

# HUMAN ETHICS OF USING DRONES + CAMERA TRAPS IN PRIMATE CONSERVATION

## PRO'S + CON'S

-Jack Lammas- 19185099@brookes.ac.uk - 2022 -

### INTRODUCTION

Modern technology is changing the way researchers acquire data on primates [1, 2]. Camera traps and drones are leading the way in creating non-invasive research methods that save the time-consuming process of habituation [3, 4]. Despite the positives for both primates and researchers, further ethical investigation is needed to provide a code of conduct [5, 6]. Identified here are potential positive and negative aspects of camera traps and drones for humans.



Locals can be trained in operating technology and data collection [7]. This creates inclusive conservation roles for local people that can potentially boost income and education [8].

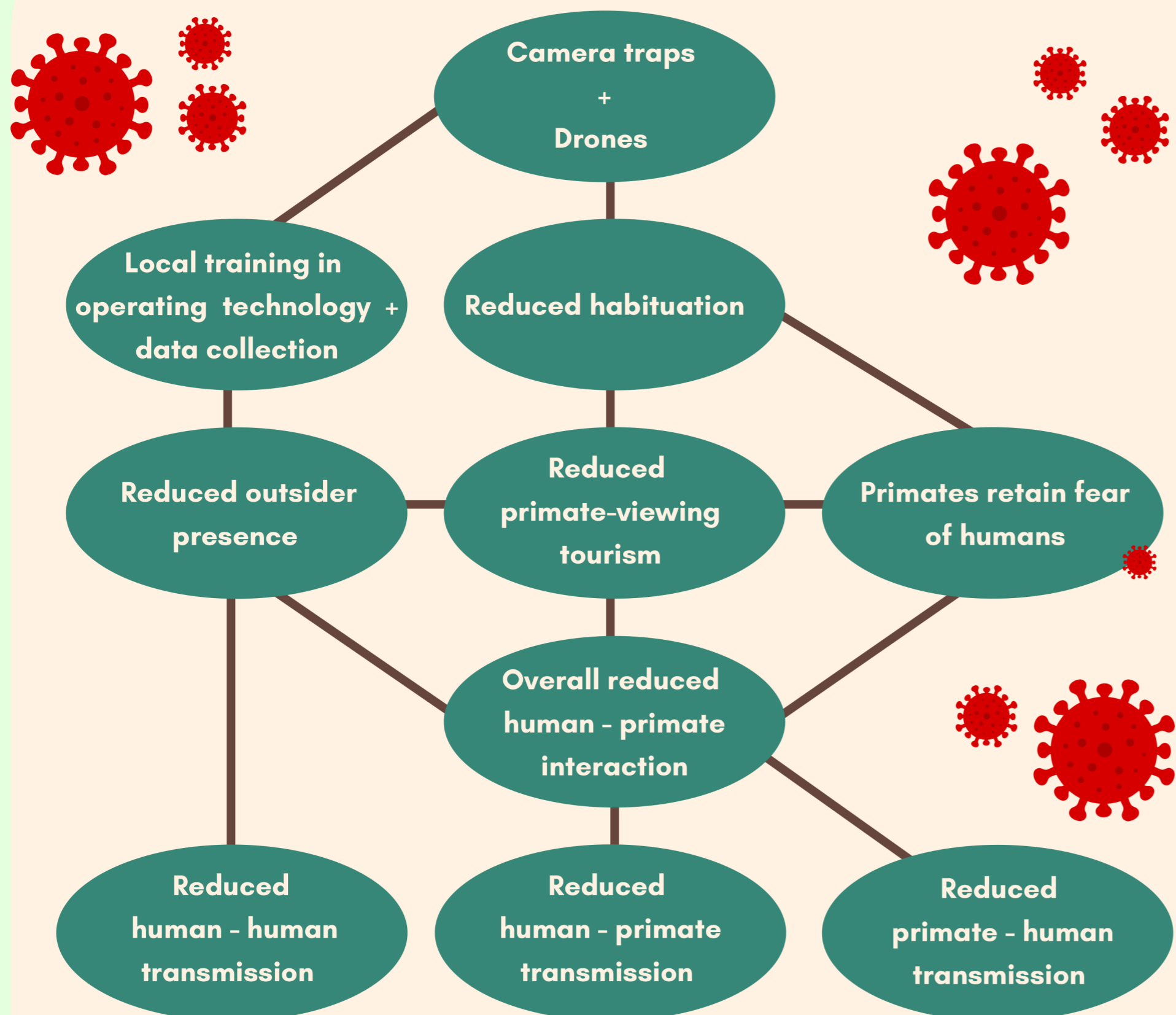


Increased local conservation has generated positive attitudes and support from local areas. Local conservation allows trust and mutual understanding of culture and belief, thus avoiding disturbances often created by outsider groups [9].



The use of camera traps and drones reduces the need for habituation [4]. Habituation has often become a point of ethical debate as it reduces fear in the subject and potentially increases negative human-primate interactions [10-12].

### REDUCED DISEASE TRANSMISSION



Many diseases can spread between humans and primates putting both groups at risk from increased interactions [11-21]. Camera traps and drones could potentially prevent transmission through reduced human - primate and human-human interaction [4].

### CONSENT AND PRIVACY

When conducting camera trap studies, it is important to follow a code of conduct that informs all local stakeholders and ensures they understand exactly what they are consenting to [6, 22]. Many communities may use the study area and complications may arise if a mutual agreement regarding consent and privacy is not reached with all members [5].

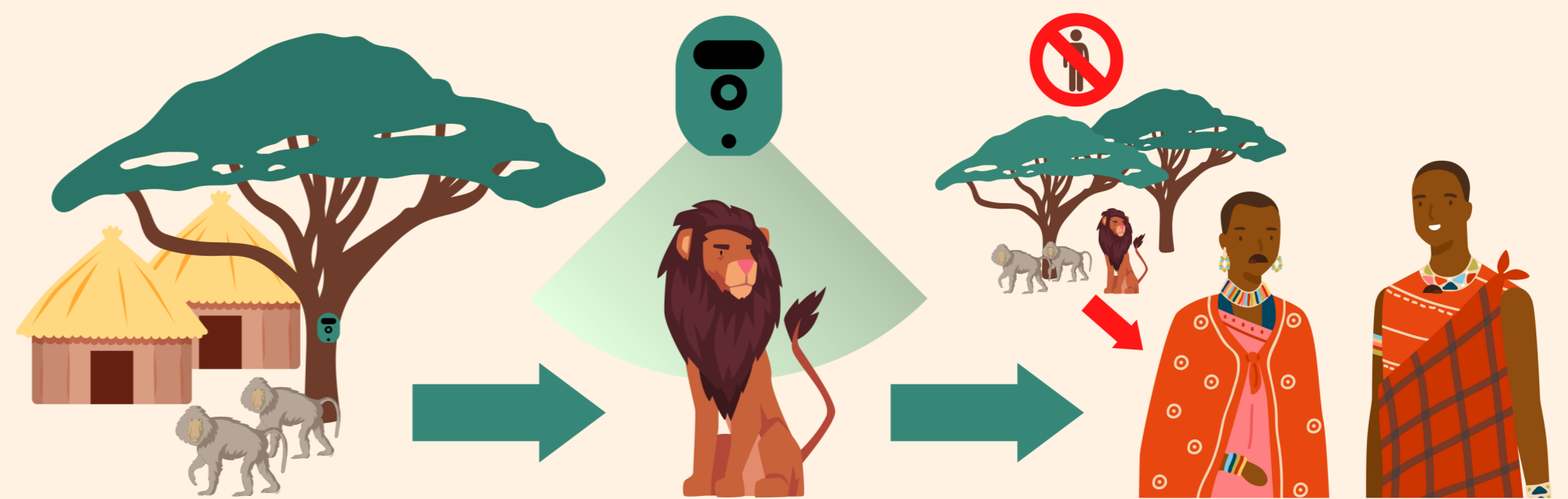


### ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

Witnessing illegal activity creates an ethical dilemma [10, 27]. Camera traps may capture incriminating videos of local people [3, 5]. To what extent should identity be protected? Reporting a crime may create distrust and jeopardise the study, also endangering the local individuals involved [10]. How much power do researchers have if authorities demand access to their data [1]? Restricting access to authorities may place the researcher in danger of committing a criminal offence [6]. This moral issue remains difficult to navigate and remains a complication of using camera traps.



### DISPLACE LOCAL PEOPLE



Camera traps are used for primate research in areas shared with humans

Evidence of high profile species found on camera traps

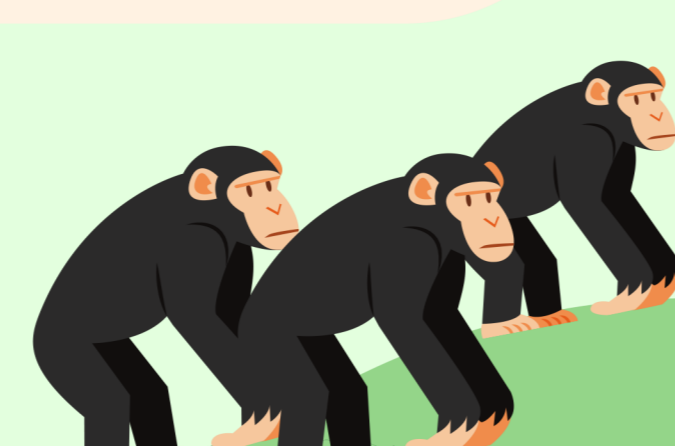
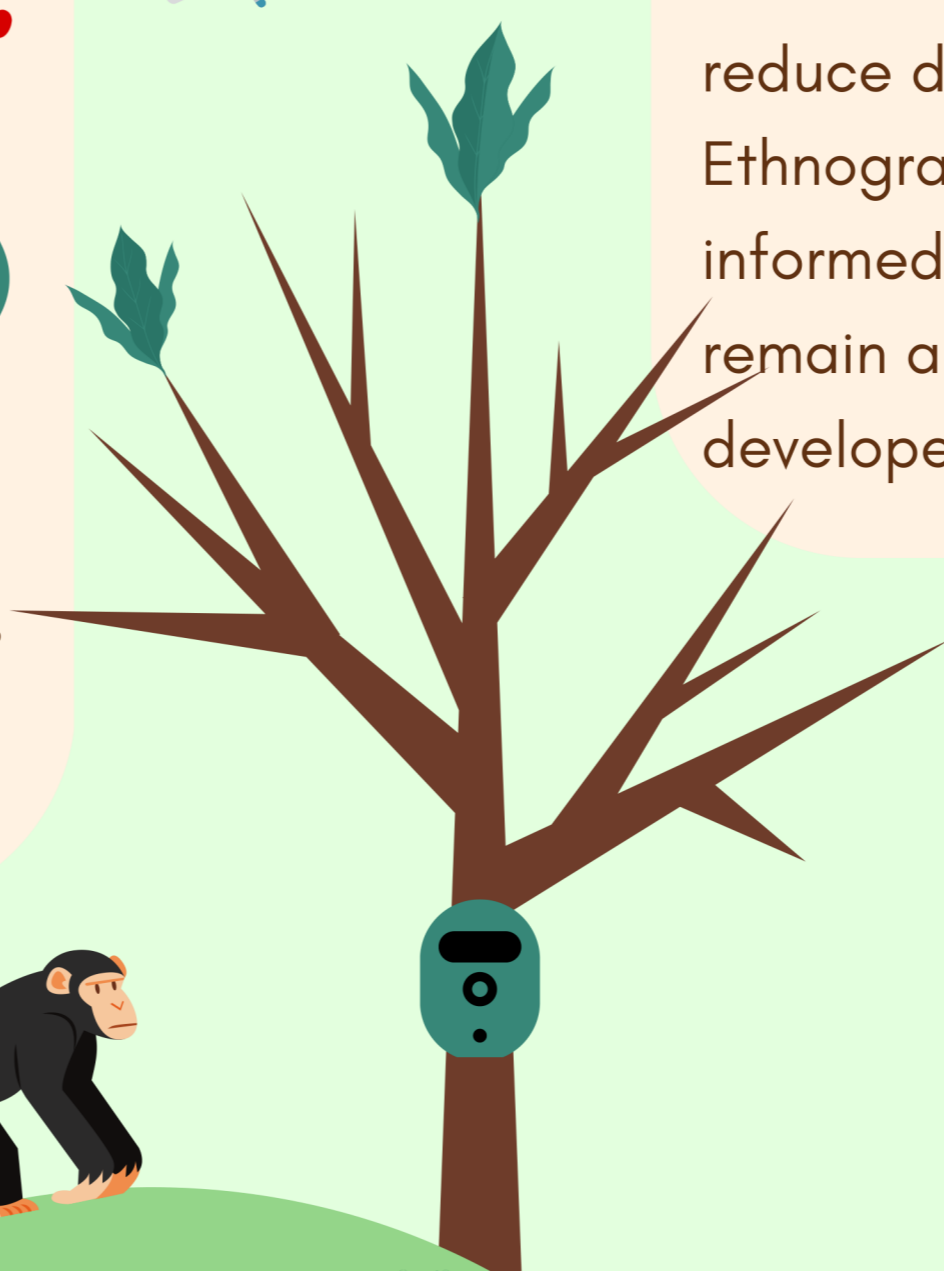
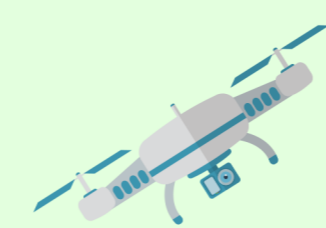
Authorities change status of area to protected. People are forcible evicted and displaced

The displacement of local people has been a serious ethical issue in conservation [23-26]. Camera trap and drone findings may increase the conservation status of an area.

Despite this appearing seemingly positive to the conservationist, higher authorities may respond with evictions creating humanitarian issues as well as losing local support [3,24].

### CONCLUSION

Camera traps and drones are useful tools that can benefit locally managed conservation. The potential to reduce disease transmission is beneficial to all parties. Ethnographic methods can be applied when acquiring informed consent. The capture of illegal activities still remain an ethical dilemma that requires a well developed code of conduct if such events occur.



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