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Sound Horeg and the Governance of Urban Noise in East Java: A Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah and Wasatiyyah Perspective

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Abstract

In this study, we analyze *sound horeg* in East Java province in terms of Islamic law based on the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* concept involving urban areas like Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Kediri, and Madiun along with rural or semi-urban areas including Tapal Kuda by incorporating both the normative approach relying on the Qur'an, hadith, and jurisprudential literature and socio-legal approach by using social media as a source of empirical evidence. It is found that *sound horeg* is used for entertainment purposes widely among people in the province and generates economic benefits at the same time; but the high decibels of sound pollution have negative consequences such as potential harm to health, conflicts within the community, and moral wrongdoing in light of Islamic ethics. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* and *wasatiyyah*, there exists an intrinsic conflict between the welfare of the community and the safeguarding of the essentials of life, indicating that there is a need for regulation in East Java.

INTRODUCTION

Sound horeg the use of ultra-high-powered audio systems generating vibrations felt far beyond the immediate event space has become one of East Java's most contested socio-cultural phenomena. Originating in the Tapal Kuda region, it has spread rapidly to Surabaya, Malang, Sidoarjo, Kediri, and Madiun, evolving from a localized tradition into a province-wide practice (Darmawan & Efendi, 2024). Sound horeg is typically featured in community celebrations, carnivals, and convoy events, where the primary emphasis is entertainment. Yet the extreme noise it generates has provoked sustained controversy spanning public health, social order, economic, and Islamic legal domains

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(Pradana, 2025).

The socio-economic dimensions of sound horeg are significant. The practice supports sound system providers, youth organizations, and small vendors who benefit from event crowds. It also functions as an expression of communal identity, particularly in Tapal Kuda communities where folk arts and popular entertainment constitute a core feature of social life (Apriyono, 2021; Rohmah & Sari, 2018). Beyond Tapal Kuda, its expansion into the metropolitan corridors of Surabaya and Sidoarjo and into the interior cities of Kediri and Madiun has amplified both its cultural reach and its social tensions. Responses across these varied contexts differ markedly: some communities embrace sound horeg for its entertainment value and economic potential, while others reject it as a source of intolerable disruption.

From a public health standpoint, the risks associated with extreme sound are well-documented. Prolonged exposure to high-decibel environments produces hearing impairment (Natarajan et al., 2023; Daniel, 2007; Śliwińska-Kowalska & Davis, 2012), sleep disorders (Hu et al., 2025; Bion et al., 2018), and psychological stress (Westman & Walters, 1981), with cumulative long-term consequences for surrounding communities. These impacts raise urgent questions about whether the practice can be ethically sustained, and on what legal basis it might be regulated or restricted.

Sound horeg has attracted significant regulatory and religious legal attention. The East Java Governor issued a circular restricting high-powered sound systems in public spaces, citing public health and social order concerns. At the religious level, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) East Java Regional Board and the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) East Java issued fatwas declaring sound horeg *haram* on the grounds that it causes demonstrable harm (*ḍarar*) to public health, disrupts worship and communal peace, and violates the Islamic maxim *lā ḍarara wa lā ḍirār* (no harm shall be inflicted or reciprocated). These institutional positions reflect a harm-centered reading of Islamic law that prioritizes public welfare over cultural expression.

Counter-arguments have nonetheless emerged from several preachers and community religious figures who dispute this categorical prohibition. Their position holds that sound horeg, if conducted within reasonable bounds limited hours, controlled decibel levels, and appropriate locations constitutes a permissible form of entertainment (*malāhī mubāḥah*) rather than an inherently prohibited act. They argue that Islamic jurisprudence distinguishes between a practice and its excesses, and that the appropriate response is regulation rather than blanket prohibition.

This institutional and community-level debate reveals a fundamental tension within Islamic legal reasoning: between the precautionary logic of preventing harm (*dar' al-mafāsid*) and the accommodative logic of securing benefit (*jalb al-maṣāliḥ*). It also raises a core question this study seeks to address: what analytical framework can move the discussion beyond binary pronouncements toward a principled, context-sensitive assessment?

Several academic studies have begun to examine sound horeg from legal and cultural perspectives. Darmawan and Efendi document its cultural and economic

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embeddedness in the Mengare Island context, establishing the social significance of the practice (Darmawan & Efendi, 2024). Adhim offers a social-*fiqh* analysis acknowledging both entertainment function and harm potential, but without a systematic *maqāṣid*-based framework (Adhim, 2025). Winanda and Alam examine the intersection of Islamic law and positive law in responding to the phenomenon, highlighting normative tensions without resolving them (Winanda & Alam, 2025). Fitrianggraeni and Davey address underwater noise pollution generated by horeg from an environmental law angle (Fitrianggraeni & Davey, 2025). Vince further examines the cultural-ecological conflict between sound horeg and local wisdom traditions such as *jaranan* (Vince, 2025).

Within Islamic jurisprudence, scholarship on noise-related harm has grown alongside broader interest in environmental *fiqh*. Al-Banna and Rosyidah demonstrate how Yusuf al-Qaradawi's jurisprudential method can be applied to contemporary environmental harm, including acoustic pollution, through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Al Banna & Rosyidah, 2025). Muhajir et al. show how Islamic legal reasoning can be articulated in dialogue with national regulatory frameworks a dimension directly relevant to the governance of sound horeg (Muhajir et al., 2023). Husain, Ayoub, and Hassmann further examine how Islamic law interacts with secular civil law in contemporary pluralist societies, providing comparative context for Indonesia's mixed legal landscape (Husain et al., 2024). These works collectively establish that Islamic jurisprudence possesses the conceptual tools to address noise as a form of environmental and social harm, yet their application to the specific phenomenon of sound horeg remains underdeveloped.

Despite this growing body of work, a significant research gap remains. Existing academic studies on sound horeg are analytically fragmented: they either focus on cultural-economic dimensions without systematic legal analysis, or engage Islamic law at a general normative level without accounting for the empirical diversity of East Java's communities. More importantly, while the NU and MUI fatwas constitute authoritative institutional positions, they do not by design engage in sustained academic reasoning about the gradations between prohibition, regulation, and conditional permission. They do not address the counter-arguments raised by preachers who defend conditional permissibility, and they do not offer a replicable analytical framework applicable across the varied local contexts of East Java. This study fills that gap by integrating *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* analysis with empirical data from across the province.

Islamic law provides analytical tools well-suited to this complexity. The principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* require that human activities be assessed against five fundamental objectives: the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) (Rasool et al., 2020; Lamido, 2016; Dusuki & Bouheraoua, 2011). The legal maxim *dar' al-mafāsid muqaddam 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ* preventing harm takes precedence over securing benefit applies directly when the harms of a practice outweigh its advantages (Yusuf et al., 2024). At the same

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time, Islam recognizes the legitimacy of entertainment as a dimension of human well-being, provided it does not contradict the sharīʿah. The objective, therefore, is not categorical prohibition but principled regulation.

Contemporary Islamic legal scholarship emphasizes that *fiqh* must remain responsive to empirical social realities rather than operating solely through textual deduction (Yilmaz, 2024; Rosen, 2000). A moderation-oriented approach (*wasaṭiyyah*) further requires that law avoid both excessive permissiveness and excessive restriction, seeking instead a calibrated middle path between the two extremes (Syafi'i, 2025a; Abelson, 2014; Schwedler, 2011; Arifinsyah et al., 2020). This study adopts these commitments as its analytical orientation. This study is guided by three research questions: (1) What are the health, social, and cultural harms and benefits of sound horeg as practiced across East Java, and how do these map onto the five objectives of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah? (2) How do the NU and MUI East Java fatwas and the counter-arguments of community preachers differ in their legal reasoning, and what do these differences reveal about the underlying jurisprudential tensions? (3) What Islamic legal framework integrating *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, the principle of harm prevention, and the moderation ethic can serve as a principled basis for regulating, rather than absolutely prohibiting or unconditionally permitting, sound horeg?

This study aims to produce a contextually grounded Islamic legal analysis of sound horeg that moves beyond institutional fatwas and fragmented academic treatments. Its contribution is threefold. Theoretically, it extends *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* analysis to a contemporary popular culture phenomenon shaped by entertainment technology. Methodologically, it integrates normative Islamic legal reasoning with empirical community data drawn from across East Java. Practically, it offers a regulatory framework that communities, religious authorities, and government bodies can use as a reference for responding to sound horeg in a manner consistent with Islamic values, public health imperatives, and social order (Hammer et al., 2014; Murphy & King, 2022; Hallaq, 1995/2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is a qualitative method (Jackson & Mazzei, 2022), with a normative approach (Negara, 2023) and socio-legal (Mulcahy & Cahill-O'Callaghan, 2021). The normative approach involves examining Islamic legal texts, including the Qur'an, Hadith, and both classical and contemporary literature that discuss the principles of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah and the concept of Islamic moderation. This normative analysis seeks to establish a conceptual framework as a basis for evaluating the sound horeg phenomenon, particularly in relation to its economic benefits and the health risks it generates (Gatti & McAvoy, 2024).

In addition, this study adopts a socio-legal approach by examining representations and discourses surrounding the practice of sound horeg on social media platforms widely used by communities across East Java including Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Kediri, Madiun, and the Tapal Kuda region such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and

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YouTube. Empirical data were collected through content analysis of posts, comments, and online interactions that express support, criticism, or general perspectives on the use of sound horeg from multiple East Javanese localities. This approach enables the researcher to capture community perceptions, attitudes, and experiences within digital spaces, thereby positioning Islamic law not merely as a normative doctrine but also as a responsive framework relevant to social realities manifested in the era of digital communication. The data were analyzed descriptively and analytically by comparing Islamic legal principles with field findings to identify a balance between benefit and harm. This process integrates the values of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah with the empirical conditions of society, producing contextual conclusions.

Through this method, the research seeks to generate practical recommendations that can serve as ethical guidelines for communities, government authorities, and stakeholders in addressing the sound horeg phenomenon with moderation and fairness. Ultimately, the study affirms that Islamic law through the spirit of moderation and the principles of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah remains adaptive in confronting contemporary socio-cultural phenomena. By employing a comprehensive analysis, it aspires to provide ethical and practical guidance that preserves harmony between the needs of entertainment, economic interests, and the protection of public health across the diverse communities of East Java.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Social and Cultural Identity of Sound Horeg across East Java

Sound horeg is not an ancient tradition; it is a historically recent phenomenon whose roots can be traced to the expansion of commercial sound system rental services in East Java during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Community celebrations in Tapal Kuda had long relied on live musical ensembles, but as cassette-player and amplifier technology became affordable, hired sound systems began to replace live performances at weddings and carnivals. The shift from acoustic to amplified celebration was gradual and culturally continuous: the function festive noise as communal affirmation remained constant while the technology changed (Darmawan & Efendi, 2024).

The decisive turn toward *ultra*-high-powered sound what would come to be labeled "sound horeg" (from the Javanese *horeg*, meaning "to shake" or "to vibrate") emerged in the early 2010s in coastal and peri-urban communities of Jember and Bondowoso. Sound system providers began competing for clients by offering increasingly powerful equipment: stacked subwoofers, multi-kilowatt amplifiers, and bass frequencies calibrated not merely to fill a space but to be physically felt. The vibrations became the point. Sound horeg thus crystallized as a specific cultural form defined by extreme volume, bass dominance, and the visceral experience of collective sonic immersion (Pradana, 2025).

Its spread across East Java accelerated after 2015, driven by two intersecting forces:

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social media documentation and inter-community competition. Videos of horeg performances shared on YouTube and later on TikTok attracted both admiration and imitation, transforming locally rooted events into a province-wide aesthetic movement. Simultaneously, competition among sound system providers who now market their services through follower counts and viral reach incentivized escalating power levels and more elaborate convoy formats. By the early 2020s, sound horeg had migrated beyond Tapal Kuda into the metropolitan corridors of Surabaya, Sidoarjo, Malang, Kediri, and Madiun, where it appeared in carnival routes, political campaign convoys, and neighborhood celebrations alike ("Police in Jember," 2025; Jemberpedia, n.d.).

On the one hand, the presence of *sound horeg* reflects the community's openness to contemporary forms of entertainment. On the other hand, its practice is often perceived as disruptive due to noise levels that exceed the threshold of comfort. This phenomenon illustrates the tension between the need for entertainment and the desire for tranquility, ultimately generating prolonged debates within society. Younger generations tend to be more accepting of *sound horeg*, viewing it as an expression of freedom and creativity, as well as part of a popular lifestyle that reinforces community identity. In contrast, older generations frequently regard it as a disturbance, as the excessive noise conflicts with the values of serenity and social harmony that they uphold (Aprilian & Poerwanti, 2025).

The social reception of sound horeg is deeply divided, and it is precisely this division that has driven both religious prohibition and state regulation. On the one hand, sound horeg generates measurable economic benefits. A qualitative study by Aprilian, Arif, and Poerwanti on the sound horeg parade in Bumirejo Village, Blitar Regency, found that micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) particularly food, beverage, and souvenir vendors experienced a significant increase in income during parade events, while the village government recorded additional revenue to its communal fund (kas desa). The study further documented that the parade also created new business opportunities in the creative economy sector, including themed merchandise associated with the sound horeg culture. Beyond its economic contribution, sound horeg functions as a vehicle for communal recreation and cultural identity, particularly among younger generations who regard it as an expression of freedom, creativity, and popular culture. In generational terms, younger participants tend to embrace it enthusiastically, while older residents more often experience it as a disruption to the values of serenity and social harmony they uphold (Aprilian & Poerwanti, 2025).

On the other hand, the negative consequences of sound horeg are substantial and well-documented. Physically, the intense vibrations produced by its ultra-high-powered audio systems have caused structural damage to nearby buildings including cracked glass and dislodged roof tiles in multiple locations across East Java. Vulnerable groups, particularly the elderly and young children, are disproportionately affected: some families in Bumirejo Village were compelled to evacuate during parade events,

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and reports have emerged of infants suffering health complications due to extreme sound exposure. Beyond physical harm, public protests have been documented in several areas. In Jember, for instance, a group of mothers staged a protest against sound horeg activities, though they reportedly faced intimidation by participants. Moral concerns have also surfaced: critics argue that the entertainment format encourages behavioral deviations—including alcohol consumption—and that certain performance elements, such as revealing costumes, conflict with prevailing Javanese cultural norms and Islamic values. These concerns extend to fears that sound horeg may redirect younger generations away from more productive social and religious pursuits ("Viral Acara Sound Horeg," 2025).

The ethnic and religious diversity of the Tapal Kuda region further intensifies these competing responses. While some communities embrace sound horeg as an expression of cultural dynamism, others regard it as a threat to social order and moral standards a view that has reinforced negative stigma around the phenomenon in certain circles ("Mothers from Jember," 2025). It is the convergence of these documented harms health impacts, property damage, public disorder, and perceived moral erosion that formed the evidentiary basis for the institutional responses that followed. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) East Java and the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) East Java issued fatwas declaring sound horeg *haram*, citing its harmful effects on public health and social order as violations of Islamic principles prohibiting *mafsadah*. At the regulatory level, the Blitar Regency Government had already issued Circular Letter No. B/180.07/295/409.4.5/2024 on the organization of carnival and public entertainment events, capping noise levels at 60 decibels, limiting event hours to no later than 23.00 WIB, and mandating accountability for potential property damage. The East Java Governor subsequently introduced broader provincial regulations that sought to manage rather than prohibit the practice, adding a third institutional voice to an already complex normative landscape.

Islamic Law Perspective on Noise Phenomena

Islamic law views excessive noise through the principle of sound moderation which originates from the Koran and Hadith. Q. al-Aʿrāf [7]:31 prohibits all forms of isrāf (exceeding the limits), while Q. Luqmān [31]:19 explicitly orders lowering the voice and likens excessive loudness to the braying of a donkey. The Prophet Muhammad also emphasized in the hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim that Allah is All-Hearing and All-Close, so there is no need to raise your voice excessively. Classical scholars agree that noise that disturbs the peace of others is a reprehensible laghw: al-Ghazālī calls it hindering the solemnity of worship, while Ibn Taymiyyah classifies it as taʿaddī which must be prevented for the sake of the maṣlaḥah ʿāmmah. Al-Qarḍāwī added that entertainment is basically permissible as long as it does not cause harm and maintains social benefits (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

In line with this, the Prophet Muhammad emphasized in a hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim that when people supplicate, they are not calling upon a deity

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who is deaf or distant, but upon Allah, the All-Hearing and Ever-Near (Muslim, 1992, No. 2704), so there is no need to raise your voice excessively.

Classical scholars generally regarded any form of excessive noise as *laghw* (idle or futile action) that ought to be avoided. Al-Ghazālī, in *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, emphasized that loud sounds disturbing the tranquility of others constitute reprehensible behavior, as they distract the heart from attaining devotion in worship (al-Ghazālī, 2005, p. 245). Ibn Taymiyyah likewise stressed that sounds which disrupt public tranquility may be classified as a form of *taʿaddī* (transgression) that must be prevented in order to safeguard the common good (*maṣlaḥah ʿāmmah*) (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1995, p. 53). Meanwhile, contemporary scholars such as Yūsuf al-Qarḍāwī, in his work *Fiqh al-Lahw wa al-Tarwīḥ*, argue that entertainment is fundamentally permissible as long as it does not contravene the principles of the sharīʿah, does not cause harm, and continues to uphold social benefit (al-Qaraḍāwī, 2001, p. 112).

Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, entertainment is permissible insofar as it remains consistent with the protection of life, intellect, and social order. The Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) of East Java, through Fatwa No. 1 of 2025, explicitly prohibited the use of *sound horeg* beyond reasonable limits, judging it to bring harm and disrupt public order. In its clarification, MUI East Java emphasized that such practices are incompatible with the principles of Islamic law, which prioritize social tranquility and the protection of public health (Indonesian Ulema Council of East Java, 2025).

Nevertheless, differing dynamics have emerged at the local level, as seen in Lumajang, where the local branch of MUI clarified that statements by certain groups permitting *sound horeg* must still refer to and comply with the fatwa issued by MUI East Java (Indonesian Ulema Council of Lumajang, 2025). This divergence reflects a tension between those who regard *sound horeg* as a form of cultural expression and entertainment, and those who emphasize the ethical dimensions of the sharīʿah along with the social impacts it produces.

The phenomenon of *sound horeg* can also be examined more profoundly through the five dimensions of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. First, *ḥifẓ al-dīn* requires that entertainment activities do not interfere with religious obligations. Second, *ḥifẓ al-nafs* underscores the importance of safeguarding physical safety and public health from excessive noise. Third, *ḥifẓ al-ʿaql* highlights the need to preserve clarity of thought and avoid excessive behavior. Fourth, *ḥifẓ al-nasl* serves to protect younger generations from negative moral influences. Finally, *ḥifẓ al-māl* stresses the necessity of weighing economic aspects, including both potential benefits and possible social costs (Wiguna, 2022; Shofi et al., 2022).

Through the *maqāṣid* approach, Islamic law functions as a moral compass for weighing benefits against harms. Forms of entertainment that are healthy and non-destructive may be preserved, while those that cross acceptable limits must be controlled. This balance serves as a basis for analyzing the *sound horeg* phenomenon in the Tapal Kuda region, ensuring that cultural identity is not lost while social order is

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maintained. As a social practice, *sound horeg* presents a clear dilemma: it generates economic benefits for performers and small traders, yet it also carries risks of health problems and social conflict. The principle of preventing harm (*darʾ al-mafāsid*) takes precedence in Islamic law, even though its economic and social benefits should not be disregarded. Hence, proportional regulation emerges as the most viable solution. The Islamic legal analysis of noise illustrates the flexibility of the sharīʿah in addressing contemporary issues. Rather than rigid, Islamic law is adaptive in assessing diverse circumstances. Accordingly, *sound horeg* can be situated within the framework of Islamic law as a phenomenon requiring regulation not subject to total prohibition, yet not left entirely unchecked. This reflects the distinctive balance of Islamic law, which seeks to preserve harmony between entertainment needs, economic interests, and social order.

Wasathiya as the Middle Way

The concept of Islamic moderation (*wasatiyyah*) is a key principle in assessing the *sound horeg* phenomenon, as it emphasizes maintaining balance between two extremes (Craiutu, 2023; Syafi'i, 2025a), These extremes are represented by leaving the practice entirely unrestricted or imposing a total ban. Through the principle of moderation (Syafi'i & Rofi'i, 2023), society can arrive at more proportional solutions (Kruglanski et al., 2021).

The concept of Islamic moderation (wasatiyyah) provides an analytical framework for evaluating the sound horeg phenomenon by positioning itself between two opposing tendencies. On one side are groups advocating unrestricted permissiveness, who regard sound horeg solely as a form of cultural entertainment and economic activity that should proceed without substantial limitation. This position is commonly represented by event organizers, segments of youth communities, and local economic actors benefiting from the events. On the opposite side are groups demanding total prohibition due to concerns over excessive noise, health risks, disruption of worship, and threats to public order. This position is reflected in the 2025 East Java MUI fatwa and in criticisms raised by several religious leaders and community organizations (Indonesian Ulema Council of East Java, 2025). Within this context, wasatiyyah does not seek an absolute compromise, but rather a proportional framework balancing cultural expression, economic interests, and public welfare.

Moderation recognizes entertainment as a legitimate human need, yet insists it must remain under control (Syafi'i, 2025b). In the context of *sound horeg*, moderation entails regulating volume, timing, and venue so as not to disadvantage the community. This approach allows entertainment to continue without producing excessive negative consequences. By applying moderation, Islamic law demonstrates its role as a flexible ethical guide. Rather than focusing solely on prohibition, it seeks practical solutions that can be implemented within social life, thereby reinforcing its relevance to contemporary phenomena. Moderation further requires the involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making (Prasetiyo et al., 2025). Religious scholars, community

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leaders, government authorities, and younger generations must engage collectively in formulating fair regulations. Such participatory involvement enhances the social legitimacy of the rules established (Syafi'i, 2023).

Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, moderation balances the protection of life and intellect with the preservation of property and social interests. Entertainment is permissible as long as it does not endanger health or disrupt public order. This principle aligns with Islamic teachings that emphasize the pursuit of communal welfare. Moreover, a moderation-based approach can serve as a means to prevent social conflict (Dasopang et al., 2023).

Without regulation, *sound horeg* has the potential to trigger friction between event organizers and surrounding communities. Through moderation-based regulation, entertainment can continue without sacrificing public tranquility. Islamic moderation demonstrates that Islamic law is not a rigid doctrine, but rather a way of life capable of balancing worldly needs with spiritual values (Syafieh & Anzhaikan, 2023).

This concept creates broad opportunities for social innovation. The wasatiyyah framework has demonstrated particular relevance in urban contexts such as Surabaya, where Islamic organizations and majelis taʿlim networks have long practiced a communicative, inclusive approach to religious life that balances cultural expression with ethical boundaries. This Surabaya-based experience of wasatiyyah cultivated through grassroots Islamic education and daʿwah offers a replicable model for managing the sound horeg phenomenon in other East Javanese cities. Accordingly, Islamic moderation offers a relevant solution across all East Javanese communities, whether in the densely urbanized corridors of Surabaya and Sidoarjo, the commercial hubs of Kediri and Madiun, or the culturally distinctive communities of the Tapal Kuda hinterlands, providing guidance to sustain harmony between entertainment, health, and social order. The principle also demonstrates that Islamic law is intended to facilitate rather than to complicate. Entertainment can therefore persist, but within the framework of Islamic values that prioritize balance.

Economic, Health, and Social Order Impacts

The sound horeg phenomenon cannot be separated from the economic impact it produces (Winanda & Alam, 2025). The presence of high-powered sound systems generates employment opportunities for various groups, including technicians, equipment providers, and small-scale vendors. This activity contributes to the circulation of local economies across East Java, from the metropolitan hubs of Surabaya and Sidoarjo to the communities of Kediri, Madiun, and the Tapal Kuda region ("Sound Horeg, Pro-Kontra," n.d.).

However, these economic benefits are often met with health disadvantages ("Fenomena Sound Horeg," n.d.). Extreme noise can cause permanent hearing loss (Natarajan et al., 2023; Pienkowski, 2021), high blood pressure (Mannucci & Ancona, 2021), and sleep problems (Smith et al., 2022). In the long term, however, it may undermine community productivity. Beyond health concerns, social order is also

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disrupted, as many residents complain that *sound horeg* events often continue late into the night, disturbing comfort and neighborhood tranquility. Such circumstances hold the potential to spark conflicts among community members (Edgerton, 2022).

The balance between economic benefits and social harms is a key issue (Vince, 2025). Local governments face significant challenges in formulating fair regulations. A total ban is difficult to impose due to the economic benefits involved, yet leaving it unregulated is equally problematic because of the health risks. Islamic law provides an ethical framework for addressing this issue, particularly through the maxim that preventing harm should take precedence over pursuing benefits. This implies that when health risks outweigh potential gains, stricter limitations are necessary. Even so, the economic value cannot be dismissed. With proper regulation, *sound horeg* can continue to contribute to the local economy without causing harm. This balance must be achieved through social dialogue.

Broad participation is therefore essential: event organizers must recognize the impacts they create, communities should voice their concerns, and authorities need to establish clear regulations. Such synergy can lead to more equitable solutions. Ultimately, *sound horeg* is a social phenomenon that presents both opportunities and challenges. With appropriate regulation, its economic benefits can be sustained while minimizing health and social harms. Thus, an academic analysis of the economic, health, and social impacts of *sound horeg* underscores the need for an integrative approach, with Islamic law serving as an ethical guide in shaping such regulation.

Implications of Islamic Law on Public Policy

The Islamic legal analysis of the *sound horeg* phenomenon carries important implications for public policy across East Java. Policies formulated should not be guided solely by economic interests but must also take into account public health and social order (World Health Organization, 2021).

Local governments can formulate regulations that impose limits on sound volume and set clear guidelines for the timing of events (CNN Indonesia, 2025). Such regulations align with Islamic principles that prioritize collective welfare. In this way, entertainment may continue without causing harm. Public policy should also involve religious scholars and community leaders to ensure moral legitimacy. With religious endorsement, regulations are more likely to be accepted by society an important consideration throughout East Java, where strong religious traditions prevail. Experience from institutions such as Masjid Al Falah Surabaya and similar urban Islamic centers demonstrates that inclusive, wasatiyyah-based education can foster tolerance and build the social consensus needed to support such regulations. In this context, Islamic law functions as a source of public ethics, offering foundational values that serve as a reference in rule-making. Thus, regulations become not only legally valid under state law but also morally sound from a religious perspective. The synergy between state law and Islamic law therefore becomes essential (DetikNews, 2025). Both legal systems can operate in tandem to preserve social harmony.

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The findings presented in Section 4 indicate that public complaints regarding sound horeg intensify primarily after 10:00 PM, particularly in densely populated residential areas and locations near mosques and schools, where excessive noise is perceived to disrupt rest, religious activities, and social tranquility. At the same time, many respondents acknowledged that sound horeg contributes to local entertainment culture and generates economic opportunities for youth groups, vendors, and sound-system operators. These findings suggest that a wasatiyyah-oriented policy should prioritize proportional regulation rather than total prohibition, including limiting operational hours, restricting ultra-high-volume sound systems in sensitive public zones, and aligning sound intensity with regional environmental noise standards. Nevertheless, the implementation of such policies remains challenging due to differing interpretations among religious scholars, resistance from some youth communities who view sound horeg as part of local identity, and the limited enforcement capacity of village authorities in the Tapal Kuda region. In this context, wasatiyyah should be understood not merely as a normative slogan but as a practical framework for negotiating tensions between ḥifẓ al-nafs (protection of health and public welfare) and ḥifẓ al-māl (protection of economic interests) within contemporary Muslim society (al-Qaraḍāwī, 2011, pp. 44–49; Auda, 2008, pp. 22–30).

In practice, this framework may be expressed through legislation, technical regulations, public education, and community-based enforcement mechanisms aimed at reducing excessive noise without eliminating local cultural expression entirely. Educational initiatives concerning the health risks of prolonged noise exposure can function as preventive measures that encourage more responsible forms of entertainment. However, the findings of this study also demonstrate that the relationship between Islamic law and state regulation is not always seamless, as public acceptance depends heavily on local socio-cultural dynamics, generational perspectives, and institutional trust. Accordingly, the principles of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah and wasatiyyah contribute not only as moral ideals but also as analytical foundations for formulating balanced public policies capable of managing tensions between entertainment, economic interests, public health, and social order across East Java.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that the *sound horeg* phenomenon across East Java from Surabaya, Malang, Sidoarjo, Kediri, and Madiun to the Tapal Kuda region is a socio-cultural practice rich with meaning, yet controversial due to its health, social, and legal implications. The analysis based on *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* demonstrates that while entertainment is permissible, it must remain within the framework of protecting religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). Accordingly, *sound horeg* can only be justified when its benefits outweigh the harms, in line with the principle *darʾ al-mafāsid muqaddam ʿalā jalb al-maṣāliḥ* (preventing harm takes precedence over pursuing benefit).

The findings further reveal that Islamic law functions as a moral compass for

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balancing the need for entertainment with the protection of society. Islamic moderation (*wasatiyyah*) offers a middle path: *sound horeg* need not be entirely prohibited, yet it cannot be left unchecked. Regulations limiting sound volume, setting event schedules, and involving religious scholars and community leaders are likely to be more effective, as they align with the principle of public welfare in Islamic law.

Academically, this research contributes by expanding the discourse of Islamic law into contemporary issues, particularly noise and its implications for public health and social order. Future studies are encouraged to adopt an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates environmental law, public health, and cultural studies. Through such integrative perspectives, more just, moderate, and contextually relevant public policies can be formulated in response to the *sound horeg* phenomenon across East Java.

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Authors' Contribution

Imam Syafi'i is the sole author of this article and was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, data collection, analysis, and the drafting and revision of the manuscript.

AI Generative Statement

The author declares that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript. All stages of the work, including research conceptualization, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, writing, and language editing, were carried out entirely by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the entire content of this article.

Statement of Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest that could have influenced the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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