How does gender impact family relationships in the wild?O'Connell-Rodwell observed that "in dry? years, the strict pecking order they establish benefits all of them." For example, the young bulls know they must get in line behind the more senior elephants. In this way, everyone gets a turn to eat and drink, conflict is avoided, and peace is maintained. Gelada Study Reveals Female Primates with Power Geladas are primates that live in the remote highlands of Ethiopia. Males are larger than females, but females have the real power in family groups. Wildlife biologist Chadden Hunter studies geladas in Simen Mountains National Park in Ethiopia. Hunter has observed that typical family units have between two and eight adult females, their offspring, and a primary male, which researchers call the family male. Gelada males have little say in what the family does from day to day. The females decide where and how long to graze3 for food, when to move, and where to sleep. They also choose which male will be their mate and when it is time to replace that mate. Young bachelor males live in separate groups. They spend most of their time observing family groups and looking for opportunities to challenge the family males. When a young bachelor comes too close to a family, the family male chases him away. To replace a family male, the females invite a bachelor into the family. Females typically do this when a family male becomes weak or does not give enough attention to them or their offspring. Hunter explains, "That's especially true in families where there are six or seven females; it's a lot of work to keep them all happy."Instead, they preferred active play-climbing, jumping, and chasing each other through trees.Recent studies show how gender influences the social structure of elephants, geladas, and chimps ?Studies Show Gender Effect in Elephant Societies ?Young elephants grow up in extended matriarchal families.During the study, Stanford University behavioral psychologist Caitlin O'Connell-Rodwell found that each member knew his status, and that the group followed a strict social hierarchy.Researchers Discover Gender-Driven Play in Chimps Just as human children often choose different toys, some monkeys in captivity have demonstrated gender-driven toy preferences.For example, young female vervet and rhesus monkeys often play with dolls in captivity, while young males prefer toys such as trucks.His team observed that the way a community of young Kanyawara female chimps played with sticks mimicked caretaking behaviors.However, a recent c study at Etosha National Park in Namibia shows that males often form intense, long- lasting friendships with other males .Older males act as teachers and mediators2 for younger ones, controlling or disciplining them when conflict occurs.Hunter's study has generated new interest in geladas, and it will challenge primatologists to learn more about their gender behavior.The H chimps appeared to be using the sticks as dolls, as if they were practicing for motherhood.This play preference, which was very rarely seen in males, was observed in young female chimps more than a hundred times during 14 years of study.Elephant mothers, aunts, grandmothers, and female friends cooperate to raise babies in large, carefully organized 8 groups.This system helps protect young orphan elephants when hunters or farmers kill their mothers.?Previously, male elephants were perceived to be less social than females.Hunter has observed that no family male lasts more than four years, and many are replaced before three.Now, for the first time, a study in Kibale National Park in Uganda shows that the same is true for chimps in the wild.When a young elephant is orphaned, other females take over the dead mother's role.The strong bonds between females continue throughout their lives, which can be as long as 70 years.Then they generally leave their mothers and

form other groups with male elephants.Richard Wrangham, a primatologist at Harvard University, has been studying the play behavior of male and female chimps.The young females took sticks to their nests and cared for them like mother chimps with their babies.In contrast, young males did not normally play with objects.Stick play may have evolved to prepare females for motherhood.In contrast, young male elephants stay close to their female family members until they are 14.These strict rules of behavior are helpful when food and drink are scarce.However, replaced males do not leave their families.It may have given them an advantage by providing skills and knowledge that contributed to their survival."That way, they can protect their children," he says, "and they're very aggressive about that."It is also possible that stick play is just an expression of the imagination–an ability found in chimps and humans but few other .animals.Rather, they stay on in a kind of grandfather role