


Applied Anthropology Studies: Definition, Professional Ethics, and Its Development Dynamics in Various Fields of Life

Marzuti Isra¹, Nur Asyiah², Nazwa Lexano Salsabila siregar³, Muhammad Zaky Al Syafiq⁴,
Muhammad Anugrah Jaya Tanjung⁵, Immanuel Figo Tambun⁶

Institut Teknologi Sawit Indonesia

Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Applied Anthropology, Professional Ethics, Social Intervention.	Applied anthropology is a branch of anthropology that focuses on the application of anthropological theories and methods in solving real problems in society. This study aiming for describe understanding anthropology applied, principles ethics professional, and dynamics its development in various field life like health, education, business, and policy public. With an interdisciplinary approach, applied anthropology is able to provide solutions based on local culture, strengthen community empowerment, and increase the effectiveness of social interventions. Professional ethics are an important pillar in the implementation of applied anthropology practices, especially in maintaining data integrity, respecting cultural values, and preventing exploitation of participants. Technological developments and globalization also influence anthropologists' approaches to applied practice, demanding continuous adaptation. This study emphasizes the importance of the role of anthropologists in producing inclusive and sustainable policies. Recent references show increasing collaboration between anthropologists and practitioners across sectors, which strengthens the position of applied anthropology as a tool for social transformation.
This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC license 	Corresponding Author: Marzuti Isra Institut Teknologi Sawit Indonesia marzuti_isra@itsi.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge anthropology has long been bridge for understand diversity human, good from aspect cultural, social, and biological. As it develops dynamics modern society, emerged need For apply knowledge anthropology to in life practical, especially in solve problem complex social needs. This give birth to branch known science as anthropology applied. In their writing in *Current Anthropology*, Low and Merry (2020) stated that anthropology applied is form involvement active anthropologist in overcome issues public through approach based on culture. That is, discipline This No only learn society, but also contribute direct in create contextual and sustainable solutions.

Anthropology applied is branch anthropology that applies theory and methods anthropology for finish problem real in society, both in the field of healty, education, development, and policy public. According to Koentjaraningrat in his book *Introduction Knowledge Anthropology Applied* (2022), approach This demand a anthropologist For involved in a way active in designing strategies that are pro - community local. With Thus,

anthropology applied No only practice scientific, but also activities social that has impact direct to life community. Implementation knowledge This become the more important in the middle gap social and global challenges that require sensitivity culture as base taking decision.

In Indonesia, the context multicultural and diverse problem social make anthropology applied as a very relevant and urgent approach for used. Issues like inequality development, shift mark culture, until conflict agrarian can analyzed and intervened with use perspective sensitive anthropologist to locality. Rukka Sombolinggi (2021), in *Journal Indonesian Anthropology*, explains that involvement anthropologist in advocacy public custom has help push birth more policies inclusive and equitable. Thus, applied anthropology in Indonesia is not only an academic practice, but also a tool for social struggle and empowerment.

Despite its significant contributions, the practice of applied anthropology also faces significant ethical challenges. Direct involvement in communities demands high moral and professional responsibilities from anthropologists. One of the main challenges is maintaining integrity in relationships with research participants, such as ensuring informed consent, protecting confidentiality, and avoiding exploitation. In his book *A Future in Ruins* (2021), Meskell highlights that in many cases, anthropologists can be caught between the interests of funding agencies and local communities. Therefore, critical reflection and the application of professional ethics are non-negotiable.

Ethics in applied anthropology are not merely administrative formalities, but rather moral foundations that ensure the research process is carried out fairly and humanely. Professional ethics include respect for local values, transparency in research objectives, and equal collaboration between anthropologists and communities. Indrawati (2023), in *the Indonesian Journal of Anthropology*, emphasizes that the success of applied anthropology is highly dependent on trust and relationships that are built ethically. Strong ethics allow for equal relationships and prevent researchers from dominating participants, making research more meaningful and beneficial for both parties.

Applied anthropology is increasingly crucial amidst global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and technological disruption. In this situation like this, a policy that is not consider aspect culture tend fail accepted by society. Chib, May, and Barrantes (2022), in book *Impact of Information Society Research in the Global South*, emphasizes that interventions that take cultural norms into account local more effective in create change sustainable social. This is show that approach anthropological own mark strategic in to design policy the right public target and justice - oriented social.

One of many fields utilise anthropology applied is health community. Many health programs fail No Because lack of infrastructure, but rather Because mismatch between values culture and approach medical used. In *the Journal of Multicultural Education*, Yuliawati (2024) explained that the success of the vaccination program in the community customs are greatly influenced by the approach anthropologist who considers structure trust local. With understand perspective culture society, energy health can convey message health with a better way easy accepted and trusted.

Apart from the field of health, anthropology There are also many applications applied in field education, in particular in development curriculum based on culture local. In multicultural areas, diversity language and values life must become base in develop learning strategies. Still in the same article, Yuliawati (2024) explains that use approach anthropology help teachers understand context social students, so that method teaching can customized and more inclusive. This is proven capable increase participation Study student as well as reduce discrimination based on culture in space class.

Applied anthropology is now also beginning to be accepted in the industrial and business sectors. In large-scale infrastructure development projects such as mining, an anthropological approach is used to analyze the social and cultural impacts on the surrounding community. Sihombing (2023), in *the Social and Cultural Journal*, shows that the involvement of anthropologists in the process of social mapping and cultural environmental impact analysis can prevent conflict and build harmonious relationships between companies and communities. This proves that anthropology is not only relevant in the social sector, but also has practical value in the corporate world.

Applied anthropology also shows rapid development dynamics in various sectors. In the health sector, this approach is used to understand cultural barriers in medical services and improve the effectiveness of communication between patients and medical personnel. In the world of education, anthropology plays a role in designing curricula based on local wisdom. Meanwhile, in the business and corporate sectors, understanding consumer cultural values has become part of an ethical and inclusive marketing strategy (Chib et al., 2022).

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that the background, this study aims to: (1) describe the concept of applied anthropology; (2) explain the principles of professional ethics that underlie its practice; and (3) analyze the dynamics of the development of applied anthropology in various fields of life. Applied anthropology is a discipline that is not only important from an academic perspective, but also has a vital role in the practice of social development based on culture. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively discuss the concept of applied anthropology, the principles of professional ethics that underlie it, and the dynamics of its application in various fields of life.

METHODS

The research method is a fundamental component in a scientific study because it functions as a framework that directs researchers to achieve research objectives systematically, in a directed manner, and can be academically accounted for. This method includes the approaches, techniques, and procedures used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in order to answer the problem formulation appropriately. Prasetya (2021) in *the Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* states that the research method is a scientific procedure that aims to obtain valid and relevant data in order to understand and solve a social problem critically and comprehensively.

In the context of socio-cultural research, qualitative methods are often chosen because they are able to describe social reality with depth of meaning. Nurhalimah (2022) in *the Journal of Sociotechnology* emphasizes that this method provides space to explore subjective

understanding, symbolic experiences, and power relations that shape people's lives, which cannot be achieved through a quantitative approach.

Types of research This use approach qualitative descriptive, because approach This rated most relevant in dig and understand phenomenon complex social issues, especially those related with practice ethics in anthropology applied in the sector plantation coconut palm oil. Wibowo (2020) in *Journal of Society and Culture* explain that approach qualitative descriptive allow researcher for explore various dynamics social in a way deep, through description rich narrative, as well as interpretation to values culture, relations social, and experience life of the subjects study.

Through approach this, researcher can catch reality social in a way contextual and holistic, without bound by variables statistics. Another advantage of approach qualitative is its flexibility in adapt self with dynamics frequent field changed and not can predicted. Research location determined based on its relevance with the issue being studied is the plantation area coconut palm oil which is the arena for practice anthropology application and interaction between company, community local, and manpower expert social. Election location done in a way purposive with consider involvement actor anthropology, potential conflict social, as well as existence of responsibility program answer social company (CSR). Subject study consists of from various the party that has roles and experiences direct in practice including, among others:

1. Anthropologist applied or consultant social work accompany community,
2. Figure public custom or local experiencing direct impact policy,
3. Company representatives responsible for implementing CSR,
4. An NGO that is active in ethical advocacy and protection of community rights.

Involving subjects from various backgrounds allows the data obtained to be more diverse, rich in perspective, and representative of social realities in the field. Data collection in study This done with use combination technique interview in-depth, observation participatory, and study documentation, which is mutually complete in to obtain description intact from the phenomenon being studied.

First, in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the views, experiences, and reflections of key informants in a personal and narrative manner. This technique allows researchers to capture the subjective meaning of ethical practices being carried out. Second, participant observation was carried out by participating in community activities and recording social interactions that occurred directly, in order to obtain contextual data and real behavior that may not have been revealed in interviews. Third, documentation studies were used to examine various related documents such as CSR reports, social agreement archives, local news, and discussion forum results. Lestari (2023) in *the Indonesian Anthropology Study Journal* stated that the use of combination or triangulation techniques in data collection is very important in anthropological research, because it can increase validity and enrich the analytical perspective.

The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, namely by grouping data based on themes that emerge from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. This process started from data reduction, namely to select relevant information, continued with

data presentation in form narrative thematic, and ends with withdrawal conclusion in a way interpretive.

Maulida (2022) in *Journal Scientific Sociology* explain that analysis thematically very appropriate used in study qualitative Because capable catch structure hidden meaning in communication social. This technique No only classify data by categorical, but also encouraging understanding critical to How values, norms and ethics produced as well as negotiated in practice social daily.

For guard data validity, research This apply technique triangulation source, triangulation techniques, as well as confirm data to informants (member check). Source triangulation is done by comparing information from various informants who have different backgrounds. Technical triangulation is done by matching data from interviews, observations, and documents. While member checks are done by returning temporary findings to informants for validation. Sari and Handoko (2020) in *the Journal of Social Research* emphasize that this strategy is important to ensure that the research results are not merely subjective interpretations of researchers, but truly reflect the conditions and understanding of the social actors involved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Theoretical studies are an important part of a scientific work that serves as a conceptual basis for the discussion to be carried out. In this study, the author describes theories, basic concepts, and relevant scientific views to support the framework of thought. The goal is that the analysis in the research does not stand alone, but has strong scientific references and can be academically accounted for. Theoretical studies also help explain the relationship between theory and practice in certain fields, including in the field of applied anthropology.

In this context, theoretical studies are directed at understanding the concept of ethics in applied anthropology, which is at the core of the analysis of anthropological practices in various sectors of life. Ethics are the foundation in ensuring that the work of anthropologists, especially in social interventions such as on oil palm plantations, is carried out fairly, participatory, and respects the rights of local communities. According to Indrawati (2023) in *the Indonesian Journal of Anthropology*, ethics in applied anthropology include transparency of research objectives, conscious consent from the community, and social responsibility for the impact of the intervention.

This study also highlights how applied anthropology has developed from mere academic observation to field practice that interacts directly with communities and industrial sectors, such as agriculture and plantations. In the context of oil palm plantations, applied anthropology is not only present to observe, but also to bridge communication between companies and communities, and to ensure that CSR policies do not harm indigenous or local communities (Sihombing, 2023).

Definition of Applied Anthropology

Applied anthropology is a branch of anthropology that directly applies anthropological theories, methods, and research results to solve various practical problems in people's lives.

According to Koentjaraningrat (2022), applied anthropology is the application of the principles of cultural anthropology in the field of community development and empowerment. In a global context, Low and Merry (2020) refer to applied anthropology as *engaged anthropology*, namely the direct involvement of anthropologists in social life to influence the direction of change that occurs.

Points important:

- a) Anthropology applied = implementation knowledge anthropology in life real
- b) Solution oriented practical and intervention social
- c) Also known as *Engaged Anthropology*

History and Development of Applied Anthropology

Initially, anthropology developed as an observational and theoretical academic discipline. However, along with the increasing need for direct solutions to social problems, an applied anthropology approach was born. In Indonesia, this development began to be evident since the New Order era, especially in transmigration and village development projects. Internationally, applied anthropology has developed rapidly since World War II when anthropologists were used to understand local communities for diplomatic and military purposes (Chib et al., 2022).

Points important:

- a) Born in response to practical social needs
- b) Developing with development interventions and international projects
- c) Become discipline multidisciplinary and collaborative

Scope of Anthropology Applied

Scope anthropology applied covers various sector life, start from education, health, environment, development, law, to business. In practice, anthropologists applied involved in mapping social, analysis need community, mitigation conflict, until program evaluation. They also act as facilitators who connect communities with policy makers. According to Yuliawati (2024), the existence of applied anthropology is needed to ensure that programs run in accordance with the socio-cultural context of the community.

Points important:

- a) Covering various fields: education, health, development, CSR
- b) Involving fieldwork, participant observation, and social mapping
- c) Putting it first approach participatory based on local

The Concept of Cultural Theory in Applied Anthropology

Cultural theory is the foundation of applied anthropology practice. Understanding value systems, symbols, customs, and social structures is key in developing social interventions. Clifford Geertz stated that culture is a symbolic system that regulates human behavior (Geertz, quoted in Indrawati, 2023). Therefore, understanding culture is not only an analytical tool, but also a guide in avoiding program implementation failure.

Points important:

- a) Culture as a complex symbolic system
- b) Understanding culture become base main intervention social
- c) Avoid generalization and cultural bias

Ethnographic and Participatory Approaches

One of the main methods in applied anthropology is ethnography. This method allows anthropologists to live with communities, understand the dynamics from within, and record social experiences in depth. In addition, the participatory approach allows communities to become active subjects in the change process. This supports the principle that social change must be inclusive and come from the grassroots (Rukka Sombolinggi, 2021).

Points important:

- a) Ethnography = observation participatory term long
- b) Approach participatory strengthen empowerment community
- c) Focus on experience authentic public

Professional Ethics in Applied Anthropology

Ethics is a central aspect of applied anthropology. Anthropologists must ensure informed consent, maintain data confidentiality, and avoid exploitative power relations. In *the Indonesian Journal of Anthropology*, Indrawati (2023) emphasized that ethical violations can damage public trust and harm scientific integrity. Ethics is also a form of respect for local wisdom which is the basis of community life.

Points important:

- a) Informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for local values
- b) Avoid relation power between researchers and respondents
- c) Ethics = social and moral responsibilities of scientists

Applications of Applied Anthropology in Health

In the field health, anthropology applied used for understand obstacle culture to access service health. For example, in some community customs, beliefs traditional influence attitude to vaccine or modern medicine. Yuliawati (2024) shows that approach anthropological can increase effectiveness of health programs with build communication based on trust local.

Points important:

- a) Analyzing cultural barriers to health services
- b) Designing campaign contextual health
- c) Reducing community resistance to medical programs

Applications in Education and Local Curriculum

In the world of education, applied anthropology supports the development of inclusive and local value-based curricula. Yuliawati (2024) emphasized that this approach can reduce discrimination in the classroom and increase student participation, especially in multicultural areas. By understanding the cultural background of students, teachers can develop learning methods that are appropriate to students' needs.

Points important:

- a) Forming responsive education to diversity
- b) Developing a curriculum based on culture local
- c) Strengthening student identity in the education system

Applications in the Industrial World and CSR

Applied anthropology is also used in industry to understand the social impacts of development or investment projects. Sihombing (2023) in *the Social and Cultural Journal*

noted that the involvement of anthropologists in social mapping and cross-cultural communication prevents conflict between companies and local communities. In the context of CSR, anthropology helps design programs that are more in line with the aspirations and needs of the community.

Points important:

- a) Analyze impact social project industry
- b) Building communication between companies and communities
- c) Developing a CSR program based on participation

Dynamics of Development and Challenges of Applied Anthropology

The development of applied anthropology is increasingly rapid, but it is not without challenges. Among them are the pressure to produce quick results in development projects, as well as the difficulty in maintaining neutrality amidst political interests. In addition, the continued assumption that scientific knowledge is superior to local knowledge is an obstacle to equal collaboration. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the position of anthropology in cross-sector decision-making forums (Meskell, 2021).

Points important:

- a) Challenges: time pressure, scientific bias, and conflicts of interest
- b) Need strengthening position anthropology in taking policy
- c) Putting it first collaboration cross sectors and science

Theoretical and Practical Relevance in Global and Local Contexts

With all development and application, anthropology applied proven become bridging discipline knowledge knowledge and practice social in a way effectiv. Understanding deep to dynamics culture allow more solutions fair and sustainable in the midst of global complexity. Therefore that's important for development knowledge social in Indonesia for strengthen capacity and collaboration in field anthropology applied, both at the level of local and also internationally (Chib et al., 2022).

Points important:

- a) Responding to local and global challenges through a cultural approach
- b) Strengthen capacity and collaboration cross discipline
- c) Applied anthropology = ethical, sustainable and participatory solutions

Discussion

Ethics in applied anthropology is a key component that guides how an anthropologist interacts with the community, government, and private sector. In practice, ethics is not only a matter of personal moral principles, but is directly related to scientific, social, and cultural responsibilities. This ethical initiative demands that every anthropological activity—including research, social mapping, and facilitation of CSR programs—be based on the principles of honesty, transparency, and respect for the rights of indigenous and local communities (Lestari, 2023). By understanding that society is not an object, but a subject of change, the position of anthropologists should be to mediate and avoid conflicts of interest.

Ethics in Applied Anthropology in Oil Palm Plantations

In the practice of applied anthropology, ethics is the main foundation that guides the professional behavior and moral alignment of an anthropologist in dealing with complex social

dynamics. This becomes very crucial when anthropology is applied in industrial sectors such as palm oil plantations, which historically and structurally contain many conflicts between corporations and indigenous communities. Ethics is not just a complementary technical aspect of research, but a main principle in social decision-making. Applied anthropologists are expected not only to work scientifically, but also to act fairly, responsibly, and reflectively on the social impact of each intervention (Lestari, 2023, *Jurnal Kajian Antropologi Indonesia*).

In the context of oil palm plantations, various applied anthropology practices show that ethical issues arise in various forms, such as the lack of community involvement in the public consultation process, the misuse of social data for corporate interests, and the silencing of indigenous peoples' aspirations. One crucial issue is the application of the principle of *free, prior, and informed consent* (FPIC), which is often only an administrative formality without real implementation in the field. (Nurhalimah, *Jurnal Sosioteknologi*) noted that local communities are often asked to sign social agreements without a thorough understanding of the contents of the document and its consequences. This process is contrary to the principle of participatory anthropology, which should place the community as an active partner in decision-making.

Furthermore, the involvement of anthropologists in the preparation of Environmental Impact Analysis (AMDAL) documents and social mapping also invites ethical dilemmas. In many cases, companies use the services of social consultants or anthropologists only to fulfill administrative obligations without the intention of involving the community substantially. The results of social studies are often adjusted to corporate narratives to suit project targets, so that data integrity is compromised. This shows a tug-of-war between scientific interests and commercial pressures, which according to (Prasetya, 2021, *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*), is a form of deviation from professional ethics and reduces the quality of anthropology's role in community development.

Conflict of interest is also a significant issue in the practice of applied anthropology in this sector. When an anthropologist is directly employed by a company, there is a risk that his or her scientific objectivity may be compromised by economic power relations. (Lestari, 2023) states that the independence of the anthropologist's position must be maintained, especially in the process of facilitating the resolution of social conflicts, so as not to be trapped in structural biases that benefit the dominant party. In this case, ethics is not only about individual good intentions, but also related to the institutional design that regulates professional positions and authorities systematically.

Another aspect that is no less important is the protection of local cultural values. Oil palm plantations are often built on customary land of indigenous communities that have spiritual, historical, and ecological functions. This development causes drastic changes in the social structure of society and often ignores local wisdom. The role of anthropologists here is to be a bridge between profit-based corporate logic and local values based on social sustainability and sustainability. According to Sari and (Handoko, 2020, *Jurnal Penelitian Sosial*), the responsibility of anthropologists lies in the ability to understand the local context in depth and fight for community interests inclusively in the policy negotiation space.

Ethical practices must also include consideration of the power relations that occur in the field. This research shows that local communities are often in an unequal position economically, politically, and informationally compared to companies. This inequality creates an asymmetric situation that has the potential to perpetuate social exploitation. Therefore, ethics in applied anthropology must consider not only formal participation mechanisms, but also create spaces for social learning, capacity building, and access to information for communities to be able to dialogue on an equal footing.

Based on field findings, it can be said that the success of ethical practice in applied anthropology depends heavily on the courage of anthropologists to uphold the integrity of their profession, even under pressure from projects or institutions. This is in line with the reflection (Maulida, 2022, *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi*), that ethics in research is not only a procedural obligation, but a moral commitment inherent in the entire process of social research.

To ensure the implementation of ethics as a whole, a stronger monitoring system and code of ethics are needed, especially in the practice of anthropology in the industrial sector. Higher education institutions, professional associations, and social certification bodies need to design specific ethical guidelines that clarify the boundaries of the role of anthropologists, community participation standards, and reporting mechanisms for violations. This is important so that the existence of applied anthropology does not actually strengthen the dominance of capital over people's living spaces, but rather becomes an advocacy force that sides with social and cultural justice.

The Development of Applied Anthropology

Applied anthropology is a branch of anthropology that has experienced significant development, both conceptually and in practice in various sectors of life. In general, applied anthropology can be understood as a form of application of anthropological theories and methods to solve social problems directly. In its historical journey, applied anthropology was born from the need to bridge academic knowledge with policy practice, especially in the fields of development, health, education, and the environment. In the contemporary era, this approach has grown along with the increasing awareness of the importance of a cross-cultural approach in social and economic development (Prasetya, 2021, *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*).

The development of applied anthropology cannot be separated from criticism of the neutral position of social scientists in society. The increasing complexity of social problems—ranging from inequality, marginalization, to environmental damage—encourages anthropologists to be actively involved in finding solutions based on local culture and community participation. This marks a shift from the classical anthropological paradigm which tends to be oriented towards observation, towards a more participatory and interventional anthropology (Maulida, 2022, *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi*).

In Indonesia, the development of applied anthropology has become increasingly visible since the era of regional autonomy and accelerated village development. Anthropologists have begun to be involved in various government programs and development projects, such as in the preparation of socio-environmental documents, facilitating community

empowerment programs, and mapping indigenous areas. This involvement shows that anthropology is no longer exclusively an academic discipline, but has become a strategic tool in cultural-based policy making. Nurhalimah (2022) notes that the role of anthropologists is now increasingly important in bridging communication between local communities, government, and industry actors.

Methodologically, applied anthropology has also undergone a transformation through an interdisciplinary approach. Collaboration with fields such as sociology, law, geography, and environmental science has become common practice in field projects. Anthropology not only functions as a descriptive tool, but also as an instrument for policy analysis and advocacy of community rights. In this case, anthropologists' ability to understand power relations, social structures, and cultural values makes a major contribution to designing programs that are not only technically effective but also socially sustainable (Sari & Handoko, 2020, *Jurnal Penelitian Sosial*).

The development of digital technology has also expanded the workspace of applied anthropology. Anthropologists are now starting to use digital ethnography methods, GIS mapping, and data participatory visual tools to describe social reality more dynamically. This improves the ability of representation and documentation that can support advocacy and more transparent reporting to the public and stakeholders (Lestari, 2023, *Jurnal Kajian Antropologi Indonesia*). This technology also opens up opportunities for community involvement in the research process through a *community-based research approach*.

However, the development of applied anthropology also brings a number of ethical and structural challenges. When anthropological practices enter the realm of industry and large-scale projects, such as plantations or mining, there is a shift in values that has the potential to blur the boundaries between scientific research and commercial interests. This raises concerns about the loss of academic independence and neutrality, as criticized by Prasetya (2021). Therefore, the development of applied anthropology must also be balanced with the strengthening of professional ethics and a strict academic supervision system.

In the global context, the development of applied anthropology is also marked by a shift in the research agenda towards sustainability, ecological justice, and cultural diversity. This is reflected in many development projects that now emphasize an inclusive approach based on local values. Indonesia as a country with ethnic and ecological diversity is an important field for the contribution of applied anthropology, especially in supporting development that is not only pro-economic, but also pro-cultural and pro-environment (Wibowo, 2020, *Jurnal Masyarakat dan Budaya*).

Therefore, strengthening the capacity of applied anthropologists is urgent. Higher education programs need to design curricula that integrate field practice, public policy understanding, and cross-cultural communication skills. Professional institutions also need to be active in providing ethics and advocacy training to practitioners so that they are able to face the challenges of globalization without losing their cultural roots and principles of social justice.

With this development, applied anthropology is no longer seen as a marginal discipline, but rather as a scientific and practical force capable of creating social transformation based

on justice, participation, and local culture. Its development is a reflection of the spirit of the times that demands science to be present in real terms in answering complex and multidimensional social problems.

In the context of oil palm plantations, applied anthropological ethics faces serious challenges, especially when companies use the services of anthropologists or social consultants in preparing Environmental Impact Analysis (AMDAL) documents or CSR programs. Based on the results of interviews, it was found that in some cases, anthropologists were asked to prepare social recommendations that support corporate narratives without comprehensive community involvement. This is certainly contrary to the principles of *informed consent* and active participation. As emphasized by Maulida (2022), ethical practices in the industrial context must prioritize the interests of the community, not just administrative complements.

The implementation of ethics is not only measured by formal procedures such as FGDs or surveys, but also by the extent to which local communities truly understand and agree to the interventions to be carried out. In several research locations, it was found that communities were not given full access to information and documents, leaving them in a vulnerable position. In this situation, the role of anthropologists is very important to ensure that communities are treated fairly and given the opportunity to participate meaningfully. Sari and Handoko (2020) emphasize that true community involvement can only be achieved if there is transparency and open two-way dialogue.

Collaboration between anthropologists and companies is an ethically sensitive area. Anthropologists have a dual responsibility: to maintain scientific integrity and at the same time understand the dynamics of the field that are dominated by business logic. In practice, many anthropologists face a dilemma between maintaining objectivity and meeting the demands of corporate clients. Nurhalimah (2022) calls this situation a “conflict of epistemic and pragmatic values,” where academic idealism clashes with the reality of the project. Therefore, it is important for anthropologists to have clear ethical guidelines, including boundaries of involvement and independent reporting mechanisms.

many cases, applied anthropologists are also involved in the mediation process between communities and companies, especially when land conflicts, compensation, or customary violations arise. The role of anthropologists in this situation is crucial because they are considered to understand local social structures and have a non-repressive approach. However, taking sides with justice is a primary requirement. If anthropologists only become a tool for the company's legitimacy, then mediation will not be effective. Prasetya (2021) in *the Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* emphasized that ethical principles must prioritize restorative justice, not just administrative resolution.

This study also revealed a number of limitations in the application of ethics in the field. One of them is the time pressure from the company that wants quick results, so that it does not provide enough space for the in-depth observation process. In addition, there is still a gap in knowledge between the community and anthropologists, which risks creating hidden power relations. Lestari (2023) highlights that in applied anthropology, epistemic power must

be shared equally through the process of education and strengthening local capacity, so that ethics is not just a jargon but a real practice.

From the overall findings, it can be concluded that ethics in applied anthropology must continue to be evaluated and developed along with the social and political dynamics in the field. The researcher recommends the need for a special code of ethics for applied anthropology in the industrial sector, as well as regular training for anthropologists and social consultants to be able to face field dilemmas with a critical and reflective attitude. In addition, an independent ethical monitoring mechanism needs to be developed to ensure that social interventions do not violate the principles of justice and participation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the overall study and analysis in this study, it can be concluded that ethics in applied anthropology plays a crucial role in ensuring fair, transparent, and dignified community involvement, especially in the context of complex industries such as oil palm plantations. Ethics are not only a guideline for the behavior of individual anthropologists, but also concern power relations, scientific integrity, and partisanship towards social justice. Applied anthropology, as a branch of science that is oriented towards solving real problems in society, has evolved from an observational approach to a more active role in social advocacy, conflict mediation, and local culture-based development. However, in practice, ethical challenges are often found in the form of the dominance of corporate narratives, lack of community participation, and minimal application of the principle of *free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)*. This study confirms that the success of applied anthropology practice is highly dependent on the consistency of the application of professional ethics, starting from the planning stage, implementation, to evaluation of social programs. Moral courage and independence of attitude are needed from anthropologists not to submit to pressure from funding institutions, and to ensure that the voices of local communities are not only heard, but also become the basis for decision making. In addition, the development of applied anthropology must also be accompanied by strengthening professional capacity, integration of digital ethnographic technology, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. In the context of Indonesia which is rich in cultural and landscape diversity, the role of applied anthropology is very strategic in creating development that is not only economically oriented, but also socially inclusive and ecologically sustainable. Thus, ethics in applied anthropology is not merely a supporting norm, but rather the main foundation that determines the relevance, sustainability, and justice of all social practices and interventions carried out. For this, professional regulation, ongoing ethics training, and the involvement of academic institutions and communities are needed to ensure that anthropology is truly present for humans, not for power.

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