availability of translation into sign language in teaching, and daily communication, belonging to a particular social class, gender, age, etc.

### **Justification of Research Methods**

This research is based on the principles of mixing methods and includes two stages: quantitative and qualitative. At each stage, the sample was based on various principles, although the general framework for the selection of informants and respondents remained constant. Thus, in the course of a quantitative survey, an available target sample was

implemented using a mixed procedure for selecting respondents. College administration or college staff acted as entry points. The total sample size was 187 people, studying in educational institutions located in 17 different settlements: Moscow, Ufa, Kazan, Samara, St. Petersburg, Perm, Novaya Usman, Biysk, Kostroma, Stavropol, etc.

The sample for the qualitative stage was based on the results of a quantitative survey. Interviews with informants living in Moscow were conducted in an oral-visual form with the participation of a sign language interpreter. Interviews with other informants were also conducted in visual form with the participation of a sign language translator using video communications programs or messengers (Telegram, WhatsApp, Viber). In addition, four expert interviews were conducted with specialists in the field of vocational education for DHOH from different fields: a teacher and interpreter in an inclusive college, a manager in a public organization, and also a department head in a scientific organization engaged in the development of professional education. The total sample of the qualitative stage was 21 interviews.

Both the questionnaire and the interviews were adapted for understanding by deaf and hard of hearing respondents. A separate paragraph of the dissertation is devoted to the problems of adapting survey methods. The experience gained during the survey and interview was generalized and formalized for further use.

### **Scientific Contribution of the Research**

Despite the fact that the professional choice of young people has been studied for a long time by Russian and Western researchers, its interpretations in previous works were usually of an ableist character. The results of this study demonstrate that the application of classical approaches to determining professional choice to such a group as the deaf and hard of hearing is limited. These approaches consider deafness in medical and rehabilitation context and do not take into account social and cultural foundations of community formation, such as the use of sign language in communication, common historical development and the role of vocational education, as well as residential forms of education, the culture of the deaf

and community involvement, orientation towards building a sports career. This study reconstructed the existing sociological approaches to the empirical identification of the deaf and hard of hearing within the framework of traditional and post-traditional concepts.

The first all-Russian survey of deaf and hard of hearing students of secondary vocational educational institutions made it possible to systematize the factors of professional choice at different levels. So, at the individual level, the social environment and the desire to maintain contact with friends play a special role in the professional choice of young people with hearing impairments. In some cases, schoolteachers also play a special role, while the role of parents is limited, especially when it comes to parents with hearing impairments. The results of the study, applied at the level of institutions, suggest the need to develop the school education system for the deaf, partnerships between schools, colleges and employers, including the participation of specialized public organizations, and also to eliminate failures in the implementation of accepted rules within colleges. Finally, at the macro level, there is a conflict between social and medical interpretations of deafness (education and rehabilitation), aggravated by the vulnerable position of people with disabilities in the labor market.

The methodological novelty of the research is the consideration of the deaf and hard of hearing as an object of empirical sociological research, indicating possible barriers to entering the field and analyzing the group, as well as ways of solving emerging problems. The design, structure and methodology of the study allowed some characteristics of the DHOH to be taken into account: the research thesaurus was edited in accordance with the specifics of semantic and contextual understanding by DHOH respondents, the needs for professional interpretation into sign language were taken into account, the research design was based on the principle of participation — the DHOH were involved in the statement of the research problem and the implementation of the research, as well as the interpretation of its results.

The research results were presented both at Russian and foreign scientific conferences and at specialized events with the participation of the All-Russian Society of the Deaf, representatives of educational organizations of secondary vocational education and teachers.

### **The main thesis**

1. Contemporary sociological research on deafness is a sub-section of the newly emerging scientific discipline deaf studies and a broader line of research on disability. They place themselves in the context of “deaf epistemologies”, which involve the development of specialized research tools. These tools should take into account the general aspects of deafness as a physiological feature of a person, as well as the unique socio-cultural characteristics of the DHOH. In Russian practice, there is an adaptation and modification of the methods of critical reflection that have developed in international science and practice. They collide and intertwine with Russian traditions, giving rise to a plurality of tools for understanding and measuring. The plurality of "deaf epistemologies" is inextricably linked with an indication of the internal heterogeneity of the group of DHOH. This heterogeneity is based on the degree of hearing loss, sign language proficiency, hearing or deaf parents, type of school, including boarding experience. In some cases, these groups are specific in terms of the severity of factors that determine the occupational choice. Their diversity in the Russian context develops into the structure of factors that manifest themselves in two dimensions: micro, meso and macro-systems, as well as politics, practice, and attitudes.

2. Throughout the 20th century, a well-functioning mechanism of reproduction of the class of workers among the DHOH worked in our country. After the creation in 1959 of a unified system of vocational training for the DHOH, people with hearing impairments worked both in ordinal enterprises and in a segregated system of training and production enterprises), including those with institutional support from the All-Russia Society of the Deaf (VOG). The result of the transition to market relations was the transformation of the vocational training system for the DHOH and the closure of most educational institutions, greatly reduced the chances of DHOH youth to build a consistent trajectory of transition

from education to profession. Despite this, the attitude towards secondary vocational education is still rooted in the community, including at the VOG level. At the same time, the previous Soviet experience is not critically reflected and is not reproducible in the context of an orientation towards international norms and the implementation of new institutional designs.

3. At the macro level, internal contradictions were found in the vocational education system. They arise from divergent discourses of the medical model and social model, which is based on the principles of the concepts of independent living and improving the quality of life of people with disabilities. This conflict is inherent in the legal discourse. As a result, macro-level policies do not fully ensure one of the leading rights of persons with disabilities –the right to choose the path of getting well-being. This is the reason for the extremely low assessment of employment opportunities due to the closed nature of positions requiring high qualifications, the presence of stereotypes about deaf workers, and discrimination against employees with hearing disabilities, including in the possibilities of remuneration and career growth.

4. Agents of the micro and meso-level take part in making professional choices for DHOH young people. The degree of participation of different agents is related to the sociocultural characteristics of students. According to the survey, the role of parents is limited. For children from "hearing" families, parents act as assistants and consultants but do not make a sole decision about a child's profession. For children of deaf parents and those living in small towns, the role of facilitators in decision-making is taken by schoolteachers, who in some cases individually decide where the child will continue to study. Such students find themselves in a situation of programmed choice when they do not actually make any decision. In turn, deaf peers and friends act for deaf and hard of hearing youth as a role model when making a professional choice, which allows them to maintain their familiar social environment.

5. Due to the cumulative effect, different compositions of these factors become the driving forces of occupational choice. Systemic gaps at the macro- and meso-levels become barriers that limit the competencies of young people and minimize the chances of optimizing the choosing of a profession at the micro-level. One of the key barriers is a narrow corridor of opportunities at all stages of building a professional trajectory. Informants talk about the low level of school training for the deaf. Because the abolition of benefits for admission it reduces the chances of getting a professional education. They also talk about the perception of mass schools as inaccessible due to the lack of special conditions, incl. translation into sign language. At the college level, barriers are the lack of systematic training of teachers, the reluctance of specialists to work with the DHOH, and the lack of sign language interpreters. This forces colleges to further reduce the list of available specialties. In addition, students talk about the lack of systematic support for employment. As a result, micro-level agents, like parents and the social environment of the deaf student, are involved in deciding the issue of further employment. At the meso-level, competitions of professional excellence and public organizations that help with finding a job have good potential, but at the moment they are not able to fully satisfy the request from graduates.

6. At the individual level, young people have low legal literacy and rarely talk about the fight for their rights. Some of the informants do not even know that they have the right to get higher education. In general, the DHOH are inclined to demonstrate an attitude towards obtaining secondary vocational education, consider this level to be sufficient for achieving success in life, and do not plan to get higher education. This is especially true for students from deaf families living in small towns. The complex of specific attitudes and ideas about the profession among DHOH youth is formed, on the one hand, in the context of the development of social institutions, on the other hand, in the context of cultural characteristics and historical development of the community. The individual trajectories of young people are inscribed in the collective trajectory of the DHOH people. So, building a sports career becomes an alternative to professional education. Such a strategy, firstly, is highly

appreciated by informants in terms of material benefits, secondly, it allows one to achieve high status within the community, and, thirdly, it is deeply rooted in the Deaf culture.

### **The Structure**

The thesis consists of an introduction, four chapters, conclusion and appendices. The first chapter is dedicated to the disclosure of the concept of deafness in scientific discourse, a description of the medical, social and cultural aspects that determine the position of the DHOH in the social structure, as well as analysis of statistical information reflecting the current situation of the deaf community in Russia. The second chapter analyzes the development of the vocational education system for the deaf in our country and its implications for the current situation and also examines theories that explain the concept of “occupational choice” and its relations with the social structure of society. The third chapter is about the description of the methodology of the research: the description of its design using the strategy of mixing methods, as well as the sample of quantitative and qualitative stages. In addition, this chapter discusses the methodological features of a survey of people with hearing impairments that impose restrictions on conducting a research. Finally, the fourth chapter is dedicated directly to the interpretation of empirical materials and to the analysis of interviews with deaf and hard of hearing students in colleges and vocational schools. This chapter discusses the most significant characteristics of choosing a profession for the deaf, their assessment of job prospects, examines educational and professional experience of students, identifies barriers to making an occupational choice, and highlights some alternative strategies that allow deaf youth to adapt to adverse social conditions.

### **The Main Conclusions of the Research**

The professional choice of DHOH students is understood in a comprehensive way as a spontaneous and rational process mediated by various individual and structural characteristics. Ideas about professional and career opportunities are formed both by the



objective structures of the meso and macro levels (including approaches to the definition of disability, the situation in education in the country, labor market conditions, etc.), and by the subjective views of deaf and hard of hearing students.

At the policy level, up to the last, the medical concept of understanding deafness remained dominant in the Russian education system. The whole system of raising children with hearing impairments was aimed not so much at education as at socialization, adaptation of the DHOH to life in the society by teaching them to speak and read from lips. The transformation of social policy in accordance with the principles of the concepts of independent life and improving the quality of life of people with disabilities, as well as the transition of the Russian education system to a course towards inclusion are the result of the development of the social model. This indicates a systemic shift in approaches to working with the DHOH. Due to the coexistence of medical and social discourses at the macro level of policy, the vocational education system for the DHOH turns out to be regulated by normative acts, the logic of which in many respects contradicts each other. On the one hand, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by Russia, and the law on education presupposes that the deaf and hard of hearing should have equal opportunities with hearing and any specialty should be available to them. On the other hand, the life of people with disabilities is regulated by regulations and public institutions, according to the logic of which the deaf and hard of hearing are “sick” and incapable of full-fledged professional activity. Thus, a barrier to making a professional choice and building a career is the need to obtain an individual rehabilitation or habilitation program issued by the bureau of medical and social expertise and determining, among other things, individual restrictions on hiring. Due to this, the IPRA limits the possibility of choosing a profession along with the current list of contraindications of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, which prohibits the work of the deaf in a number of areas. On the one hand, equal opportunities are postulated, on the other, restrictions are imposed. Therefore, the need to get an individual rehabilitation or habilitation program is a barrier to making a professional choice and building a career. The program is issued by the Bureau of Medical and Social Expertise and

determines, among other things, individual restrictions on hiring. Due to this, it limits the possibility of choosing a profession along with the current list of contraindications of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, which prohibits the work of the deaf in a number of areas.

Political barriers also manifest themselves at the meso-level of specific educational institutions due to insufficient elaboration of institutionalized rules in institutions. This is compounded by the low legal literacy of young people at the individual level. DHOH young people, as a rule, are not inclined to fight for their rights, but perceive refusal in hiring or restrictions on admission to a certain specialty as a natural difficulty. Deaf informants in the regions of Russia in a number of cases do not know that they have the right to receive higher education and enter a university, or, knowing about such an opportunity, do not consider it, assuming that education will not be available to them.

Analyzing deafness in terms of medical and social models can lead to the neglect of important cultural and linguistic foundations of the deaf community. In general, the community of the DHOH is rather heterogeneous, and the boundaries between different subgroups are formed not only by the degree of hearing loss, but also by various socially and culturally determined characteristics. At the same time, at the level of public discourse, including at the level of legislation and public organizations, the “deaf and hard of hearing” are understood as a single group. Due to this, most of the factors identified in the work have the same effect on all DHOH students of secondary vocational educational institutions.

At the level of real practice, the type of school, origin from a hearing or deaf family, place of residence, knowing of sign language, and the degree of hearing loss are characteristics that make it possible to explain in some cases the specifics of the professional choice of certain groups. Most students make their own decisions about where they will continue their studies and what profession they will receive. This is especially true for hearing-impaired students who make decisions based primarily on their own interests, as well as children from "hearing" families who do not speak sign language. When looking for

a job, hearing impaired children and children from "hearing" families are also more likely to plan to choose an interesting job than other categories.

The opinions of parents play an important role, however, unlike classical theories of professional choice, parents rather act as advisors and guarantors, and their real influence is limited, including due to the fact that most of the respondents remained in the boarding school during their schooling. The parents of such children support them, but do not interfere with the choice, suggesting that studying in a college where the DHOH are already studying will allow the child to get a guaranteed profession. The only exceptions are graduates of mass schools, for whom, when making a professional choice, the recommendation of their parents is extremely important.

Deaf peers become real agents influencing the professional choice of the DHOH, especially those who live in Moscow and stayed in a boarding school. Such students are more likely to make their choice at the last moment, "by accident", while relying on where their social environment plans to go. In general, maintaining contacts during the transition from school to vocational education, focusing on the opinion of friends is more important for students with high hearing loss who graduated from schools for the deaf. This category is significantly more likely to indicate that it will be important for them to have good friends when choosing a place to work. Thus, the professional choice of students is largely motivated not by rational ideas about their future profession, but by dispositional characteristics rooted in the culture of the community. Their value is to maintain contacts and a communicative environment. Deaf adolescents are more important role models than hearing parents. At the same time, if, when making a professional choice and deciding on a future specialty for the DHOH, it was extremely important to maintain their social environment and study together with other deaf people, then in the context of future employment, the guys are not afraid to work together with the hearing, provided they will be treated well by the hearers.

Residents of small towns are earlier determined with their choice of profession and more often rely on the opinion of teachers, just like students from families with deaf parents. Moreover, in some cases, teachers single-handedly make a decision about where exactly the

child will continue to study. The informants themselves perceive this trajectory as the only possible one, that is, the students find themselves in a situation of programmed choice, when in fact they do not make any decision, but turn out to be guided by external circumstances.

At the meso-level, the role of the school in professional choice is also manifested in cooperation with specific colleges, especially in Moscow, where such partnerships have existed for several decades. Students who indicated a given reason for admission to a particular college tended to perceive this trajectory as the only possible one. In this situation, professional choice is also not only limited, but directed by the school. The influence of the school at the meso-level is also manifested in the low quality of school education in special educational institutions, aggravated by the limited opportunities for the development of literacy among the deaf (for objective reasons). These factors do not allow the DHOH to participate in the entrance examinations on a common basis in the context of the cancellation of benefits upon admission.

At the college level, students face a range of factors that limit professional choices. The main factor is the narrow corridor of opportunities for choosing a specialty. In some cases, the choice is artificially limited due to the decision of colleges to unite all DHOH students in one direction, as well as due to the unwillingness of colleges to work with this group. The problems are the lack of sign language interpreters (or their absence), the need for special conditions and the lack of appropriate resources at the educational institution, as well as the low level of training of teachers. Thus, the shortcomings of the organization of the environment and the educational process in specific educational institutions become a factor limiting the professional choice of the DHOH at the meso-level.

DHOH students, including those who have already had work experience, noted that obtaining a professional education is not a guarantee of further employment. The practice of hiring people with disabilities is typical for large corporations, however, the proposed positions involve, as a rule, manual labor and do not correspond to the education received by deaf people. VOG plays an important role in the development of inclusive employment. They enter into agreements with potential employers from large retailers, fast food chains,

transport companies, which allows solving many employment problems in the short term. In the long term this leads to gaps between the vocational education and the future place of work. According to the informants, the issue of employment should now be resolved individually (at the micro level), with the involvement of informal ties. They see this as a problem. Currently, there are limited practices of systemic institutionalized support for employment of the DHOH at the meso level – through college or other organizations, with the exception of a few private initiatives that are unable to meet the growing demand. At the macro level, such a tool is professional skill contests, which are called effective both by experts and by students with disabilities. However, these contests perform rather a selective function. They allow only the most prepared and talented children to get a job and does not solve the problem of mass employment of graduates.

Attitudes that appear at all three levels are also identified as factors in the professional choice of young people with hearing impairments. At the macro level, such attitudes are stereotypes of employers about the professional suitability of the deaf and hard of hearing and, as a result, discrimination against deaf workers in terms of wages and career opportunities.

In the USSR, people with hearing disabilities were integrated into the vocational training and employment system. The systemic transformations of the late 20th century led to the closure of most educational and production enterprises, which greatly reduced the chances of deaf and hard of hearing young people building a consistent trajectory. Despite this, today within the community, including at the VOG level, there remains a strong orientation towards obtaining professional education for the deaf. According to the results of the study, the strategy of obtaining secondary vocational education is the main one for young people with hearing impairments. The decision on admission is, as a rule, predetermined, especially among students from small towns. Employment is viewed by the DHOH as a major trajectory after college graduation. For the vast majority of students, secondary vocational education becomes the final stage before entering the labor market, while hearing peers more often view secondary vocational education as a transitional stage

on the way to getting another level. The system of secondary vocational education itself is largely focused on the subsequent admission of graduates to universities, which is not relevant for the DHOH, who perceive secondary vocational education as sufficient to achieve success in life.

An alternative to getting a profession is building a sports career. Sport, firstly, is rooted in the culture of the deaf, and secondly, it is perceived by young people as an opportunity to earn easy money and achieve high status positions within the community. As a result, this type of career is a resource for social cohesion of DHOH youth, while vocational education does not provide such an opportunity. In general, the orientation towards maintaining one's own involvement in the deaf community, including through sign language, is one of the factors of professional development: being within the community turns out to be more important than building a professional career outside the community. The vocational education system currently does not take into account the social and cultural contexts of the development of the deaf community, although there are those among students for whom it is fundamental to go beyond the group, but at the moment they are in the minority.

The development of inclusive education will allow solving some of these problems, however, for the formation of effective institutions for professional adaptation of the DHOH, it is necessary to develop comprehensive programs. These programs should take into account the legal framework, as well as the specific local conditions for implementing changes and the needs of the students. At the moment, there is a weak legal regulation of the professional education of people with disabilities, especially in the context of massive stimulation of inclusive education and the shift of the main focus of attention to the school level of education. Inclusive education is not a sufficient condition for the integration of the DHOH, but it is necessary for the DHOH to better navigate the world of hearing. In addition, it is necessary to systematically support inclusive employment, the key role in which should belong to the state, for example, through the creation of a system of educational and production enterprises, specialized resource centers for assistance in employment on the basis of educational institutions. At the same time, the creation of special niches in the labor

market for the DHOH would require recourse of special education. In such a system it plays a key role in the life structure, well-being, achievement of social status by young people with deafness, which demonstrates the limitations of the application of the social model.

Despite the internal variability of the study sample, patterns were identified that open up opportunities for a deeper understanding of the social aspects of professional choice for the DHOH. We set ourselves the goal of identifying and systematizing various factors that determine this heterogeneity, as well as determine the career strategies of DHOH boys and girls, their possible effects, but we admit that some of the conclusions obtained in the course of this study require additional verification. This study is largely of an exploratory nature, including due to the impossibility of constructing a representative sample. Another limitation of the study is the difficulty of obtaining statistically significant conclusions about the differences in strategies and factors of individual subgroups.

## **Publications**

- Bolshakov N. Ot deviatsii k identichnosti: transformatsiya nauchnykh podkhodov k ponimaniyu glukhoty [From deviation to identity: transformation of scientific approaches to understanding deafness] // Zhurnal sotsiologii i sotsial'noy antropologii [The Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology]. 2016. Vol. XIX. № 2 (85). Pp. 160–174.
- Bolshakov N. Vozmozhnosti primeneniya strategii smeshivaniya metodov pri izuchenii soobshchestva glukhikh i slaboslyshashchikh [The Possibilities of Mixed Methods Research in Studying of the Deaf Community] // Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Filosofiya. Sotsiologiya. Politologiya. [Tomsk State University Journal of Philosophy, Sociology and Political Science]. 2017. № 38. Pp. 154–165.

- Bolshakov N. Sochetat', kombinirovat', smeshivat': kachestvennyye i kolichestvennyye metody v sovremennoy issledovatel'skoy praktike [Bring together, combine and mix: Qualitative and Quantitative methods in Modern Research Practices] // Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniya: Ekonomicheskiye i sotsial'nyye peremeny. [Monitoring of Public Opinion: Economic and Social Changes]. 2017. № 3. Pp. 21–29.
- Bol'shakov N., Astakhova N. Patterny kul'turnogo potrebleniya glukhikh i slaboslyshashchikh: inklyuziya ili izolyatsiya? [Cultural Consumption Patterns among the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Inclusion versus Exclusion] // Zhurnal issledovaniy sotsial'noy politiki [The Journal of Social Policy Studies]. 2017. Vol. 15. № 1. Pp. 51–66.
- Bolshakov N., Berg-Nordlie M. The Critical Movement Against the 2010–2012 Education Reform in Russia: Networks, Organisations and Parties // Europe-Asia Studies. 2018. Vol. 70. No. 4. Pp. 666–684.
- Bol'shakov N. «U slyshashchikh bol'she vozmozhnostey dlya zhizni»: problemy srednego professional'nogo obrazovaniya glukhikh i slaboslyshashchikh [‘The Non-Deaf Enjoy More Opportunities’: The Problems of Professional Education for Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Students] // Zhurnal issledovaniy sotsial'noy politiki [The Journal of Social Policy Studies]. 2019. Vol. 17. № 4. Pp. 571–584.
- Bolshakov N.V., Kolesnikov V.V. Opros glukhikh v sotsiologicheskom issledovanii: kognitivnyye i kommunikativnyye aspekty [The Deaf in a Sociological Study: Cognitive and Communicative Aspects] // Sotsiologiya: metodologiya, metody, matematicheskoye modelirovaniye [Sociology: Methodology, Methods, Mathematical Modeling]. 2019. № 49. Pp. 57–83.
- Iarskaia-Smirnova E., Bolshakov N. Modeli ponimaniya invalidnosti [Models of understanding disability] // Muzey oshchushcheniy: slabovidyashchiye i nezryachiye posetiteli [Experiencing the Museum: Blind and Partially Sighted Visitors]. M.: Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018. Pp. 11–21.



- Bolshakov N. V. Vvedeniye v Deafhood [Introduction to Deafhood] // Muzey oshchushcheniy: glukhiye i slaboslyshashchiye posetiteli [Experiencing the Museum: Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Visitors]. M.: Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2019. Pp. 36–43.
- Bolshakov N. V. Modeli kul'turnogo potrebleniya soobshchestva glukhikh [Models of Cultural Consumption of the Deaf Community] // Muzey oshchushcheniy: glukhiye i slaboslyshashchiye posetiteli [Experiencing the Museum: Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Visitors]. M.: Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, 2019. Pp. 61–66.