



# Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies)

*Sylvia Frisk*

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In recent decades, Malaysia has been profoundly changed both by forces of globalization, modernization, and industrialization and by a strong Islamization process. Some would argue that the situation of Malay women has worsened, but such a conclusion is challenged by this study of the everyday religious practice of pious women within Kuala Lumpur's affluent Malay middle class. Here, women play an active part in the Islamization process, not only by heightened personal religiosity but also by organizing and participating in public programs of religious education.

By organizing new forms of collective ritual and assuming new public roles as religious teachers, these religiously educated women are transforming the traditionally male-dominated gendered space of the mosque and breaking men's monopoly over positions of religious authority. Exploring this situation, *Submitting to God* challenges preconceptions of the nature of Islamization as well as current theories of female agency and power.

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