



## Awarded COFAS Marie Curie fellows – For the FOIP programme



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**Project:** How do social status and gender matter for health when dealing with high work-related demands?

**Abstract:** That social status has a large impact of individuals' health is something that for example epidemiologists and sociologists have recognized in decades. In this post-doctoral project gender is seen as a status characteristic. In work and organizational psychology the research about these factors is much more limited. Although social status and gender are factors that generally have a fundamental influence on individuals' life they may be especially important when individuals have to mobilize resources to meet high demands. It is possible to argue that employees with high social status would be in a better position to handle high work-related demands since they have more resources, such as access to information, control over the work situation and influence over decision-making, than employees on a lower level. Demands that are controllable are not likely to be associated with ill-health. On the other hand, the demands for employees on high positions could be so high that the resources they access are not enough to outweigh the negative effects of the high demands.

The general aim with this project is to investigate how social status and gender matter when employees are challenged with three specific work-related demands. These demands are organizational changes, work-family conflict and illegitimate tasks, and are a significant part of the contemporary working life. An increased understanding of the implications of social status and gender for these demands would both mean a contribution to the scientific knowledge of social status and gender in working life, but the knowledge could also be used to identify groups that are more vulnerable to work-related demands, and hence a possibility to direct resources to where they are most needed.

**Career plan:** A conclusion from the thesis that I defended in April 2010 was that social status was important to consider in order to understand the consequences of organizational changes. I therefore wanted to continue to investigate these issues in a broader context. A first step in this direction was when I got the opportunity to spend the autumn 2011 in the Whitehall II-group at University College London. During the stay I started to collaborate with several researchers in the Whitehall II-group and my further stay in this research group will make it possible to maintain and develop collaborations with scientists from different research fields and different countries that all share a common research interest in social status. During the post-doctoral programme I plan to further develop my statistical knowledge, especially longitudinal analysis, and to use large databases. I will also continue to develop skills in writing publications together with researchers from different disciplines and to communicate research results.