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**Table 1: Interviewee descriptors**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Education<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Years<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>UK study<sup>c</sup></i>	<i>Current expertise</i>
1	Albert	38	M	Masters	6	Yes	Engineering
2	Barnes	38	M	Masters	9	Yes	Engineering
3	Bismark	32	M	Masters	15	Yes	Primary Education
4	Collins	41	M	Doctorate	11	Yes	Higher Education
5	Debrah	32	F	Bachelor	13	Yes	Engineering
6	Fredina	40	M	Bachelor	13	Yes	Nursing
7	George	45	M	Doctorate	12	Yes	Higher Education
8	Harriet	48	F	Masters	19	Yes	Nursing
9	Imogen	36	F	Masters	10	Yes	Social work
10	Jepson	40	M	Doctorate	7	No	Education
11	Eleanor	32	F	Masters	10	Yes	Biomedical
12	Monica	37	F	Doctorate	10	No	Medicine
13	Naomi	40	F	Diploma	13	No	Nursing
14	Patrick	41	M	Bachelor	14	Yes	Nursing
15	Quinta	40	M	Doctorate	6	Yes	Higher Education
16	Roland	38	M	Masters	10	Yes	Engineering
17	Samuel	40	M	Doctorate	11	No	Medicine
18	Thomas	31	M	Masters	10	Yes	Management
19	Wilma	46	F	Masters	15	Yes	Management
20	Yeltsin	39	M	Doctorate	15	Yes	Higher Education

<sup>a</sup> "Education" refers to the highest level of education attained

<sup>b</sup> "Years" refers to the number of years the individual has been domiciled in the UK and/or Europe.

<sup>c</sup> "UK Study" refers to whether the individual had to study or re-train in the UK prior to work (yes) or not (no).

**Table 2: Overview of final coding structure**

First-order Indicators	Theoretical categories	Aggregate theoretical categories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Starting a menial job</li> <li>- Retraining, learning (and unlearning) skills</li> <li>- Updating knowledge and skills</li> </ul>	Preparation for take-off	Johnny just come
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building up relational networks</li> <li>- Honing technical knowledge and skills</li> <li>- Acquiring career sponsor(s) or Mentor(s)</li> </ul>	Gaining a foothold	Toe-holding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overcoming 'foreignness'</li> <li>- Developing professional cultural competences</li> <li>- Cultivating reflexive awareness</li> </ul>	Securing position in the professions	Enrichment-in-practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Qualifications recede in importance</li> <li>- Movement between organizations</li> <li>- Coaching and mentoring new arrivals</li> </ul>	Steady progression within career	Puissance-lap

**Table 3: Overview of analytical and conceptual categories**

Transition phases in(to) the professions	Exemplary quotations
<i>Johnny just come:</i> The new-arrival strategizing to enter a professional occupation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I had to do three/four jobs to be able to pay my tuition fees, maintenance, and to even buy suits to attend these interviews. (Roland, Engineer)</li> <li>▪ I had a manager who really liked me, who wanted to push me so I did tell her that I needed to change my visa from student to work permit and she was like you know how do we go about it and then I just, she said to me just fill the form and then just write the letters and I'll sign it. So that was it really so that was how I got the work permits. (Imogen, Social Worker)</li> </ul>
<i>Toe-holding:</i> Gaining a foot in the professional career doorway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I'm not prepared to go back home. I would rather stay here, get my papers, experience, and do something with my life than to go back home like a failure, so I had to have a thick skin. (Barnes, Engineer)</li> <li>▪ I needed to prove my worth in a totally new system, not understanding the system, not knowing how things really worked. It takes patience and fortitude to develop the skills and network you need to compete successfully (Collins, Higher Education).</li> </ul>
<i>Enrichment-in-practice:</i> Securing a surer foothold on the fast-moving career escalator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I now know exactly what to do to get the work done even when I am the only qualified nurse on a shift. It takes time to really figure out these things, you know? (Naomi, Nurse)</li> <li>▪ I might appear to have all the luck in the world, but you know I've had my ups and downs in my career. Just had to put in the hours to learn on the job. Now I am the first to be called in when there is a system failure. I've almost become irreplaceable! (Roland, Engineer)</li> </ul>
<i>Puissance-lap:</i> Systematic career progression within the chosen profession.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If people know that you are good at what you do, and there is a need for people to do what you do best, then they will definitely come to you. You can go anywhere! (George, Professor)</li> <li>▪ When you struggled to find your own feet you really don't want to see fellow migrants go through same. That is why being able to share my experience, research, and knowledge with them is important to me. (Yeltsin, Academic)</li> </ul>