A Senior Thesis, Bound (and Sold)

Seeing your undergraduate thesis bound on a campus library shelf is a point of pride. Seeing that thesis for sale in a bookstore is another matter.

Katherine Adam, who graduated from Boston College in 2007 with a degree in sociology, will have that opportunity next month. On April 30, *The New Feminized Majority: How Democrats Can Change America with Women’s Values* (Paradigm Publishers), a book adapted from her senior thesis, will hit shelves nationwide.

“There’s a lot of resistance to undergraduates’ thinking that their work is really important,” says Ms. Adam. But that didn’t stop her thesis adviser, Charles Derber, from persuading her to polish her undergraduate treatise into something bigger. Mr. Derber, a sociology professor at the college, is listed as a co-author.

The text looks at what Ms. Adam calls feminized values (which are essentially synonymous with progressive principles), and is a call for Democratic candidates to embrace those ideals in this year’s presidential and congressional campaigns.

Ms. Adam says the concept came to her while working as a Democratic activist during the 2004 presidential election, where she was surprised that evangelical Christians were the only group to whom candidates reached out using “a values-based political strategy.” She says the book intends to re-examine moral politics through the lens of gender. “Feminized values are the new moral majority,” says Ms. Adam.

This year’s Democratic presidential primary offers an interesting application of her argument, which Ms. Adam says has an “gender-bending phenomenon.” Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton’s campaign has begun using fear tactics to marginalize her opponent (think the 3 a.m. red phone ad), and Ms. Adam says Senator Clinton’s campaign strategy “has certainly been less feminized than Sen. Barack Obama’s.”

As the candidates shift their focus to Pennsylvania, they will be on the new author’s turf: Ms. Adam is now an outreach coordinator for the Philadelphia GROW Project, a program within the Drexel University School of Public Health that examines how hunger affects preschoolers.

While she is not actively supporting one candidate over the other, she says she hopes to use ideas generated from her undergraduate thesis — now her undergraduate book — to press Democrats to adopt women’s values.