

BROKERAGE, ETHNICITY, AND THE LEGACY OF TRANSMIGRATION IN LAMPUNG TIMUR REGIONAL HEAD ELECTIONS: A SCOPING REVIEW OF THE INDONESIAN LITERATURE

Himawan Indrajat¹, Robi Cahyadi Kurniawan², Arizka Warganegara³

¹ Doctoral Program in Development Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
Universitas Lampung, Indonesia

²³Lecturer Governance Studies Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Lampung,
Indonesia

indrajathimawan@gmail.com

Abstract

Background: Indonesia's transition to direct regional head elections (Pilkada) since 2005 reopened local political contestation to ethnic and religious mobilisation. Lampung province presents a distinctive case because its demographic composition was reshaped by a century of state-sponsored transmigration, yet no review has systematically mapped how the literature connects ethnic identity politics, social network/brokerage mechanisms, and the legacy of transmigration policy within a single analytical frame at the district (kabupaten) level. Objective: This scoping review maps and synthesises the Indonesian and international literature (2010–2026) addressing three interlocking constructs – ethnic identity politics, political brokerage/social networks, and transmigration policy – as they bear on regional head elections in Indonesia, with particular attention to Lampung. Methods: Following the Arksey and O'Malley scoping review framework and adapted PRISMA-ScR reporting guidance, the review question was structured using the SPIDER framework (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type). Systematic searches were conducted across academic search engines, including a dedicated update search of Semantic Scholar, CrossRef, and Google Scholar, totalling 23 search/retrieval actions and 135 raw records. After deduplication (n = 56 unique records) and eligibility screening against inclusion criteria (2010–2026 or foundational status, Indonesian/English language, SINTA/Scopus-indexed journals or academic books, thematic relevance), 20 sources were included. Data were extracted into a structured matrix and appraised using an adapted Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative designs, supplemented by a relevance-and-currency assessment for non-qualitative sources. Results: Included sources cluster into three thematic strands: (1) ethnic outbidding and constructivist critiques of ethnic identity in Indonesian elections; (2) clientelism, brokerage, and social network mechanisms underpinning vote mobilisation; and (3) the demographic and political legacy of transmigration, particularly in Lampung, where ethnicity and religion converge through what recent scholarship terms “ethnicity and religion based organizations” (ERBOs). Eight of nine qualitative-design sources received a “high” CASP-adapted quality rating, indicating a methodologically robust evidentiary base. Conclusion: While each thematic strand is individually well developed, no identified study integrates ethnic identity, brokerage networks, and transmigration legacy within a single district-level, two-cycle comparative design. This gap substantiates the need for original

qualitative-comparative research of the kind undertaken on Lampung Timur's 2020 and 2024 Pilkada.

Keywords: *ethnic identity politics; political brokerage; clientelism; transmigration policy; regional head elections; Lampung; scoping review; PRISMA-ScR*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Ethnic identity politics has become one of the most persistent themes in the study of Indonesia's post-authoritarian local elections. Since the introduction of direct regional head elections (Pemilihan Kepala Daerah, or Pilkada) in 2005, decentralisation has opened local political contestation to primordial mobilisation along ethnic, religious, and regional lines. What was designed to deepen participatory governance has, in many districts, become a new arena in which local elites activate group identities as instruments of vote acquisition.

Lampung province, at the southern tip of Sumatra, offers a particularly instructive case. Beginning with Dutch colonial colonisation schemes in 1905 and intensifying under the New Order's mass transmigration programme, successive waves of resettlement – predominantly from Java – permanently altered the province's ethnic composition. Indigenous Lampungese, once the demographic majority, had become a minority by 2010. This demographic transformation did not merely reshape settlement patterns; it created the social infrastructure through which ethnicity, religion, and political brokerage now interact in local electoral contests.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Gap

Three bodies of literature bear directly on this phenomenon, yet they have largely developed in parallel rather than in dialogue. The first concerns ethnic identity politics and its contested salience in Indonesian local elections, ranging from classical ethnic outbidding models to constructivist critiques emphasising the strategic, situational activation of identity. The second concerns political brokerage, clientelism, and social network structures that mediate the translation of group sentiment into electoral support. The third concerns the demographic and political legacy of transmigration policy, a structural variable specific to provinces such as Lampung, Kalimantan, and parts of Sulawesi.

Existing reviews and empirical studies typically engage one, or at most two, of these strands. No systematic mapping exercise has yet examined how all three intersect at the district (kabupaten) level, nor how their interaction changes across successive electoral cycles. This represents a meaningful gap: without a synthesis that traces the joint operation of ethnic activation, brokerage mechanisms, and transmigration legacy, subsequent empirical research risks reproducing single-lens explanations for what is, in practice, a multi-causal phenomenon.

1.3 Objectives and Review Questions

This scoping review addresses the following questions: (i) How does the Indonesian and international literature characterise the role of ethnic identity in local elections since the introduction of direct Pilkada? (ii) What mechanisms of political brokerage and social network mobilisation have been documented in Indonesian electoral contexts, and how do they intersect with ethnic or religious identity? (iii) How has transmigration policy shaped the demographic and political landscape of Lampung, and what evidence exists linking this legacy to electoral outcomes? (iv) What gaps remain in the literature that would justify further primary research at the district level, specifically in Lampung Timur across the 2020 and 2024 Pilkada cycles?

2. Methods

This review follows Arksey and O'Malley's scoping review framework, reported using an adapted PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) structure. Because PRISMA-family guidance was originally developed for clinical and biomedical systematic reviews assessing intervention effects, its quantitative bias-assessment components (e.g., Cochrane Risk of Bias, Newcastle–Ottawa Scale) were not applied; instead, quality appraisal for qualitative sources followed an adapted Critical Appraisal Skills **Programme (CASP) checklist, described in Section 2.6.**

2.1 Review Question Formulation: The SPIDER Framework

The review question was structured using SPIDER (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type), a framework developed specifically for qualitative and mixed-methods evidence synthesis, in preference to the clinically oriented PICO framework. Table 1 presents the SPIDER formulation.

Table 1. SPIDER Framework for Review Question Formulation

Component	Formulation
S – Sample	Local political actors (regional head candidates, campaign teams/brokers), leaders and members of religious organisations (Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, PKB), and election administrators in Lampung Timur Regency
PI – Phenomenon of Interest	The activation and mobilisation of ethnic identity politics, the operation of political brokerage/social networks across religious organisations, and the influence of transmigration policy legacy on Pilkada support configurations
D – Design	Qualitative-comparative case study (within-case, two time points: 2020 and 2024); focus group discussion; in-depth interview; social network mapping
E – Evaluation	Patterns of ethnic/religious-based support mobilisation; ethnic coalition configuration in candidate pairings; broker role and stability; shifts in pattern from 2020 to 2024

R – Research type	Qualitative research – comparative case study with thematic analysis (open, axial, and selective coding)
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2.2 Eligibility Criteria

Sources were eligible if they: (a) were published between 2010 and 2026, with an exception for foundational theoretical works (Horowitz, 1985; Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972) that remain standard reference points in the field; (b) were written in Indonesian or English; (c) were published in SINTA- or Scopus-indexed journals, or by recognised academic presses; and (d) addressed at least one of the three thematic concepts – ethnic identity politics, political brokerage/social networks, or transmigration policy – in relation to Indonesian local elections or Lampung's demographic-political context.

2.3 Search Strategy

Four concept clusters and their synonyms were combined using Boolean logic: (K1) ethnic identity politics, ethnic outbidding; (K2) political social networks, patronage, clientelism, political brokerage; (K3) transmigration policy, demographic engineering; (K4) regional head elections, Pilkada, local elections Indonesia. The search strategy followed (K1 OR K2 OR K3) AND (K4), narrowed with “Lampung”/“Lampung Timur” where applicable. Searches were conducted across academic search engines in two rounds: an initial exploratory and systematic round, and a dedicated update round targeting Semantic Scholar, CrossRef (via journal/DOI pages), and Google Scholar to capture the most recent publications (2025–2026). In total, 23 search/retrieval actions were performed, yielding 135 raw records.

2.4 Study Selection

Deduplication removed 79 records that referred to identical sources appearing across multiple indexing or citing platforms (e.g., ResearchGate, Tandfonline, White Rose Research Online, SINTA, Google Scholar mirrors), leaving 56 unique records for title/abstract screening. Full-text eligibility assessment against the criteria in Section 2.2 excluded 36 records, detailed in Section 3.1, leaving 20 sources for inclusion.

2.5 Data Extraction

A structured extraction matrix was applied to each included source, capturing: author(s)/year, study design and data source, key findings, and limitations acknowledged by the original authors. Extraction was based on published abstracts, author summaries, and publicly available methodological descriptions.

2.6 Quality Appraisal

Because the majority of included sources employ qualitative or mixed-methods designs unsuited to clinical bias-assessment tools, quality was appraised using an adapted CASP Qualitative Checklist, condensed into six practical criteria: (1) clarity of aims and methodological appropriateness; (2) recruitment and data collection; (3) researcher reflexivity and ethical consideration; (4) rigour of analysis; (5) clarity of findings; (6) overall

value. Each criterion was rated Yes (clearly met), Partial (not fully ascertainable from available text), or No (not addressed). For the eleven non-qualitative sources (theoretical, descriptive, quantitative, or secondary review), a three-criterion relevance-and-currency assessment was applied instead: thematic relevance, temporal status, and venue credibility.

3. Results

3.1 Search Results and Study Selection

Figure 1 presents the adapted PRISMA-ScR flow diagram summarising the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion process.

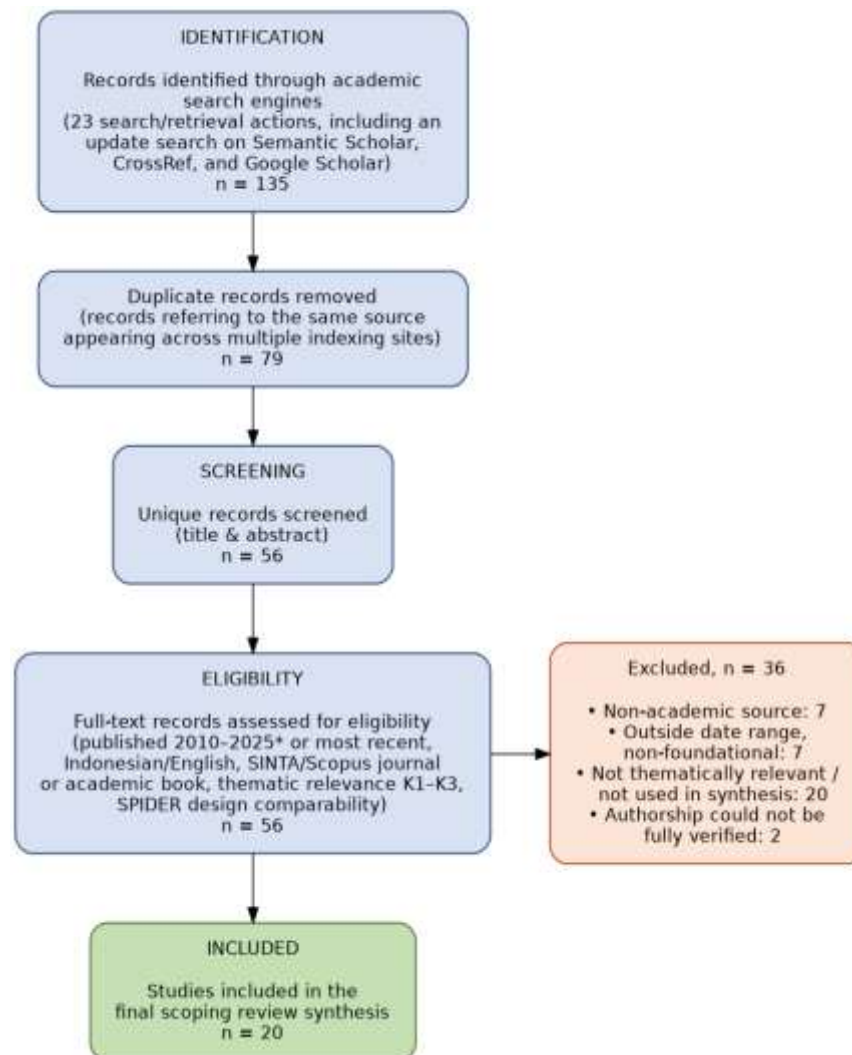


Figure 1. Adapted PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process

Of the 36 excluded records, 7 were non-academic sources (news media, opinion blogs, think-tank commentary), 7 fell outside the 2010–2026 date range without foundational status, 20 were judged not thematically relevant or were not ultimately drawn upon in the synthesis, and 2 could not be fully verified for authorship from available metadata.

3.2 Characteristics of Included Studies

Table 2 summarises the design, data source, key findings, and limitations of the 20 included studies.

Table 2. Data Extraction Matrix of Included Studies (n = 20)

#	Author(s)/Year	Design & Data Source	Key Finding(s)	Limitations
1	Aspinall (2011)	Conceptual essay; review of post-reform political trends	Ethnic politics has increasingly lost salience as an organising frame for electoral mobilisation in much of Indonesia	Position essay; no systematic field data presented
2	Aspinall (2013)	Macro-analytical essay; national-level synthesis	Post-decentralisation power fragmentation drove the diffusion of patronage	National-level generalisation; limited local case detail
3	Aspinall (2014)	Qualitative case study; field interviews with campaign teams/brokers	Typology of brokers (activist/clientelist/opportunist); predation and defection driven by candidate resources and electoral prospects	Local variation may affect generalisability of the model
4	Aspinall & As'ad (2015)	Qualitative village-level case study; field interviews	Village brokers act as connective nodes between candidates and grassroots; network structure is a "patchwork" rather than hierarchical	Single case study; transferability requires further testing
5	Aspinall & Berenschot (2019)	Mixed-method: extensive multi-site ethnography + expert survey	Indonesian clientelism is "free-wheeling", not bound to a single patron	Broad scope risks obscuring district-specific variation
6	Aspinall & Mietzner (2019)	Macro-structural analysis; aggregate electoral data	Democratic paradox: electoral competitiveness persists amid rising illiberalism	National-level analysis; does not explain local micro-mechanisms
7	Aspinall & Rohman (2017)	Qualitative case study; fieldwork on Java village elections	Money politics and brokerage reshape the rural elite	Java-focused; may differ outside Java

8	Aspinall & Sukmajati (Eds.) (2016)	Edited volume of qualitative multi-site case studies	Local variation in vote-buying and clientelism during the 2014 election	Depth varies across contributing chapters
9	Berenschot (2018)	Comparative study: expert survey across 38 districts + ethnography	Clientelism more intense in wealthy, state-dependent provincial capitals than rural Java	Expert assessments are perceptual, not direct observation everywhere
10	Chandra (2005)	Theoretical-methodological essay	Ethnic identity is fluid (constructivist), not fixed/primordial	Conceptual critique; not empirically tested within the article
11	Haridison (2026)	Qualitative institutional case study; analysis of the Dayak Customary Council	Customary institutions mediate access to state resources and consolidate elite power across electoral cycles	Single focus on Central Kalimantan; institutional mechanism differs from Lampung's religious organisations
12	Horowitz (1985)	Foundational theoretical book; comparative case illustration	Ethnic outbidding model in ethnically divided societies	Published 1985, predating Indonesia's direct-election era
13	Indrajat & Budiono (2026)	Systematic review/meta-synthesis (PRISMA + SPIDER protocol)	Divergent trajectories of Javanese ethnic identity transformation depending on migration context	Secondary synthesis; no new primary data
14	Lestari (2019)	Short descriptive-qualitative article	Religious-based polarisation intensified after the 2017 Jakarta election	Short article; limited explicit methodological depth
15	Pratiwi, Matous & Martinus (2022)	Quantitative (survey-based SNA, n = 315 coffee/cocoa farmers, Lampung)	Ethnicity and transmigration experience shape centrality within knowledge networks	Agricultural domain, not political; generalisation to political networks requires caution
16	Rabushka & Shepsle (1972)	Foundational theoretical book; deductive formal model	Intra-ethnic party competition drives extremity (outbidding)	Published 1972; non-Indonesian context, deductive rather than field-based

17	Susetyo et al. (2024)	Descriptive-policy study; 2024 field study in Lampung	Lampung has shifted from a transmigration-receiving to a transmigration-sending province; social integration challenges persist	Focus on social welfare; limited discussion of political-electoral implications
18	Warburton & Aspinall (2019)	Macro-structural analysis; national democratic trend data	Democratic regression explained by structure, elite agency, and public opinion combined	National level; not specific to district-level Pilkada
19	Warganegara & Waley (2022)	Qualitative case study, Lampung; field interviews (doctoral fieldwork)	Transmigration shifted indigenous Lampungese from majority (1930s) to minority (2010); ethnic identity politics resurged post-2005	Provincial level; not district-specific
20	Warganegara & Waley (2024)	Qualitative case study, Lampung; field interviews, ERBO concept	Ethnicity and religion remain dominant in Lampung's local politics via Ethnicity and Religion Based Organizations (ERBOs)	Provincial level; variation in ERBO strategy not fully explained

3.3 Thematic Findings

3.3.1 Theme 1: Ethnic Identity Politics and Its Contested Salience

Classical accounts of identity-based electoral politics rest on the ethnic outbidding model developed by Horowitz (1985) and Rabushka and Shepsle (1972), which holds that in ethnically divided societies, parties draw support along group lines because inter-ethnic preferences are assumed mutually exclusive. This model was substantially challenged by Chandra's (2005) constructivist critique, which reframes ethnic identity as fluid and strategically activated rather than fixed. Within Indonesia, Aspinall (2011) argued that ethnic politics has progressively lost salience as an organisational frame for local politics. This claim is directly contested by two Lampung-based field studies: Warganegara and Waley (2022, 2024) demonstrate that ethnicity, intertwined with religious identity, remains a dominant force in Lampung's local politics, operationalised through Ethnicity and Religion Based Organizations (ERBOs) that channel ethnic sentiment into votes.

3.3.2 Theme 2: Political Brokerage and Social Network Mechanisms

Aspinall and Berenschot's (2019) *Democracy for Sale* establishes that Indonesian clientelism is diffuse and "free-wheeling", spreading through kinship networks rather than binding voters to a single patron. Aspinall (2014) provides a micro-level model of broker behaviour, distinguishing activist, clientelist, and opportunist brokers, and identifying predation and defection as the principal threats to broker loyalty – a framework directly applicable to analysing cross-organisational broker networks (NU, Muhammadiyah, PKB)

across electoral cycles. Aspinall and As'ad (2015) and Aspinall and Rohman (2017) extend this through village-level fieldwork, while Berenschot (2018) demonstrates that clientelistic intensity varies systematically by regional political economy rather than simple poverty levels. Haridison's (2026) recent study of the Dayak Customary Council in Central Kalimantan extends the brokerage literature to an outer-island, ethnic-institutional setting, offering a conceptual parallel – though not methodological equivalent – to Lampung's ERBOs.

3.3.3 Theme 3: Transmigration Policy and the Demographic-Political Legacy in Lampung

Transmigration to Lampung began under Dutch colonial administration in 1905 and intensified under the New Order, permanently altering the province's ethnic composition. Warganegara and Waley (2022) document that indigenous Lampungese, a demographic majority in the 1930s, had become a minority by 2010. Susetyo et al. (2024) trace the policy's trajectory from the colonial period to the present, noting that Lampung has shifted from a transmigration-receiving to a transmigration-sending province, while social integration challenges between migrants and indigenous communities persist. Pratiwi, Matous, and Martinus (2022) offer a rare quantitative bridge between transmigration and social network structure, finding that ethnicity and migration experience shape centrality within rural knowledge networks – a finding conceptually extensible, though not yet empirically tested, from agricultural to political networks. Most recently, Indrajat and Budiono (2026), publishing through Universitas Lampung's own Department of Government Studies, applied a PRISMA/SPIDER-protocol systematic review to compare Javanese ethnic identity transformation across transmigration and diaspora contexts – methodologically the closest precedent to the present review, though itself a secondary synthesis rather than primary district-level fieldwork.

3.4 Methodological Quality of Included Studies

Of the nine sources with qualitative or mixed-methods designs, eight received an overall CASP-adapted quality rating of “high”, and one (Aspinall & Sukmajati, Eds., 2016) received “moderate” owing to variable methodological depth across contributed chapters. This indicates that the methodological foundation of the Indonesian brokerage-clientelism literature (the Aspinall research programme) and the Lampung-specific fieldwork (Warganegara & Waley) is sufficiently robust to serve as a design comparator for further district-level qualitative-comparative research.

4. Discussion

4.1 Synthesis of Key Findings

Read together, the three thematic strands reveal a structurally interlocking, rather than independently operating, set of mechanisms in Lampung. Transmigration policy created the demographic substrate upon which ethnic identity mobilisation becomes materially possible (Warganegara & Waley, 2022); social networks and political brokerage (Aspinall,

2014; Aspinall & As'ad, 2015) constitute the operational mechanism through which that identity is translated into concrete electoral support; and migration experience itself appears to shape the very structure of the social networks through which mobilisation occurs (Pratiwi et al., 2022). This tripartite interlocking has not, to date, been the explicit object of a single integrated study.

4.2 Research Gap and Novelty

No identified source combines ethnic identity politics, brokerage/social network analysis, and transmigration legacy within a single district-level design comparing two successive Pilkada cycles. The Warganegara and Waley studies operate at the provincial level; the Aspinall brokerage literature is predominantly Java-focused. This gap substantiates the original contribution of research examining how transmigration legacy, cross-organisational religious brokerage networks (NU, Muhammadiyah, PKB), and ethnic identity activation interact and shift in pattern between the 2020 and 2024 Lampung Timur Pilkada.

4.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings suggest that Indonesian local electoral politics cannot be adequately explained through a single-lens ethnic outbidding or pure clientelism framework. Rather, the Lampung case invites an integrated theoretical model in which structural demographic legacy (transmigration), relational mechanism (brokerage networks), and symbolic mobilisation (ethnic/religious identity activation) are treated as co-constitutive rather than competing explanations. This extends both the constructivist critique of ethnic outbidding (Chandra, 2005) and the brokerage literature (Aspinall, 2014) into a demographically specific, transmigration-shaped setting that neither literature has fully addressed on its own terms.

4.4 Limitations of the Review

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. First, database access constraints meant that structured API queries to Semantic Scholar and CrossRef could not be executed directly; searches instead relied on web-based academic search retrieval, which, while extensive, may not achieve the same recall as direct database querying. Second, data extraction and quality appraisal were conducted from published abstracts and publicly available methodological descriptions rather than close reading of full manuscripts for every included source; this is a preliminary appraisal that warrants verification through full-text review, particularly for the six qualitative case studies most directly relevant to subsequent primary research design. Third, raw identification counts for the initial exploratory search phase (eight actions) were not retained in full, though the resulting unique sources are precisely identified. Fourth, as a scoping rather than systematic review, this study maps the breadth of available evidence without conducting formal meta-analysis or exhaustive risk-of-bias scoring.

5. Conclusion

This scoping review mapped 20 sources across three thematic strands – ethnic identity politics, political brokerage and social networks, and transmigration policy legacy – relevant to Indonesian regional head elections, with particular attention to Lampung province. While each strand is individually well-established and methodologically robust (eight of nine qualitative sources rated “high” quality), no study was found that integrates all three within a single district-level, two-cycle comparative design. This gap directly substantiates the rationale for primary qualitative-comparative research examining the interaction of ethnic identity activation, cross-organisational religious brokerage networks, and transmigration legacy across the 2020 and 2024 Lampung Timur regional head elections – research that would extend both the ethnic politics and clientelism literatures into a demographically distinctive, transmigration-shaped electoral setting.

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