

***Sound Horeg* in Rural East Java: A Durkheimian Interpretation of Solidarity and Social Tension**

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of *sound horeg*, the use of high-powered loudspeaker systems in rural celebrations in East Java, through the lens of Durkheimian functionalism. While *sound horeg* strengthens mechanical solidarity by creating shared festive experiences and expressing local identity, it also generates social tension through noise disturbance, resident conflict, and moral debate. The study employs virtual ethnography to analyze how the practice is performed, represented, and contested in digital spaces including YouTube and TikTok. Videos, comment threads, online discussions, and digital news reports are observed to explore how communities interpret *sound horeg* and respond to regulatory and religious interventions such as Fatwa MUI Jatim 2025. The findings show that *sound horeg* has evolved into a digital cultural arena where symbolic creativity and public negotiation take place. Supportive communities portray it as cultural pride, while critics highlight discomfort, intimidation, and risks to public welfare. The circulation of halal signs in response to the fatwa illustrates how cultural expression, religious authority, and digital performativity interact in shaping social meaning. The study concludes that managing *sound horeg* requires collaborative policy involving communities, government institutions, and religious authorities to balance cultural expression with social order and public well-being.

Keywords: *Sound Horeg; Mechanical Solidarity; Social Dysfunction; Digital Ethnography*

A. Introduction

The phenomenon of *sound horeg* has become a recognizable feature of popular culture in various regions of Indonesia, especially within rural communities in East Java. The term *sound horeg* refers to the use of loudspeaker systems with extremely powerful bass output during social events such as weddings, circumcision ceremonies, village festivities, and competitive performances between community sound groups as discussed by Darmawan and Efendi (2024). In many cases, *sound horeg* is understood not only as entertainment but also as a marker of social status, a symbol of collective pride, and an expression of local cultural identity, as noted by Aprilian and Poerwanti (2025).

For many rural residents, the strength and vibrancy of the sound system represent the success and prestige of an event. When the sound is perceived as not *horeg*, the event may be regarded as less festive or lacking in status according to Radius Team (n.d.). As a result, *sound horeg* becomes a medium for affirming social presence in the community and for reinforcing shared values related to cooperation and solidarity. It operates not only as an acoustic technology but as a form of social communication that expresses collective identity.

Despite these positive functions, *sound horeg* has generated serious environmental and social concerns. Excessive noise often exceeds acceptable limits, disrupts daily activities, and in several reported cases has caused physical damage to homes. In Wedusan Village in Pati, Central Java, strong bass vibrations during a *sound horeg* carnival caused roof tiles to collapse, as reported by TVOne News (n.d.). A similar incident in Jabung, Malang, East Java resulted in the collapse of a house ceiling due to extreme sound intensity as documented by Tribun Jatim (n.d.). These incidents illustrate the tension between cultural expression and the public right to safety and environmental comfort.

Academic studies and institutional responses highlight the seriousness of the issue. Apriliyanti et. al (2025) show that noise levels produced by *sound horeg* may reach 135 decibels, which is far above the recommended safe limit of 85 decibels according to the World Health Organization. Such noise may contribute to stress, sleep disturbance, and impaired hearing. Other studies, such as that by Cahyani (2025), reveal that *sound horeg* content circulating on digital platforms often reinforces negative stereotypes about East Javanese communities. These portrayals tend to reduce the practice to a symbol of backward behavior while overlooking its cultural meaning and social value. Consequently, *sound horeg* has become part of a wider national debate on identity, morality, and cultural representation.

In response to public concern, the Indonesian Council of Ulama in East Java issued Fatwa Number 1 of 2025 on the Use of *Sound Horeg* as recorded by MUI Jatim (2025). The fatwa defines *sound horeg* as an audio system with the potential to produce extremely high volume at low frequencies. It permits the use of audio technology in social and cultural activities as long as it does not violate religious norms or disturb the rights of others. Excessive volume that harms health, disrupts community quiet, or accompanies prohibited activities is considered unlawful according to DSN MUI (2025). The fatwa allows moderate volume for positive events such as wedding receptions, religious gatherings, or *shalawatan*, while prohibiting competitive performances known as *battle sound* due to their extreme noise and wastefulness. It also mandates compensation for any damage caused by excessive sound.

Public responses to the fatwa have been extensive. Some regard it as a form of moral protection for vulnerable communities, while others interpret it as

an intrusion into long standing traditions. Reactions have circulated through online commentary, video responses, digital discussions, and social media posts, indicating that *sound horeg* now functions as a cultural arena where religion, tradition, state regulation, and community identity interact and sometimes conflict.

Although the issue has been widely discussed, scholarly analysis of *sound horeg* through classical sociological theory remains limited. Durkheim's structural functionalism provides an important framework for interpreting this phenomenon. Durkheim argues that social practices support social order and cohesion, yet may also produce dysfunction when they conflict with collective norms or undermine social integration, a point elaborated by Rawls (2012). His concept of mechanical solidarity, which is based on shared values and common forms of life, helps explain how *sound horeg* strengthens communal ties in rural settings as examined by Thilakarathna (2019). At the same time, Durkheim warns that weakened social regulation can lead to anomie, a condition where norms become unclear or ineffective. This is relevant to *sound horeg* when its intensity exceeds informal social controls or contradicts formal regulations, leading to conflict and disorder as noted by Fathoni (2024). Based on these considerations, this study analyzes *sound horeg* by drawing on Durkheim's perspective. The analysis focuses on two aspects, namely the integrative functions that strengthen community solidarity and cultural identity, and the dysfunctional aspects related to noise disturbance, conflict, and the need for regulatory or religious intervention.

The study adopts virtual ethnography to observe and interpret social interaction within digital spaces. The rise of *sound horeg* content across platforms such as YouTube and TikTok makes this approach highly relevant. Through passive observation of videos, comment threads, online discussions, and digital news sources, the study explores how different groups interpret *sound horeg* and respond to regulatory and religious measures. The geographical focus is rural East Java, a major center of *sound horeg* activity. Units of analysis include event videos, public discussions such as *Catatan Demokrasi* on TVOne, user comments on social media, regional regulatory documents, and Fatwa MUI Jatim 2025. The article is organized into several parts. The first outlines the theoretical foundation and methodological orientation. The second analyzes the social and symbolic functions of *sound horeg*. The third examines its dysfunctional consequences. The fourth discusses institutional responses and public negotiation of meaning in digital spaces. The article concludes with reflections on the need for collaborative policy that balances cultural expression with social order and public welfare.

B. Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with virtual ethnography to explore how the phenomenon of *sound horeg* is represented, interpreted, and debated in digital spaces. Virtual ethnography is chosen because *sound horeg* exists not only as a physical cultural practice but also as an active digital discourse across platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. The researcher observes videos, comment threads, online discussions, and digital news reports without participating in them. This passive role allows organic public expression to be documented. The study covers a five-month period from June to November 2025 and focuses on digital content linked to rural communities in East Java including areas such as Banyuwangi, Jember, Lumajang, Malang, and Sidoarjo.

Data sources include audiovisual content showing parades, *battle sound* competitions, community reactions, and televised discussions such as episodes of *Catatan Demokrasi* on TVOne. Public comments that express support, criticism, or concern are collected as reflections of social meaning. Digital documents such as Fatwa MUI Jawa Timur 2025, regional public order regulations, and online news coverage provide institutional context. Academic literature on Durkheim's theories of mechanical solidarity, social function, and dysfunction is also used to guide interpretation. Metadata such as upload dates, viewer numbers, and location tags are recorded to support contextual understanding.

Data analysis follows digital content analysis through reduction, thematic classification, narrative reading, and interpretation guided by Durkheimian theory. Content is grouped into themes such as community solidarity, cultural identity, entertainment, noise impact, conflict, and institutional regulation. Supportive comments are interpreted as expressions of collective identity, while critical comments reflect social discomfort and dysfunction. This analytical process enables a coherent understanding of *sound horeg* as both a cultural practice and a digital social field in which meaning, conflict, and identity are continually negotiated.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Results

The findings of this study indicate that the phenomenon of *sound horeg*, which refers to the use of high-powered loudspeaker systems in various celebratory events in rural East Java, has gained significant visibility in digital spaces. Searches using the tag *sound horeg* on YouTube and TikTok demonstrate that the practice functions not only as local entertainment but also as a subject of wide public discussion. On YouTube, the use of the *sound horeg* tag resulted in at least two hundred twenty-one thousand uploaded videos across more than thirty-one thousand channels. The most frequent search topics were *sound horeg*, *sound horeg* Jatim, and *sound horeg* haram. These videos include parades,

competitive sound performances, and coverage of the social and religious controversies linked to *sound horeg*. Among the most viewed recordings are the upload by Harian Horeg titled *Memed lagi hepy dengerin sound baru yg dia buat* which has reached 3.3 million views (Horeg 2025) and another from Crew Ghopro Audio titled *ceksoundhoreg horeg karnaval djhoreg* which has reached 11 million views (Audio 2025).

On TikTok, public engagement appears even higher. By 11 November 2025, the tag *sound horeg* had been used in 564.7 thousand uploads. The content varies from village entertainment videos to politically charged material. One example is the upload from @infojember titled *Viral Perjanjian Politik Bupati Jember untuk sound horeg Bikin Geger Netizen* which features Bupati Jember Muhammad Fawait signing a symbolic agreement supporting *sound horeg*. The video received 209.7 thousand views, 4.599 likes, and 604 comments (InfoJember 2025). Comments reflect strong differences in opinion between supporters and critics.

Table 1
Comments on the Video “Viral Political Agreement of the Regent of Jember for *Sound Horeg* Causes Public Uproar” (account @infojember)

Account	Comment (Translated)	Likes	Replies
@adestiawan	Please play it in front of the regent’s house only no need to drive it around	802	16
@Diazepam	They said I voted for you because of <i>sound horeg</i> Gus as if Jember will progress only because of <i>sound horeg</i>	534	58
@asis afif	Great we are lucky to have a regent like this Jember is free great sir Fawait an example of a leader who cares about the people’s entertainment	0	3
@el zipo	I choose him for the sake of <i>horex</i> boss	0	9

Other uploads highlight the cultural dimension of *sound horeg*. The account @HOREGMAXIMAL posted a video titled Welcome to Jawa Timur East Java Indonesia with the tag *soundssystemmalang*. The video depicts a village carnival where residents dance and cheer in response to the music played through the *sound horeg* system. As of the data collection date, the video had reached 639.2 thousand views, 18.3 thousand likes, and 203 comments (HOREGMAXIMAL 2025).

Table 2
Comments on the video Welcome to Jawa Timur East Java Indonesia (account @HOREGMAXIMAL)

Account	Comment (Translated)	Likes	Replies
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@Kelpin	For city people who are not affected better not interfere not everyone has access to entertainment like in the city respect the villagers they just want to have fun in their own place	777	81
@AZZURA	Some say this is entertainment for poor people but the ones saying it are even poorer	664	18
@vanila_latte	They say it is entertainment for poor people but they do not know how expensive it is to rent <i>horeg</i>	148	14
@Hi ini Arin	I want to move to East Java	126	1

Other content shows signs of resistance. The account @radarpena uploaded a video titled *Ibu ibu asal Jember protes sound horeg malah diintimidasi dipaksa klarifikasi*. The clip shows a middle-aged woman who is pressured to clarify her complaint after protesting the noise. By 11 November 2025, the video had reached 5.1 million views, 196.2 thousand likes, and 19.9 thousand comments (RadarPena 2025).

Table 3
Comments on the Video “Mothers from Jember Protest *Sound Horeg* and Are Intimidated and Forced to Clarify” (account @radarpena)

Account	Comment (Translated)	Likes	Replies
@guspri	Do not back down Ma’am many people do not like <i>sound horeg</i>	27.300	144
@bams61111	This mother is right <i>sound horeg</i> harms many people	70.600	247
@ChachaWidy	Seeing the mother carrying a baby cloth she must be disturbed because she has a baby	5.887	34
@Cah Pati	<i>Sound horeg</i> is not suitable when it goes around it should have a designated place	6.014	144

A major portion of digital content involves reactions to the religious ruling issued by MUI Jawa Timur. After Fatwa MUI Jatim 2025 declared excessive *sound horeg* unlawful, several sound groups displayed LED signs reading halal during performances. This action generated extensive online reaction and media coverage. Videos with themes such as sound horeg pasang logo HALAL #shorts reached 610 thousand views (Vincent 2025). Bigeru TV’s upload titled Setelah Diharamkan Sound horeg Malah Bawa Bawa Logo Halal reached 3.9 million views (TV 2025). iNews aired a segment titled Difatwa Haram Sound horeg Melawan Cantumkan Logo Halal with 122 thousand views (iNews 2025). CNN Indonesia published Viral Sound horeg Pasang Logo Halal Usai Ada Fatwa Haram with 31 thousand views (Indonesia 2025). SINDOnews shared MUI Jatim

Keluarkan Fatwa Haram Logo Halal Muncul Saat Pertunjukan Sound horeg with 5.5 thousand views (Prime 2025).

Independent channels also contributed commentary. Videos include *Menolak Difatwa Haram oleh MUI Sound horeg Malah Dipasang LED Berlogo Halal* with 32 thousand views (Kanal Independen 2025b) and *Logo Halal Dipasang di Sound horeg Kesalahan Berpikir Inimah* with 274 thousand views (Kanal Independen 2025a). KapanLagiDotCom uploaded a clip titled *Memasang Logo Halal Sound horeg Kembali Beraksi dengan Nuansa Timur Tengah* (KapanLagiDotCom 2025). Several videos also show *sound horeg* units decorated with LED signs reading halal.

The findings show that the digital ecosystem surrounding *sound horeg* is highly active. Videos related to entertainment receive expressions of pride and joy, while those related to controversy such as political involvement or the fatwa generate intense debate. The high number of views and interactions across platforms demonstrates that *sound horeg* has moved beyond a local cultural practice and become a digital social phenomenon with strong public resonance.

Table 4
Recapitulation of videos themed sound horeg haram across platforms

Platform	Channel	Title (Translated)	Views	Description
YouTube	@geraldvincentt	<i>Sound horeg installs halal logo shorts</i>	610.000	Public reaction to <i>sound horeg</i> with halal symbol
YouTube	Bigeru TV	<i>After being declared unlawful sound horeg displays halal logo</i>	3.900.000	Reaction to the MUI fatwa
YouTube	iNews	<i>Declared unlawful sound horeg fights back shows halal logo</i>	122.000	Mainstream media coverage
YouTube	CNN Indonesia	<i>Viral sound horeg installs halal logo after fatwa</i>	31.000	National news report

YouTube	SINDOnews	MUI Jatim issues unlawful ruling halal logo appears in <i>sound horeg</i> performance	5.500	Media coverage
YouTube	Independent	Rejecting the MUI ruling <i>sound horeg</i> installs LED with halal symbol	32.000	Independent commentary
YouTube	Independent	Halal logo installed on <i>sound horeg</i> faulty reasoning	274.000	Critical commentary
YouTube	@geraldvincentt	Halal version of <i>sound horeg</i> is this really different	37.000	Variation using religious symbolism
YouTube	KapanLagiDotCom	Installing halal logo <i>sound horeg</i> returns with Middle Eastern styled performance	-	Independent coverage
TikTok	Multiple accounts	Reactions to the MUI fatwa	-	Variety of user interpretations

These results demonstrate that *sound horeg* has become a complex phenomenon that bridges entertainment, cultural identity, political symbolism, social conflict, and religious interpretation within the digital public sphere.

2. Discussion

The phenomenon of *sound horeg*, which involves the use of high-volume loudspeaker systems in village celebrations in East Java, reflects a complex social dynamic in which local culture, social norms, and digital interaction intersect. Evidence from YouTube and TikTok shows that rural communities participate collectively in parades, sound competitions, and communal festivities, while external audiences respond with a mixture of support, satire, and criticism. These

interactions illustrate the presence of shared emotional experience and collective participation, which align with the Durkheimian concept of mechanical solidarity. Durkheim argues that the solidarity of a society depends on similarity among its members and that collective consciousness consists of common beliefs and sentiments that shape social cohesion, as stated in Durkheim (1984). In the context of *sound horeg*, shared experiences of celebration become a foundation for strengthening community identity and social bonds. Supportive comments such as those seen in @HOREGMAXIMAL's video demonstrate the internalization of community values that emphasize togetherness and mutual respect.

However, the findings also reveal significant social tension. Many comments and videos document protests against excessive noise, instances of intimidation toward those who criticize *sound horeg*, and sharp disagreement regarding the fatwa issued by MUI Jawa Timur. These conditions illustrate a state of normative uncertainty that Durkheim describes as anomie, a situation in which social norms lose their clarity or authority. Marks (1974) explains that anomie emerges when individuals experience insufficient moral regulation. The digital spread of *sound horeg* extends this uncertainty because local norms encounter broader external judgments that do not necessarily share the same cultural background. The result is a clash of interpretations regarding what is considered acceptable entertainment and what constitutes disturbance or moral violation.

The perspective offered by Pink contributes to understanding this digital dimension. Pink notes that digital ethnography requires attention to physical, social, and digital experiences as interconnected rather than separate. According to Pink et al. (2015), digital media should be understood as part of daily life, not as an independent domain. In the case of *sound horeg*, digital uploads capture sensory and emotional aspects of events while extending their reach into public online spaces. Through this process, the meanings of the practice become multiple and contested. Pink (2012) points out that digital environments enable negotiation of norms through shared reflection. This can be seen in the creative responses of sound groups who display halal signs as a reaction to the fatwa, blending religious symbolism with entertainment in ways that illustrate social negotiation rather than passive compliance.

The work of Jonathan Sterne provides further insight into the auditory dimension of the phenomenon. Sterne argues that sound is experienced differently depending on the social position of listeners. In his view, hearing requires positionality because sound is shaped by context and circumstance as explained in Sterne (2012). Within *sound horeg*, supporters perceive the sound as a source of enjoyment and cultural pride, while those who live near the performance sites experience discomfort and disruption. Sterne's idea of sonic imagination helps explain the creativity of operators and performers who

combine music, volume, visual displays, and symbolism to produce meaning. In this sense, sound becomes not only entertainment but also a medium of identity formation and negotiation.

Institutional responses demonstrate how social regulation functions in contemporary society. Fatwa MUI Jatim 2025 and regional regulations such as *Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Sidoarjo Number 4 Year 2021* show attempts to maintain balance between individual expression and community well-being. The fatwa outlines several points including the permissibility of audio technology when used appropriately, the prohibition of harmful noise, the regulation of mixed gender dancing, and the obligation to provide compensation for damages caused by excessive volume. These religious guidelines reflect moral regulation intended to protect communal harmony. At the same time, local government regulations place limits on the time and volume of loudspeaker use, such as restricting use to 22.00 WIB as reported by Harian Bhirawa (2021). From a Durkheimian perspective, these regulations work together as mechanisms to restore social order when norms become unclear or are contested.

The fatwa also functions as a form of religious control that carries significant authority in a society where many citizens rely on religious guidance in public affairs. As noted by Luthfi et al. (2024), fatwas serve as socio legal instruments that help communities internalize moral values. Combined with formal regulation, fatwas guide behavior and inform public expectations. These overlapping forms of regulation protect the rights of individuals to cultural expression while ensuring that such expression does not violate public welfare or the constitutional right to health and safety as stated in BAPPENAS RI (1945).

The findings also highlight the performative aspect of sound culture in digital spaces. Videos and comments do not simply document events but also produce meaning through interaction. The creative use of LED signs reading halal represents a symbolic negotiation of religious authority and cultural identity. This illustrates the dynamic relationship between cultural practice, digital representation, and normative boundaries. Digital audiences participate by supporting, opposing, or reshaping the meaning of *sound horeg* through commentaries and shared interpretations.

Overall, the findings show that *sound horeg* operates at the intersection of tradition, identity, power, and regulation. It reinforces mechanical solidarity within communities, while generating dysfunction through conflict, noise pollution, and moral debate. It is shaped by local practices and simultaneously transformed through digital circulation. The phenomenon demonstrates how rural cultural expression can evolve into a national debate shaped by the movement of symbols, public sentiment, and religious authority within digital society.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *sound horeg* is more than a loudspeaker practice in rural East Java. It functions as a cultural expression that strengthens mechanical solidarity through shared festivities, collective emotion, and the affirmation of local identity. At the same time, it generates social tension through noise disturbance, conflict among residents, and debates over moral and religious boundaries. Digital platforms extend these dynamics by transforming local celebrations into publicly visible content that invites admiration, criticism, and negotiation of meaning.

The digital circulation of *sound horeg* also reflects forms of creativity and resistance. Communities respond to regulation and fatwa through symbolic gestures such as LED signs reading halal, while online audiences reinterpret the practice through comments and shared content. These interactions illustrate digital performativity where cultural meaning is shaped by participation, visibility, and social imagination. The responses of MUI Jawa Timur and regional governments show attempts to balance cultural expression with public order by setting moral and practical limits on sound volume and public conduct.

The findings highlight theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study deepens understanding of mechanical solidarity, anomie, and the shifting meaning of cultural practices in digital society. Practically, it points to the need for collaborative policy among communities, government institutions, and religious authorities to manage *sound horeg* in a way that respects cultural identity while protecting public welfare. Future research may examine how similar cultural practices evolve in other regions or how digital narratives influence the perception of rural culture and community expression.

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