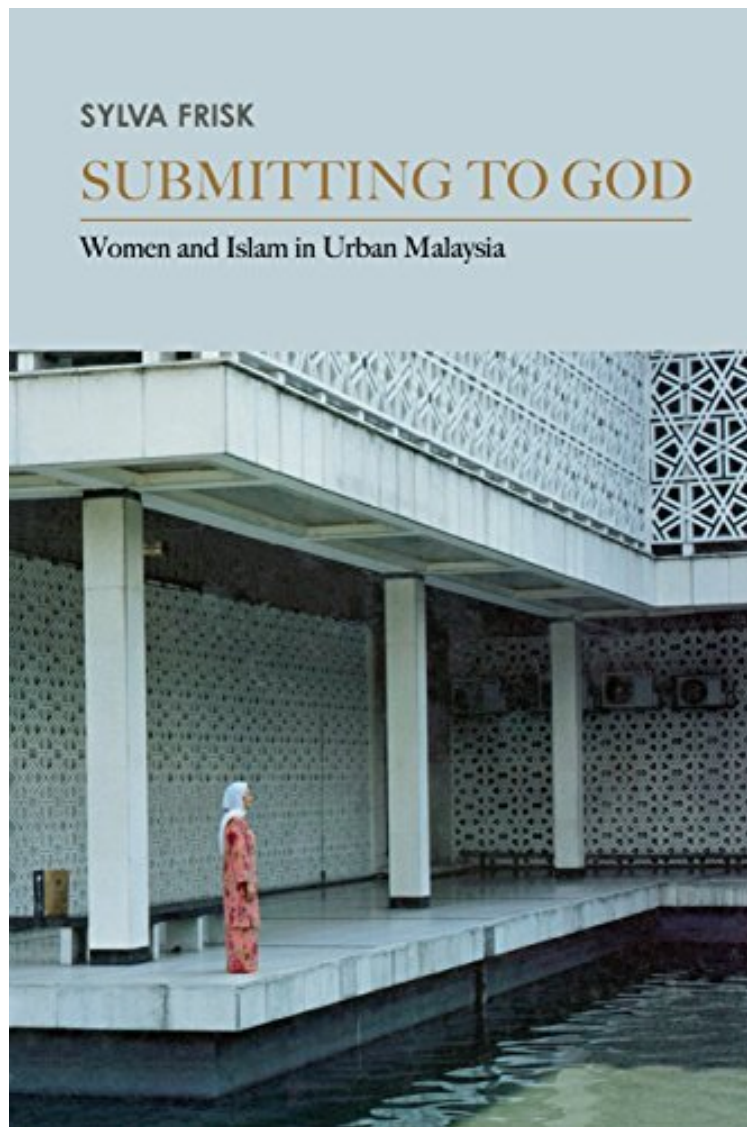


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Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies)

Sylvia Frisk

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Sylvia Frisk : Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia (Critical Dialogues in Southeast Asian Studies):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Inside View of Religiosity By Songplayerman Frisk's book is one of

the rare examples of a first person account of an international experience of religion that is neither condescending or negative. She tells us how women in Kuala Lumpur use religion as a medium for discussion of an array of problems. Islam seems to give them a feeling of control in many life situations. Her Malaysian friends do not seem like informants but co-celebrants. Since she is not Muslim, these women explained many things to her with which she might otherwise have been thought familiar. She brings a sexual conflict subtext of her own, denied by the women in the groups, that is still intriguing. This is an enjoyable ethnographic experience that inspires many questions and gives some answers.

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.

"The book is especially welcome for placing gender relations at the centre of the immense changes within contemporary Malaysia and it will be of great interest to a wide range of readers interested in Southeast Asian developments, in gender and in religious studies more generally." Malia Stivens, *Pacific Affairs* "I strongly recommend *Submitting to God* to readers seeking a humane approach to Islam in Malaysia, a text that is not filled with negative images and addresses real spiritual as well as other social issues." David Banks, *Cont Islam*, Vol. 6 (2011) "An important contribution to the study of women in Islam. . . . We learn how these independent women actively seek to shape themselves as pious subjects and in the process make a profound impact on the practice of Islam in their society." Rusalina Idrus, *American Anthropologist*, December 2011 "One of the distinctive features of this wonderfully researched ethnography is its insightful analysis of the religiosity and spiritual development of urban Malay women who had participated in the Islamization process in Malaysian society. *Submitting to God* will undoubtedly add to the debates on the anthropology of difference, gender and religion, and gender and Islam." Sharifah Zaleha Syed Hassan, Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia About the Author Sylva Frisk is a lecturer in the School of Global Studies at Gothenburg University, Sweden.