

AGE SETS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND THE BALANCE OF POWER: EVIDENCE FROM VILLAGES IN RURAL CONGO*

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ABSTRACT: Across much of Africa, political authority rests with older chiefs. Age sets – groups of young men who are initiated together and remain bound as a cohort for life – traditionally provide a counterweight to this authority. We ask whether this social structure shapes the effects of governance interventions that aim to check the power of village chiefs. We implement a randomized intervention in 102 villages in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that gives chiefs grants to purchase and distribute health products and forms committees to oversee them. We randomly vary whether each committee is composed of young men or a diverse set of villagers. We find that young male committees perform better in villages with age sets: they are more cohesive, undertake more oversight, and shift the distribution of products away from chiefs and from wealthier households. In villages without age sets, young male committees provide no such benefits and can worsen elite capture. One key mechanism appears to be the social network structure: young male committees in age set villages are less embedded in the chief’s network.

Keywords: Social organization, age sets, accountability, governance.

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1. Introduction

There is a growing consensus that development policies and interventions should account for local context ([Ashraf, Bau, Nunn and Voena, 2020](#), [Bau, Lowes and Montero, 2025](#), [Moscona, Nunn and Robinson, 2026](#)). The importance of context is especially salient for policies aimed at altering village governance in Africa. Villages are typically governed by local chiefs who tend to be older and, consequently, less educated than younger cohorts. Chiefs are often appointed through mechanisms that do not involve universal suffrage, and their accountability occurs primarily through informal channels. In these respects, village governance in much of Africa differs markedly from the formal institutions of local governance common in Western societies.

Concerns about this political structure have motivated attempts to address what are perceived to be institutional deficiencies. Two prominent intervention strategies have emerged. First, development programs have aimed to improve chief accountability by creating village development committees that can monitor and constrain chief behavior ([Casey, Glennerster and Miguel, 2012](#), [Humphreys, Sanchez de la Sierra and Van der Windt, 2019](#), [Heß, Jaimovich and Schündeln, 2021](#)). The underlying concern is that chiefs may be despotic with few checks on their power. Second, parallel efforts have attempted to shift power from older village chiefs to younger, more educated villagers ([Casey, Glennerster, Miguel and Voors, 2023](#)), challenging the gerontocratic aspect of traditional governance on the grounds that younger individuals are underutilized in decision-making.

However, the success of such interventions likely depends critically on the local context in which they are embedded. In particular, the consequences of empowering young men likely depend on answers to fundamental questions about their social role: Do young men traditionally have political legitimacy? Can they effectively provide oversight in gerontocratic societies? Answering these questions requires understanding the institutions that govern the balance of power between youth and elders.

One such structure, widespread across Africa but largely absent from development policy discussions, is the institution of age sets. Age sets are groups of men of approximately the same age who are initiated together through extended rituals—often lasting up to six months—that involve removal from the village, arduous training, and typically circumcision. Members of an age set remain bonded for life and progress together through successive age grades. Age sets are

widespread across Africa and exhibit rich variation in where they are practiced and how they are organized.¹

While the consequences of this horizontal social structure for redistribution have recently been documented (Moscona and Seck, 2024), within the anthropological literature, the primary consequence of age sets is not economic but political. Age sets, comprised of a cohesive group of young men, provide a counterbalance to the political power of the elites in the village, who are generally from an older generation. By building cohesive cohorts of young men whose allegiances are oriented horizontally (toward age mates) rather than vertically (toward elders), age sets can provide a counterweight to the authority of older elites in otherwise gerontocratic settings.

This paper asks whether the consequences of common governance interventions—specifically, the creation of village development committees comprised of young men to monitor chiefs—depend on whether age sets are present in a village. By doing so, we bring together two disparate research literatures: randomized controlled trial (RCT) research targeting village governance, which motivates our experimental design, and ethnographic research on the governance effects of age sets, which motivates our cultural focus and hypothesized mechanisms. Our central goal is to explore whether governance interventions can be altered *ex ante*, in an informed yet simple way, to align with local social conditions and produce better outcomes.

We implement a field experiment across 102 rural villages in Sud-Ubangi province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a setting that exhibits substantial variation in age set practices even across nearby villages. The project was implemented in partnership with a local NGO, Congo Helping Hands (CHH). The intervention provides village chiefs with a cash grant (approximately \$100) to purchase three health products that are difficult to access in rural areas—deworming pills, chlorine tablets for water purification, and oral rehydration salts (ORS). Chiefs are responsible for purchasing and distributing these products, which vendors sell at subsidized prices during village visits. We form village development committees (VDCs) to monitor chiefs and assist with product distribution. Critically, we randomly vary committee composition: in half the villages, committees are selected from all volunteers (the "diverse committee" arm),

¹While there is no single comprehensive cross-ethnic measure of the prevalence of age sets, following ethnographic work, we proxy for two defining components in the Ethnographic Atlas: adolescent male initiation (circumcision at age 6 or older) and adolescent male segregation. Within Africa, 57% of ethnic groups practice adolescent circumcision and 73% practice adolescent segregation; 42% exhibit both, and 86% exhibit at least one. These are imperfect proxies for age set organization, but they capture two core elements emphasized in ethnographic accounts: initiation into manhood and the formation of cohort-based ties.

while in the other half, committees comprise only male volunteers aged 18–35 (the "young male committee" arm). We implement the intervention in two rounds (2019 and 2022) and conduct endline surveys approximately six months after each round.

We hypothesize that the consequences of committee type depend on the social context of each village. Specifically, we test whether it is the case that in age set villages, young male committees work more effectively and provide better oversight of the village chief. In age set villages, young men belonging to the same age set tend to be bonded and highly cohesive. This may generate a more cohesive committee that is better at undertaking oversight tasks, such as participating in committee meetings and meeting with other committee members, organizing village meetings, communicating with villagers, and distributing the health products. Moreover, since the age set custom creates a cohesive group of young men that counterbalances the power of elders who hold political positions, young male committees may be better able to limit elite capture and ensure more equitable distribution. In contrast, in villages without age sets, young men may lack the social cohesion and traditional legitimacy needed to effectively constrain elder authority, potentially making young male committees more susceptible to cooptation.

We measure age set presence at baseline using reports from village notables and sages. In baseline survey data, we find that age set villages differ in terms of political norms. Respondents are more likely to endorse gerontocratic decision-making and to report stronger elder power, yet they report lower trust in elders, consistent with an environment where elder authority is salient but contested.

We focus on three sets of outcomes motivated by the logic of governance interventions: (i) committee functioning and cohesion (e.g., whether committee members undertake oversight tasks and feel socially connected to each other and to villagers); (ii) chief behavior and accountability (e.g., whether the chief organizes meetings, undertakes distribution, and whether project funds are missing); and (iii) distributional outcomes (who receives the health products, particularly whether allocation is tilted toward elites and those socially connected to the chief).

We find that committee composition interacts sharply with local social structure. In villages with age sets, assigning a young male committee leads to substantively stronger committee performance. Committee members report undertaking more project-management and oversight tasks—including organizing meetings, organizing and carrying out distribution, and meeting with villagers to answer questions or address concerns—relative to young male committees in

villages without age sets and relative to diverse committees. These behavioral differences are mirrored in social outcomes: in age set villages, young male committee members report feeling closer to one another and closer to villagers (though not closer to the chief), consistent with age sets generating a cohesive cohort. We also observe that chiefs appear less comfortable with this assignment: enumerators record that chiefs are less satisfied when a young male committee is selected in an age set village, which aligns with ethnographic descriptions of tension between cohesive youth cohorts and elder authority. Thus, in terms of committee cohesion and governance tasks performed, young male committees in age set villages are more effective.

We find some evidence that young male committees in age set villages affect some of the behaviors of the chief. Specifically, chiefs were more likely to organize meetings. However, chiefs were less likely to distribute the products themselves. Thus, in villages with young male committees and age sets, the committee seems to have taken more responsibility in terms of distribution relative to the chief. We find no effect on the frequency that the chief met with villagers or the committee or the extent to which he kept written records.

Despite these improvements in committee and chief engagement, we find limited evidence that young male committees in age set villages reduce financial capture by chiefs, largely because baseline capture is already low. Across villages, less than 10% of project funds are missing on average, and this level does not meaningfully change across rounds. Interestingly, villagers' beliefs about the extent of chief capture are accurate and strongly correlated with realized missing money, while external experts substantially overestimate capture (23%). Moreover, treatment assignment does not systematically affect missing funds.

We also find meaningful effects on the allocation of resources. Even though nearly all households receive some products (95%), the distribution of how many products different actors receive is sensitive to both committee composition and the presence of age sets. In age set villages, young male committees shift allocations away from village elites. Chiefs retain substantially fewer products when a young male committee is assigned in an age set village, and similarly, villagers who are socially close to the chief and those who are wealthier receive fewer products. Importantly, these changes do not appear to be offset by capture by the committee itself: we find little evidence that the additional products are redirected toward households that are socially close to committee members or to committee members themselves. Together, these patterns suggest that in age set villages, cohesive young male committees can meaningfully constrain

elite favoritism in allocation decisions, even if they do not change aggregate delivery.

A key insight is that the same “youth empowerment” intervention can backfire in the absence of the complementary social institution. In villages without age sets, young male committees do not generate improved oversight and appear more susceptible to cooptation by elders. In these villages, allocations become more skewed toward elites when young male committees are formed. This contrast points to a broader logic: in strongly gerontocratic environments, despite being better educated, these young men cannot effectively constrain the power of the chief. Age sets appear to supply legitimacy by creating cohesive cohorts and norms that legitimate youth oversight. Without age sets, assigning oversight responsibility to a young male cohort may simply create an institution that is formally empowered but socially weak, making it easier for elites to capture.

A potential concern with our analysis is that age set villages may differ from non-age set villages along other dimensions that could independently affect governance outcomes. To address this concern, we show that our results are robust to including controls for a rich set of baseline village characteristics—including village size, distance to urban centers, village age, geographic location, access, clan structure, and public goods and infrastructure – and their interactions with the young male committee indicator. This approach attempts to isolate the effect specifically attributable to age set practices rather than other correlated features of villages. We find that the results are consistent across specifications with and without these controls, suggesting that the interaction between committee composition and age sets reflects the political and social structures generated by age set institutions rather than other confounding village-level differences.

We turn to mechanisms to understand why young male committees are more effective in age set villages, and we consider three explanations. The first explanation, which the evidence supports, is that age sets reshape the social and political ties that matter for oversight. Using social network data, we find that chiefs are less likely to name young male committee members as part of their social network – in particular, as people they socialize with or ask for advice. Young male committees in age set villages are thus less embedded in the chief’s network.

The second potential mechanism is that the committees themselves differ – that young male committees in age set villages might be more educated, wealthier, or otherwise distinct. We find little evidence of this; young male committees in age set and non-age set villages are similar across a range of characteristics. The third potential mechanism is that their members are more likely

to have been initiated together, which could make them more cohesive. We find that committee members in age set villages are more likely to have been initiated, but no more likely to have been initiated together when the committee is composed of young men.² Neither explanation accounts for our results.

Overall, our findings show that the effects of the program we examine – which, like other recent initiatives, aims to give some formal power to younger individuals in the village – depend on the presence of an important local custom, age sets. When age sets are present, then young male committees do generate groups that are more cohesive and engage more in oversight activities. In terms of product distribution, young male committees appear not to be able to prevent unfair product distribution, which is not surprising given the fact that our setting is strongly gerontocratic. When age sets are present, this adverse outcome is not present. These findings highlight the care that must be taken when attempting to alter the distribution of power in local villages. Our findings show that whether a particular intervention is beneficial or not can depend critically on the baseline social and political structure.

The paper makes a number of contributions to our existing knowledge. First, we contribute to longstanding debates over the nature of traditional political authority and accountability in Africa. Influential accounts emphasize the limited formal constraints facing chiefs and characterize local governance as a form of “decentralized despotism” (Mamdani, 1996, p. 8). This perspective has helped motivate interventions that create councils or committees intended to provide countervailing authority. By contrast, Africanist and philosophical accounts emphasize that chiefly authority is often constrained through consultation, consensus, and social institutions that are not captured by Western-style electoral forms (Gyekye, 1996, Nyerere, 1961, Senghor, 1964). Our findings show why these perspectives need not be mutually exclusive. Very little project money is captured by chiefs – consistent with the notion of constraints on the chief, but the distribution of resources remains politically sensitive. This distinction echoes Wittman (1989): political arrangements may have limited effects on aggregate performance while still shaping distribution. Moreover, whether an additional formal check improves allocation depends on the pre-existing social organization of power. Age sets make young male committees an effective counterweight to chiefs; without age sets, the same formally empowered committee can remain socially weak and may instead

²Shared initiation is unlikely on mechanical grounds: initiations occur roughly every one to three years, while young male committees draw six members from an eighteen-year age range (18–35). Thus, in practice, few committees would contain members from the same initiation class.

facilitate elite capture.

Second, we contribute to the literature on the efficacy of community-driven development (CDD) programs. [Casey \(2018\)](#) provides an overview of the key findings from the literature. Despite much policy enthusiasm for CDD and the hope that these programs improve local decision-making, there is little evidence of enduring impact. As described in [Casey \(2018\)](#), while CDDs are able to effectively deliver local public goods, there is little impact on institutions. Generally, in CDD interventions, the committees that are formed are designed to be diverse. Thus, our project differs slightly from this standard implementation and provides evidence on how targeting groups that traditionally hold the role of holding leaders accountable may improve outcomes. [Humphreys et al. \(2019\)](#) implement a large-scale CDD in Eastern Congo across 1250 villages. They find no evidence that the program improves governance outcomes across a wide variety of indicators, such as whether public funds are captured and the types of governance practices employed by village leaders. Our results speak to how CDD programs may be tailored to better leverage existing institutions – rather than aiming to change them.

More broadly, our paper provides a concrete example of how to integrate local social structures into policy in a simple, yet real, way. Age sets have been noted as being important components of traditional governance, but have not been integrated into policy. Indeed, this disconnect was already being highlighted two decades ago. Writing in 2005, a World Bank working paper observed that “of the 78 [World Bank] assessments of legal and justice systems undertaken by the Bank since 1994, many mention the prevalence of traditional justice in the countries looked at, but *none* explore the systems in detail or examine the links between local level systems and state regimes” ([Chirayath, Sage and Woolcock, 2005](#), p. 3) (emphasis in the original). The document then goes on to identify age sets as being an important dimension of traditional politics, for the groups in their case studies, since they “partially offset the central authority of the chief and the divisions amongst the lineages” (p. 13). Our paper therefore brings together two research traditions that have rarely intersected: experimental work on village-governance interventions and ethnographic research on the political role of age sets.

Finally, we show how social institutions create de facto political power. A growing literature documents how social structures shape exchange networks, residence patterns, conflict, household bargaining, and financial relationships ([Greif, 1994, 2006](#), [Bau, 2021](#), [Moscona, Nunn and Robinson, 2020](#), [Lowes, 2022](#), [Moscona and Seck, 2024](#)). Our findings identify how these social

structures matter via political channels: age sets may help transform young men into an organized constituency capable of acting collectively and constraining gerontocratic leaders. This organization weakens young men's dependence on the chief, strengthens political engagement within their cohort, and allows formally assigned oversight authority to become more effective in practice. Without age sets, granting young men the same formal authority does not generate equivalent de facto power. These patterns suggest that the functioning of formal political institutions depends on the social organization underlying them.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. We start by providing background on age sets and the study setting in Section 2. We describe the experimental design in Section 3 and the empirical strategy in Section 4. The results on governance are presented in Section 5 and on product distribution in Section 6. Finally, we explore mechanisms in Section 7 and conclude in Section 8.

2. Age Sets: Background and Descriptive Baseline Evidence

2.1. Ethnographic Background on the Importance of Age Sets

In age set societies, politics are structured horizontally through groups of men of approximately the same age, who have been initiated into an age set. Age set initiations create social ties among men of similar ages and also organize the movement of cohorts through socially recognized stages of authority and responsibility. As Bernardi (1985, p. 9) emphasizes, "age class systems are unique, for not only do they regulate the attainment of individual maturity and autonomy, but they regulate the distribution and rotation of all forms of power". Bernardi (1985, p. 57) argues that the system limits "individual attempts at personal power" by ensuring that authority is attached to age groups rather than to particular individuals, families, or lineages. Age sets therefore structure social identity and political authority: they create cohesive horizontal cohorts while also organizing the intergenerational allocation of power.

One of the most thoroughly studied age set societies is the Maasai of Kenya, where boys are initiated into the first age set via a circumcision ritual, after which they become warriors and live together. In their mid-twenties, when the next group of young boys is ready for initiation, the warriors transition into being farmers and husbands, officially getting married. After this, they

transition into being elders who make political decisions, and finally into the oldest age set where they focus on spiritual and supernatural tasks.

One consequence of this social structure, which is well recognized in the anthropological literature, is that the presence of age sets puts natural checks on the powers of the political elite in society. Because one's age set determines one's status in society, no one family can accumulate power since power cannot be passed on to one's descendants. Moreover, the fact that the system creates a cohesive group of young men who belong to the same age set provides a force that naturally checks the power of the elite, who are generally a group of elders who belong to a more senior age set (Bernardi, 1985).

An anecdote from a rural Nigerian village highlights how age sets can serve as a check on the political power of older generations (Bohannan, 1964, pp. 165–170). The village was divided about whether a young man named Yaav was involved in witchcraft. The youth instructed the elders of the village to convene a meeting, during which the Chief decided that Yaav should be punished for witchcraft. However, the Chief's son, whose name was Ihugh, sided with the coalition that was against his father. When the Chief asked his son why he would side against his own father, Ihugh replied that he and Yaav were age mates, and this bond was stronger and more important. Ultimately, Yaav was spared punishment.

This story highlights a number of important consequences of age sets. First, because the age set was a unified, cohesive group, they had political power. They were able to force the elders to convene a meeting, and they were able to prevent them from punishing Yaav for witchcraft. Second, it shows the strength of the horizontal ties within the community. In the end, Ihugh's horizontal allegiance to his age mates was stronger than his vertical allegiance to his own father, even though his father was the chief. The story illustrates how age sets create a cohesive group of young, able-bodied men, who collectively balance the power of the political elders in the village. In gerontocratic societies, where older men control political power, they may provide checks on any potential wrongdoings or abuse of power that may occur by the elders.

2.2. The Study Setting and Baseline Data: Gazawili among the Ngbaka

The study takes place in the Sud-Ubangi province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This location is an ideal setting to examine our questions of interest. It has significant variation in age set practices, where the practice varies from one village to the next, even within



Figure 1: *Gazawili* among the Ngbaka

Notes: The figure presents images of young men from the Ngbaka tribe performing a traditional dance during the final stages of the age set initiation ritual. The figure on the left is a colonial-era photo of a gazawili initiate. The figure on the right is a 2017 photo of a gazawili initiate.

the predominant ethnic group, the Ngbaka. Among the Ngbaka, the age set initiation ritual is called *gazawili*. This practice was documented by early ethnographers in the region. As a visual illustration of the continuity in the practice over time, Figure 1 provides images of young men from the Ngbaka tribe performing a traditional dance as part of the final stages of the age set initiation ritual. The image on the left is from the colonial period, while the image on the right was taken by the project enumerators in 2017. The photo captures the stage of initiation when individuals who have completed their training in the forest return to society.

Given that there is very limited data on age set initiation rituals for our study area, we conducted a baseline survey in 2016 in 102 randomly selected villages from Gemena territory, which is located in the northwest of the DRC. We collected information on various political, social, and economic characteristics of the villages, as well as information on the village history. We implemented tailored surveys with the Village Chief, the Sage (a knowledgeable elder within the community), the Secretary (an assistant to the village chief), one notable from each clan of the village, and 12 randomly chosen citizens from the village (4 old men, 4 young men, 2 old

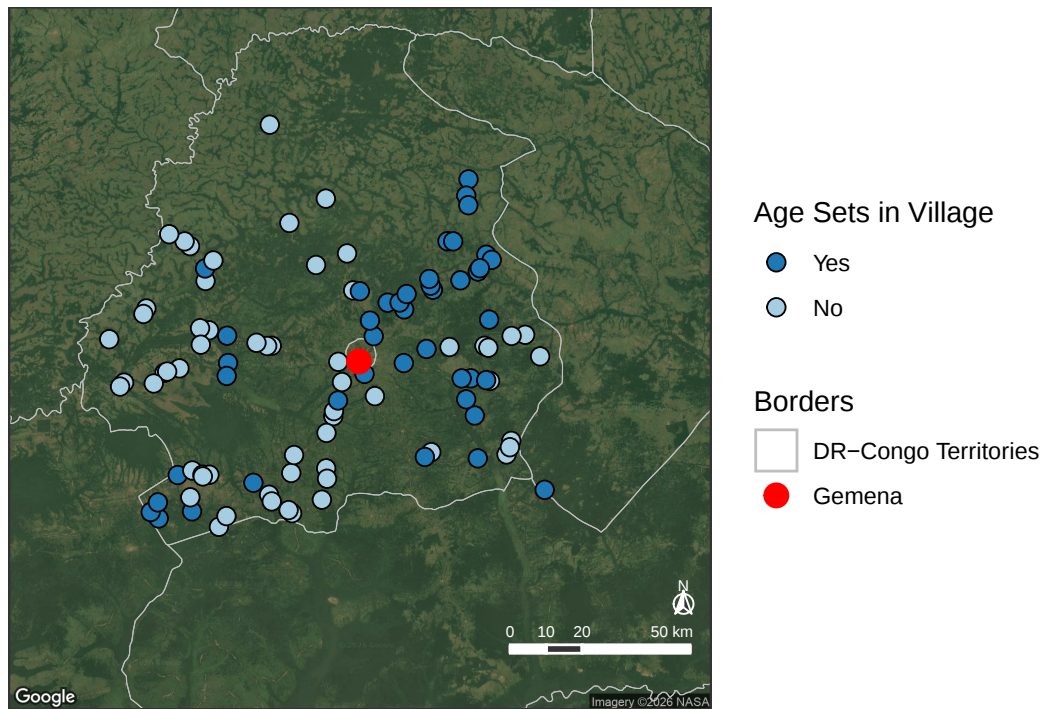


Figure 2: Gemena Territory and Study Villages

Notes: This figure presents Gemena territory in the DRC, the sample villages, and whether the villages have age set initiation rituals.

women, and 2 young women). On average, 18 individuals (villagers, chief, notables, and others) were surveyed per village, for a total of over 1,800 respondents.

For those villages where the sages and notables report initiation rituals for young men, we collect detailed data on various aspects of the initiation. Of our 102 villages, we identify 59 as having initiation rituals for young men based on reports from the sages and notables. A map of the villages in the sample is shown in Figure 2. Villages that have initiation rituals are denoted in dark blue and those without initiation rituals are in light blue.

We present details on the *gazawili* initiation in Table 1. Generally, boys participate in the ritual around the age of 12, although there is significant variation in the age at which individuals complete the ritual. Circumcision is part of the initiation ritual. Not all boys in the eligible age range participate, and there has been a decrease in participation over time. The initiation rituals are always done in groups and typically require a several-month stay in the forest in a secret location. The most frequent duration of the initiation is between one and three months; however, some villages have initiations that last up to a year.

During the initiation, livelihood skills (like hunting, woodworking, and agriculture) and the

history and customs of the tribe are taught. The individual leading the initiation ritual tends to be a clan notable or a sage (elder) within the community. The difficult nature and the duration of the rituals naturally result in strong bonds being formed between the boys that participate in the initiation.

When asked about why participation in the ritual is important, village leaders say that the most important reasons for participating are: to build a work ethic, to make connections with individuals of the same age, and to cultivate *bokoko*, the Lingala word for traditional customs. Reasons that are not important include: business, hiring, happiness, and money lending. Overall, these descriptive data on *gazawili* highlight its arduous nature and its role in building cohesive groups of young men who have knowledge of the traditions and customs of the village.

2.3. Descriptive Statistics: Age Set vs. Non-Age Set Villages

Given that there is substantial variation in whether villages have age sets, it is natural to ask how age set villages differ from those that do not have age sets. Therefore, in Table 2 we present summary statistics for baseline characteristics of the villages, distinguishing between those that have age set initiation rituals and those that do not. The final column reports the p-value for a test of equality between the means of the two groups. Panel A reports village characteristics, Panel B reports chief characteristics, and Panel C reports baseline villager characteristics.

The table shows that villages with and without age set initiation rituals are similar along some dimensions, especially in the characteristics of chiefs and villagers. In all, 7 of 17 village characteristics are statistically different at the 10% level. We find that villages with age sets tend to be older and larger. They also tend to have more infrastructure, which likely reflects the larger population size. Based on our visits to villagers and discussions with chiefs, sages, and lineage elders, the most likely reason is that having age set initiations in a village requires a fixed cost; namely, it is a full-time job for at least one individual for the duration of the age set initiation, which is typically 1-3 months. Thus, larger villages are more likely to have the required number of young males to make continuation of age set initiations worthwhile. As we discuss in the empirical strategy below, our main specifications account for the most important of these observable differences, and conduct robustness tests to examine whether the results are sensitive to controlling flexibly for the other baseline characteristics that differ across age set and non-age set villages.

Table 1: Age Set Initiation Details

	Summary Statistics					Observations	
	Mean	SD	Min	Median	Max	Villages	Respondents
Age when initiation is generally done	12.2	4.56	5	11.2	18	59	189
Circumcision is performed during initiation (0/1)	.985	.0827	.5	1	1	59	196
Initiation done in a group (0/1)	1	0	1	1	1	59	196
Young men leave village during initiation (0/1)	.966	.103	.5	1	1	59	196
Proportion of men who participated in the past (0: none – 3: all)	1.96	.527	.5	2	3	59	196
Proportion of men who participate now (0: none – 3: all)	.942	.682	0	1	2	59	195
Do men ever refuse to participate? (1: never – 4: often)	2.57	.615	1	2.64	4	59	196
Proportion of men who participate due to pressure (0: specific men – 4: all men)	1.87	.711	1	2	3	59	190
Village chief must complete this initiation (0/1)	.326	.412	0	0	1	59	194
Men from multiple clans participate (0/1)	.621	.403	0	.714	1	59	196
Men from multiple villages participate (0/1)	.543	.4	0	.6	1	59	196
Men from multiple tribes participate (0/1)	.251	.371	0	0	1	59	196
Proportion of young males in village who participate							
Specially selected boys of initiation age (0/1)	.154	.281	0	0	1	59	196
A few boys of initiation age (0/1)	.362	.389	0	.25	1	59	196
Some boys of initiation age (0/1)	.445	.423	0	.5	1	59	196
All boys of initiation age (0/1)	.0388	.184	0	0	1	59	196
Location of initiation							
Secret location in the forest (0/1)	.809	.346	0	1	1	59	196
Open location in the forest (0/1)	.184	.345	0	0	1	59	196
Secret location in the village (0/1)	.00706	.0388	0	0	.25	59	196
Length of initiation							
More than one week and less than one month (0/1)	.0503	.18	0	0	1	59	196
More than one month and less than three months (0/1)	.618	.455	0	.909	1	59	196
More than three months and less than six months (0/1)	.126	.274	0	0	1	59	196
More than six months and less than one year (0/1)	.181	.356	0	0	1	59	196
More than one year (0/1)	.0254	.145	0	0	1	59	196
Frequency of initiation							
Every couple of months (0/1)	.00578	.0344	0	0	.25	59	196
Once a year (0/1)	.516	.421	0	.6	1	59	196
Once every two years (0/1)	.0184	.0834	0	0	.5	59	196
Once every three years (0/1)	.276	.369	0	0	1	59	196
Once every five years or more (0/1)	.0972	.215	0	0	1	59	196
Irregular or depends (0/1)	.0248	.0923	0	0	.5	59	196
Skills learned during initiation							
History of the tribe (0/1)	.905	.168	.5	1	1	59	195
History of the clan (0/1)	.909	.171	.5	1	1	59	194
Fishing (0/1)	.849	.251	0	1	1	59	196
Hunting (0/1)	.84	.26	0	1	1	59	196
Special means of communication (0/1)	.838	.262	0	1	1	59	196
Artisinal skills (0/1)	.829	.271	0	1	1	59	196
Farming (0/1)	.737	.377	0	1	1	59	196
Bokoko (0/1)	.786	.309	0	1	1	59	196
Sewing (0/1)	.776	.281	0	1	1	59	196
Fabrication of thatch (0/1)	.781	.323	0	1	1	59	196
Communal farming (0/1)	.347	.441	0	0	1	59	196
Public good maintenance (0/1)	.332	.436	0	0	1	59	196
Leadership skills (0/1)	.316	.446	0	0	1	59	196
Fighting or soldiering (0/1)	.299	.395	0	0	1	59	196
Importance of initiation for activities							
(1: not at all important - 5: very important)							
Work ethic	3.97	.89	1	4	5	59	196
Bokoko	3.76	1	1	4	5	59	195
Responsibility	3.6	.979	1	4	5	59	193
Making connections with same age	3.3	1	1	3.5	5	59	195
Marriage	3.22	1.22	1	3	5	59	195
Good husband	3.18	1.22	1	3	5	59	194
Success in life	2.68	1.04	1	3	5	59	192
Learning skills	2.38	1.2	1	2	5	59	196
Business	2.14	1.31	1	1.5	5	59	193
Happiness	2.07	1.13	1	2	5	59	193
Hiring	1.84	1.03	1	1.33	4	59	195
Money lending	1.79	.937	1	1.5	4	59	196

Notes: This table reports summary statistics of village-level averages constructed from interviews with village leaders (sages and notables) conducted at baseline in 2016. For each village, responses are averaged across respondents before computing the reported statistics.

None of the eleven chief characteristics is statistically different across the two groups. Chiefs in age set villages are similar in terms of years of education, year in which became chief, years served as chief, whether they were elected, religion, and wealth. Villagers in age set villages are also similar on a wide variety of demographic characteristics, though they are more likely to be Catholic.³

2.4. Baseline Political Authority in Age Set Villages

To motivate a study of accountability and political norms in age set villages, we use our baseline data to ask if there is any evidence that age set villages differ in how politics is organized. Age set villages may differ in how authority is perceived and contested: elders may be viewed as legitimate holders of power, while younger cohorts may also have more recognized roles and a stronger capacity for collective voice. To explore this possibility, we use baseline survey questions on political authority, accountability, and the organization of decision-making.

Table 3 shows that age set villages are characterized by stronger perceptions of elder political authority: respondents are more likely to report that elders *should* be responsible for decision-making and that, in practice, elders hold relatively more power and provide more support to chiefs. At the same time, respondents in age set villages report *lower* trust in elders. Taken together, these patterns are consistent with the ethnographic accounts discussed above: age set villages exhibit a specific political environment—one in which elder authority is salient but not unconditionally deferred to—in which cohesive youth cohorts may serve as a counterweight to gerontocratic power.

3. Experimental Design

The descriptive evidence above shows that age set villages differ from other villages both in observable characteristics, such as village size, and in political norms surrounding elder authority, in ways that align with ethnographic accounts of age sets as a counterweight to gerontocratic power. These patterns are, however, descriptive and correlational, and cannot tell us whether the presence of age sets may change how a given governance intervention actually plays out.

³The marginally significant difference in the share male reflects the stratified sampling design rather than a real imbalance. We planned to sample a fixed quota of eight men and four women per village, so the male share is mechanically near two-thirds in nearly every village; the small difference is driven entirely by two non-age set villages in which the quota could not be filled.

Table 2: Village Characteristics by Age Sets

	Age Sets		No Age Sets		P-value
	Obs.	Mean	Obs.	Mean	
<i>Panel A: Village Characteristics</i>					
Village size					
Number of households	59	563	43	301	0.05
Number of households (2019)	59	370	43	243	0.11
Number of households (enum estimate) (2019)	59	281	43	205	0.11
Village history					
Approx. years since village was created (2019)	57	93.4	43	82.0	0.01
Number of clans when founded (2019)	59	2.83	43	1.98	0.01
Number of clans now (2019)	59	3.95	43	3.16	0.04
Village public goods					
Truck access by road (0/1) (2019)	59	0.915	43	0.884	0.60
Road material sand (0/1) (2019)	59	0.729	42	0.833	0.22
Land titles (0/1)	59	0.678	43	0.698	0.83
Health center (0/1)	59	0.559	43	0.581	0.83
Primary school (0/1)	59	0.864	43	0.651	0.01
Secondary school (0/1)	59	0.559	43	0.326	0.02
Market (0/1)	59	0.169	43	0.093	0.27
Generator (0/1)	59	0.169	43	0.14	0.68
Village assets					
Solar panels (0/1)	59	0.915	43	0.907	0.89
Mobile coverage (0/1)	59	0.525	43	0.302	0.02
Distance travelled for good mobile coverage (km)	59	18.6	43	24.5	0.15
<i>Panel B: Chief Characteristics</i>					
Age	57	51.9	43	49.0	0.16
Male (0/1)	57	1.0	43	1.0	.
Married (0/1)	57	1.0	43	1.0	.
Years of education	57	7.23	43	7.14	0.89
Age became chief	57	40.5	43	40.3	0.95
Years as chief	57	10.8	43	9.14	0.40
Chief elected by villagers (0/1)	57	0.772	43	0.767	0.96
Catholic (0/1)	57	0.333	43	0.395	0.53
Protestant (0/1)	57	0.632	43	0.535	0.33
Pentecostal/Evangelical (0/1)	57	0.0351	43	0.0465	0.78
Wealth based on appearance (1–5)	57	1.84	43	1.77	0.59
<i>Panel C: Villager Characteristics</i>					
Age	708	39.4	517	39.3	0.77
Male (0/1)	708	0.669	517	0.665	0.08
Married (0/1)	708	0.849	517	0.868	0.16
Years of education	708	6.79	517	6.59	0.35
Catholic (0/1)	708	0.453	517	0.354	0.06
Protestant (0/1)	708	0.511	517	0.59	0.13
Pentecostal/Evangelical (0/1)	708	0.0254	517	0.0387	0.28
Wealth based on appearance (1–5)	707	1.62	516	1.63	0.90

Notes: The table presents the average characteristics of villages (Panel A), chiefs (Panel B), and villagers (Panel C) in the baseline survey administered in Gemena territory by the presence of age set practices. All p-values reflect the difference in means between the groups. For Panel A, all means are the average characteristics of the villages using variables from baseline data (2016) and round 1 pre-implementation data (2019). For Panel B, all means are the average characteristics of the village chiefs in the 2016 baseline survey. Two village chiefs were not available at the time of the survey. For Panel C, all means are the average characteristics of the villagers surveyed in the 2016 baseline survey.

Table 3: Age Sets & Political Authority

	Dependent Variables:			
	<i>Elders Should be Responsible for Decisions [1-5]</i>	<i>Relative Power Elders vs. Young [1-5]</i>	<i>Trust in Elders [1-4]</i>	<i>Chief Support from Elders vs. Young [4 - -4]</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age Set	0.484*** (0.147)	0.411** (0.168)	-0.174*** (0.064)	0.105** (0.048)
Observations	1,222	1,201	1,205	1,207
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	2.98	3.09	2.95	0.11
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a villager at baseline. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All dependent variables are coded so that higher values indicate stronger elder authority. *Elders Should be Responsible for Decisions* measures whether respondents believe that older persons should be responsible for making decisions in the village on a scale from 1 to 5, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. *Relative Power Elders vs. Young* measures the perceived power gap between older and younger members on a scale from 1 to 5, ranging from young men have a lot more political power to elder men have a lot more political power. *Trust in Elders* measures the level of trust in older individuals on a 1 to 4 scale, ranging from no trust to complete trust. *Chief Support (Elders vs. Young)* is the difference in support the village chief receives from older versus younger men, from -4 (all support from young men, none from elders) to +4 (all support from elders, none from young men). *Chief Support (Elders vs. Young)* is the difference in support the village chief receives from older versus younger men; it is the difference between two five-point measures recording how many older versus younger men support the village chief (from “no one” to “everyone”); it ranges from -4 (all support from young men, none from elders) to +4 (all support from elders, none from young men). *Age Set* equals 1 if a village has age sets. *Individual Controls* include: male, age, and age squared. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

This motivates our experimental design in which, rather than comparing age set and non-age set villages directly, we examine how the effect of forming committees to monitor the chief—and, in particular, of staffing them with young men—differs by whether a village has age sets. This lets us assess whether standard governance interventions can be aligned, ex ante, with local social structure to improve policy outcomes.

The experimental design and implementation unfolded as follows. We partnered with a local NGO, Congo Helping Hands (CHH), a non-profit organization that has worked in the DRC since 2004, for the design and implementation of the project.⁴ The project provides the village chief with a cash grant of USD 100 for the purchase of health products. These health products are over-the-counter products that are generally difficult to access in rural parts of DRC, but that are effective for improving health. The three products are: deworming pills (mebendazole), chlorine tablets (Aquatabs) that can be used to chlorinate drinking water, and oral rehydration salts (ORS) that can be used for rehydration when sick with diarrhea (Miguel and Kremer, 2004, Haushofer, Kremer, Maertens and Tan, 2021, Kremer, Luby, Maertens, Tan and Więcek, 2023). To address access concerns, these products are sold by CHH vendors who visit the villages to sell

⁴The founders of CHH have been working in the DRC since 1998. CHH projects aim to improve the quality of life of Congolese people through human development in health, education, and agriculture. CHH has conducted many projects related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (commonly referred to as WASH) throughout the DRC.

the products at a subsidized rate.

As is standard in such projects, CHH formed a small committee with six villagers, referred to as village development committees (VDCs), to help administer the project. The committee members' responsibilities are: to ensure that the chief uses the funds appropriately, to ensure the products are distributed fairly and equitably, to help to distribute the products themselves, to help villagers to use them, and to answer any questions that may arise. Because the positions are typically volunteer positions, the committee members are not paid.

The primary experimental manipulation in this project is in how committee members are selected. For this project, CHH formed the committees in a manner that is more structured than is typical, so that we can analyze the effects of different types of committees and how this varies depending on whether a village has age sets. For a random selection of half of the villages, CHH created committees that are only men between the ages of 18 and 35 (*Young Male Committee*). In the other half of the villages, committees were "diverse" – i.e., a random sample of those who volunteered to be on the committee (*Diverse Committee*). In both sets of villages, the committee members are chosen randomly (or randomly conditional on the criteria) among those who volunteered to be a part of the committee. This adjustment to the NGO's standard practice provides variation in committee composition that allows us to observe whether the success of the project depends on the age and gender of committee members and whether this differs depending on whether the village traditionally has age sets or not.

3.1. Project Structure and Timeline

The project implementation involved several steps. After the baseline survey, CHH visited the villages to implement the project. This included meeting with the villagers to describe the project, forming the village development committees, and delivering the cash grant. Project vendors would then visit the villages to sell the health products. Finally, an endline survey was conducted with villagers, the committee members, and chiefs. Two rounds of the project were implemented, i.e., two rounds of delivering the cash grant and selling health products. See Figure 3 for the project timeline. Below, we describe each step of implementation in greater detail.

1. Baseline Survey. The baseline data collection was described in detail in Section 2. During this visit, baseline data were collected and a relationship with the chief was established. This occurred from June 2016 to September 2016. We use these data to establish whether a village has age sets.

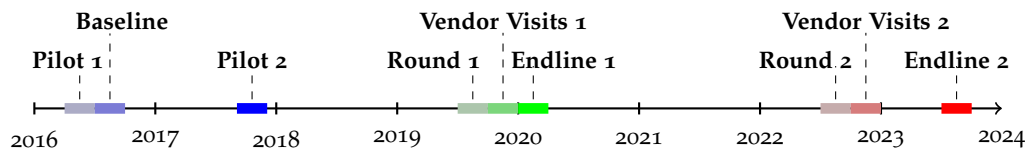


Figure 3: Project Timeline

Notes: The figure presents the project timeline, including the baseline data collection, two piloting rounds, and the two rounds of the project. Each project round includes a set-up visit, three vendor visits, and an endline visit.

2. Implementation Visits. The implementation visit involved several types of meetings. First, CHH held an initial meeting with villagers to explain the project: the distribution of funds to the chief to purchase subsidized health products, the creation of a Village Development Committee (VDC) to oversee the chief, and the proper use of the health products. Appendix Figure A1 provides pictures of initial village meetings across two different villages.

Second, a meeting was held for those interested in becoming volunteers for the VDC to review the role and responsibilities of the committee members. From those who attend this meeting and report being interested in being on the committee, we randomly select individuals. As described above, in half of the villages, the committees are formed by randomly selecting individuals among all of those who are interested in being volunteers. In the other half of randomly selected villages, committee members are selected only from volunteers who are male and between 18 and 35 years old. We survey all individuals who attend the committee information meeting, regardless of the treatment status of the village, to collect basic demographic information (age, gender).

Once the committee has been selected and committee members have been notified, CHH meets with the committee alone, with the chief alone, and then with the committee and chief together. During these meetings, CHH again explains the setup of the program. Specifically, CHH explains that the chief will receive a cash grant, that the cash grant is only for the purchase of health products from the project vendors, and that three project vendors will visit the village in several weeks at different times to sell the health products at a subsidized price. The chief is responsible for using the funds to purchase the product and for distributing the product. The committee is responsible for overseeing the performance of the chief and for assisting with product distribution. Both the chief and the committee are responsible for communicating with each other and with villagers. Finally, at the end of the visit, CHH provides the chief with the \$100 grant (in Congolese Francs) for the purchase of health products.

3. Vendor Visits. CHH hired and trained vendors who would visit the villages to sell the products. After approximately 3 weeks, the first vendor visits the village. Vendor visits are staggered so that only one vendor visits each week. One vendor sells deworming pills, one vendor sells Aquatabs, and another vendor sells ORS. A vendor for each product visits every village once each round. The vendors provide access to the three health products and sell the products at highly discounted prices (50% discount) to the village chief, who can use the grant provided by CHH to purchase these products for the members of the village. At the end of each sale, the vendor is asked to take a picture of the number of products sold and of two receipts: one receipt goes to the chief, and one receipt is kept for CHH's records (see Appendix Figure [A2](#) for an example).

4. Endline Survey. Several months after the last vendor visit, the enumerators visit the village again. The endline for round 1 was conducted in 2019/2020 (before COVID-19); the endline for round 2 was conducted in 2023. Endline survey data were collected from the committee members, the chief, and randomly selected households. The surveys with the committee members and the chief focus on the governance of the program: which project tasks each undertook, how the meetings were organized (if any), and how the committee oversaw the chief's management of the funds. The household surveys focus on whether and how many products each household received and from whom, the household's health experiences since implementation, and villagers' views on the performance of the chief and the committee. Finally, after the completion of the endline surveys, the enumerators ask the chief to return any unused project funds.

5. Network Survey. As part of the 2023 endline, we also collected social network data to understand how age sets may shape the social network structure in villages ([Breza, Chandrasekhar, Lubold, McCormick and Pan, 2023](#)). Because age set initiation rituals are for men, we collect network data from male respondents to characterize how age sets shape men's social networks. Village chiefs, committee members, and villagers complete this portion of the survey. The network survey elicits the list of individuals within the village with whom the respondent socializes, borrows or lends, asks advice, and discusses politics. The survey then collects detailed data on each named network member, such as: their clan, whether they did the age set initiation together, and whether the individual is a committee member, the village chief, or a notable within the community.

Appendix Table [A1](#) reports summary statistics from the network survey. Respondents in age

set and non-age set villages report a similar number of friends. However, consistent with age sets organizing social ties around age cohorts, respondents in age set villages have a higher share of friends in the same age group. Likewise, respondents in age set villages are substantially more likely to name at least one friend who participated in an age set ritual, and a much larger share of their named friends participated in age sets. Together, these patterns provide descriptive evidence that age sets shape the composition of local social networks without changing the overall number of reported ties.

3.2. Validating Implementation

We validate that the project was implemented as designed across all 102 villages. The village meetings were well attended: average total attendance during the implementation meetings was just under 100 individuals (Appendix Table A2). The mean attendance was slightly higher in non-age set villages (110 versus 87). The average attendance for the committee selection meeting was 50 individuals, and this was also slightly higher in non-age set villages (54 versus 48). Overall, we find that the gender and age composition of attendees at the committee selection meeting is similar across village types.

The committee composition data confirm that the experimental manipulation was implemented in accordance with the treatment status – i.e., only including young men or a diverse committee. We find that the experiment’s manipulation of the age composition of committees was successful (Appendix Figure A3). Young male committees are, on average, much younger than the diverse committees.⁵ We also find that in all cases except one, where the number of necessary volunteers was low, the young male committees are comprised of just men (Appendix Figure A4).⁶

We next assess balance across a broad set of characteristics of villagers, committee members, and chiefs by treatment group – whether the village has age sets and whether it was randomly assigned to have a young male committee. These are reported in Appendix Table A3. Panel A shows that villages are broadly comparable across treatment groups on most dimensions, though they differ on a few; for example, as discussed in Section 2, age set villages tend to

⁵In one village assigned to receive a young male committee, a man of 53 years old was selected to be on the committee because there were not enough young men who volunteered.

⁶In this instance, two women were selected as committee members in the young male committee treatment because only four men below the age of 35 volunteered at the committee selection meeting in one village.

be larger.⁷ Panel B presents summary statistics of the committee member characteristics by treatment group. As expected, in the young male committee treatment groups (columns 2 and 4), almost all committee members are male. In the diverse committees, between 64 and 71 percent of the committee members are male. Among the young male committees, the average age is also much lower – between 28.9 years and 30.8 years, relative to 40 years. Another significant difference across the committee types is that the members of the young committees tend to be better educated. Additionally, in age set villages, committee members report feeling closer to the chief. Panels C and D show that chiefs and the broader villager sample are comparable across treatment groups—chiefs are uniformly male and married with similar age, education, and wealth, and villagers differ only marginally (by about a year in average age). Thus, unlike committee composition, which varies by design, chiefs and villagers are broadly comparable across treatment groups.

Finally, when the committee composition was reported to the chief, our enumerators were asked to record how satisfied the chief appeared. When notifying the chief of the list of selected committee members, the enumerator is instructed to “Pay attention to how the chief reacts to the list of selected volunteers”. The enumerator is then asked “Did the chief seem completely satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not satisfied at all with the list of chosen volunteers?” The distribution of responses, which is shown in Appendix Figure A5, show a clear pattern. In general, chiefs report being happy with the committee selection. They are very unlikely to report being not very happy or not happy at all. However, this is most likely when young male committees are selected, and the village has age sets. In fact, this is the only setting in which chiefs report being not happy at all.

4. Empirical Strategy

Our analysis examines outcomes, some at the village level and some at the individual or household level. For the village-level analyses, our baseline estimating equation takes the following form:

$$y_{v,r} = \beta_1 \mathbb{1}_v^{Young Male} + \beta_2 Age Set_v + \beta_3 Age Set_v \times \mathbb{1}_v^{Young Male} + \mathbf{X}'_v \Phi + \delta_r + \varepsilon_{v,r}, \quad (1)$$

⁷As mentioned in Section 2, this is consistent with the fixed costs of organizing age set initiations, which larger populations can more readily sustain.

where v indexes randomly-selected villages in our sample and r rounds of the experiment. The variable $y_{v,r}$ denotes our outcomes of interest. These outcomes include various proxies for the functioning of the project, including: tasks performed by committee members and chiefs; project money that is unaccounted for (i.e., not spent on health products or returned to the project at the end of the round); distribution of health products; and health outcomes.

The equation for individual-level outcomes is analogous:

$$y_{i,v,r} = \beta_1 \mathbb{1}_v^{Young\ Male} + \beta_2 Age\ Set_v + \beta_3 Age\ Set_v \times \mathbb{1}_v^{Young\ Male} + \mathbf{X}'_i \Sigma + \mathbf{X}'_v \Omega + \delta_r + \epsilon_{i,v,r}, \quad (2)$$

where an individual is denoted by i , v is their village, and r is an experiment round. Examples of the outcomes of interest, $y_{i,v,r}$, include actions taken by committee members or the chief, receipt of health products by villagers, etc.

In both equations, $\mathbb{1}_v^{Young\ Male}$ is an indicator that equals one if village v was randomly chosen to have a village committee that comprises only young men, where young is age 18 to 35. The variable *Age Set* is a measure of the extent to which age sets are present in villages. Throughout our analysis, we use two measures of this. Our baseline measure is an indicator variable that equals one if the village, at the time of the baseline survey, had age set initiations. We also check robustness to using an auxiliary measure that captures not only the extensive margin (is it present or not) but also the intensive margin (how common is it) and present these results in [Appendix B](#). Thus, our second measure is the share of young men from the village who had undergone the initiation ritual at the time of the baseline survey.

The vector $\mathbf{X}'_i$, which appears in equation (2), contains individual-level controls, which vary slightly depending on the sample of individuals and outcome being examined. The vector $\mathbf{X}'_v$, which appears in both equations (1) and (2), denotes our village-level covariates, which include distance to Gemena (the major urban area) and the estimated number of households in the village at baseline, and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator ($\mathbb{1}_v^{Young\ Male}$).⁸ We interact the village-level controls with the Young Male Committee indicator to ensure that the effect captured by β_3 reflects the interaction between age sets and committee composition rather than differential effects of these other village characteristics. Furthermore, because the presence of age sets is correlated with a few other village characteristics, one might worry that β_3 reflects a differential effect of young-male committees operating through one of those characteristics

⁸Before constructing the interaction terms, we mean-center both village covariates across the 102 study villages.

rather than through age sets. To address this, we also show results in which we add each such characteristic, and its interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator, one at a time to assess the stability of our estimate of β_3 throughout (Appendix Section A.2). Because two rounds of the project were implemented, we include round fixed effects, δ_r . A village therefore contributes two observations in the village-level analysis, and one per sampled respondent per round in the individual-level analysis. Standard errors are clustered at the village level.

We are interested in all coefficients in equations (1) and (2). The coefficient β_1 tells us how villages with committees that comprise young men differ from diverse committees in villages that do not have age sets. The coefficient β_2 tells us whether villages with age sets have more or less successful projects when the committee is diverse (i.e., does not comprise only young men). Lastly, the coefficient β_3 , which is our primary estimate of interest, tells us whether there is a differential effect of young male committees in villages that have age sets. That is, whether villages with age sets (relative to those without) have more or less successful projects when the committee comprises young men only (relative to those that are diverse).

5. Examining Governance Outcomes

5.1. *Committee Cohesion and Performance*

Our first outcome of interest is committee cohesion. In the endline survey, we ask each committee member how close they feel to the other committee members. We measure their categorical responses using a 1-5 integer scale that is increasing in closeness and use this as a measure of ex-post committee cohesion. Estimates of equation (2) where the unit of observation is a committee member and closeness is the outcome are reported in columns 1 and 2 of Table 4. We find that young male committee members in age set villages report feeling closer to each other. Thus, when the committees are congruent with the traditional social structure, the committee is more cohesive. Interestingly, we do not find greater closeness of each committee member to the chief (columns 3-4), a finding that is expected given the nature of age sets. There is also some evidence that young male committees in age set villages feel closer to villagers (columns 5-6).

We then turn to examining the committee's performance. We measure whether, during the experiment, committee members undertook each of the following tasks: organizing meetings, organizing product distribution, distributing products, meeting with villagers, meeting with the

Table 4: Committee Member Closeness to Other Committee Members, Chief, and Villagers

	Dependent Variable: <i>Committee Member Closeness to [...]:</i>					
	Other Committee Members [0-5]		Chief [0-5]		Villagers [0-5]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.234** (0.099)	0.200** (0.095)	0.037 (0.150)	-0.001 (0.151)	0.178* (0.105)	0.145 (0.101)
Age Set	-0.123 (0.076)	-0.079 (0.071)	0.300*** (0.096)	0.301*** (0.104)	-0.055 (0.081)	-0.032 (0.079)
Young Male Committee	-0.012 (0.077)	-0.008 (0.077)	0.058 (0.127)	0.077 (0.126)	-0.067 (0.081)	-0.067 (0.079)
Observations	1,108	1,108	1,111	1,111	1,111	1,111
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	3.918	3.918	3.680	3.680	3.701	3.701
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a committee member in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Committee Member Closeness* is the Committee Member's reported closeness to others in the village (0–5 scale), based on a visual figure where 0 denotes two persons far apart and 5 denotes extremely close. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if a village has age sets (baseline measure). *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

chief, and keeping records. We construct a measure of the number of activities each committee member undertook. Estimates of equation (2) among committee members are reported in columns 1 and 2 of Table 5. Column 1 does not include village-level covariates, while column 2 does. We find that young male committee members in villages with age sets tend to be more active and engage in more overall tasks for the project. In this sense, they are more effective at providing project oversight.

When we examine the specific tasks, we find that young male committees in age set villages are more likely to organize a meeting, organize product distribution, distribute products, and hold meetings with the villagers, and they are no more likely to keep records or hold meetings with the chief (Appendix Table A4).

5.2. Chief's Behavior

We examine whether committee structure affects the chief's behavior as captured by the number of tasks the chief performs in columns 3 and 4 of Table 5. Ex ante, it is unclear what effects we expect. Committees that are more active might substitute or complement the effort put in by the chief. We find that, by and large, the activities of the chief are unaffected by treatment, and there

Table 5: Oversight Tasks Performed by Committee Members and Chiefs

	Dependent Variable: <i>Project Management Task Index [0-6]</i>			
	Committee Members		Village Chiefs	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.772** (0.295)	0.651** (0.289)	0.281 (0.395)	0.388 (0.394)
Age Set	-0.028 (0.216)	0.025 (0.206)	0.131 (0.310)	0.214 (0.298)
Young Male Committee	-0.257 (0.257)	-0.123 (0.253)	-0.238 (0.305)	-0.383 (0.284)
Observations	1,110	1,110	202	202
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	3.068	3.068	4.411	4.411
Individual Controls	N	N	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a committee member in a round in columns 1 and 2 and a village chief in a round in columns 3 and 4. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. *Project Management Task Index* is the sum of indicators for each task that a committee member can report participating in (organize village meeting, organize distribution, distribute products, meet villagers, meet chief/committee, and keep records), and it takes values [0-6]. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if a village has age sets according to the sages and notables at baseline. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: age and age squared for chiefs in columns 3 and 4. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

is no differential effect in age set villages. If we look at effects on specific tasks (Appendix Table A5), we find evidence that chiefs in age set villages with young male committees report having more meetings but being less likely to organize or actually distribute the products (although these effects are underpowered and they are not consistently significant). This is consistent with the heightened activities of young male committees in age set villages, inducing the chief to have more meetings and also taking away the chief's ability to decide on the allocation of the products. This suggests that the intervention may have affected *who* received products, particularly vis-à-vis their relationship with the chief. We will return to estimates of the distributional effects in Section 6.

We also examine the amount of money unaccounted for from the \$100 in cash that the chiefs received. Money is considered unaccounted for if it was not used to purchase health products from the project vendors or returned at the end of the project. We find that very little money is unaccounted for. A histogram of the share of money missing across rounds is presented in Figure 4. On average, 8.9 percent of funds are missing. This varies slightly by round – with 9.5% missing in 2020 (SD of 0.14; max of 65%) and 8% missing in 2022 (SD of 0.12, max of 58%). This



Figure 4: Money Missing and Expert and Villager Guesses

Notes: The unit of observation in this figure is a village. This figure presents the distribution of average share of money missing across project rounds. The solid red line presents the average share missing. The first dashed red line presents villagers' estimates of the share of project money that they expect to be unaccounted for. The second dashed red line presents the average survey response from expert economists who were asked to forecast what share of the money given to village chiefs they expected to be unaccounted for – i.e., not spent on health products or returned at the end of the project.

figure is in contrast to the expert prediction of 23.2% made by 171 expert economists who are members of the NBER (Development or Political Economy groups) or BREAD.⁹ We also asked villagers about their predictions during the second round. Their average prediction of 7% is nearly identical to the 8% that was actually missing during the round.¹⁰

We estimate equation (1) with measures of the amount of money missing in each village and round as our dependent variable. The estimates, which are reported in Table 6, show no evidence that young male committees in age set villages resulted in less missing money. For our indicator variable measure of age sets, we do not find evidence of effects, neither on the intensive margin nor the extensive margin of money missing (Appendix Table A7). However, when we

⁹To measure expert expectations about the accountability of village chiefs, we surveyed economists. We reached out to members of NBER who are affiliated with the Development and Political Economy groups and to members of BREAD. In total, this represented 275 individuals. We explained a brief version of the experimental design, and asked how much of \$100 they expected would be unaccounted for – e.g., not spent on health products or returned to the implementation team. The experts could provide any amount between \$0 and \$100. We had a 62.2% response rate, with 171 individuals responding. The average response is 23.3 dollars missing. See the appendix for details of the expert survey implementation.

¹⁰We asked 1,631 villagers (16 per village, stratified by gender) about their expectations regarding how much money would be unaccounted for after the end of the second round. Their average response was 7 percent. We examined whether the share of money missing at the village level predicts what villagers guess about the money missing. The estimates, which we report in Appendix Table A6, show a positive and significant relationship between the amount of money that was missing in a village and the villagers' predictions.

Table 6: Amount of Money Missing

	Dependent Variable: Money Missing (CF)					
	Money Missing (CF)		ln(Money Missing+1)		arcsinh(Money Missing)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	3278.47 (7984.88)	3427.31 (8289.04)	1.05 (1.70)	1.34 (1.78)	0.67 (1.96)	1.11 (1.98)
Age Set	-3376.43 (4759.54)	-3689.27 (5145.50)	-0.85 (1.23)	-1.11 (1.27)	-0.42 (1.45)	-0.78 (1.44)
Young Male Committee	2255.84 (6608.77)	2165.56 (6575.48)	0.01 (1.29)	-0.00 (1.37)	0.29 (1.53)	0.16 (1.59)
Observations	204	204	204	204	204	204
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	14578.43	14578.43	5.27	5.27	5.45	5.45
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a village-round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. *Money Missing* is the amount in Congolese Francs that was neither spent on health products nor returned. *Age Set* equals 1 if a village has age sets. *Young Male Committee* equals 1 if the village was randomly assigned a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include estimated households at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

use the continuous measure, which leverages the variation in the share of young men who have participated in the age set ritual, we find some evidence of less missing money in villages with young male committees where more young men are initiated (see Appendix Table B5); this is particularly the case for the extensive margin.

Summary of the governance effects: The results so far highlight that tailoring the intervention to local social structure improves governance performance along several dimensions. In villages with age sets, assigning a young male committee increases committee engagement: committee members take on more project-management tasks and report greater cohesion. We find evidence that the committee effect crowds in some forms of chief effort, namely, organizing meetings, and crowds out others, namely, distributing the products. Finally, chiefs appear broadly accountable across all study arms: very little money is unaccounted for on average. Consistent with this, villagers' expectations about missing funds are close to realized levels, while expert forecasts substantially overstate the problem.

Robustness: A natural concern is that the presence of age sets is correlated with other village characteristics, so that our primary estimate, β_3 , could reflect a differential effect of young male committees operating through one of those characteristics rather than through age sets. To

address this, we re-estimate equations (1) and (2), progressively adding the village characteristics on which age set and non-age set villages differ at baseline (Table 2) — village age, the presence of primary and secondary schools, mobile-phone coverage, access to a well, a principal-component index of public goods, the number of clans, and the village’s latitude and longitude — both one at a time and in combination. Importantly, we interact each added control with the Young Male Committee indicator, so that each specification absorbs any differential effect of committee composition that operates through these characteristics rather than through age sets. Appendix Figure A7 plots the resulting estimates of β_3 for our main governance outcomes; the baseline specification is highlighted, and the grid beneath each plot indicates which controls (and their interactions) enter each specification.

We find that the governance estimates are stable across these specifications. For the committee project-management task index, the interaction coefficient remains close to 0.6 (on the 0–6 index) and statistically significant across all specifications, consistent with young male committees in age set villages undertaking more oversight tasks. Committee members’ closeness to one another is similarly stable, remaining positive at roughly 0.2 (on the 0–5 scale). The estimates that are null in our baseline specifications remain null throughout: the effect on chiefs’ task index stays near zero and insignificant, the effect on committee members’ closeness to the chief is indistinguishable from zero, and the indicator-based estimate of missing money remains small and imprecise. Taken together, the stability of these estimates indicates that the differential effect of young male committees in age set villages is not driven by other observable village characteristics that happen to correlate with the presence of age sets.

6. Product Distribution

The next line of inquiry investigates the distribution of these health products. We estimate equation (2) where the number of products the villager’s household received is the outcome of interest.¹¹ The estimated effects for tablets received per household, estimated separately for villagers, committee members, and chiefs, are reported in Table 7. We find that villagers receive, on average, the fewest number of tablets – around 20, while committee members receive close to 30, and chiefs receive 45. There is some evidence that villagers and committee members receive

¹¹We find that 95% of villagers, 99% of committee members, and all chiefs receive some health products. If we examine effects on the extensive margin only – i.e., looking at an indicator for receipt of a product – we find no differential effect across treatment groups (Appendix Table A8).

Table 7: Number of Products Received by Villagers, Committee Members, and Chiefs

	Dependent Variable: Number of All Products Received by...					
	Villagers		Committee Members		Chiefs	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-6.703*	-3.699	-5.345	-2.500	-21.157**	-14.032*
	(3.737)	(2.997)	(5.073)	(4.471)	(9.722)	(8.376)
Age Set	1.254	0.772	1.597	1.871	9.551**	10.491**
	(2.805)	(2.242)	(3.149)	(2.715)	(4.772)	(4.356)
Young Male Committee	5.504*	1.826	7.837*	3.974	22.208***	14.613**
	(2.855)	(2.417)	(4.258)	(3.791)	(8.248)	(7.236)
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,112	1,112	202	202
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	19.985	19.985	29.411	29.411	45.312	45.312
Individual Controls	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a villager in a round in columns 1 and 2; a committee member in a round in columns 3 and 4; and a village chief in a round in columns 5 and 6. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Number of All Products* is the sum of deworming tablets, water purification (chlorine) tablets and ORS packets received by the respondent and their household, as recorded in survey response. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if a village has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared for villagers in columns 1 and 2; age and age squared for chiefs in columns 5 and 6. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

fewer tablets in villages with age sets and young male committees. However, the estimates are fairly small in magnitude and underpowered (columns 1–4).

When we examine the number of tablets received by the chief, we find that in age set villages with young male committees, chiefs receive fewer products (columns 5 and 6). The estimated effect is sizable, equal to about $1/3$ to $1/2$ of the mean. Thus, a committee design congruent with the underlying social structure appears important. The differential effect is primarily driven by the fact that in villages without age sets, the young male committee is associated with the chief being allocated many more products. The estimated coefficient for the young male committee indicator is between 22 and 35, suggesting that young male committees in non-age set villages are particularly susceptible to influence and capture from the chief.

The estimates suggest that the primary consequence of having young male committees in age set villages—where the committee works more cohesively and actively—is that the chiefs receive fewer products, consistent with chiefs being less able to “capture” the allocation of products in these villages. Another dimension that could have been affected is the allocation of the products—that is, which individuals received them. We therefore examine whether the effects differ by villagers’ connections to local actors and by household wealth.

We first consider villagers' reported closeness to the chief and to committee members. We asked villagers to report how close they feel to the chief and committee members at each of the endline surveys. The integer variable, which ranges from 0 to 5, increases in perceived closeness. Using this measure, we partition the villagers in our sample into those who are above and below the median value of closeness and estimate our regressions separately for both groups. The results, which are reported in Panels A and B of Table 8, show different effects for the two groups.¹²

We find that villagers who are closer to the chief report receiving fewer products. This is in line with our prior finding that chiefs receive fewer products with young male committees in villages with age sets. Thus, chiefs are less able to capture products for themselves and for their friends. We also find that those close to committee members receive fewer products. Thus, we do not find evidence that reducing chiefs' influence simply redirected products toward villagers connected to the committee. If anything, the point estimates suggest that villagers connected to the committee more generally received fewer products under young male committees in age set villages.

We also examine heterogeneity by household wealth in Panel C in Table 8, which provides the sharpest evidence that the allocation of products became less skewed toward relatively advantaged households. Wealth is estimated by the enumerator during the household visit, where they rate all respondents using a 1-5 integer scale based on the respondent's house and appearance. As before, we partition the sample into those above and below the median wealth. To facilitate the cleanest division, however, we do this but require the group of wealthier individuals to be smaller than the group of less-wealthy individuals. This is meant to mimic the actual distribution of wealth in the villages where there are few wealthy people and a large number of people who are poorer and at a similar level of income.¹³ We find that the distribution of products to households in age set villages with young male committees is less skewed towards wealthy households. According to the estimates in column 4 of Panel C in Table 8, they receive

¹²The tables also present p-values testing the equality of the Age Set $\times$ Young Male Committee coefficient across the two samples.

¹³The distribution of wealth scores is roughly as follows: 1: 31%; 2: 52%; 3: 15%; 4 or 5: 2%.

12 fewer tablets, which is approximately 50% of the mean for the group.¹⁴

The final set of outcomes that we examine is related to the observed health of villagers. We construct household-level measures of the share of household members who report being sick in the last four weeks with diarrhea, vomiting, or stomach pains, as well as analogous measures focusing only on children under five. We interpret these results cautiously: the outcomes rely on short-recall self-reports that are inherently noisy, and short-run trials of health product interventions are often underpowered to detect plausible changes in morbidity, even when they meaningfully affect allocation and oversight (Kremer et al., 2023).

Consistent with the fact that these outcomes are measured noisily and over a relatively short horizon, point estimates are generally small and statistically indistinguishable from zero, with no systematic differences by age set status (Appendix Tables A12–A14). These findings are consistent with the near-universal coverage of some health products across households. As noted, 95% of villagers, 99% of committee members, and all chiefs received (some) health products. We find no evidence that our treatment and heterogeneity of interest affect the extensive margin of product receipt (Appendix Table A8).

Thus, although we find consistent evidence that young male committees in age set villages reduced product receipt among otherwise advantaged groups, these intensive margin changes do not appear to have affected shorter-run health outcomes. Larger or smaller stockpiles of health products may have affected longer-run health outcomes, which we do not measure. In other words, our estimates suggest that the intervention primarily changes how benefits are allocated and the extent of elite capture, rather than shifting average health in the short run.

Summary of product allocation and distributional effects: We find that product reception is nearly universal, and find no differential effects on whether households receive at least one product. Consistent with this, we also find little evidence of aggregate health impacts. The main effects instead operate on the intensive margin and are distributional: who receives additional tablets changes with governance structure. In particular, allocations in age set villages with young male committees appear less skewed toward locally powerful or advantaged actors. Chiefs receive

¹⁴Appendix Tables A9–A11 show that these distributional patterns are similar when we disaggregate the outcome by product type. The reductions are most apparent for chlorine tablets and ORS packs, especially among villagers who are close to the chief and among wealthier households, while the estimates for deworming tablets are generally smaller and less precise. Thus, the main heterogeneity results are not driven by focusing on the aggregation of different health products.

Table 8: Heterogeneity in Number of Health Products Received

	Dependent Variable: Number of All Products Received			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Panel A: By Closeness to Chief</i>				
	Not close to Chief		Close to Chief	
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-4.387 (3.268)	-1.187 (2.724)	-9.687** (4.472)	-6.831* (3.598)
Age Set	0.778 (2.512)	-0.266 (2.126)	2.140 (3.406)	2.032 (2.604)
Young Male Committee	3.411 (2.504)	-0.532 (2.102)	7.883** (3.341)	4.743 (2.884)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	0.101	0.028
Observations	1,455	1,455	1,661	1,661
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	17.489	17.489	22.188	22.188
<i>Panel B: By Closeness to Committee</i>				
	Not close to Committee		Close to Committee	
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-4.186 (3.306)	-1.446 (2.801)	-10.358** (5.038)	-6.635* (3.972)
Age Set	-0.073 (2.381)	-0.486 (2.064)	3.773 (4.078)	2.639 (2.955)
Young Male Committee	4.040 (2.581)	0.491 (2.158)	6.831** (3.443)	3.490 (3.034)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	0.170	0.146
Observations	1,705	1,705	1,380	1,380
Villages	102	102	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	17.597	17.597	23.173	23.173
<i>Panel C: By Villager Wealth</i>				
	Wealth≤2		Wealth>2	
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-4.707 (3.423)	-2.014 (2.819)	-18.726*** (6.373)	-12.359** (5.390)
Age Set	-0.084 (2.544)	-0.334 (2.169)	7.905* (4.719)	4.875 (3.409)
Young Male Committee	4.259 (2.751)	0.949 (2.337)	12.722*** (4.536)	6.869 (4.432)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	0.007	0.013
Observations	2,596	2,596	525	525
Villages	102	102	97	97
Mean Dep. Var.	18.780	18.780	25.939	25.939
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a villager in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Number of All Products* is the sum of deworming tablets, water purification (chlorine) tablets, and ORS packets received by the respondent and their household, as recorded in the survey response. *Close to Chief* is an indicator equal to 1 if a respondent reports a level of 3 or higher on a 0 to 5 scale measuring closeness to the village chief. *Close to Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if a respondent reports a level of 3 or higher on a 0 to 5 scale measuring closeness to the committee. *Wealth* is the enumerator's rating of respondent wealth based on appearance on a 1 to 5 scale. A village with no respondents in a given subgroup drops from that subgroup's regression, reducing its village count. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if a village has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. The p-values reported in columns (3) and (4) test equality of the *Age Set × Young Male Committee* coefficients across sub-groups within each panel: column (3) compares columns (1) and (3), while column (4) compares columns (2) and (4). * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

fewer products, and the same pattern holds for households that report being closer to the chief and for wealthier households. Taken together, these results suggest that tailoring committee composition to age set institutions does not increase overall provision, but it does shape the incidence of scarce quantities in ways consistent with reduced capture and a more egalitarian allocation of benefits.

Robustness of the product distribution estimates: We examine the sensitivity of the product-distribution estimates by again progressively adding the village characteristics that differ across age set and non-age set villages, and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator. Appendix Figures A8 and A9 plot the resulting estimates of β_3 for the number of products received (Table 7) and for our distributional (heterogeneity) results (Table 8). We find that the central distributional findings are stable across specifications. The estimated reduction in the number of products received by chiefs in age set villages with young male committees remains sizable and negative throughout (close to 14 tablets, or roughly one-third of the chief mean) while the corresponding estimates for villagers and committee members stay small and imprecise. The heterogeneity by wealth is likewise robust (around 12 tablets, about half of their mean) and statistically significant in nearly all specifications, whereas the estimate for poorer households stays close to zero. The reductions for households that are closer to the chief and to committee members are similarly negative and stable, though more modest and less precisely estimated. Taken together, these patterns indicate that the reduced capture by chiefs and the more egalitarian allocation of products in age set villages with young male committees are robust across various sets of controls, reinforcing our interpretation that these distributional effects reflect age set institutions rather than the village characteristics that co-vary with age set practices.

7. Mechanisms

To this point, we have shown that young male committees have systematically different effects in villages with age set institutions. Committees perform more project tasks and report greater cohesion, chiefs appear more constrained, and product allocations are less tilted toward chiefs and other advantaged households. We now explore mechanisms that could account for these differential impacts.

In this section, we first examine whether young male committees in age set villages are less embedded in the chief’s social and political network. Where age sets are present, young men are bound together and traditionally serve as a counterweight to the chief’s authority. A committee drawn from young men in age set villages may therefore be less tied to the chief. The following subsection provides supportive evidence, showing that chiefs in age set villages are less likely to report young-male committee members as part of their social network.

We also examine two additional channels. One is that young male committees in age set villages may differ in characteristics other than their social connections. The other is that young male committee members in age set villages are more likely to have been initiated together, which generates greater cohesion, and this explains our findings. We examine both of these directly, and find the evidence does not point to these being important mechanisms.

7.1. Potential Mechanism 1: Social and Political Network Structure

We first turn to a direct test of whether young male committees in age set villages are less connected with the village chief. If young male committees in age set villages are less embedded in chief-centered networks, they may be less susceptible to influence and capture and also better able to coordinate independently.

In Table 3, we provided descriptive data that supports this. In age set villages, chiefs tend to have more support from elders relative to the youth in the village (column 4). We now investigate this further using social network data that we collect at the second endline survey in 2023 with male respondents – villagers, committee members, and the chief. The network survey asks the village chief to list all people, of any gender, in their social network. Specifically, the chief is asked to list anyone in the village with whom he socializes/visits, exchanges advice, and lends/borrows. For each committee member, we then construct an indicator equal to one if the chief lists that member as part of his social network. By examining the nature of social networks after the intervention is completed, we can test whether young male committees in age set villages are less likely to be connected with the chief.

To examine this relationship, we estimate a variant of equation (2) where the unit of observation is a chief-committee member pair (including all committee members across both rounds of

implementation).¹⁵ We then estimate the following equation:

$$Y_{i,j,v}^{Connected} = \beta_1 \mathbb{1}_v^{YoungMale} + \beta_2 AgeSet_v + \beta_3 AgeSet_v \times \mathbb{1}_v^{YoungMale} + \mathbf{X}'_i \Omega + \mathbf{X}'_j \Phi + \mathbf{X}'_v \Psi + \varepsilon_{i,j,v} \quad (3)$$

where i indexes chiefs, j committee members, and v villages. $Y_{i,j,v}^{Connected}$ is an indicator that equals one if chief i reports that committee member j is in his social network. This is measured at endline in 2023. We examine multiple definitions of being in a chief's network – i.e., someone with whom they socialize/visit, exchange advice, and/or lend/borrow. As before, $\mathbb{1}_v^{YoungMale}$ is an indicator for village v having a young-male committee. $AgeSet_v$ is an indicator for the presence of age sets in the village. The vector $\mathbf{X}'_i$ includes chief demographic controls (age, age squared), $\mathbf{X}'_j$ includes committee member demographic controls (gender, age, age squared), and $\mathbf{X}'_v$ comprises our same set of village-level covariates and their interaction with the young male committee indicator as in equations (1) and (2). Standard errors are clustered at the village level. Our coefficient of interest is β_3 , which captures the extent to which young male committees implemented in age set villages result in a committee that is less connected to the chief.

Estimates of equation (3) are reported in Table 9. The table reports estimates from six specifications that include different combinations of covariates. We find that chiefs are less likely to report that committee members are a part of their social network when young male committees are implemented in age set villages. From the estimates of β_1 and β_2 , we see that there is no difference in the chief's social connections to the committee in age set versus non-age set villages when there is a diverse committee or in diverse versus young male committees in villages without age sets. It is only the combination of young-male committees in age set villages that generates a committee that is less socially connected to the chief.

We find that this pattern is also robust to adding the broader set of village controls: the estimate remains negative across specifications and becomes more precise in the most demanding specifications (Appendix Figure A10).

To gain a deeper understanding of which networks are relevant for this finding, we estimate variants of equation (3) where we consider different definitions of being connected to the chief; namely whether he reports socializing, borrowing/lending, or exchanging advice with a committee member. The estimates, reported in Appendix Table A15, show that the differential connection

¹⁵The reason a committee member may differ across rounds is if they moved away, chose not to participate, or died. Committee members were replaced based on the original volunteer list from round 1 implementation.

Table 9: Chief Reports Committee Member in Social Network

	Dependent Variable:					
	<i>Chief Reports Committee Member in Social Network (0/1)</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.079	-0.099**	-0.086*	-0.102**	-0.087*	-0.101**
	(0.050)	(0.048)	(0.050)	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.048)
Age Set	0.017	0.046	0.017	0.046	0.023	0.051
	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.036)
Young Male Committee	0.013	0.012	0.058	0.054	0.012	0.007
	(0.040)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.037)	(0.042)	(0.039)
Observations	720	720	720	720	720	720
Villages	101	101	101	101	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126
Village Chief Age Control	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Committee Member Age Control	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Committee Member Gender Control	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a chief-committee member dyad. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. The sample uses active 2023 chiefs matched to committee members from 2020 and 2023. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Chief Age Control* includes the chief's age and age squared. *Committee Member Age Control* includes the committee member's age and age squared. *Committee Member Gender Control* includes the committee member's gender. *Village Controls* include distance to Gemena, the estimated number of households in the village at baseline, and each of these variables interacted with the Young Male Committee indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

between chiefs and committee members is driven by chiefs being less likely to report socializing and exchanging advice with committee members but not borrowing or lending.

7.2. Potential Mechanism 2: Differences in Committee Characteristics

The next potential explanation that we consider is that the young male committees, when they are located in villages with age sets, tend to comprise members with different characteristics. We check for this possibility by estimating a variant of equation (2) where an observation is a committee member and the outcomes are characteristics of the committee members.

The estimates are reported in Table 10. Across outcomes spanning demographics, wealth and human capital, and identity, we find little evidence of meaningful differences that mimic the previously estimated differential effects of young-male committees in age set villages. These null results are stable to the fuller set of village controls: the interaction estimates generally remain small and insignificant for the various outcomes (Appendix Figure A11). This suggests that the differential treatment effects are unlikely to be driven by basic observable characteristics of the committees.

Table 10: Committee Member Characteristics

Panel A: Demographic Characteristics								
	Dependent Variable:							
	Male (0/1)		Age		Household Size		Children Under 5	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.044 (0.062)	-0.058 (0.060)	0.707 (1.751)	0.117 (1.772)	1.055 (0.646)	0.801 (0.669)	0.433 (0.264)	0.439 (0.266)
Age Set	0.042 (0.059)	0.044 (0.057)	1.142 (1.521)	1.284 (1.604)	0.335 (0.488)	0.198 (0.514)	-0.148 (0.189)	-0.241 (0.189)
Young Male Committee	0.308*** (0.051)	0.322*** (0.048)	-11.744*** (1.356)	-11.250*** (1.423)	-0.833* (0.428)	-0.601 (0.471)	0.058 (0.208)	0.065 (0.215)
Observations	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.837	0.837	37.444	37.444	9.290	9.290	2.440	2.440
Panel B: Wealth and Human Capital								
	Dependent Variable:							
	Wealth		Years of Education		Farmer		Speaks French	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.121 (0.098)	0.118 (0.102)	0.740 (0.672)	0.390 (0.735)	-0.054 (0.057)	-0.030 (0.056)	0.064 (0.045)	0.036 (0.048)
Age Set	-0.024 (0.073)	-0.033 (0.074)	0.143 (0.508)	0.094 (0.564)	0.041 (0.034)	0.026 (0.033)	-0.011 (0.028)	-0.010 (0.029)
Young Male Committee	-0.020 (0.066)	-0.019 (0.071)	1.596*** (0.526)	1.955*** (0.594)	-0.017 (0.042)	-0.043 (0.043)	0.043 (0.035)	0.070* (0.039)
Observations	1,112	1,112	1,104	1,104	549	549	1,110	1,110
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	1.862	1.862	7.703	7.703	0.891	0.891	0.191	0.191
Panel C: Identity								
	Dependent Variable:							
	Ngbaka Ethnicity		Born in Village		Married		Catholic	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.022 (0.055)	-0.024 (0.060)	-0.098 (0.089)	-0.077 (0.087)	-0.007 (0.045)	-0.018 (0.048)	-0.004 (0.127)	0.033 (0.132)
Age Set	-0.016 (0.038)	-0.014 (0.038)	0.208*** (0.065)	0.182*** (0.061)	0.023 (0.031)	0.019 (0.032)	0.118 (0.088)	0.080 (0.086)
Young Male Committee	0.028 (0.020)	0.038 (0.025)	0.228*** (0.072)	0.228*** (0.068)	0.042 (0.035)	0.049 (0.033)	0.023 (0.096)	0.002 (0.096)
Observations	1,109	1,109	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,109	1,109
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.954	0.954	0.661	0.661	0.904	0.904	0.396	0.396
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a committee member in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. The dependent variables are defined as follows. *Male* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent is male. *Age* is the respondent's age in years. *Household Size* is the total number of household members. *Children Under 5* is the number of children age five and under in the household. *Wealth* is the enumerator's rating of respondent wealth based on appearance on a 1 to 5 scale. *Years of Education* is the number of completed years of education. *Farmer* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent's primary occupation is farming, if the respondent lists a primary occupation. *Speaks French* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent reports French as a first or other language. *Ngbaka Ethnicity* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent reports Ngbaka ethnicity. *Born in Village* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent was born in the current village. *Married* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent is currently married. *Catholic* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent reports being Catholic. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if a village has age sets according to the sages and notables at baseline. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in the village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator.

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

7.3. *Potential Mechanism 3: Young Male Committees Did Initiation Together*

Another potential explanation is that our findings are driven by the fact that those in young male committees in age set villages are more likely to have undertaken initiation with other members of the committee. The common experience generates a stronger committee that performs better.

We check for this possibility by estimating a version of equation (2) at the committee member level, where the outcomes are measures of whether the members have participated in age set initiations – either at all, with other committee members, or with the chief. The estimates are reported in Table 11. We find that committees from age set villages tend to have more members who have undertaken the rituals, but that there is no differential effect depending on whether the committee is young-male or not.¹⁶ The same conclusion holds when we add the broader set of village controls (Appendix Figure A12). This makes it unlikely that our young males in age set villages effects are driven by this.

The lack of an effect on this outcome may seem surprising at first. Since young male committees have more men than diverse committees, we might expect a positive coefficient on the interaction term. However, as shown in Appendix Figure A6, age set initiations are more common among the older cohort. Thus, although young male committees have more men, they also have no older men. These two compositional effects move in opposite directions. The first increases the likelihood of committee members having undertaken the initiation, while the second decreases it. Estimates are consistent with young-male committees not having disproportionately more initiated members (in age set villages).¹⁷

8. Conclusion

This study aimed to better understand the importance of social and political structures for economic development. We considered a potentially important, yet unstudied, characteristic of

¹⁶This is expected on mechanical grounds. Initiations tend to recur once every one to three years (Table 1), so a person's initiation class is essentially determined by their birth year. A young-male committee draws six members from an eighteen-year age band (ages 18–35) and therefore spans many distinct initiation classes; even absent any selection, few committees would include two members initiated in the same one. Thus, we do not expect a large positive effect on being initiated *together*, even in age set villages.

¹⁷Note, when we turn to the share initiated specification (Appendix Table B17), we find that age set young male committees do have more committee members who have undergone initiation together. This suggests that the baseline intensity of age set initiations among the youth affects the likelihood of having undergone initiation together in young male committees. Note, it is also with this specification that we find a significant reduction in the amount of money missing.

Table 11: Committee Member Initiation by Treatment Status

	Dependent Variable:					
	Age Set Initiation (0/1)		Initiation with Committee Member (0/1)		Initiation with Chief (0/1)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.020 (0.092)	0.023 (0.092)	0.035 (0.040)	0.053 (0.044)	0.003 (0.013)	0.003 (0.014)
Age Set	0.175*** (0.058)	0.139** (0.057)	0.037** (0.015)	0.034** (0.015)	0.013 (0.010)	0.013 (0.011)
Young Male Committee	0.119* (0.065)	0.089 (0.121)	0.035 (0.022)	0.039 (0.049)	0.009 (0.006)	-0.010 (0.017)
Observations	1,113	1,113	1,113	1,113	1,113	1,113
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.304	0.304	0.053	0.053	0.013	0.013
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a committee member in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. *Age Set Initiation* equals 1 if the Committee Member reports having participated in an initiation ritual. *Initiation with Committee Member* equals 1 if the Committee Member reports having participated in the initiation ritual with other current committee members. *Initiation with Village Chief* equals 1 if the Committee Member reports having participated in the initiation ritual with the current village chief. *Age Set* equals 1 if a village has age sets. *Young Male Committee* equals 1 if the village was randomly assigned a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

many African societies: the presence of age sets, which are groups of men who move through life together collectively. Men who belong to the same age set over time pass through different age grades, or phases of life. Groups of young men at approximately the same age are initiated into the age grade together and, from then on, form an age set. The initiation rituals are typically elaborate, lasting 6 months or longer, and occur outside of the village in remote secret locations.

A potential consequence of age sets, which has been documented in ethnographies, is that the presence of age sets creates a group of young men who are cohesive and strongly allied with one another. In the cases studied, these young men serve as a check on the power of the elders in the community, who are generally the political elite. Thus, age sets may serve as a check on the political authority of the elite of a society, increasing de facto political accountability.

Overall, our findings show that the effects of the particular program we examined – which, like other recent initiatives, aims to give some formal power to younger individuals in the village – depend on the presence of an important local custom, age sets. When age sets are present, then young male committees do generate groups that are more cohesive and engage more in oversight activities.

In terms of product distribution, in villages without age set institutions, assigning young male committees does not constrain chiefs and can even increase the tilt of allocations toward chiefs

and other advantaged households. By contrast, in villages with age sets, the same committee assignment is associated with a less elite-skewed distribution, consistent with age set institutions strengthening constraints on capture. These findings highlight the care that must be taken when attempting to alter the distribution of power in local villages. Our findings show that whether a particular intervention is beneficial or not can depend critically on the baseline social and political structure.

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Online Appendix for
AGE SETS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND THE BALANCE OF POWER:
EVIDENCE FROM VILLAGES IN RURAL CONGO

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Appendix A. Additional Tables and Figures

A.1. Additional Results



Figure A1: Implementation of Village Meetings

Notes: The photos are from two village meetings. Both photos are from the initial visit and were taken by CHH staff. The photo on the left is from the initial information meeting. The photo on the right is from the meeting for individuals interested in volunteering to be on a village oversight committee.

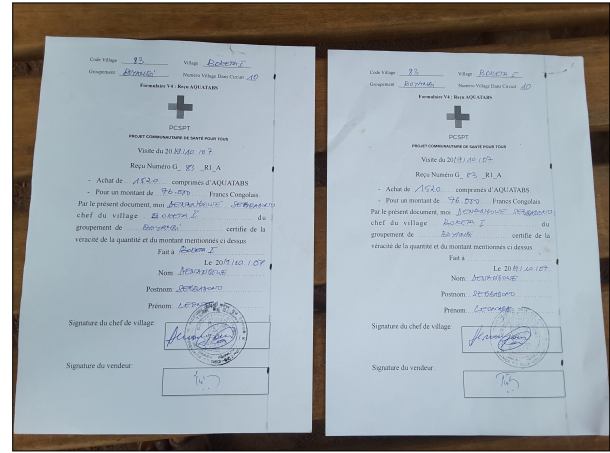


Figure A2: Vendor Visit Implementation

Notes: Both photos were taken by the CHH Aquatabs vendor during a visit to a village: one for the number of products sold (left photo) and of two receipts (right photo), one for the chief and one receipt is kept for CHH's records.

Table A1: Network Survey Summary Statistics

	Age Set Villages		No Age Set Villages		P-value
	Obs.	Mean	Obs.	Mean	
Mean number of friends by respondent					
All Network Respondents	2,269	8.26	1,672	8.02	0.16
Villagers	1,940	8.05	1,435	7.76	0.09
Committee Members	270	9.02	195	9.21	0.59
Village Chiefs	59	11.7	42	11.7	0.99
Proportion of friends in same age group					
All Network Respondents	2,269	0.705	1,672	0.675	0.01
Villagers	1,940	0.705	1,435	0.676	0.02
Committee Members	270	0.673	195	0.643	0.25
Village Chiefs	59	0.849	42	0.781	0.10
Has friend that participated in Age Set (0/1)					
All Network Respondents	2,269	0.748	1,672	0.388	0.00
Villagers	1,940	0.738	1,435	0.381	0.00
Committee Members	270	0.8	195	0.426	0.00
Village Chiefs	59	0.847	42	0.429	0.00
Proportion of friends participated in Age Set					
All Network Respondents	2,269	0.458	1,672	0.146	0.00
Villagers	1,940	0.455	1,435	0.147	0.00
Committee Members	270	0.466	195	0.142	0.00
Village Chiefs	59	0.531	42	0.121	0.00

Notes: Age set is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets according to village notables and the village sage. The unit of observation is the network survey respondent. Number of friends is the number of named friends in the network survey. Proportion of friends in same age group is the share of named friends whose age falls on the same side of the 35-year old/young cutoff as the respondent: both respondent and friend are younger than 35, or both are 35 or older. Has friend that participated in Age Set equals 1 if at least one named friend participated in an age set ritual. Proportion of friends participated in Age Set is the share of named friends who participated in an age set ritual. P-values are from regressions of each outcome on the Age Set village indicator, with standard errors clustered at the village level.

Table A2: Villager Participation in CHH Meetings

	All Villages					Age Set Villages					No Age Set Villages				
	Obs.	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Obs.	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Obs.	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Village meeting:															
Total Audience	102	96.7	45.2	36	343	59	86.8	31.9	36	160	43	110	56.4	36	343
Committee selection:															
Total Audience	98	50.1	17.6	17	110	56	47.1	15.4	26	110	42	54.1	19.7	17	99
Young Men (≤ 35)	98	13.4	5.64	3	30	56	12.4	4.93	3	29	42	14.6	6.31	4	30
Young Women (≤ 35)	98	8.5	4.57	1	27	56	8.36	4.77	1	27	42	8.69	4.34	1	19
Old Men (≥ 35)	98	18.6	7.91	4	49	56	17.8	6.49	6	36	42	19.8	9.43	4	49
Old Women (≥ 35)	99	9.52	5.99	0	31	56	8.59	5.66	1	31	43	10.7	6.25	0	28

Notes: The unit of observation is the village in round 1. The table displays the number of participants in the first main meeting held by CHH in each village in Gemena territory. Statistics are provided for the full sample (*All Villages*), villages where age set rituals are not practiced (*No Age Set Villages*), and villages where age set rituals are practiced (*Age Set Villages*). *Village meeting: Total Audience* is the total audience for the village's meetings held on the second day of implementation in 2019. In this meeting, villagers are given general information about the project, the formation of the committee is explained, and the health products and their correct usage are presented. *Committee selection: Total Audience* is the total audience at the *Committee selection meeting*. In this meeting, the roles and responsibilities of the chief and the committee are explained, and the selection of the committee is made. Attendance based on characteristics variables *Men and Women older or younger than 35 years old* takes information on the people who came to the Committee Meeting and completed the survey at the end of the meeting.

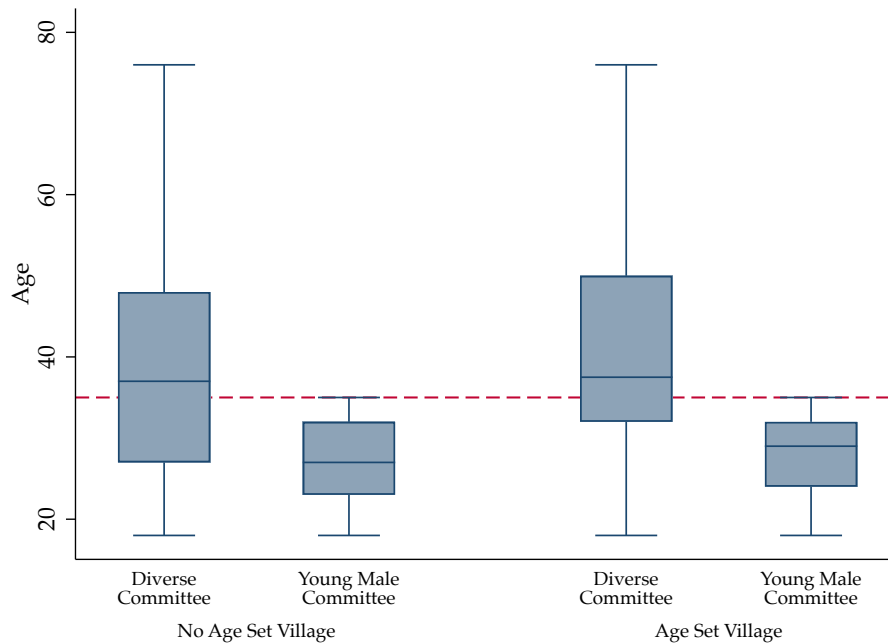


Figure A3: Age of the Selected Committee Members by Treatment Status and Age Set Practices

Notes: The figure displays the age composition of the committees by treatment status and age set practices. The left part of the plot presents the age composition for villages where age sets are not practiced (*No Age Set Village*). The right hand side of the plot presents the result for villages where age sets are practiced (*Age Set Village*). Within each category of villages *Diverse Committee* stands for committees selected randomly among all volunteers. *Young Male Committee* are committees selected randomly only from young male volunteers.

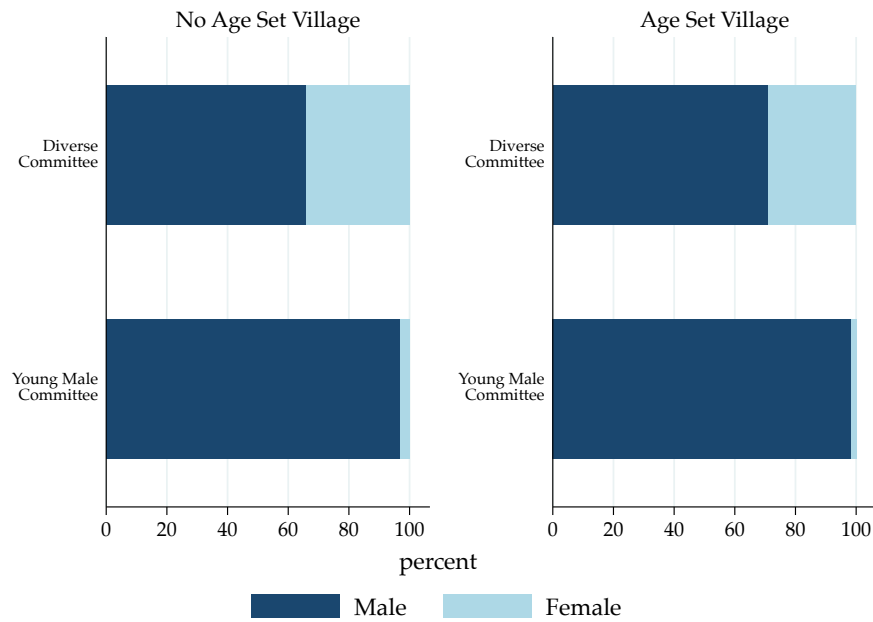


Figure A4: Gender Composition of the Committees by Treatment Status and Age Set Practices

Notes: The left panel of the figure presents the gender composition of committees for villages without age sets (*No Age Set Village*). The right panel of the figure presents the result for villages with age sets (*Age Set Village*). The top panel presents the gender composition for villages assigned to the diverse selection of committee members (*Diverse Committee*), and the bottom panel presents the gender composition for villages assigned to young male committees (*Young Male Committee*).

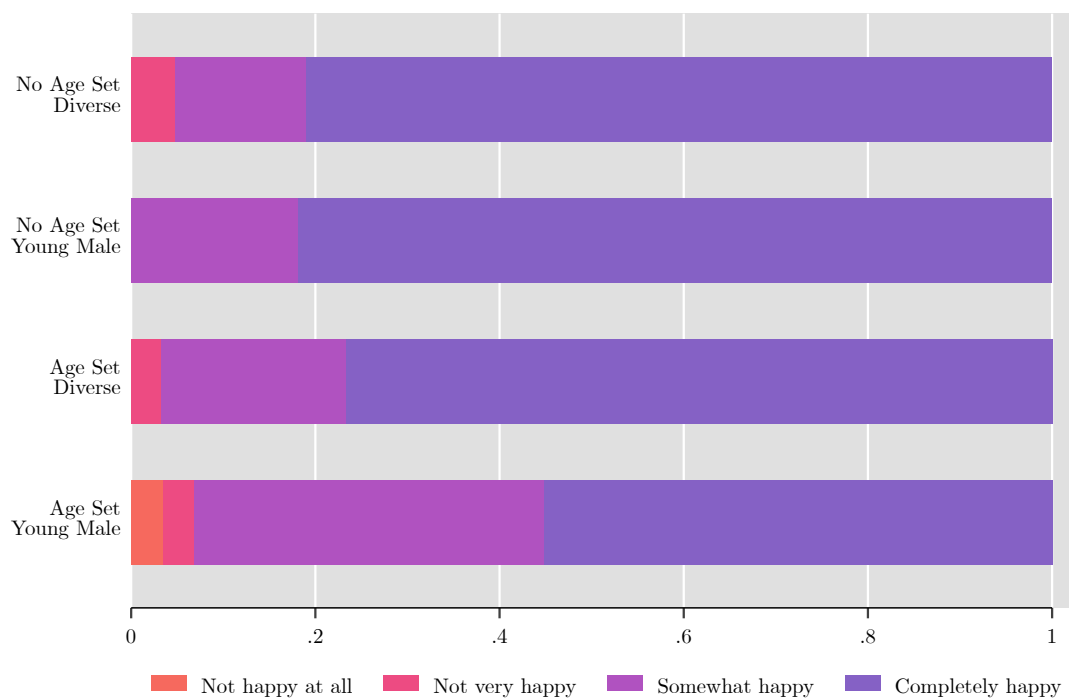


Figure A5: The Chief's Reaction to the Selected Committee Members

Notes: The unit of observation is a village chief. This figure presents the chief's satisfaction with the committee when formed in 2019. Chiefs were presented with the selected committee members; enumerators were asked to observe how satisfied they thought each chief was with the selected committee members, where (1) is not at all happy and (4) is completely happy.

Table A3: Baseline Village, Committee Member, Chief and Villager Characteristics by Treatment Group

	No Age Set Village Diverse Committee			No Age Set Village Young Male Committee			Age Set Village Diverse Committee			Age Set Village Young Male Committee		
	Obs.	Mean		Obs.	Mean	P-value	Obs.	Mean	P-value	Obs.	Mean	P-value
Panel A: Village Characteristics												
Village size												
Number of households	21	337		22	267	0.30	30	694	0.07	29	427	0.44
Number of households (2019)	21	351		22	140	0.03	30	389	0.74	29	350	0.99
Number of households (enum estimate) (2019)	21	278		22	135	0.02	30	307	0.71	29	255	0.76
Village history												
Approx. years since village was created (2019)	21	83.9		22	80.1	0.64	30	96	0.07	27	90.5	0.33
Number of clans when founded (2019)	21	2.05		22	1.91	0.77	30	3	0.08	29	2.66	0.18
Number of clans now (2019)	21	3.24		22	3.09	0.80	30	4.47	0.04	29	3.41	0.72
Village public goods												
Truck access by road (0/1) (2019)	21	.952		22	.818	0.17	30	.9	0.47	29	.931	0.75
Road material sand (0/1) (2019)	20	.75		22	.909	0.18	30	.733	0.90	29	.724	0.84
Well (0/1)	21	.143		22	.0909	0.60	30	.333	0.10	29	.483	0.01
Land titles (0/1)	21	.714		22	.682	0.82	30	.667	0.72	29	.69	0.85
Health center (0/1)	21	.524		22	.636	0.46	30	.6	0.60	29	.517	0.96
Primary school (0/1)	21	.762		22	.545	0.13	30	.833	0.54	29	.897	0.23
Secondary school (0/1)	21	.381		22	.273	0.46	30	.633	0.07	29	.483	0.48
Market (0/1)	21	.0476		22	.136	0.32	30	.2	0.08	29	.138	0.26
Village assets												
Generator (0/1)	21	.19		22	.0909	0.36	30	.133	0.60	29	.207	0.89
Solar panels (0/1)	21	.952		22	.864	0.32	30	.933	0.77	29	.897	0.45
Mobile coverage (0/1)	21	.429		22	.182	0.08	30	.567	0.34	29	.483	0.71
Distance travelled for good mobile coverage (km)	21	20.2		22	28.6	0.21	30	17.8	0.70	29	19.5	0.91
Panel B: Committee Members Characteristics												
Age	115	40.4		123	28.9	0.00	170	41.8	0.39	156	30.8	0.00
Male (0/1)	115	0.643		123	0.967	0.00	170	0.706	0.36	156	0.981	0.00
Married (0/1)	115	0.843		123	0.878	0.47	169	0.876	0.40	156	0.923	0.05
Years of education	115	6.43		123	8	0.01	170	6.54	0.84	156	8.98	0.00
Catholic (0/1)	115	0.322		123	0.374	0.62	169	0.456	0.14	156	0.468	0.13
Protestant (0/1)	115	0.557		123	0.553	0.97	169	0.533	0.79	156	0.494	0.52
Pentecostal/Evangelical (0/1)	115	0.104		123	0.065	0.43	169	0.00592	0.03	156	0.0128	0.04
Wealth based on appearance (1–5)	115	1.5		123	1.59	0.50	169	1.6	0.40	156	1.67	0.13
Panel C: Chief Characteristics												
Age	21	51.0		22	47.1	0.24	28	53.1	0.36	29	50.7	0.91
Male (0/1)	21	1.00		22	1.00	.	28	1.00	.	29	1.00	.
Married (0/1)	21	1.00		22	1.00	.	28	1.00	.	29	1.00	.
Years of education	21	7.14		22	7.14	1.00	28	7.14	1.00	29	7.31	0.86
Catholic (0/1)	21	0.476		22	0.318	0.29	28	0.286	0.17	29	0.379	0.50
Protestant (0/1)	21	0.429		22	0.636	0.17	28	0.714	0.04	29	0.552	0.40
Pentecostal/Evangelical (0/1)	21	0.0476		22	0.0455	0.97	28	0.00	0.25	29	0.069	0.76
Wealth based on appearance (1–5)	21	1.76		22	1.77	0.96	28	1.68	0.67	29	2.00	0.17
Panel D: Villager Characteristics												
Age	253	38.6		264	40.0	0.03	360	39.1	0.44	348	39.8	0.06
Male (0/1)	253	0.664		264	0.667	0.31	360	0.672	0.08	348	0.667	0.31
Married (0/1)	253	0.885		264	0.852	0.12	360	0.825	0.00	348	0.874	0.46
Years of education	253	6.73		264	6.46	0.33	360	6.64	0.87	348	6.94	0.68
Catholic (0/1)	253	0.368		264	0.341	0.90	360	0.431	0.35	348	0.477	0.14
Protestant (0/1)	253	0.573		264	0.606	0.81	360	0.536	0.50	348	0.486	0.21
Pentecostal/Evangelical (0/1)	253	0.0474		264	0.0303	0.35	360	0.0222	0.15	348	0.0287	0.28
Wealth based on appearance (1–5)	252	1.54		264	1.72	0.15	360	1.58	0.51	347	1.67	0.29

Notes: The table presents the average characteristics of the villages (Panel A), committee members (Panel B), chiefs (Panel C), or villagers (Panel D) by treatment group using variables from baseline data (2016) and round 1 pre-implementation data (2019). All p-values are clustered at the village level and reflect the difference in means between the control group (No Age Sets and Diverse Committee) and the other groups.

	Dependent Variable:					
	Organize Meetings [0/1]		Organize Distribution [0/1]		Distribute Products [0/1]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Project Management Tasks Done by Committee Members I:						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.155** (0.061)	0.158** (0.061)	0.194* (0.103)	0.168 (0.105)	0.241** (0.110)	0.200* (0.109)
Age Set	0.013 (0.040)	0.023 (0.039)	0.019 (0.073)	0.042 (0.076)	0.028 (0.081)	0.052 (0.081)
Young Male Committee	-0.045 (0.041)	-0.051 (0.041)	-0.090 (0.086)	-0.056 (0.086)	-0.159 (0.097)	-0.114 (0.097)
Observations	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.150	0.150	0.595	0.595	0.748	0.748
	Dependent Variable:					
	Meet Villagers [0/1]		Meet Chief [0/1]		Keep Records [0/1]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel B: Project Management Tasks Done by Committee Members II:						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.114* (0.062)	0.077 (0.062)	0.036 (0.070)	0.010 (0.075)	0.032 (0.093)	0.037 (0.096)
Age Set	-0.001 (0.047)	0.006 (0.048)	0.001 (0.053)	-0.004 (0.056)	-0.087 (0.067)	-0.095 (0.070)
Young Male Committee	-0.011 (0.049)	0.020 (0.048)	0.040 (0.055)	0.069 (0.058)	0.007 (0.071)	0.010 (0.073)
Observations	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.529	0.529	0.595	0.595	0.452	0.452
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

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Table A5: Oversight Tasks Performed by Chiefs

	Dependent Variable:					
	Organize Meetings [0/1]		Organize Distribution [0/1]		Distribute Products [0/1]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A: Project Management Tasks Done by Chief I:</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.320** (0.137)	0.326** (0.141)	-0.060* (0.035)	-0.040 (0.029)	-0.113 (0.133)	-0.050 (0.140)
Age Set	-0.049 (0.101)	-0.010 (0.095)	0.021 (0.023)	0.015 (0.018)	0.032 (0.104)	0.037 (0.111)
Young Male Committee	-0.157 (0.100)	-0.180* (0.101)	0.025 (0.025)	0.008 (0.025)	0.089 (0.099)	0.012 (0.107)
Observations	202	202	202	202	202	202
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.322	0.322	0.985	0.985	0.787	0.787
	Dependent Variable:					
	Meet Villagers [0/1]		Meet Committee [0/1]		Keep Records [0/1]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel B: Project Management Tasks Done by Chief II:</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.102 (0.139)	0.032 (0.137)	0.075 (0.136)	0.152 (0.134)	-0.043 (0.056)	-0.032 (0.062)
Age Set	0.045 (0.101)	0.094 (0.096)	0.060 (0.097)	0.056 (0.097)	0.022 (0.035)	0.021 (0.037)
Young Male Committee	-0.143 (0.110)	-0.078 (0.109)	-0.062 (0.108)	-0.137 (0.106)	0.009 (0.045)	-0.008 (0.045)
Observations	202	202	202	202	202	202
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.594	0.594	0.762	0.762	0.960	0.960
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of an analysis is a chief in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. The dependent variables are defined as follows: *Organize Meeting* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports organizing a village meeting for the project. *Organize Distribution* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports organizing health product distribution for the project. *Distribute products* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports distributing health products for the project. *Meet Villagers* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports meeting with villagers about complaints or questions for the project. *Meet Committee* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports meeting with the committee about complaints or questions for the project. *Keep Records* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports keeping records to track health products for the project. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if a village has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: age variable and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table A6: Villager Guess of Money Missing and Actual Money Missing

	Dependent Variable: <i>Share Money Missing Guessed by Villagers</i>				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Share Money Missing	0.264*** (0.071)	0.260*** (0.071)	0.249*** (0.071)	0.246*** (0.071)	0.274*** (0.073)
Age Set × Young Male Committee					-0.026 (0.028)
Age Set					0.042* (0.023)
Young Male Committee					0.000 (0.016)
Observations	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625
Villages	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069
Village Controls	N	N	Y	Y	N
Individual Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in round 2. Standard errors clustered at the village level. *Share of Money Missing Guessed* is villager's guess for the share of project money that will be unaccounted for at the end of the final round. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, an age variable, and age squared. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table A7: Any Money Missing

	Dependent Variable: <i>Any Money Missing (0/1)</i>					
	OLS		Logit		Probit	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.07 (0.17)	0.10 (0.17)	0.26 (0.68)	0.45 (0.72)	0.16 (0.42)	0.25 (0.44)
Age Set	-0.06 (0.12)	-0.10 (0.13)	-0.26 (0.49)	-0.43 (0.54)	-0.16 (0.31)	-0.24 (0.32)
Young Male Committee	0.02 (0.13)	0.02 (0.13)	0.08 (0.51)	0.03 (0.55)	0.05 (0.32)	0.04 (0.33)
Observations	204	204	204	204	204	204
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a village-round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. *Money Missing* is the amount in Congolese Francs that was neither spent on health products nor returned. *Any Money Missing* equals 1 if *Money Missing* is greater than 0. *Age Set* equals 1 if a village has age sets. *Young Male Committee* equals 1 if the village was randomly assigned a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include estimated households at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table A8: Received Any Product by Villagers and Committee Members

	Dependent Variable: <i>Received Any Product [0/1]</i>			
	Villagers		Committee Members	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.053 (0.037)	-0.027 (0.032)	0.019 (0.017)	0.014 (0.017)
Age Set	0.005 (0.032)	-0.001 (0.026)	-0.009 (0.012)	-0.006 (0.012)
Young Male Committee	0.043 (0.030)	0.016 (0.027)	-0.003 (0.015)	-0.001 (0.015)
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,112	1,112
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.946	0.946	0.989	0.989
Individual Controls	Y	Y	N	N
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in a round in columns 1 and 2 and a committee member in a round in columns 3 and 4. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Received Any Product* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports receiving one or more of any of the following: deworming tablets, water purification (chlorine) tablets or ORS packets. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, an age variable, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A9: Heterogeneity in Number of Health Products Received
by Product and Closeness to Chief

	Dependent Variable: Number of [...] tablets					
	All Respondents		Respondents Not close to Chief		Respondents Close to Chief	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A: Deworming tablets</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.003 (0.747)	0.482 (0.647)	0.403 (0.834)	0.927 (0.763)	-0.483 (0.875)	-0.081 (0.772)
Age Set	0.426 (0.632)	0.244 (0.539)	0.118 (0.643)	-0.177 (0.559)	0.743 (0.777)	0.634 (0.654)
Young Male Committee	0.001 (0.493)	-0.644 (0.486)	-0.486 (0.569)	-1.269** (0.565)	0.504 (0.558)	0.057 (0.553)
P-value: Equality of Age Set × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.307	0.214
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,455	1,455	1,661	1,661
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	6.140	6.140	5.515	5.515	6.688	6.688
<i>Panel B: Chlorine tablets</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-4.261* (2.338)	-2.646 (1.933)	-3.390 (2.106)	-1.660 (1.826)	-5.592** (2.723)	-4.032* (2.267)
Age Set	0.560 (1.429)	0.488 (1.237)	0.600 (1.336)	0.174 (1.217)	0.809 (1.643)	0.974 (1.386)
Young Male Committee	3.797* (1.968)	1.831 (1.682)	2.863 (1.744)	0.787 (1.543)	4.929** (2.325)	3.180 (1.999)
P-value: Equality of Age Set × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.236	0.114
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,455	1,455	1,661	1,661
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	8.820	8.820	7.743	7.743	9.770	9.770
<i>Panel C: ORS packs</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-2.438** (1.175)	-1.535 (0.986)	-1.401 (1.001)	-0.455 (0.865)	-3.612** (1.497)	-2.718** (1.245)
Age Set	0.268 (0.913)	0.040 (0.698)	0.060 (0.759)	-0.263 (0.612)	0.588 (1.194)	0.424 (0.878)
Young Male Committee	1.706* (0.900)	0.640 (0.801)	1.035 (0.828)	-0.051 (0.699)	2.450** (1.042)	1.506 (0.961)
P-value: Equality of Age Set × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.063	0.021
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,455	1,455	1,661	1,661
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	5.025	5.025	4.231	4.231	5.730	5.730
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a villager in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Close to Chief* is an indicator equal to 1 if a respondent reports a level of 3 or higher on a 0 to 5 scale measuring closeness to the village chief. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. The p-values reported in columns (5) and (6) test equality of the *Age Set* × *Young Male Committee* coefficients across sub-groups within each panel: column (5) compares columns (3) and (5), while column (6) compares columns (4) and (6). * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A10: Heterogeneity in Number of Health Products Received
by Product by Close to Committee

	Dependent Variable: Number of [...] tablets					
	All Respondents		Respondents Not Close to Committee		Respondents Close to Committee	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A: Deworming tablets</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.003 (0.747)	0.482 (0.647)	-0.025 (0.786)	0.363 (0.764)	-0.003 (1.012)	0.567 (0.872)
Age Set	0.426 (0.632)	0.244 (0.539)	0.323 (0.622)	0.204 (0.600)	0.693 (0.911)	0.322 (0.734)
Young Male Committee	0.001 (0.493)	-0.644 (0.486)	-0.066 (0.546)	-0.701 (0.597)	-0.101 (0.622)	-0.561 (0.591)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.980	0.873
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,705	1,705	1,380	1,380
Villages	102	102	102	102	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	6.140	6.140	5.521	5.521	6.978	6.978
<i>Panel B: Chlorine tablets</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-4.261* (2.338)	-2.646 (1.933)	-2.814 (2.058)	-1.415 (1.787)	-6.568** (3.021)	-4.455* (2.457)
Age Set	0.560 (1.429)	0.488 (1.237)	-0.295 (1.230)	-0.402 (1.110)	2.175 (2.018)	1.842 (1.596)
Young Male Committee	3.797* (1.968)	1.831 (1.682)	3.041* (1.742)	1.237 (1.503)	4.641* (2.411)	2.661 (2.083)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.132	0.115
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,705	1,705	1,380	1,380
Villages	102	102	102	102	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	8.820	8.820	7.694	7.694	10.321	10.321
<i>Panel C: ORS packs</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-2.438** (1.175)	-1.535 (0.986)	-1.347 (1.093)	-0.394 (0.942)	-3.786** (1.605)	-2.747** (1.252)
Age Set	0.268 (0.913)	0.040 (0.698)	-0.101 (0.766)	-0.288 (0.636)	0.905 (1.349)	0.474 (0.916)
Young Male Committee	1.706* (0.900)	0.640 (0.801)	1.066 (0.906)	-0.046 (0.763)	2.292** (1.009)	1.391 (0.923)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.094	0.065
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,705	1,705	1,380	1,380
Villages	102	102	102	102	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	5.025	5.025	4.382	4.382	5.874	5.874
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a villager in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Close to Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if a respondent reports a level of 3 or higher on a 0 to 5 scale measuring closeness to the committee member. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. The p-values reported in columns (5) and (6) test equality of the *Age Set × Young Male Committee* coefficients across sub-groups within each panel: column (5) compares columns (3) and (5), while column (6) compares columns (4) and (6). * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table A11: Heterogeneity in Number of Health Products Received
by Product by Wealth

	Dependent Variable: Number of [...] tablets					
	All Respondents		Respondents Wealth ≤2		Respondents Wealth >2	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A: Deworming tablets</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.003 (0.747)	0.482 (0.647)	0.605 (0.660)	1.005* (0.580)	-3.906** (1.637)	-2.450 (1.614)
Age Set	0.426 (0.632)	0.244 (0.539)	-0.127 (0.555)	-0.302 (0.464)	3.248** (1.269)	2.662** (1.198)
Young Male Committee	0.001 (0.493)	-0.644 (0.486)	-0.468 (0.475)	-0.987** (0.462)	2.633** (1.057)	1.244 (1.237)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.002	0.004
Observations	3,121	3,121	2,596	2,596	525	525
Villages	102	102	102	102	97	97
Mean Dep. Var.	6.140	6.140	5.679	5.679	8.417	8.417
<i>Panel B: Chlorine tablets</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-4.261* (2.338)	-2.646 (1.933)	-3.443 (2.248)	-1.967 (1.911)	-8.885** (3.704)	-5.952* (3.242)
Age Set	0.560 (1.429)	0.488 (1.237)	0.126 (1.382)	0.197 (1.282)	2.587 (2.146)	1.193 (1.719)
Young Male Committee	3.797* (1.968)	1.831 (1.682)	3.395* (1.913)	1.555 (1.649)	6.155* (3.113)	3.541 (2.857)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.063	0.106
Observations	3,121	3,121	2,596	2,596	525	525
Villages	102	102	102	102	97	97
Mean Dep. Var.	8.820	8.820	8.404	8.404	10.876	10.876
<i>Panel C: ORS packs</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-2.438** (1.175)	-1.535 (0.986)	-1.869* (1.067)	-1.052 (0.930)	-5.935*** (2.107)	-3.957** (1.781)
Age Set	0.268 (0.913)	0.040 (0.698)	-0.082 (0.810)	-0.229 (0.668)	2.070 (1.630)	1.020 (1.075)
Young Male Committee	1.706* (0.900)	0.640 (0.801)	1.332 (0.857)	0.381 (0.753)	3.935*** (1.492)	2.084 (1.616)
P-value: Equality of Age Set x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.017	0.024
Observations	3,121	3,121	2,596	2,596	525	525
Villages	102	102	102	102	97	97
Mean Dep. Var.	5.025	5.025	4.697	4.697	6.646	6.646
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a villager in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Wealth* is a measure on a 1 to 5 scale by the enumerator of the respondent's wealth based on appearance. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. The p-values reported in columns (5) and (6) test equality of the *Age Set × Young Male Committee* coefficients across sub-groups within each panel: column (5) compares columns (3) and (5), while column (6) compares columns (4) and (6). * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table A12: Health Outcomes

	Dependent Variable: <i>Avg Effect, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Stomach Pain (AES)</i>			
	Share HH Members		Share Children under 5	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.029 (0.072)	0.070 (0.069)	-0.040 (0.065)	0.020 (0.065)
Age Set	-0.030 (0.053)	-0.025 (0.052)	0.043 (0.038)	0.038 (0.040)
Young Male Committee	0.011 (0.059)	0.084 (0.104)	0.076 (0.050)	0.272*** (0.102)
Observations	3,133	3,133	2,613	2,613
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
SD	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Avg Effect* reports the average standardized effect across the three illness outcomes: diarrhea, vomiting and stomach ache. *Share HH Members* is the share of household members, including the respondent, reported to have experienced the illness in the four weeks prior to the survey. *Share Children Under 5* is the proportion of children under age five reported to have experienced the illness in the four weeks prior to the survey. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table A13: Health Outcomes by Condition, Share of HH Members

	Dependent Variable: <i>Avg Effect, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Stomach Pain (AES)</i>							
	Avg. Effect		Diarrhea		Vomiting		Stomach Pain	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.032 (0.071)	0.073 (0.069)	-0.001 (0.017)	0.014 (0.017)	0.014 (0.013)	0.020 (0.012)	-0.000 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.008)
Age Set	-0.032 (0.052)	-0.029 (0.051)	-0.008 (0.011)	-0.011 (0.011)	-0.009 (0.009)	-0.008 (0.008)	0.002 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)
Young Male Committee	0.009 (0.058)	0.089 (0.103)	0.011 (0.015)	0.049* (0.028)	-0.004 (0.009)	-0.000 (0.017)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.013)
Observations	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,131	3,131
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.123	0.081	0.081	0.039	0.039
SD	1.000	1.000	0.172	0.172	0.139	0.139	0.093	0.093
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Avg Effect* reports the average standardized effect across the three illness outcomes: diarrhea, vomiting and stomach ache. *Share HH Members* is the share of household members, including the respondent, reported to have experienced the illness in the four weeks prior to the survey. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, an age variable, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A14: Health Outcomes, Share Children Under 5

	Dependent Variable: <i>Avg Effect, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Stomach Pain (AES)</i>							
	Avg. Effect		Diarrhea		Vomiting		Stomach Pain	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.040 (0.065)	0.020 (0.065)	-0.047 (0.031)	-0.018 (0.031)	0.004 (0.025)	0.016 (0.026)	0.001 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)
Age Set	0.043 (0.038)	0.038 (0.040)	0.019 (0.022)	0.011 (0.021)	-0.003 (0.018)	-0.005 (0.018)	0.003* (0.002)	0.004** (0.002)
Young Male Committee	0.076 (0.050)	0.272*** (0.102)	0.041 (0.025)	0.118** (0.046)	0.014 (0.019)	0.041 (0.032)	0.002 (0.002)	0.012* (0.007)
Observations	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.190	0.148	0.148	0.004	0.004
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Avg Effect* reports the average standardized effect across the three illness outcomes: diarrhea, vomiting and stomach ache. *Share Children Under 5* is the proportion of children under age five reported to have experienced the illness in the four weeks prior to the survey. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, an age variable, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

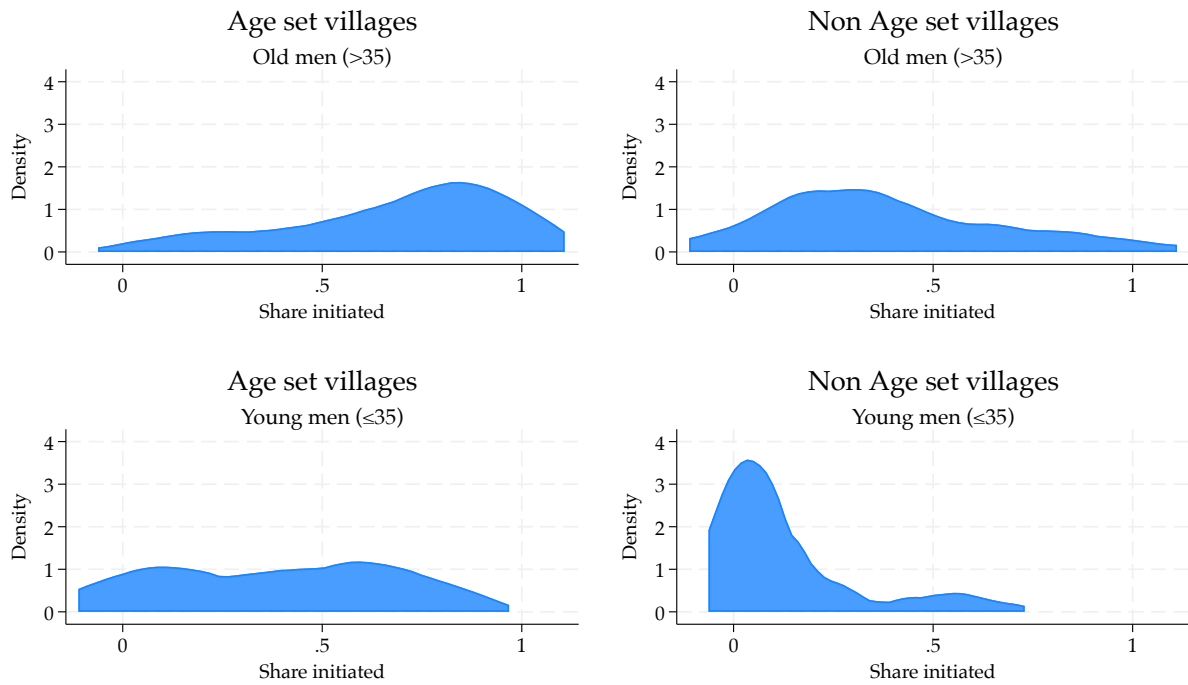


Figure A6: Share Initiated Across Villages and Age Groups

Notes: The figures display the density for the share of male villagers who report having done an age set initiation by whether a village still has age set practices and by respondent age (whether they are over or under 35 years of age).

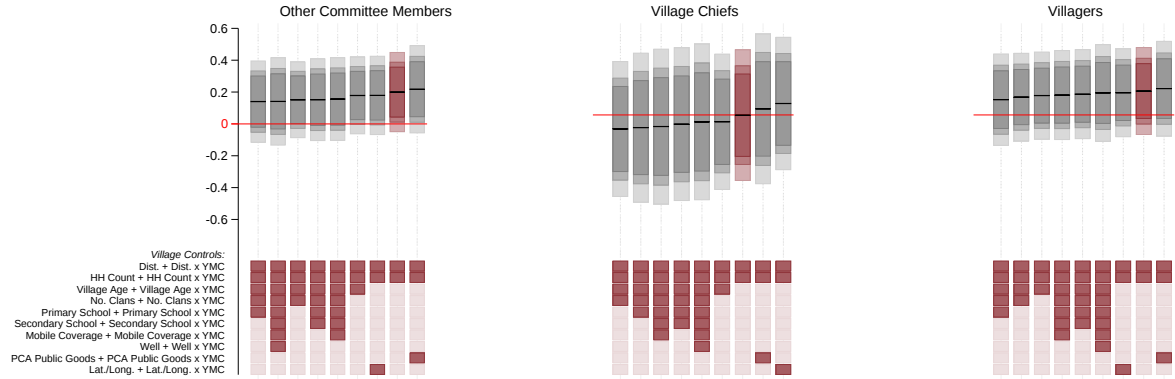
Table A15: Committee Member in Village Chief's Social Networks

	Dependent Variable:					
	<i>Chief Reports Committee Member in Social Network by Activity (0/1)</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Panel A: Network Activity 1 – Socialize / Visit House (0/1)</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.057 (0.046)	-0.077* (0.046)	-0.063 (0.046)	-0.079* (0.045)	-0.063 (0.046)	-0.078* (0.045)
Age Set	-0.014 (0.033)	0.006 (0.033)	-0.014 (0.033)	0.006 (0.035)	-0.010 (0.032)	0.010 (0.034)
Young Male Committee	0.013 (0.038)	0.013 (0.034)	0.056 (0.037)	0.054 (0.033)	0.021 (0.038)	0.018 (0.035)
Observations	720	720	720	720	720	720
Villages	101	101	101	101	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094
<i>Panel B: Network Activity 2 – Exchange Advice (0/1)</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.085** (0.042)	-0.095** (0.042)	-0.092** (0.042)	-0.097** (0.042)	-0.093** (0.042)	-0.096** (0.042)
Age Set	0.040 (0.031)	0.058* (0.031)	0.039 (0.031)	0.054* (0.033)	0.043 (0.031)	0.058* (0.033)
Young Male Committee	0.013 (0.033)	0.011 (0.031)	0.066** (0.033)	0.060* (0.031)	0.029 (0.035)	0.022 (0.033)
Observations	720	720	720	720	720	720
Villages	101	101	101	101	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092
<i>Panel C: Network Activity 3 – Lends & Borrowers (0/1)</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	0.026 (0.032)	0.020 (0.030)	0.025 (0.031)	0.018 (0.031)	0.025 (0.032)	0.018 (0.031)
Age Set	-0.027 (0.023)	-0.016 (0.022)	-0.025 (0.024)	-0.013 (0.024)	-0.023 (0.025)	-0.011 (0.025)
Young Male Committee	-0.020 (0.026)	-0.022 (0.025)	0.003 (0.026)	0.001 (0.026)	-0.013 (0.028)	-0.016 (0.028)
Observations	720	720	720	720	720	720
Villages	101	101	101	101	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042
<i>Panel D: Political Discussion (0/1)</i>						
Age Set × Young Male Committee	-0.051 (0.051)	-0.069 (0.049)	-0.056 (0.051)	-0.072 (0.050)	-0.057 (0.051)	-0.072 (0.050)
Age Set	-0.002 (0.035)	0.030 (0.033)	0.000 (0.035)	0.033 (0.036)	0.005 (0.035)	0.038 (0.036)
Young Male Committee	-0.007 (0.041)	-0.007 (0.038)	0.035 (0.041)	0.032 (0.039)	-0.011 (0.044)	-0.015 (0.041)
Observations	720	720	720	720	720	720
Villages	101	101	101	101	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114
Village Chief Age Control	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Committee Member Age Control	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Committee Member Gender Control	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

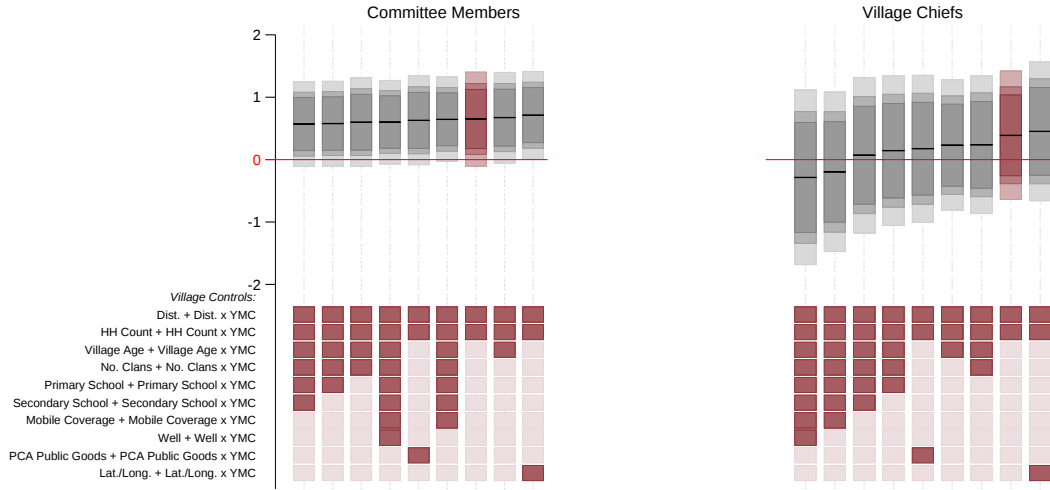
Notes: The unit of a analysis is a chief-committee member dyad in 2023. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. The sample uses active 2023 chiefs matched to committee members from 2020 and 2023. *Age Set* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent originates from a village that has age sets. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Chief Age Control* includes the chief's age and age squared. *Committee Member Age Control* includes the committee member's age and age squared. *Committee Member Gender Control* includes the committee member's gender. *Village Controls* includes the estimated number of households in village at baseline and distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

A.2. Robustness: Stability of Estimates to the Inclusion of Additional Village Controls

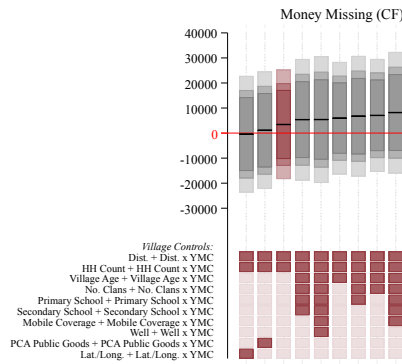
Figure A7: Stability of the Governance Estimates to the Inclusion of Additional Village Controls



(a) Committee Member Closeness to Others [0–5]



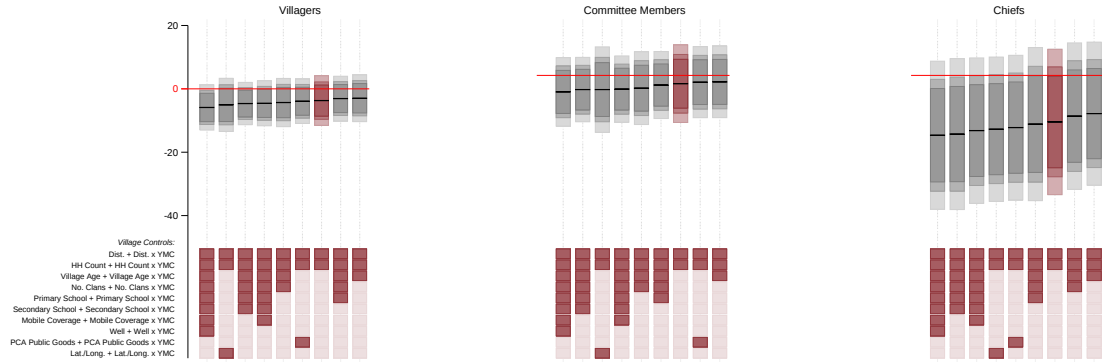
(b) Committee Project Management Task Index [0–6]



(c) Amount of Money Missing (Congolese Francs)

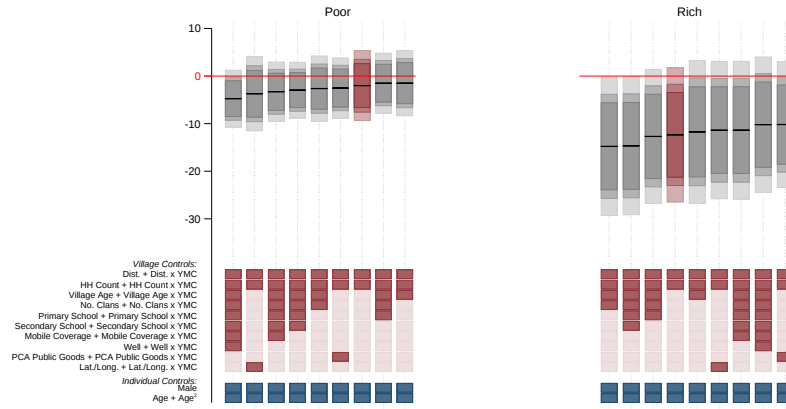
Notes: Each panel reports the estimated interaction coefficient β_3 on $Age\ Set \times 1_v^{Young\ Male}$ from equations (1) and (2), across specifications that add the village-level controls and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator, shown in the grid below each plot. The solid line is the point estimate; the shaded bands report the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence intervals, with standard errors clustered at the village level. The highlighted column is the baseline specification, which includes distance to Gemena and the estimated number of households at baseline (and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator). Panel (a) reports committee members' closeness to other committee members, the chief, and villagers; panel (b) reports the index for committee members and village chiefs; panel (c) reports the amount of project money unaccounted for.

Figure A8: Stability of the Product-Distribution Estimates to the Inclusion of Additional Village Controls

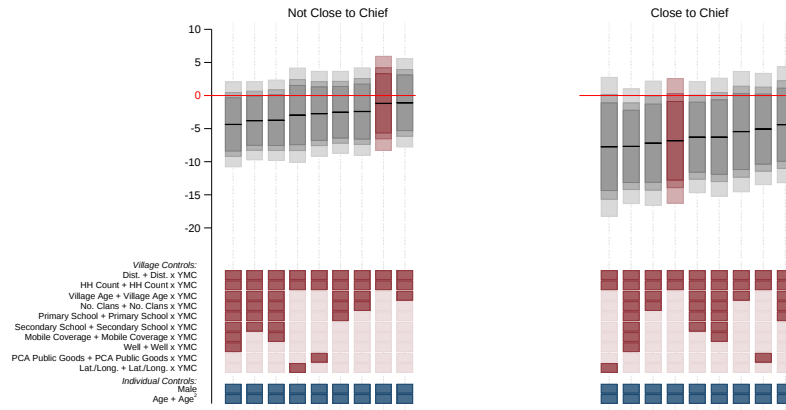


Notes: The figure reports the estimated interaction coefficient β_3 on $\text{Age Set} \times \mathbf{1}_v^{\text{Young Male}}$ from equation (2), where the outcome is the number of health products received, estimated separately for villagers, committee members, and village chiefs. Specifications add the village-level controls and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator, shown in the grid below the plot. The solid line is the point estimate; shaded bands report the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence intervals, with standard errors clustered at the village level. The highlighted column is the baseline specification.

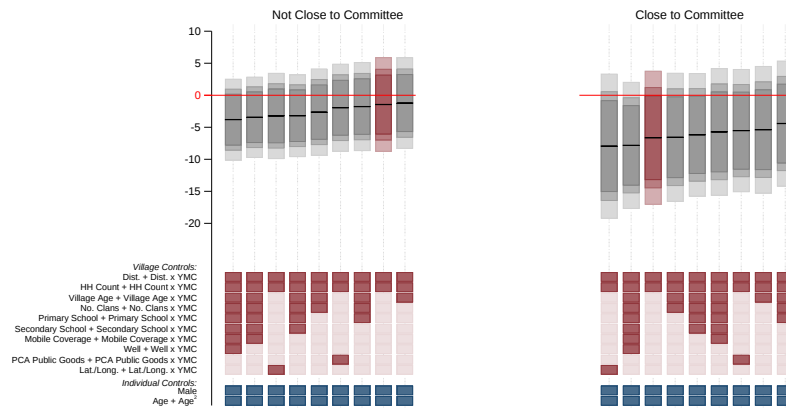
Figure A9: Stability of the Distributional Estimates to the Inclusion of Additional Village Controls



(a) By Villager Wealth [Poorer vs. Wealthier Households]



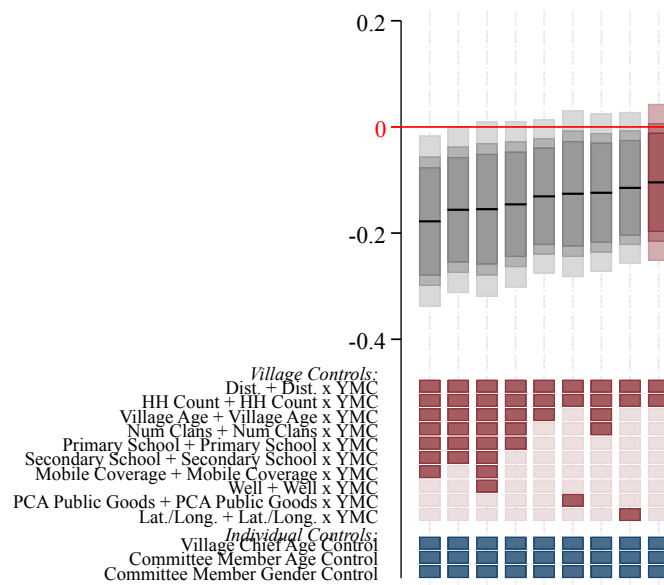
(b) By Closeness to the Chief [Not Close vs. Close]



(c) By Closeness to Committee Members [Not Close vs. Close]

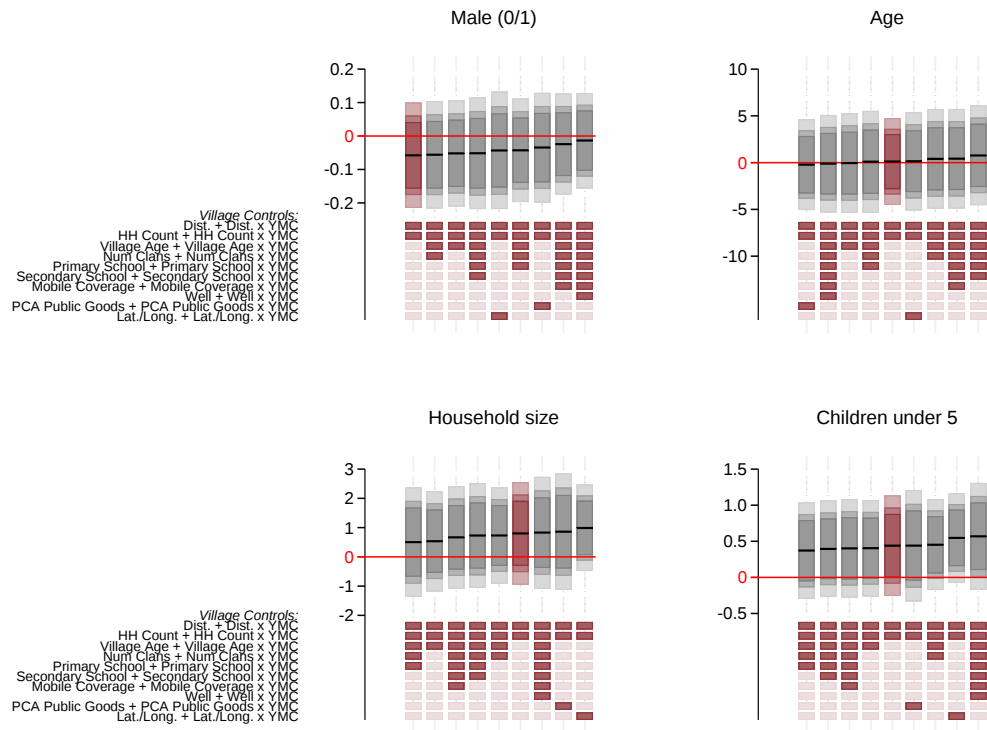
Notes: Each panel reports the estimated interaction coefficient β_3 on $Age\ Set \times 1_v^{Young\ Male}$ from equation (2), where the outcome is the number of health products received by villagers, estimated separately within sub-samples defined by villager wealth (panel a), closeness to the chief (panel b), and closeness to committee members (panel c). Specifications add the village-level controls and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator, shown in the grid below each plot. The solid line is the point estimate; shaded bands report the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence intervals, with standard errors clustered at the village level. The highlighted column is the baseline specification.

Figure A10: Committee Member in the Chief's Network: Stability to Additional Village Controls

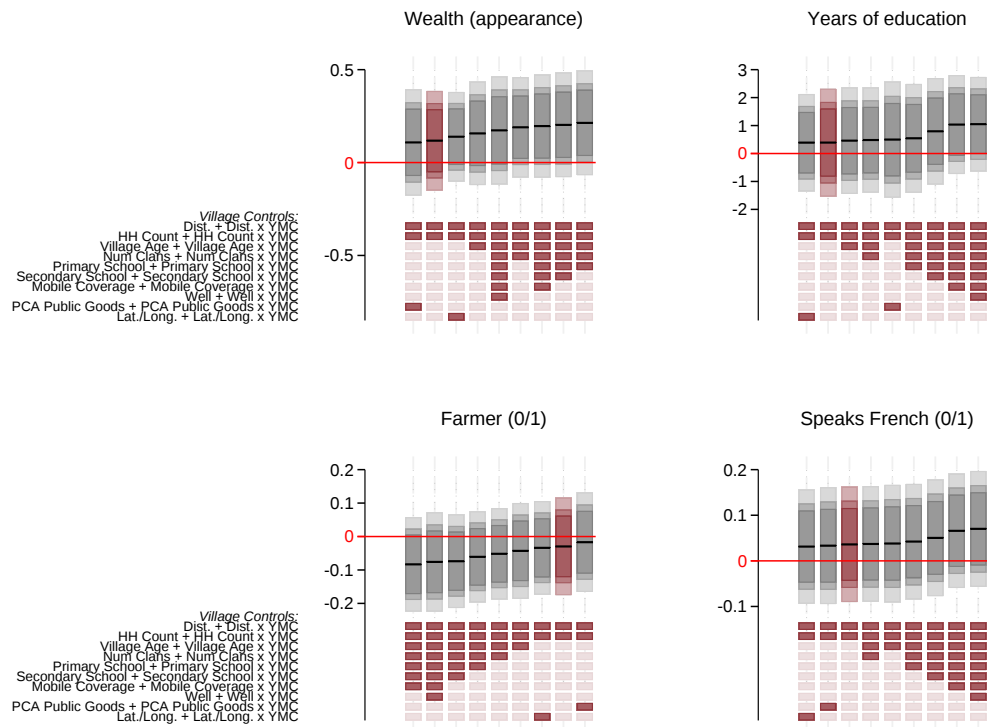


Notes: The figure reports the estimated interaction coefficient β_3 on $\text{Age Set} \times \mathbb{1}_v^{\text{Young Male}}$ from a chief-committee-member dyadic regression, where the outcome is an indicator for the chief reporting the committee member as part of their social network. Specifications add the village-level controls — and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator — shown in the grid below the plot, and include chief and committee-member age and gender controls. The solid line is the point estimate; shaded bands report the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence intervals, with standard errors clustered at the village level. The highlighted column is the baseline specification.

Figure A11: Committee Member Characteristics: Stability to Additional Village Controls

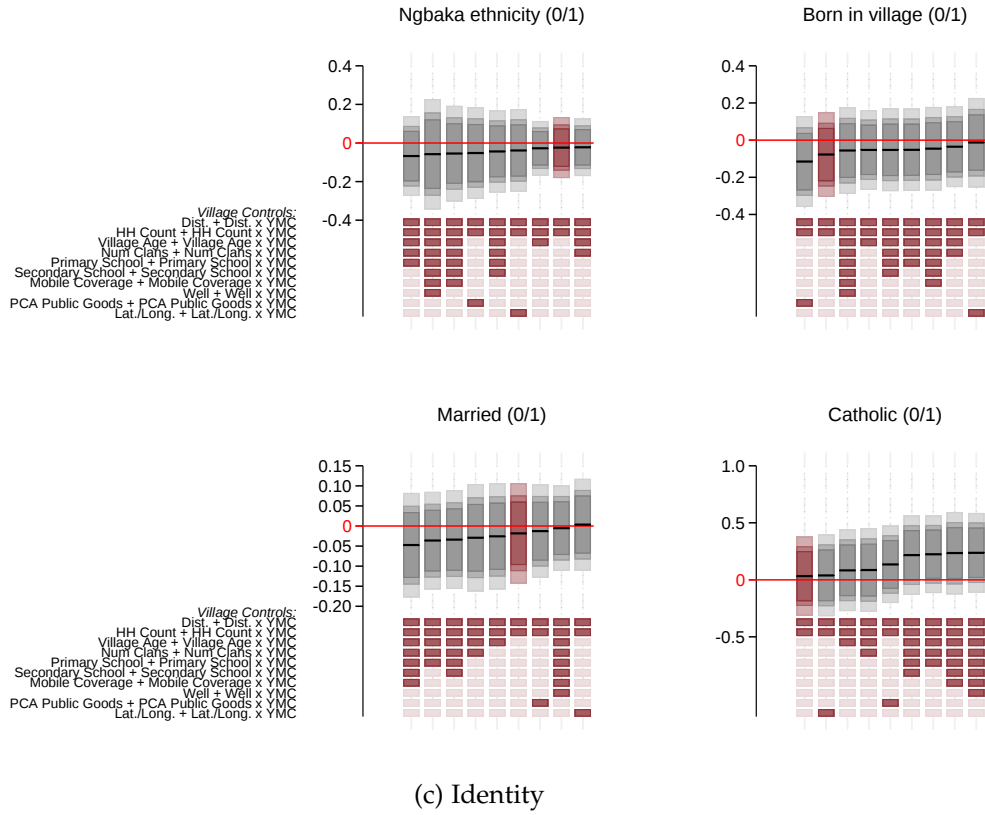


(a) Demographics



(b) Wealth and Human Capital

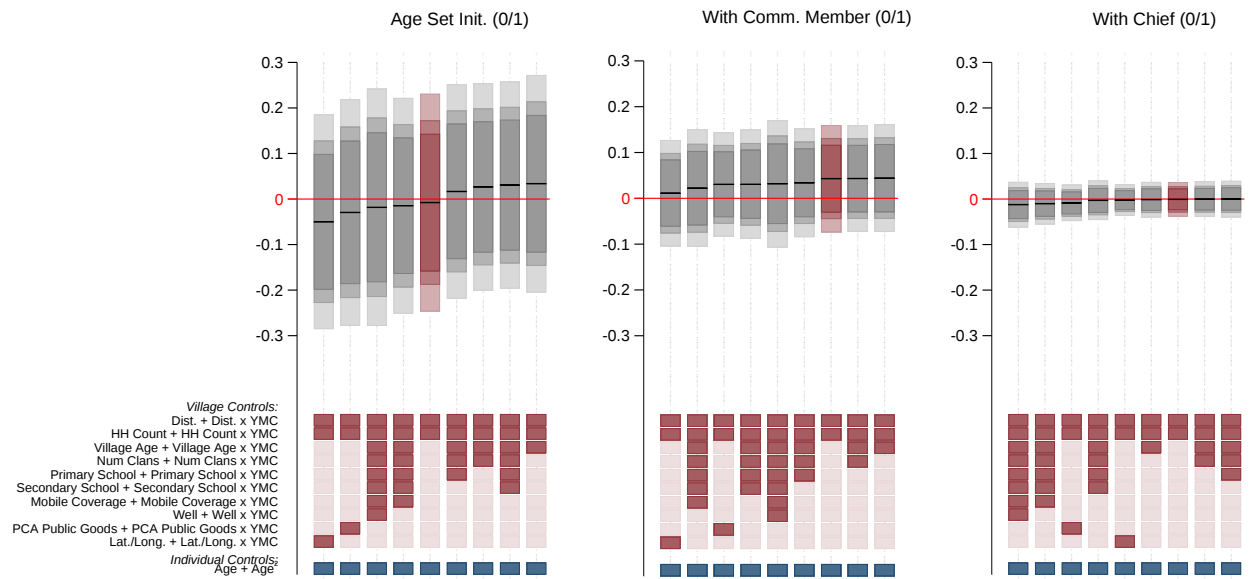
Figure A11: Committee Member Characteristics: Stability to Additional Village Controls (continued)



(c) Identity

Notes: The figure reports the estimated interaction coefficient β_3 on $Age\ Set \times \mathbb{1}_v^{Young\ Male}$, where the outcomes in (a) are committee members' sex (male), age, household size, and number of children under 5; the outcomes in (b) are committee members' wealth based on enumerator assessment, years of education, an indicator for being a farmer, and an indicator for speaking French; and the outcomes in (c) are indicators for whether a committee member is of the Ngbaka tribe, was born in the village, is married, or is Catholic. Specifications add the village-level controls and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator, shown in the grid below each plot. The solid line is the point estimate; shaded bands report the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence intervals, with standard errors clustered at the village level. The highlighted column is the baseline specification.

Figure A12: Committee Member Initiation: Stability to Additional Village Controls



Notes: The figure reports the estimated interaction coefficient β_3 on $Age\ Set \times 1_v^{Young\ Male}$, where the outcomes are indicators for whether a committee member underwent age set initiation, was initiated with another committee member, and was initiated with the chief. Specifications add the village-level controls and their interactions with the Young Male Committee indicator, shown in the grid below each plot. The solid line is the point estimate; shaded bands report the 90, 95, and 99 percent confidence intervals, with standard errors clustered at the village level. The highlighted column is the baseline specification.

Appendix B. Alternative Specification using Share of Young Men Initiated

Table B1: Committee Member Closeness to Other Committee Members, Chief, and Villagers:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: <i>Committee Member Closeness to [...]:</i>					
	Other Committee Members [0-5]		Chief [0-5]		Villagers [0-5]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.332** (0.147)	0.222 (0.163)	0.170 (0.210)	0.087 (0.204)	0.099 (0.154)	-0.057 (0.156)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-0.161 (0.110)	-0.060 (0.110)	0.082 (0.136)	0.097 (0.142)	0.125 (0.115)	0.244** (0.116)
Young Male Committee	0.024 (0.065)	0.044 (0.072)	0.020 (0.109)	0.048 (0.101)	0.007 (0.068)	0.035 (0.068)
Observations	1,108	1,108	1,111	1,111	1,111	1,111
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	3.918	3.918	3.680	3.680	3.701	3.701
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a committee member in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Committee Member Closeness* is the Committee Member's reported closeness to others in the village (0–5 scale), based on a visual figure where 0 denotes two persons far apart and 5 denotes extremely close. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B2: Oversight Tasks Performed by Committee Members and Chiefs:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: <i>Project Management Task Index [0-6]</i>			
	Committee Members		Village Chiefs	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.868** (0.402)	0.856** (0.401)	0.089 (0.580)	0.053 (0.589)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-0.100 (0.279)	-0.147 (0.278)	0.191 (0.379)	0.491 (0.403)
Young Male Committee	-0.075 (0.214)	0.008 (0.205)	-0.101 (0.294)	-0.165 (0.283)
Observations	1,110	1,110	202	202
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	3.068	3.068	4.411	4.411
Individual Controls	N	N	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a committee member in a round in columns 1 and 2 and a village chief in a round in columns 3 and 4. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. *Project Management Task Index* is the sum of indicators for each task that a committee member can report participating in (organize village meeting, organize distribution, distribute products, meet villagers, meet chief/committee, and keep records), and it takes values [0-6]. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. The dependent variables are defined as follows. *Individual Controls* include: age and age squared for chiefs in columns 3 and 4. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B3: Oversight Tasks Performed by Committee Members:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: <i>Project Management Tasks Done by Committee Members:</i>					
	Organize Meeting [0/1]		Organize Distribution [0/1]		Distribute Products [0/1]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.171* (0.100)	0.161 (0.104)	0.107 (0.147)	0.125 (0.153)	0.258* (0.145)	0.258* (0.145)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.068 (0.057)	0.096 (0.059)	-0.016 (0.093)	-0.008 (0.101)	-0.060 (0.104)	-0.066 (0.109)
Young Male Committee	-0.007 (0.040)	-0.005 (0.044)	-0.012 (0.075)	0.006 (0.075)	-0.100 (0.077)	-0.072 (0.074)
Observations	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.150	0.150	0.595	0.595	0.748	0.748
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
	Dependent Variable: <i>Project Management Tasks Done by Committee Members:</i>					
	Meet Villagers [0/1]		Meet Chief [0/1]		Keep Records [0/1]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.111 (0.077)	0.059 (0.083)	0.149 (0.098)	0.154 (0.105)	0.071 (0.132)	0.099 (0.142)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.065 (0.061)	0.065 (0.066)	0.000 (0.072)	-0.030 (0.077)	-0.157* (0.087)	-0.204** (0.097)
Young Male Committee	0.022 (0.044)	0.047 (0.043)	0.017 (0.047)	0.029 (0.048)	0.006 (0.066)	0.003 (0.071)
Observations	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.529	0.529	0.595	0.595	0.452	0.452
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a committee member in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. The dependent variables are defined as follows: *Organize Meeting* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports organizing a village meeting for the project. *Organize Distribution* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports organizing health product distribution for the project. *Distribute products* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports distributing health products for the project. *Meet Villagers* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports meeting with villagers about complaints or questions for the project. *Meet Chief* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports meeting with the chief about complaints or questions for the project. *Keep Records* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports keeping records to track health products for the project. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B4: Oversight Tasks Performed by Chiefs:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: Project Management Tasks Done by Chief:					
	Organize Meeting [0/1]		Organize Distribution [0/1]		Distribute Products [0/1]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.176 (0.196)	0.122 (0.191)	0.030 (0.055)	0.054 (0.061)	-0.288 (0.206)	-0.304 (0.204)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-0.104 (0.131)	-0.004 (0.129)	0.027 (0.028)	0.024 (0.025)	0.147 (0.137)	0.257* (0.135)
Young Male Committee	-0.023 (0.099)	-0.020 (0.097)	-0.019 (0.034)	-0.033 (0.036)	0.110 (0.100)	0.071 (0.097)
Observations	202	202	202	202	202	202
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.322	0.322	0.985	0.985	0.787	0.787
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
	Dependent Variable: Project Management Tasks Done by Chief:					
	Meet Villagers [0/1]		Meet Committee [0/1]		Keep Records [0/1]	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-0.156 (0.226)	-0.207 (0.223)	0.246 (0.185)	0.310 (0.189)	0.081 (0.068)	0.078 (0.081)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.132 (0.148)	0.187 (0.156)	0.018 (0.134)	0.042 (0.143)	-0.028 (0.045)	-0.016 (0.042)
Young Male Committee	-0.037 (0.097)	0.005 (0.095)	-0.092 (0.096)	-0.138 (0.093)	-0.040 (0.038)	-0.051 (0.040)
Observations	202	202	202	202	202	202
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.594	0.594	0.762	0.762	0.960	0.960
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of an analysis is a chief in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. The dependent variables are defined as follows: *Organize Meeting* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports organizing a village meeting for the project. *Organize Distribution* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports organizing health product distribution for the project. *Distribute products* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports distributing health products for the project. *Meet Villagers* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports meeting with villagers about complaints or questions for the project. *Meet Committee* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports meeting with the committee about complaints or questions for the project. *Keep Records* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports keeping records to track health products for the project. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Individual Controls* include: age variable and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B5: Any Money Missing & Amount of Money Missing:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: Any Money Missing (0/1)					
	OLS		Logit		Probit	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-0.62** (0.24)	-0.58** (0.26)	-2.61** (1.05)	-2.50** (1.10)	-1.62** (0.64)	-1.54** (0.67)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.46*** (0.15)	0.40** (0.16)	1.96*** (0.71)	1.75** (0.76)	1.21*** (0.42)	1.08** (0.45)
Young Male Committee	0.24** (0.12)	0.25** (0.12)	1.01** (0.49)	1.03** (0.51)	0.63** (0.30)	0.64** (0.31)
Observations	204	204	204	204	204	204
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
	Dependent Variable: Money Missing (CF)					
	Money Missing (CF)		ln(Money Missing)		arcsinh(Money Missing)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-3928.75 (12202.05)	-5260.55 (12409.27)	-5.17** (2.45)	-4.97* (2.60)	-6.83** (2.95)	-6.56** (3.03)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	3262.05 (6830.63)	2130.08 (6892.55)	3.84** (1.49)	3.35** (1.64)	4.72*** (1.72)	4.14** (1.86)
Young Male Committee	5372.78 (5390.43)	5739.26 (5419.55)	2.18* (1.19)	2.25* (1.24)	2.73** (1.36)	2.75* (1.39)
Observations	204	204	204	204	204	204
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	14578.43	14578.43	5.27	5.27	5.45	5.45
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a village-round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. *Money Missing* is the amount in Congolese Francs that was neither spent on health products nor returned. *Any Money Missing* equals 1 if *Money Missing* is greater than 0. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* equals 1 if the village was randomly assigned a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include estimated households at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B6: Number of Products Received by Villagers, Committee Members, and Chiefs:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: Number of All Products Received by...					
	Villagers		Committee Members		Chiefs	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-2.877 (4.630)	-3.600 (4.177)	-3.548 (6.279)	-5.526 (5.915)	-17.613 (13.497)	-13.992 (11.761)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-3.004 (3.442)	-0.447 (3.166)	-3.864 (4.081)	-0.130 (3.846)	-1.927 (7.542)	2.779 (7.527)
Young Male Committee	2.468 (2.494)	0.697 (1.935)	5.770 (3.666)	4.135 (3.273)	15.206** (7.364)	10.577* (6.105)
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,112	1,112	202	202
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	19.985	19.985	29.411	29.411	45.312	45.312
Individual Controls	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a villager in a round in columns 1 and 2; a committee member in a round in columns 3 and 4; a village chief in a round in columns 5 and 6. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Number of All Products* is the sum of deworming tablets, water purification (chlorine) tablets and ORS packets received by the respondent and their household, as recorded in survey response. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared for villagers in columns 1 and 2; age and age squared for chiefs in columns 5 and 6. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B7: Heterogeneity in Number of Health Products Received:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: Number of All Products			
	Not close to Chief		Close to Chief	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-0.114 (4.116)	-2.292 (3.761)	-5.066 (5.357)	-4.700 (5.009)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-2.745 (2.996)	-0.069 (2.746)	-3.684 (4.113)	-1.265 (3.992)
Young Male Committee	0.955 (2.273)	-0.564 (1.671)	3.757 (2.885)	2.086 (2.333)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	0.175	0.439
Observations	1,455	1,455	1,661	1,661
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	17.489	17.489	22.188	22.188
	Not close to Committee		Close to Committee	
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-2.866 (3.785)	-4.495 (3.426)	-3.784 (6.690)	-2.818 (6.118)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-3.288 (2.820)	-0.815 (2.597)	-1.753 (5.286)	0.202 (4.868)
Young Male Committee	2.425 (2.285)	0.926 (1.709)	2.092 (3.165)	0.361 (2.642)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	0.830	0.690
Observations	1,705	1,705	1,380	1,380
Villages	102	102	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	17.597	17.597	23.173	23.173
	Wealth≤2		Wealth>2	
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-0.567 (4.073)	-0.946 (3.690)	-22.305** (9.932)	-20.820*** (7.746)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-3.967 (2.982)	-1.691 (2.844)	5.368 (7.985)	7.402 (5.571)
Young Male Committee	1.731 (2.369)	0.066 (1.851)	8.480** (4.041)	5.730* (3.281)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	0.020	0.041
Observations	2,596	2,596	525	525
Villages	102	102	97	97
Mean Dep. Var.	18.780	18.780	25.939	25.939
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a villager in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Number of All Products* is the sum of deworming tablets, water purification (chlorine) tablets, and ORS packets received by the respondent and their household, as recorded in the survey response by respondent type. *Close to Chief* is an indicator equal to 1 if a respondent reports a level of 3 or higher on a 0 to 5 scale measuring closeness to the village chief. *Close to Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if a respondent reports a level of 3 or higher on a 0 to 5 scale measuring closeness to the committee. *Wealth* is the enumerator's rating of respondent wealth based on appearance on a 1 to 5 scale. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. The p-values reported in columns (3) and (4) test equality of the *Share Initiated × Young Male Committee* coefficients across sub-groups within each panel: column (3) compares columns (1) and (3), while column (4) compares columns (2) and (4). * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B8: Received Any Product by Villagers and Committee Members:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: <i>Received Any Product</i> [0/1]			
	Villagers		Committee Members	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-0.069 (0.046)	-0.063 (0.053)	-0.006 (0.021)	-0.020 (0.024)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-0.021 (0.026)	-0.015 (0.036)	0.000 (0.015)	0.011 (0.021)
Young Male Committee	0.033 (0.022)	0.019 (0.021)	0.009 (0.011)	0.013 (0.011)
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,112	1,112
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.946	0.946	0.989	0.989
Individual Controls	Y	Y	N	N
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in a round in columns 1 and 2 and a committee member in a round in columns 3 and 4. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Received Any Product* is an indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports receiving one or more of any of the following: deworming tablets, water purification (chlorine) tablets or ORS packets. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, an age variable, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B9: Heterogeneity in Number of Health Products Received
by Product and Closeness to Chief:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: Number of [...] tablets					
	All Respondents		Respondents Not close to Chief		Respondents Close to Chief	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Deworming tablets</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.387 (0.951)	-0.034 (1.046)	0.678 (1.067)	-0.287 (1.066)	0.199 (1.114)	0.003 (1.302)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.211 (0.764)	0.657 (0.814)	0.489 (0.862)	1.105 (0.827)	-0.187 (0.956)	0.163 (1.116)
Young Male Committee	-0.122 (0.506)	-0.352 (0.473)	-0.458 (0.559)	-0.677 (0.493)	0.168 (0.566)	0.035 (0.560)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.657	0.902
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,455	1,455	1,661	1,661
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	6.140	6.140	5.515	5.515	6.688	6.688
<i>Chlorine tablets</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-1.794 (3.013)	-2.044 (2.566)	-0.381 (2.699)	-1.380 (2.469)	-3.032 (3.397)	-2.591 (2.878)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-1.683 (1.901)	-0.099 (1.747)	-1.700 (1.683)	-0.106 (1.653)	-1.767 (2.210)	-0.242 (2.038)
Young Male Committee	1.858 (1.694)	0.858 (1.352)	1.045 (1.522)	0.215 (1.258)	2.571 (1.956)	1.530 (1.553)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.175	0.525
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,455	1,455	1,661	1,661
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	8.820	8.820	7.743	7.743	9.770	9.770
<i>ORS packs</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-1.470 (1.297)	-1.522 (1.244)	-0.411 (1.137)	-0.625 (1.069)	-2.233 (1.683)	-2.112 (1.665)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-1.532 (1.049)	-1.005 (0.958)	-1.534* (0.854)	-1.068 (0.781)	-1.730 (1.345)	-1.186 (1.277)
Young Male Committee	0.732 (0.703)	0.191 (0.580)	0.368 (0.661)	-0.102 (0.483)	1.018 (0.853)	0.522 (0.758)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated × Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.224	0.367
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,455	1,455	1,661	1,661
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	5.025	5.025	4.231	4.231	5.730	5.730
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a villager in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Close to Chief* is an indicator equal to 1 if a respondent reports a level of 3 or higher on a 0 to 5 scale measuring closeness to the village chief. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. The p-value is from a test of equality of the *Share Initiated × Young Male Committee* coefficients across sub-groups. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B10: Heterogeneity in Number of Health Products Received
by Product by Close to Committee:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: Number of [...] tablets					
	All Respondents		Respondents Not Close to Committee		Respondents Close to Committee	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Deworming tablets</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.387 (0.951)	-0.034 (1.046)	-0.488 (1.041)	-1.353 (1.121)	1.219 (1.352)	1.138 (1.463)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.211 (0.764)	0.657 (0.814)	0.593 (0.819)	1.173 (0.891)	-0.079 (1.186)	0.077 (1.231)
Young Male Committee	-0.122 (0.506)	-0.352 (0.473)	0.055 (0.567)	-0.127 (0.541)	-0.480 (0.610)	-0.570 (0.589)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.298	0.150
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,705	1,705	1,380	1,380
Villages	102	102	102	102	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	6.140	6.140	5.521	5.521	6.978	6.978
<i>Chlorine tablets</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-1.794 (3.013)	-2.044 (2.566)	-1.181 (2.381)	-1.869 (2.182)	-3.037 (4.170)	-2.237 (3.505)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-1.683 (1.901)	-0.099 (1.747)	-2.027 (1.548)	-0.597 (1.511)	-0.702 (2.810)	0.647 (2.532)
Young Male Committee	1.858 (1.694)	0.858 (1.352)	1.744 (1.425)	0.943 (1.149)	1.827 (2.208)	0.664 (1.777)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.508	0.932
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,705	1,705	1,380	1,380
Villages	102	102	102	102	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	8.820	8.820	7.694	7.694	10.321	10.321
<i>ORS packs</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-1.470 (1.297)	-1.522 (1.244)	-1.196 (1.049)	-1.272 (0.921)	-1.967 (2.042)	-1.719 (1.943)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-1.532 (1.049)	-1.005 (0.958)	-1.854** (0.826)	-1.391** (0.677)	-0.972 (1.697)	-0.521 (1.552)
Young Male Committee	0.732 (0.703)	0.191 (0.580)	0.627 (0.698)	0.110 (0.508)	0.745 (0.872)	0.267 (0.792)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.679	0.946
Observations	3,121	3,121	1,705	1,705	1,380	1,380
Villages	102	102	102	102	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	5.025	5.025	4.382	4.382	5.874	5.874
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a villager in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Close to Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if a respondent reports a level of 3 or higher on a 0 to 5 scale measuring closeness to the committee member. *Wealth* is a measure on a 1 to 5 scale by the enumerator of the respondent's wealth based on appearance. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. The p-value is from a test of equality of the *Share Initiated × Young Male Committee* coefficients across sub-groups. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B11: Heterogeneity in Number of Health Products Received
by Product by Wealth:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: Number of [...] tablets					
	All Respondents		Respondents Wealth <=2		Respondents Wealth >2	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Deworming tablets</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.387 (0.951)	-0.034 (1.046)	0.830 (0.788)	0.576 (0.893)	-4.430 (2.796)	-4.281* (2.539)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.211 (0.764)	0.657 (0.814)	-0.087 (0.633)	0.187 (0.707)	2.868 (2.236)	3.416* (1.803)
Young Male Committee	-0.122 (0.506)	-0.352 (0.473)	-0.364 (0.439)	-0.566 (0.410)	1.695 (1.212)	1.099 (1.182)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.075	0.108
Observations	3,121	3,121	2,596	2,596	525	525
Villages	102	102	102	102	97	97
Mean Dep. Var.	6.140	6.140	5.679	5.679	8.417	8.417
<i>Chlorine tablets</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-1.794 (3.013)	-2.044 (2.566)	-0.587 (2.815)	-0.823 (2.412)	-10.913** (5.473)	-10.001** (4.342)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-1.683 (1.901)	-0.099 (1.747)	-1.992 (1.804)	-0.417 (1.714)	1.201 (3.592)	2.170 (2.622)
Young Male Committee	1.858 (1.694)	0.858 (1.352)	1.598 (1.639)	0.646 (1.333)	4.242 (2.635)	2.970 (2.122)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.040	0.090
Observations	3,121	3,121	2,596	2,596	525	525
Villages	102	102	102	102	97	97
Mean Dep. Var.	8.820	8.820	8.404	8.404	10.876	10.876
<i>ORS packs</i>						
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-1.470 (1.297)	-1.522 (1.244)	-0.810 (1.149)	-0.699 (1.149)	-6.962** (3.086)	-6.538*** (2.412)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-1.532 (1.049)	-1.005 (0.958)	-1.888** (0.875)	-1.462* (0.824)	1.299 (2.652)	1.816 (1.940)
Young Male Committee	0.732 (0.703)	0.191 (0.580)	0.498 (0.676)	-0.014 (0.551)	2.542** (1.141)	1.661 (1.079)
P-value: Equality of Share Initiated x Young Male Committee coefficients	.	.	.	.	0.028	0.046
Observations	3,121	3,121	2,596	2,596	525	525
Villages	102	102	102	102	97	97
Mean Dep. Var.	5.025	5.025	4.697	4.697	6.646	6.646
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a villager in a round. Standard errors are clustered at the village level. *Wealth* is an a measure a 1 to 5 scale by the enumerator of the respondents wealth based on appearance. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, age, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator. The p-value is from a test of equality of the *Share Initiated × Young Male Committee* coefficients across sub-groups. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B12: Health Outcomes:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: <i>Avg Effect, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Stomach Pain (AES)</i>			
	Share HH Members		Share Children under 5	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.048 (0.115)	0.056 (0.122)	0.052 (0.126)	0.134 (0.126)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-0.058 (0.076)	-0.013 (0.087)	0.014 (0.060)	0.019 (0.063)
Young Male Committee	0.014 (0.050)	0.102 (0.102)	0.038 (0.049)	0.287*** (0.106)
Observations	3,133	3,133	2,613	2,613
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
SD	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Avg Effect* reports the average standardized effect across the three illness outcomes: diarrhea, vomiting and stomach ache. *Share HH Members* is the share of household members, including the respondent, reported to have experienced the illness in the four weeks prior to the survey. *Share Children Under 5* is the proportion of children under age five reported to have experienced the illness in the four weeks prior to the survey. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B13: Health Outcomes by Condition, Share of HH Members:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: <i>Avg Effect, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Stomach Pain (AES)</i>							
	Avg. Effect		Diarrhea		Vomiting		Stomach Pain	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.046 (0.115)	0.056 (0.122)	-0.015 (0.022)	-0.003 (0.022)	0.017 (0.019)	0.015 (0.021)	0.010 (0.016)	0.008 (0.017)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-0.060 (0.074)	-0.017 (0.086)	-0.009 (0.014)	-0.008 (0.016)	-0.012 (0.013)	-0.004 (0.014)	-0.004 (0.012)	0.002 (0.013)
Young Male Committee	0.015 (0.049)	0.108 (0.102)	0.015 (0.012)	0.052* (0.028)	-0.001 (0.008)	0.004 (0.017)	-0.004 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.013)
Observations	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,133	3,131	3,131
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.123	0.081	0.081	0.039	0.039
SD	1.000	1.000	0.172	0.172	0.139	0.139	0.093	0.093
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Avg Effect* reports the average standardized effect across the three illness outcomes: diarrhea, vomiting and stomach ache. *Share HH Members* is the share of household members, including the respondent, reported to have experienced the illness in the four weeks prior to the survey. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, an age variable, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B14: Health Outcomes, Share Children Under 5:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable: <i>Avg Effect, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Stomach Pain (AES)</i>							
	Avg. Effect		Diarrhea		Vomiting		Stomach Pain	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.052 (0.126)	0.134 (0.126)	-0.061 (0.047)	-0.037 (0.049)	0.024 (0.041)	0.032 (0.043)	0.009 (0.007)	0.014* (0.008)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.014 (0.060)	0.019 (0.063)	0.012 (0.037)	0.009 (0.040)	0.000 (0.026)	0.007 (0.027)	0.000 (0.003)	0.000 (0.003)
Young Male Committee	0.038 (0.049)	0.287*** (0.106)	0.032 (0.021)	0.113** (0.045)	0.009 (0.019)	0.045 (0.031)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.012* (0.007)
Observations	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613	2,613
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.190	0.148	0.148	0.004	0.004
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of analysis is a villager in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include a round fixed effect. *Avg Effect* reports the average standardized effect across the three illness outcomes: diarrhea, vomiting and stomach ache. *Share Children Under 5* is the proportion of children under age five reported to have experienced the illness in the four weeks prior to the survey. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Individual Controls* include: an indicator variable equal to 1 if the villager is a male, an age variable, and age squared. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B15: Chief Reports Committee Member in Social Network:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable:					
	<i>Chief reports committee member in social network (0/1)</i>					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated Young Men × Young Male Committee	-0.029 (0.067)	-0.093 (0.078)	-0.035 (0.067)	-0.097 (0.073)	-0.033 (0.068)	-0.092 (0.074)
Share Initiated Young Men	-0.062 (0.044)	-0.017 (0.054)	-0.070 (0.045)	-0.032 (0.055)	-0.067 (0.047)	-0.029 (0.057)
Young Male Committee	-0.024 (0.035)	-0.018 (0.033)	0.019 (0.036)	0.025 (0.033)	-0.028 (0.038)	-0.022 (0.035)
Observations	720	720	720	720	720	720
Villages	101	101	101	101	101	101
Mean Dep. Var.	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126
Village Chief Age Control	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Committee Member Age Control	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Committee Member Gender Control	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The sample uses active 2023 chiefs matched to committee members from 2020 and 2023. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Chief Age Control* includes the chief's age and age squared. *Committee Member Age Control* includes the committee member's age and age squared. *Committee Member Gender Control* includes the committee member's gender. *Village Controls* include distance to Gemena, the estimated number of households in the village at baseline, and each of these variables interacted with the Young Male Committee indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B16: Committee Member Characteristics
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

Panel A: Demographic Characteristics								
	Dependent Variable:							
	Male (0/1)		Age		Household Size		Children Under 5	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-0.031 (0.088)	-0.037 (0.091)	3.393 (2.756)	3.056 (2.696)	2.034* (1.154)	1.839 (1.198)	0.756* (0.450)	0.825* (0.455)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.024 (0.083)	0.010 (0.086)	-1.489 (2.316)	-1.646 (2.378)	0.445 (0.870)	0.263 (0.911)	-0.134 (0.288)	-0.202 (0.307)
Young Male Committee	0.292*** (0.045)	0.299*** (0.043)	-12.395*** (1.097)	-12.097*** (1.112)	-0.841** (0.407)	-0.680 (0.415)	0.084 (0.175)	0.081 (0.171)
Observations	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.837	0.837	37.444	37.444	9.290	9.290	2.440	2.440
Panel B: Wealth and Human Capital								
	Dependent Variable:							
	Wealth		Years of Education		Farmer		Speaks French	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.356** (0.163)	0.363** (0.164)	1.075 (0.897)	0.836 (0.968)	0.104 (0.071)	0.125 (0.078)	0.032 (0.062)	0.003 (0.065)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	-0.055 (0.122)	-0.078 (0.121)	0.338 (0.664)	0.124 (0.740)	-0.023 (0.041)	-0.033 (0.043)	0.032 (0.041)	0.027 (0.044)
Young Male Committee	-0.056 (0.063)	-0.057 (0.064)	1.697*** (0.441)	1.935*** (0.463)	-0.080** (0.039)	-0.098** (0.040)	0.071** (0.029)	0.090*** (0.029)
Observations	1,112	1,112	1,104	1,104	549	549	1,110	1,110
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	1.862	1.862	7.703	7.703	0.891	0.891	0.191	0.191
Panel C: Identity								
	Dependent Variable:							
	Ngbaka Ethnicity		Born in Village		Married		Catholic	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	-0.040 (0.054)	-0.013 (0.063)	-0.035 (0.116)	0.036 (0.117)	-0.044 (0.064)	-0.068 (0.062)	-0.087 (0.203)	-0.049 (0.219)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.063 (0.050)	0.055 (0.057)	0.289*** (0.079)	0.203** (0.083)	0.016 (0.042)	0.027 (0.041)	0.283** (0.140)	0.214 (0.148)
Young Male Committee	0.028 (0.042)	0.027 (0.044)	0.180*** (0.062)	0.169*** (0.058)	0.051* (0.027)	0.059** (0.024)	0.046 (0.082)	0.034 (0.081)
Observations	1,109	1,109	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,112	1,109	1,109
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.954	0.954	0.661	0.661	0.904	0.904	0.396	0.396
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation in this table is a committee member in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. The dependent variables are defined as follows. *Male* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent is male. *Age* is the respondent's age in years. *Household Size* is the total number of household members. *Children Under 5* is the number of children age five and under in the household. *Wealth* is the enumerator's rating of respondent wealth based on appearance on a 1 to 5 scale. *Years of Education* is the number of completed years of education. *Farmer* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent's primary occupation is farming, if the respondent lists a primary occupation. *Speaks French* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent reports French as a first or other language. *Ngbaka Ethnicity* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent reports Ngbaka ethnicity. *Born in Village* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent was born in the current village. *Married* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent is currently married. *Catholic* is an indicator equal to 1 if the respondent reports being Catholic. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* is an indicator equal to 1 if the village was randomly assigned to have a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in the village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee indicator.

* p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B17: Committee Member Initiation by Treatment Status:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable:					
	Age Set		Initiation with		Initiation with	
	Initiation (0/1)		Committee Member (0/1)		Chief (0/1)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Share Initiated × Young Male Committee	0.159 (0.103)	0.170 (0.118)	0.208*** (0.067)	0.234*** (0.064)	0.016 (0.021)	0.007 (0.023)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.430*** (0.064)	0.387*** (0.079)	0.056** (0.025)	0.049* (0.027)	0.015 (0.012)	0.022 (0.015)
Young Male Committee	0.087* (0.047)	0.112 (0.103)	-0.007 (0.016)	0.055 (0.047)	0.006 (0.008)	-0.009 (0.019)
Observations	1,113	1,113	1,113	1,113	1,113	1,113
Villages	102	102	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	0.304	0.304	0.053	0.053	0.013	0.013
Village Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a committee member in a round. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All analyses include round fixed effects. *Age Set Initiation* equals 1 if the Committee Member reports having participated in an initiation ritual. *Initiation with Committee Member* equals 1 if the Committee Member reports having participated in the initiation ritual with other current committee members. *Initiation with Village Chief* equals 1 if the Committee Member reports having participated in the initiation ritual with the current village chief. *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Young Male Committee* equals 1 if the village was randomly assigned a committee of young men. *Village Controls* include: estimated number of households in village at baseline, distance to Gemena, and their interaction with the Young Male Committee Indicator. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Table B18: Baseline Survey: Age Sets & Political Authority:
Alternative Specification using Share Initiated

	Dependent Variable:			
	Elders Should be	Relative Power	Trust in	Chief Support from
	Responsible for Decisions [1-5]	Elders vs. Young [1-5]	Elders [1-4]	Elders vs. Young [4 - -4]
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Share Initiated (Young Males)	0.098 (0.220)	-0.004 (0.269)	-0.172 (0.109)	0.048 (0.063)
Observations	1,222	1,201	1,205	1,207
Villages	102	102	102	102
Mean Dep. Var.	2.98	3.09	2.95	0.11
Individual Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y

Notes: The unit of observation is a villager at baseline. Standard errors clustered at the village level. All dependent variables are coded so that higher values indicate stronger elder authority. *Elders Should be Responsible for Decisions* measures whether respondents believe that older persons should be responsible for making decisions in the village on a scale from 1 to 5, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. *Relative Power Elders vs. Young* measures the perceived power gap between older and younger members on a scale from 1 to 5, ranging from young men have a lot more political power to elder men have a lot more political power. *Trust in Elders* measures the level of trust in older individuals on a 1 to 4 scale, ranging from no trust to complete trust. *Chief Support (Elders vs. Young)* is the difference in support the village chief receives from older versus younger men, from -4 (all support from young men, none from elders) to +4 (all support from elders, none from young men). *Chief Support (Elders vs. Young)* is the difference in support the village chief receives from older versus younger men; it the difference between two five-point measures recording how many older versus younger men support the village chief (from “no one” to “everyone”); it ranges from -4 (all support from young men, none from elders) to +4 (all support from elders, none from young men). *Share Initiated (Young Males)* is the share of young males (age ≤ 35) in the village who report having completed initiation in the baseline survey. *Individual Controls* include: male, age and age squared. * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

Appendix C. Pre-Analysis Plan

The study was pre-registered on the AEA RCT registry website – AEARCTR-0005370 (<https://www.socialscisceregistry.org/trials/5370>).