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Brown School Alumna Takes Home Early Career Achievement Award
January 18, 2011

The Brown School and [Center for Social Development \(CSD\)](#) congratulates Michal Grinstein-Weiss on her receipt of the Deborah K. Padgett Early Career Achievement Award from the [Society for Social Work and Research \(SSWR\)](#). Professor Grinstein-Weiss is an alumna of the Brown School and a former Research Associate and Post-Doctoral Fellow at CSD. She is now an Associate Professor at the [University of North Carolina \(UNC\)](#). She accepted the award at the annual SSWR conference in Tampa, Florida on January 14, 2011.



Grinstein-Weiss earned her doctorate at the Brown School with a dissertation that examined asset accumulation and home purchase by race, using data from a larger CSD research project, the [American Dream Demonstration](#). Given the disparate home ownership rates of whites and blacks in America, and the central role of home ownership in long-term household development, this topic has important implications for household stability, schooling, and many other community and family issues. Dr. Melvin Oliver, a leading scholar on race and assets, served as a member of her dissertation committee.

In addition to her accomplished scholarship, Grinstein-Weiss's tenure at the Brown School was distinguished by her extraordinary success in securing federal research funding, including two dissertation grants from HUD. As Michael Sherraden comments, "In 26 years of working with doctoral students, I do not recall anyone who was more successful at funding her dissertation research with federal government research support. This reflects very positively on the quality of her dissertation research and her potential as a scholar."

As a professor at UNC, Grinstein-Weiss has continued her work on the American Dream Demonstration, leading wave four of the experimental research project on Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) with funding she secured from the MacArthur, Mott, and Rockefeller Foundations. The project tracks treatments and controls ten years after the intervention was initiated, making this an experiment of unusual longevity and policy interest.

Taking this work abroad, Dr. Grinstein-Weiss has organized an initiative in her native Israel for a policy test of Child Development Accounts (CDAs)—universal accounts beginning at birth. In 2010, a US team representing UNC, the US Treasury Department, New America Foundation, and CSD undertook planning meetings with Israeli officials to design a policy test. The project has the strong backing of the Israeli Social Affairs Minister, Isaac Herzog. The aim is to test a policy that might one day cover all Israeli newborns, Arab and Jewish alike. The long-term vision for this work is, someday, a Middle East Development Account that crosses national borders, which might become one small step to help bridge diverse peoples in a tragically divided part of the world.

Dr. Grinstein-Weiss's scholarship is embedded in contexts of great meaning and consequence. Her work reflects uncommon scope and insight, in addition to policy relevance and rigorous scholarship. We congratulate her on her latest achievement.

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