

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The narrative of *Sound Horeg* as Indonesian popular culture: A critical discourse analysis

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ABSTRACT

Current digital public spheres provide a new medium for one Indonesian grassroots community group to bring *sound horeg* as its local cultural expression into national discussions. From an opposing side, dominant discourses from formal authorities and mainstream media continuously frame the practice of *sound horeg* as a social threat. This condition raises the urgency to examine subcultural actors' strategies in negotiating stigma and seizing the cultural legitimacy of *sound horeg* within Indonesian society. Proceeding from this issue, this study examines *sound horeg* as Indonesian popular culture situated within public debates on noise, morality, and social order. The research aims to analyze *sound horeg* representation and its identity negotiation through Memed Potensio's narrative as a practitioner in the *Aduan Masyarakat* program on Trètan Universe's YouTube channel. The qualitative descriptive method uses Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis integrated with Stuart Hall's representation theory. Data obtained from the relevant episode's transcription were analyzed across textual, discourse practice, and sociocultural dimensions. The study concludes that *sound horeg* discourse in digital media spaces operates as a counter-practice resisting dominant cultural hegemony. Subcultural actors successfully deconstruct negative stigmas like 'illegal', 'immoral', and 'tacky' labels attached by formal authorities and urbanites. This discursive practice strategically shifts *sound horeg* from a mere social disturbance into a manifestation of collective identity legitimacy, communal solidarity, and cultural sovereignty for grassroots communities and the local working class. Theoretically, this research expands the application of critical discourse analysis to Indonesian local popular culture phenomena.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Popular Culture; *Sound Horeg*.

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INTRODUCTION

One manifestation of local popular culture in Indonesia is evident in *sound horeg*, a practice utilizing high-powered sound systems as an integral component of grassroots entertainment. Terminologically, *sound horeg* refers to the deployment of massive-scale audio technology designed to produce intense sound pressure and bass configurations capable of physically vibrating surrounding buildings, as reflected in the Javanese word *horeg*, meaning 'to vibrate'. Practically, this technology serves as a primary performance element typically acquired through rental systems to enliven carnivals, parades, and *sedekah bumi* (earth offering) ceremonies across Indonesia (Aprilian et al., 2025; Vince, 2025). *Sound horeg* flourishes as a prominent popular entertainment trend in East Java, particularly concentrated in Malang Regency as its pioneering hub, with investment values reaching billions of rupiahs per unit according to observations by Sulistyowati & Kusnul (2025). Consequently, *sound horeg* has transformed from a mere technical hobby into a dominant symbol of economic prestige and communal identity within local public festivities.

The *sound horeg* phenomenon elicits diverse public responses. Certain groups perceive this practice as a manifestation of grassroots cultural creativity generating substantial economic impacts for local communities and MSMEs (referred to in Indonesian as *Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah* or UMKM) (Asia Daily, 2025; Damayanti, 2025). Another segment of society considers *sound horeg* a source of disturbance driven by extreme noise levels posing risks of physical damage and hearing health disorders (Parikesit et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). From the perspective of Indonesian law, this practice is classified as a violation of public order and environmental pollution as stipulated in Article 99 of *Undang-Undang Nomor 32 Tahun 2009* about *Perlindungan dan Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup* (Law Number 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management), alongside Article 503 of the KUHP (the Indonesian Criminal Code).

These contradictory perspectives demonstrate that *sound horeg* operates within a contested domain between cultural expression and the regulatory discourses of the state and society. The *sound horeg* phenomenon thus presents a portrait of freedom of expression, economic interests, and demands for social order engaging in mutual negotiation within public sphere dynamics, providing a substantial opportunity to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) study. This conceptual framework aligns with Fairclough's perspective (in Korosh, 2024), positioning discourse as a social practice intricately intertwined with power relations, ideology, and meaning production within specific contexts.

Furthermore, discourse is understood as a means of shaping social reality that represents the interests, legitimacy, and positions of the actors involved (Fitriana & Hidayani, 2024; Hermawan & Hamdani, 2023; Riyanti, 2023; Wahyudi et al., 2025). Consequently, the narratives surrounding *sound horeg* circulating within media spaces become a crucial arena for examining the ways local popular culture practices are positioned, maintained, or questioned through language strategies, representation, and meaning construction. Accordingly, this research aims to examine the *sound horeg* narrative as popular culture through a critical discourse perspective to uncover the mechanisms of image-building, defense, and community identity negotiation within the media public sphere.

The significance of this study is amplified by the production of the *sound horeg* narrative within the *Aduan Masyarakat* program on the Trètan Universe YouTube channel. This digital media platform serves as a strategic discursive arena for examining the construction and negotiation of community self-image (Fairclough, 1995), Trètan Muslim acts as a discourse mediator directing public interpretation through satirical humor to position everyday societal problems as public issues worthy of discussion (Nurwahid & Safira, 2023; Roslyng & Dindler, 2023; Stoltenberg, 2021) Furthermore, Memed Potensio's role as a guest speaker in the *Aduan Masyarakat* program episode titled "Sound Horeg Menghibur Warga  (Ft. Thomas Alva Edi Sound)" positions him as a discourse framer directly representing the *sound horeg* community as an integral part of local popular culture. Discourse framers play a strategic role in producing and normalizing the meaning of popular culture through personal experiences, enabling the conveyed discourse to potentially challenge or negotiate the dominant narratives of order, aesthetics, and state regulation (Crilley, 2021; de Souza-Leão et al., 2022; Rafique et al., 2022). He utilizes language and experiential narratives to strategically shift the meaning of *sound horeg* from a mere disturbance to a cultural practice possessing true legitimacy.

Previous studies applying discourse approaches to examine the *sound horeg* phenomenon predominantly focus on macro-level frameworks of social conflict, normative piety, and religious authority. Fauzi (2025) utilizes Ernesto Laclau's post-structuralist model to demonstrate the MUI fatwa as an instrument of hegemony triggering symbolic resistance through terminology shifts for attaining new legitimacy. Fikri et al. (2025) apply Fairclough's CDA to dissect this practice as an ideological negotiation and symbolic conflict between youth expressive values and religious moral authority. Pradana (2025) integrates a critical

discourse approach with Securitization Theory to reveal the framing of *sound horeg* as an existential threat to morality subsequently validated by digital public sentiment.

Although all three studies are rooted in the tradition of discourse analysis, their focus remains limited to macro-level dynamics such as institutional hegemony, social class conflict, or the securitization of public issues. No study has yet descended to the micro-level to highlight an individual actor's discourse strategy in navigating such stigma through informal popular media, while integrating theories of representation and identity. This gap defines the novelty of this research, which focuses its analysis on Memed Potensio's strategies on the Trètan Universe YouTube channel. The current research specifically examines how Memed deconstructs the label of threat into an image of "professionalism" through humor and fluid identity negotiation.

The selection of this episode is based on its status as the most viral content that brings subculture practitioners and a national audience together in a dialogic manner. This provides a significant opportunity to uncover how community identity is re-represented and negotiated amidst the dominance of satirical discourse. This research fills the existing gap by analyzing the representation of *sound horeg* through Memed Potensio's narrative in the *Aduan Masyarakat* program on the Trètan Universe YouTube channel. To address this gap, the present study focuses on Memed Potensio's discourse strategies on the Trètan Universe YouTube channel. The study combines Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis with Hall's Representation Theory to examine how *sound horeg* is represented and how cultural legitimacy is negotiated in digital public space.

Regarding the analytical framework, this research applies Norman Fairclough's (1995) CDA model integrated with Stuart Hall's (1997) Representation Theory. Fairclough's model operates through three primary dimensions, encompassing text analysis, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. This combination of perspectives enables the researcher to uncover the processes of re-representation and identity negotiation within the *sound horeg* community amidst the dominance of satirical discourse. Through this approach, the research expands the domain of CDA studies in Indonesia as an alternative instrument for dissecting popular culture phenomena. This entire framework ultimately converges on the assertion regarding the power mechanisms actively utilized by subcultural groups to secure social legitimacy. Hall's (1997) representation theory complements Fairclough's CDA by explaining how meanings, identities, and cultural legitimacy are constructed through language and symbolic practices. This study aims to examine the representation of *sound horeg*, the

production of its meanings in digital media, and its relationship with broader social and power structures in Indonesian popular culture.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method focusing on Memed Potensio's narrative in the *Aduan Masyarakat* program on the Trètan Universe YouTube channel concerning the representation and polemics of *sound horeg* culture within Indonesian society. The qualitative descriptive method was selected as it aligns with the research objective of comprehensively understanding discourse phenomena. This selection relies on Creswell's (2014) concepts and Nasution's (2023) assertions positioning qualitative descriptive research as an instrument for uncovering the meanings and processes behind verbal data through contextual interpretation. Building upon this foundation, this method is applied to elucidate the mechanisms of message formation, argumentation, and discourse strategies operating naturally within public communication practices.

The data collection technique applies the observational and note-taking method, specifically by attentively watching the broadcast, followed by recording and classifying the object's utterances into data categories. According to Lustyantie (2023), this method is effective in collecting linguistic data from spoken texts. The data collection process is conducted through a series of stages, starting from selecting relevant broadcasts, watching the entire content, transcribing Memed Potensio's narrative, and subsequently classifying it based on the text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice dimensions according to Fairclough's model integrated with Hall's representation theory. The data source was the *Aduan Masyarakat* episode entitled "Sound Horeg Menghibur Warga  (Ft. Thomas Alva Edi Sound)" published on the Trètan Universe YouTube channel. The episode was selected because it prominently features Memed Potensio as a representative of the *sound horeg* community.

The research data were collected on December 5, 2025, through the audiovisual documentation of the *Aduan Masyarakat* program on the Trètan Universe YouTube channel and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analytical purposes. The analysis process was conducted from December 6 to 13, 2025, utilizing Fairclough's CDA framework syncretized with Hall's representation theory. The data codification employs a sequential numerical model. Content analysis was subsequently used in the initial stage to identify and categorize language structures and linguistic symbols representing messages explicitly and implicitly (Wicke, 2023). Furthermore, the data were analyzed across Fairclough's three CDA

dimensions, complemented by a literature study gathering relevant literature to strengthen the theoretical foundation and interpretation of the research data (Coates, 2015; Jaya et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Tunison (2023) posits that content analysis enables researchers to interpret symbolic meanings in documentable texts. In this research, the analysis stages encompass data classification followed by multi-dimensional interpretation. The text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice dimensions are sequentially analyzed to uncover identity representation, narrative packaging, and power negotiation according to Fairclough's and Hall's integrated models. The data validity in this study is maintained through theoretical and data source triangulation to ensure robust, consistent, and academically accountable interpretation results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, the main discussion is categorized into three analytical pillars: (1) the construction of *sound horeg* representation through identity-marking practices analyzed within the text dimension to uncover the linguistic and representational signifying strategies used in framing the *sound horeg* identity; (2) the narrative packaging strategies and negotiation of *sound horeg* representation in the digital sphere discussed within the discourse practice dimension through the examination of the production, packaging, and circulation processes of narratives within popular digital media; and (3) counter-hegemony and the cultural legitimacy of *sound horeg* placed within the sociocultural practice dimension to examine the operation of the *sound horeg* discourse within power relations, ideology, and efforts to negotiate cultural legitimacy amidst the domination of public order and state regulation discourses in Indonesia. The detailed elaboration is presented below.

Construction of *Sound Horeg* Representation through Identity-Marking Practices (Text Dimension)

The text dimension is syncretized with Hall's (1997) constructivist approach to examine the meaning formation process through language structure, word choice, metaphors, and rhetorical styles. The use of these linguistic elements operates as a strategy for image building and identity negotiation of the *sound horeg* community within digital media spaces.

Representation of Physical Endurance and Adaptive Subject Identity Construction of Sound Horeg Practitioners

The representation of adaptive physical endurance capable of surviving extreme working conditions serves as a primary strategy in the identity construction of *sound horeg* practitioners presented through Memed Potensio's narrative. The normalization of physical exhaustion as the professionalism of *sound horeg* practitioners functions to represent a resilient and highly durable working subject. The data presentation representing this section alongside its analysis is provided below.

Data 1

Trètan Muslim : *"Ini X-Men dengan kekuatan kuping baja."*
(This is an X-Men with ears of steel.)

Data 2

Memed : *"Rekor sih 3 hari... cuma tidur 1 jam."*
Potensio (The record is 3 days... only sleeping for 1 hour.)
Trètan Muslim : *"3 hari tidur 1 jam udah kayak pendaki Everest tah pendaki Everest."*
(3 days sleeping for 1 hour is exactly like a Mount Everest climber, a Mount Everest climber.)

The popular metaphor of "X-Men" and "ears of steel" delivered by Trètan Muslim in Data 1 functions to associate Memed Potensio with superhuman abilities. According to Fiske (2010), individuals possess the agency to utilize symbolic resources to produce meanings relevant to their social identities. This humorous rhetorical style normalizes noise risks as conquerable challenges. Furthermore, Memed Potensio's personal confession regarding his sleep deprivation in Data 2 establishes experiential legitimation. This aligns with Goffman's assertion (in Merunková & Šlerka, 2019) stating individuals consciously or unconsciously project a specific definition of the situation to the public when appearing before others. Memed Potensio's narrative operates as an identity negotiation strategy to construct the *sound horeg* practitioner as an adaptive and resilient subject possessing social legitimacy within the Indonesian popular culture space.

Normalization of Sound Horeg Damage Impacts through Renovation Assistance

The potential for community property damage resulting from *sound horeg* activities in Indonesia is redefined as an opportunity for material gain for residents through renovation mechanisms and social compensation. This redefinition is constructed by reversing the cause-and-effect relationship, utilizing humor, and shifting the meaning of damage into a renovation opportunity. Consequently, *sound horeg* is positioned as an entity actively providing socio-economic benefits and effectively eliminating the label of an environmental

threat. The data presentation representing this section alongside its analysis is provided below:

Data 3

- Trètan Muslim : *"Tapi kalau mau meriah sudah pasti meriah 'kan, meski harus meretakkan kaca. Kalau lewat di suatu kampung yang getar semua sampai pecah itu Mas Memed deg-degan enggak, maksudnya rumah warga gitu maksudnya?"*
(If you want it to be festive, it is definitely festive, right, even if it has to crack the glass. When passing through a village that vibrates entirely until everything breaks, do you feel nervous, Mas Memed, referring to the residents' houses?)
- Memed Potensio : *Justru warga malah senang, Mas. Kan gini dia nanti rumahnya dilewati sound horeg gitu terus kacanya misal pecah, terus gentengnya jatuh, ya itu mereka malah senang karena langsung diganti sama panitia.*
(The residents are actually happy, Mas. It is like this, their houses will be passed by the *sound horeg*, then if their glass breaks, and their roof tiles fall off, they are actually happy because it is immediately replaced by the committee.)

Data 3 representationally reverses the meaning of damage from a detrimental event into an opportunity for profit. The phrase choice of "*malah senang*" (actually happy) negates the residents' image of suffering, and the cause-and-effect narrative structure frames the damage as part of an anticipated mechanism. Van Leeuwen (2008) refers to this strategy as legitimization through instrumental rationalization. Within the context of *sound horeg* activities, the resulting negative impacts are subsequently normalized through the highlighting of technical compensation in the form of renovation as the ultimate goal. The ideology constructed through this narrative leads to the formation of social legitimacy asserting the damage caused by *sound horeg* as an acceptable consequence within the practice of folk entertainment. Within his discourse relations, Memed Potensio positions the residents as parties involved in a social agreement, actively eliminating the perception of passive victims. Consequently, the narrative simultaneously negotiates the societal stigma viewing *sound horeg* as a destructive and disorderly practice. The identity of the *sound horeg* practitioner is thus constructed as a responsible party thoroughly prepared to bear the material consequences of their practice. The normalization of damage impacts is further expanded through an explanation concerning the evacuation mechanism for sick residents before the event commences, as conveyed by Memed Potensio below:

Data 4

- Trètan Muslim : *"Oke. (Membaca Komen) 'Sedekah Bumi Lagunya Sound Horeg, Warga Donowarih Disuruh Mengungsi saat Karnaval.' Nah, bagaimana itu?"*
(Okay. [Reading a Comment] "Earth Offering with *Sound Horeg* Songs, Donowarih Residents Asked to Evacuate during Carnival". So, how about that?)
- Memed Potensio : *Kalau ada salah satu warga yang sakit nih, nah biasanya itu diungsikan.*
'If there is a resident who is sick, well, they are usually evacuated.'

Data 4 representationally frames *sound horeg* as a practice heavily considering humanitarian aspects. The word choice of "*biasanya*" (usually) gives the impression of a routine and standard procedure, actively eliminating the notion of an incidental action. The constructed social relation positions the committee and *sound horeg* practitioners as risk managers, and directly places the residents as protected subjects. Beck & Ritter (1992) state social legitimacy in modern activities is frequently achieved through the institutionalization of risk management to ensure hazards are socially acceptable and tolerated. Within this context, the narrative concerning the evacuation of sick residents functions as a legitimization strategy to build the image of *sound horeg* as an entertainment practice consistently observing social and humanitarian aspects. This discourse simultaneously demonstrates the symbolic power of *sound horeg* practitioners in determining the boundaries of reasonable risks acceptable to the community. The identity of the *sound horeg* practitioner is thus constructed as part of an organized, responsible social system possessing collective care. This normalization reaches a satirical point when Trètan Muslim states the following description:

Data 5

- Memed Potensio : *"Kan gini dia nanti rumahnya dilewati sound horeg gitu terus kacanya misal kacanya pecah, terus gentengnya jatuh. Mereka malah senang karena langsung diganti sama panitia. Jadi bisa renovasi rumah gratis."*
(It is like this, their houses will be passed by the *sound horeg*, then if their glass breaks, and their roof tiles fall off. They are actually happy because it is immediately replaced by the committee. So they can get a free home renovation.)
- Trètan Muslim : *"Bantuan renovasi sound horeg lebih cepat dari program pemerintah."*
(The *sound horeg* renovation assistance is faster than government programs.)

Data 5 rhetorically uses humor to critique state bureaucracy and simultaneously elevate the effectiveness of the *sound horeg* compensation mechanism. Furthermore, Scott (1990) refers to this kind of phenomenon as the art of resistance against state bureaucracy. In this context, non-elite groups utilize jokes and satire as hidden transcripts to criticize the authorities' incompetence by completely avoiding direct confrontation. The narrative effectively detaches the representation of property damage from a governance failure

because the *sound horeg* community implements a rapid response to resolve social issues. This discourse builds an ideology of communal solidarity positioned as more responsive than the state bureaucracy. The constructed symbolic relation positions the *sound horeg* community as a non-state actor possessing social power and practical legitimacy amidst the domination of formal institutions. The community's identity is subsequently constructed as an adaptive, efficient group capable of executing social functions independently.

Reconstruction of Sacredness: Integration of Profane Entertainment into Communal Rituals

Sound horeg activities are represented as part of communal rites possessing a sacred dimension, specifically through their connection with the Javanese traditional ritual of *sedekah bumi*. *Sound horeg* is positioned as a complementary element reconstructed to align with the community's communal values. Referring to Lynch (2007:131), this phenomenon demonstrates the operation of the functionalist definition of religion taking over profane popular culture resources like *sound horeg* to execute social functions in binding community solidarity. The data presentation representing this section alongside its analysis is provided below

Data 6

- Trètan Muslim : “*Kalau selain karnaval acara apa?*”
(Besides carnivals, what other events are there?)
- Memed Potensio : “*Kalau di daerah Jawa Tengah ini sedekah bumi. Jadi iya satu dusun gitu. Per RT. Nanti muter satu dusun gitu.*”
(In the Central Java area, it is the *sedekah bumi* [earth offering]. So yes, a whole hamlet like that. Per neighborhood association [RT]. Later it goes around the whole hamlet like that.)

Data 6 frames *sound horeg* activities within a culturally established collective ritual structure. Within Fairclough's sociocultural practice dimension, *sound horeg* is positioned as part of folk cultural practices obtaining legitimacy through the *sedekah bumi*. The syncretization with Hall's (1997) concept of representation is visible when the sound system as a profane object is re-represented into a symbol of village cohesion and solidarity. Memed Potensio conducts a signifying practice shifting the meaning of *sound horeg* from a mere loudspeaker into a marker of the community's collective identity. Lynch (2007:31) explains popular culture provides symbolic materials utilized by the community to understand the world and themselves. Within this context, *sound horeg* is represented as an important medium enabling the *sedekah bumi* ritual to take place festively and strengthening the

residents' social bonds. This representation simultaneously builds the ideology of communal solidarity and negotiates the dominant stigma viewing *sound horeg* solely as a source of social disturbance. The community's symbolic power is evident through the village society's ability in determining the cultural meaning and legitimacy of *sound horeg* based on the collective values they construct themselves.

Narrative Packaging Strategies and Negotiation of *Sound Horeg* in the Digital Sphere (Discourse Practice Dimension)

Text Production

The text production stage is inseparable from Trètan Muslim's role as a cultural broker producing discursive immunity. This humor strategy aligns with Bakhtin's (1984) concept of the carnivalesque suspending rigid social hierarchies through laughter to deconstruct destructive things into a liberating parody. Within Fairclough's discourse practice dimension, Trètan Muslim utilizes this comedic persona to distribute the *sound horeg* narrative as an entertainment commodity. This ironically nuanced glorification strategy leads the audience to interpret *sound horeg* as collective entertainment. This representation process strengthens Hall's (1997) constructivist view stating the media plays an active role in shaping and negotiating cultural meanings.



Figure 1. Visualization of the *Aduan Masyarakat* Program on the Trètan Universe YouTube Channel

The discourse production strategy is visually manifested through a fluid public service parody referred to by Baym (2005) as discursive integration. As shown in Figure 1, Trètan Muslim and Memed Potensio actively create a parody of bureaucratic authority. Furthermore, the video editing process utilizes humorous sound effects and meme-text to direct the audience's emotions. The destructive impact is successfully framed as a unique form of collective entertainment ensuring its collective acceptance by the digital public rationality.

Text Distribution

The text distribution stage transforms the *sound horeg* narrative into national consumption through a visual strategy designed to win digital platform algorithms. As displayed in Figure 2, the video thumbnail utilizes a dramatic expression contrast technique and a provocative clickbait title to attract a cross-demographic audience in Indonesia. This distribution successfully nationalizes the issue through the Trètan Universe channel's massive reach, garnering over 2 million views and 57 thousand likes as of December 2025.



Sound Horeg Menghibur Warga !? (Ft. Thomas Alva Edi Sound) -...

Figure 2. Video Thumbnail of the *Aduan Masyarakat* Program on the Trètan Universe YouTube Channel

Simultaneously, the distribution of the *sound horeg* discourse initiated by Memed Potensio also permeates into Indonesian mainstream media networks to systematically create a massive intertextuality chain. The mapping of the discourse contestation occurring among these various Indonesian distribution channels is subsequently presented in Table 1 below, juxtaposing the discourse strategies of the Trètan Universe channel alongside three other major media institutions, namely TRANS TV, detikcom, and tvOne converging on the YouTube platform. This comparison is specifically highlighted through two main theoretical parameters: (1) Memed Potensio's subject position referring to Hall's (1997:62) concept to observe the identity construction of Memed Potensio before the audience; and (2) the discursive representation reflecting Fairclough's (1995a:133) concept of interdiscursivity to dissect Memed Potensio's focal discussion alongside the underlying ideological content within his host media. The further explanation is provided below:

Media	Memed Potensio's Subject Position	Memed Potensio's Discursive Representation
Trètan Universe	A subject possessing the agency to reverse negative narratives. He is positioned purely as a skilled negotiator capable of transforming damage into a mutually beneficial renovation transaction, completely dispelling the labels of a victim or a villain.	The focus is directed towards counter-discourse. The text represents the damage caused by <i>sound horeg</i> as a Indonesian cultural anomaly excusable through humor and transactional logic.

TRANS TV	An entertainment object constructed through the parodic nickname 'Thomas Alva Edisound' with the physical characteristic of blackened dark circles positioned to provoke laughter from the audience and the presenters.	The focus is directed towards the exchange value of virality. The discourse is dominated by trivial topics such as income amount (IDR 20-30 million), sleep deprivation, and international fame, alongside the obscuration of actual social issues.
detikcom	A dedicated technical worker (operator). He is provided with the space to display his humanistic side as a Brewog Audio crew member working affirmatively and possessing a national working range.	The focus is directed towards figure introduction. This discourse normalizes the <i>sound horeg</i> phenomenon by framing it as a unique profession and a subculture lifestyle, and rationalizing building damage as a technical factor of old buildings.
tvOne	A party required to be responsible and obedient to regulatory authorities due to the continuity of <i>sound horeg</i> activities.	The focus is directed towards conflict and danger. The text frames <i>sound horeg</i> as a safety threat (fatality in Lumajang) and an ecological disturbance. The discussion is dominated by medical logic (decibel limits) and legal sanctions to discipline the social body.

Table 1. The Discourse Strategy Comparison of Trètàn Universe against Mainstream Media

Table 1 demonstrates the symbolic power struggle in the representation of the *sound horeg* phenomenon. Referring to Hall's (1997:62) concept, mainstream media institutions actively position Memed Potensio as a viral object of subcultural exoticism or a legal subject to normalize noise disturbance and enforce sharp disciplining processes. Within this distribution constellation, the Trètàn Universe channel successfully conducts a discursive intervention according to Fairclough (1995:133). Trètàn Muslim and Memed Potensio reconstruct the representation of *sound horeg* into a humorous transactional cultural practice effectively neutralizing the negative sentiments distributed by mainstream media.

Text Consumption

The text consumption stage within discourse practice serves as a discursive arena for the audience to conduct decoding of the distributed messages (Hardy, 2022; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023; Jensen, 2025). Media consumption evolves into a participatory discourse transforming netizen comments into tools reinforcing or challenging the competing discourses (Molodychenko, 2023; Parthama et al., 2025), as seen in the netizen comments on the *Aduan Masyarakat* video on the Trètàn Universe channel featuring Memed Potensio. Based on field data from the comment section, the audience performs meaning negotiation moving from satirical affirmation (dominant position) to logical resistance (oppositional position). Further explanation is provided through the following images:

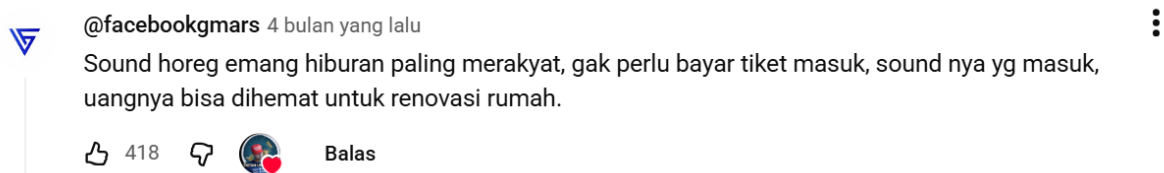


Figure 3. Screenshot of audience comments regarding free renovation from *sound horeg* activities
(Source: YouTube Trètan Universe, 2025)

Based on field data from the comment section, the audience performs meaning negotiation moving towards satirical affirmation. The response in Figure 3 demonstrates the audience normalization of *sound horeg* through transactional logic. The public accepts the premise that physical damage caused by *sound horeg* is a reasonable price for folk entertainment. This public acceptance confirms the views stating that humor in the digital sphere functions very effectively as a normalization mechanism for pacifying social tension (Gal, 2019; Ghilzai, 2025; Peters & Allan, 2022). Certain audience members conduct a deeper reading by providing sociological contexts validating the phenomenon as a social agreement, as displayed in the following image:

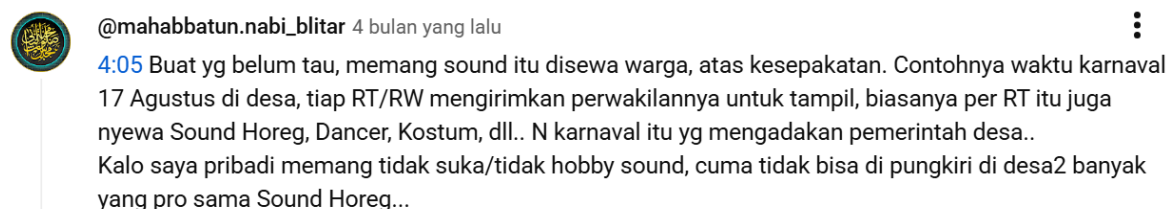


Figure 4. Screenshot of audience comments regarding the social agreement over *sound horeg*
(Source: YouTube Trètan Universe, 2025)

Figure 4 represents empirical evidence that Trètan Muslim's video successfully encourages local viewers to voice village social contracts frequently omitted from mainstream media reports focusing solely on damage aspects. Digital platforms fundamentally provide an emancipatory space for the community to reclaim cultural authority and articulate counter-narratives massively (Jin, 2025; Salehi et al., 2023). Beyond the negotiation of the social phenomenon, the humanization strategy in this video also triggers a shift in audience perception regarding the figure of Memed Potensio personally, as displayed in Figure 5:



Figure 5. Screenshot of audience responses regarding the deconstruction of Memed Potensio's figure.
(Source: YouTube Trètan Universe, 2025)

Figure 5 demonstrates the success of the image deconstruction process regarding the figure of Memed Potensio. The interdiscursivity approach employed by Trètan works effectively to humanize a source previously stigmatized negatively by netizens. In line with Francis's (1994) notion, humor possesses the transformative power to reconstruct the image of a marginal subject into a figure appearing more humanistic and socially acceptable. This phenomenon of alternative meaning-making is observable as shown in Figure 6 below:

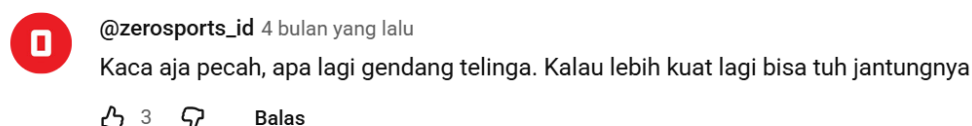


Figure 6. Screenshot of audience responses conducting oppositional reading of *sound horeg*.
(Source: YouTube Trètan Universe, 2025)

Figure 6 demonstrates an oppositional reading confronting the entertainment narrative with the reality of biological risks. Social media audiences consistently possess the active agency to reproduce oppositional readings to validate health hazard narratives frequently echoed by news media (E. P. Fauzi et al., 2024; Oktayusita et al., 2020; Sitorus et al., 2025). The existence of this comment simultaneously confirms a discourse reality that proceeds concurrently. Amidst Trètan Muslim's success in building counter-discourse, the narrative regarding health hazards frequently echoed by news media continues to leave a strong residue within the minds of certain audience members.

Counter-Hegemony and Cultural Legitimacy of *Sound Horeg* (Sociocultural Practice Dimension)

Data 6

- | | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| Trètan Muslim | : | "Kalau selain karnaval acara apa?"
(Besides carnivals, what other events are there?) |
| Memed Potensio | : | "Kalau di daerah Jawa Tengah ini sedekah bumi. Jadi iya satu dusun gitu. Per RT. Nanti muter satu dusun gitu."
(In the Central Java area, it is the <i>sedekah bumi</i> [earth offering]. So yes, a whole hamlet like that. Per neighborhood association [RT]. Later it goes around the whole hamlet like that.) |

Data 3

- Trètan Muslim : *"Tapi kalau mau meriah sudah pasti meriah 'kan, meski harus meretakkan kaca. Kalau lewat di suatu kampung yang getar semua sampai pecah itu Mas Memed deg-degan enggak, maksudnya rumah warga gitu maksudnya?"*
(If you want it to be festive, it is definitely festive, right, even if it has to crack the glass. When passing through a village that vibrates entirely until everything breaks, do you feel nervous, Mas Memed, referring to the residents' houses?)
- Memed Potensio : *Justru warga malah senang, Mas. Kan gini dia nanti rumahnya dilewati sound horeg gitu terus kacanya misal pecah, terus gentengnya jatuh, ya itu mereka malah senang karena langsung diganti sama panitia.*
(The residents are actually happy, Mas. It is like this, their houses will be passed by the *sound horeg*, then if their glass breaks, and their roof tiles fall off, they are actually happy because it is immediately replaced by the committee.)

The framing of sociocultural practices operates as an effort of counter-hegemony against the dominant discourse through situational, institutional, and societal aspects to negotiate stigma and construct cultural legitimacy. The *sound horeg* discourse is situationally inseparable from collective moments such as *sedekah bumi*. Data 6 and Data 3 demonstrate Memed Potensio's strategy to challenge negative stereotypes by highlighting the participatory unity of hamlet residents. Referring to Fairclough's (1995) notion, this situation creates a specific spatio-temporal space temporarily suspending social order norms. This phenomenon aligns with Hall's (1997:25) constructionist approach affirming that meaning is constructed through arbitrary sign systems. Memed utilizes this situation to perform re-signification practices to fix the meaning of physical damage into a symbol of pleasure and benefit. Material damage is subsequently understood as part of an economic and symbolic exchange mutually agreed upon by *sound horeg* practitioners and the audience.

This permissive situational logic encounters rigid regulatory barriers when extended to the institutional level. Legally, this activity faces threats of national criminal sanctions, specifically Article 503 paragraph (1) of the KUHP concerning public order disturbance and Article 99 of *Undang-Undang Nomor 32 Tahun 2009* about *Perlindungan dan Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup* (Law Number 32 of 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management) regulating sanctions for violations of environmental quality standards. This legal pressure is technically reinforced in specific regencies through *Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Malang Nomor 11 Tahun 2019* (Malang Regency Regional Regulation Number 11 of 2019) limiting the maximum noise level to 60 decibels and operational hours until 11:00 PM, further affirmed by *Surat Edaran Bupati Blitar Nomor B/180.07/295/409.4.5/2024* (Blitar Regent Circular Letter Number B/180.07/295/409.4.5/2024). This institutional pressure is

solidified by religious discourse through the Fatwa of the VIII Indonesian Ulama Commission forbidding *sound horeg* activities causing harm.

Reflecting on Hall's (1997:270) concept of the regime of representation, the labeling of *sound horeg* as a subject of regulation fundamentally operates as a disciplinary effort against this cultural practice. Facing this strict regulatory pressure, Memed applies cultural guerrilla tactics to circumvent the domination of structural authority. This tactical maneuver is realized by prioritizing community deliberation as a resolution mechanism, as he expresses in the *Aduan Masyarakat* broadcast provided in the following data:

Data 7

Memed Potensio : "*Sebelum mengadakan sound horeg, kita musyawarah dulu soal keberlanjutan acara ini.*"
(Before holding *sound horeg*, we deliberate first regarding the continuity of this event.)

Through Data 7, Memed Potensio offers counter-institutional legitimacy in a strategic manner. To evade the snare of public order articles and operational hour restrictions, he highlights the community deliberation mechanism as a superior social law. Simultaneously, to address the stigma of immorality, he adopts the cloak of the *sedekah bumi* customary institution as indicated in Data 6, ensuring the noise acquires a cultural umbrella of sacredness. Through this approach, Memed Potensio asserts that his community possesses self-regulation mechanisms tactically proven to command greater adherence among village residents compared to rigid formal state regulations.

At the social level, *sound horeg* discourse becomes a site of class identity politics. Beyond regulatory pressures, the practice faces urban cultural hegemony that frequently labels it as low-class entertainment. Following Hall's (1997:257) concept of stereotypes as signifying practices, such labels reduce the *sound horeg* community to negative attributes associated with poverty, tackiness, and marginality. In response, practitioners reclaim these stigmas and transform them into symbols of collective pride and cultural identity. This symbolic resistance is reflected in the following dialogue between Memed Potensio and Trètan Muslim:

Data 8

- Memed Potensio : “Kalau satu truk hampir 2 M, Mas.”
(For one truck, it reaches almost 2 billion, Mas.)
- Trètan Muslim : “Iya. Misalnya ada yang ngomong kan, wah, ini mah hiburan kelas bawah, Bro. Enggak ada hiburan kelas bawah 2 M. Enggak ada, Bro. Iya. Iya dong. Anda ke klub aja paling ya sejuta 5 juta. 2 M loh.”
(Yes. For instance, some people say, well, this is lower-class entertainment, Bro. There is no such thing as lower-class entertainment costing 2 billion. There isn't, Bro. Yes. Definitely. If you go to a club, you spend a million or 5 million at most. 2 billion, you know.)

In Data 8, Trètan performs a *trans-coding* practice using a hierarchy-reversal strategy to address Memed Potensio's statement concerning the costs of *sound horeg* events. He juxtaposes symbols of urban establishment, specifically “nightclubs” associated with the upper class, with *sound horeg* associated with the lower class. By highlighting the 2 billion figure in response to Memed Potensio's direct statement, Trètan Muslim deconstructs the myth of rural poverty. He asserts that those culturally considered the lower class actually possess economic capital far surpassing the lifestyles of urban residents.

The claim regarding capital sovereignty is reinforced by a massive material base of high economic value. Within the perspective of the political economy of discourse, *sound horeg* has transformed from a mere cultural ritual into a subsistence creative industry supporting the livelihoods of many. Field data reveals an astonishing economic scale. In the Malang Raya region alone, approximately 1,200 operators exist, with 500 operating professionally and absorbing thousands of local workers (*Asia Daily*, 2025). The capital turnover, ranging from rental costs reaching hundreds of millions of rupiah per event to operator incomes potentially touching half a billion rupiah per month, creates a multiplier effect for small traders and MSMEs around the location.

Furthermore, the study by Majid et al. (2025) confirms that these events function as an economic harvest for UMKM. Small-scale traders generate gross revenue ranging from IDR 800,000 to over IDR 1,000,000 per single event. Beyond private trader profits, this activity contributes to village revenue through parking levies and stall rentals. These economic facts strengthen the bargaining position of the *sound horeg* community within the social structure. The *sound horeg* phenomenon demonstrates the economic independence of rural communities successfully creating their own markets without interference from urban corporate investors. Therefore, the stigmatization or prohibition of *sound horeg* constitutes a threat to cultural existence and community economic sovereignty (Damayanti, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the representation of *sound horeg* in Trètan Universe broadcasts is positioned as a counter-practice against the dominant cultural hegemony regarding *sound horeg* in Indonesia. Through Fairclough's CDA syncretized with Hall's representation theory, findings indicate that the narrative delivered by Memed Potensio works strategically to deconstruct negative stigmas such as "illegal", "immoral", and "provincial" attached by state institutions, religious authorities, and the urban middle class.

The meaning-making process strategically operates across textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions to shift the destructive meaning of physical damage into constructive values like renovation and alms. Alternative narratives distributed via YouTube legitimize this practice through *sedekah bumi*, community deliberation, and economic independence. These findings indicate the successful repositioning of *sound horeg* from a mere source of social disturbance into an entity containing symbols of solidarity, collective identity, and local cultural sovereignty.

The theoretical implications of this study strengthen CDA research through the syncretization of Fairclough's model and Hall's representation theory in dissecting digital popular culture phenomena. Study results affirm that popular media functions as an arena of symbolic legitimacy for subcultural groups to build identity, simultaneously contributing significantly to critical linguistic discourse and digital communication. These findings carry practical implications as a foundation for policymakers and the community in formulating dialogical approaches to the *sound horeg* phenomenon. Its management requires a comprehensive strategy exceeding mere formal law enforcement by prioritizing cultural approaches through community deliberation, technical regulations, and public ethical agreements within the local environment.

Future research is advised to expand studies on audience reception, *sound horeg* practices in various regions, and the dynamics of economy and identity politics developing in digital media. Integrating CDA with field ethnography and digital ethnography remains essential to capture relations of culture, technology, and power more comprehensively amidst the increasingly massive development of digital popular culture in Indonesia.

DECLARATIONS

Ethical considerations

Not applicable

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

The authors declare that the generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool Gemini was used exclusively for language editing and/or grammatical improvement. The use of AI did not influence the scientific content, study design, data analysis, data interpretation, results, or conclusions of the manuscript. Full responsibility for the content remains with the authors.

Conflict of Interest

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