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Family rule in Wajo, South Sulawesi

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the position of aristocratic power holders in the district of Wajo, South Sulawesi, from the late New Order until the elections in 2004. In particular I address the following questions: 1. To what extent was administrative power embedded in aristocratic family rule in the late New Order? Which families were involved, and how did they exercise their rule? 2. What was the impact of Reformasi and regional autonomy in Wajo? What changes can be observed? 3. What was the effect of the elections in 2004 on the position of the aristocracy? 4. Finally, what kind of changes took place in the local power structure between the late New Order period and 2004?

Christian Pelras (1976:314) analysed traditional authority in Wajo in the 1960s. He concluded that members of the aristocracy would remain in power, although in forms which differ from those of the past. Similarly Burhan Magenda (1989:891-2) emphasized with regard to South Sulawesi the survival of the local aristocracy within the administrative apparatus (*pamong praja*). The fact that the *pamong praja* had become the bastion of local aristocrats is not surprising given the fact that the local bureaucracy had grown out of the dynastic bureaucracy of the 'self-governing territories' dating from the colonial period. The decentralization reforms of 1938 brought about the enlargement of the dynastic bureaucracy, accommodating the fruits of expanded educational opportunities and a growing number of aristocrats (Burhan Magenda 1989:896). With respect to the Philippines, Benedict Anderson (1988) described a so-called 'cacique democracy', in which a well-entrenched oligarchy cooperates with a strong central state machine. Anderson showed how Filipino notables learnt to manipulate electoral politics during the Marcos era. In the following pages I will describe how the aristocratic elite in Wajo tried to survive with 'coerseductive' strategies,¹ when the political system to which they were accustomed began to change.

¹ Syllogism between coercion and seduction, a communication concept introduced by Rene Jean Ravault (1985, 1986).

Map 15. Wajo in South Sulawesi

The role of the Wajo aristocracy in the late New Order

In the late 1980s one member of the aristocracy took measures to restore a solid administrative dynasty in Wajo.² This action was initiated by a senior Wajorese politician with a military background. I will call him 'the Puang', a term of reference used for Buginese of aristocratic descent. He was born in 1942 in Sengkang to an aristocratic family. After he finished high school he entered the army in 1965, whence he built an administrative career within South Sulawesi. He married the daughter of an aristocratic landowner and cattle breeder from Gilirang, and has four children. In 1995 he was promoted to the rank of Colonel. The Puang started his political career by joining Golkar in 1987 as a member of the advisory council (*dewan penasihat*). In the same year he became a member of the Wajo district parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*, DPRD). In 1993 he was elected district branch leader of Golkar as well as of the Wajo DPRD, positions he kept till 2004, when he was eventually elected district head.

Although he gained power basically through the military and the Golkar party, he also used and strengthened his network of family connections. He appointed relatives to various strategic and 'wet', or lucrative, positions in the Wajo bureaucracy. Through the so-called 'Jalur Jati' (*jalur*, direction or way, which refers to *Jalan Jati*,³ the street where the official residence of the chairman of the DPRD was located), people obtained a position or a promotion, and family members emerged as powerful bureaucrats.

The Puang has paved his way to family rule since 1983, when he was (until 1988) in charge of security at the Wajo district office. He succeeded in appointing his brothers and other relatives to different positions within the district office. In 1989 he showed an interest in becoming district head, but decided to concentrate on his military career instead.

In 1993 the Puang reinforced his power when his brother was appointed Second Assistant to the district head, in the Economy and Development Section, where he was in charge of the budget for development projects. This position is considered very lucrative, as its holder determines prices and expenditures and approves the allocation of projects to various contractors. Two other assistants (assistant one and three) are also related to the Puang. Although these do not directly manage funds, their signatures are required in order to approve projects. As all three assistants are relatives of the Puang, deals are concluded smoothly.

² In 2002 Wajo had 359,326 inhabitants spread among 176 villages and small towns (BPS Wajo 2002).

³ It also mirrors *Jalan Cendana*, the street in Jakarta where the Suharto family lives, which is similarly named after a tree.

In 1998, by which time he was chairman of the district parliament, he tried his luck again for district head, but lost the elections to a financially stronger non-aristocratic Buginese Golkar man who was supported by the central government.

The new district head was, however, to play a marginal role in Wajo politics, as he was soon overshadowed by the Puang. For despite his defeat, the Puang managed to strengthen his position in the years 1998-2004 as the number of bureaucrats related to him increased. A number of departmental heads, sub-district heads, and bureau chiefs were put in place through the Jalur Jati. The position of the Puang seemed beyond challenge, and as his power increased, many prominent leaders in Wajo claimed a family relation with him.⁴ Important positions are basically shared amongst his aristocrat relatives and loyal allies. In the mean time, aristocrats not able to use the Jalur Jati are unlikely to be promoted. As one respondent said: 'We know that Jalur Jati is the way to obtain a job, but we do not know who to contact; and if we commit an error while doing so, we will not get a job and lose our bribe money as well. That is the risk.'

Another brother of the Puang is in charge of the Provisions Section (Kepala Bagian Perlengkapan), another lucrative position, in charge of the purchase of all sorts of equipment (television sets, computers, overhead projectors, radios, fax machines, typewriters), tools, vehicles, stationary, furniture (tables, desks, benches), clothes, gifts, and so on. As in many districts in Indonesia, the marking up or duplication of receipts is a widespread practice, and when an inspection is made, the inspector is bribed with plane tickets, hotel vouchers or money deposited in the account of a family member. Another practice is to provide inspectors with letters falsely attesting they have inspected a location (Surat Perjalanan Dinas, SPD), which allow them to claim travel bonuses from their supervisors without having to leave their office. The head of the Provisions Section cooperates with the heads of the Economy Section and the Sub-division of Financial Management and Regional Expenses (Badan Pengelola Keuangan dan Barang Daerah, BPKBD), both of whom are also close relatives of the Puang. Offices (*kantor dinas*) which are considered wealthy, such as Agriculture (the richest), Revenue (the second richest), Transportation, Land, and Information/Communication, as

⁴ Buginese kinship terminology starts with biological brothers and sisters, then first, second, and third cousins. Fourth and fifth cousins are seen as relatives. The children of these cousins are called nephews and nieces, and their grand-children are called grand-children, and so on. The fathers of these cousins are called uncles, and mothers are aunts, and their grand-parents are called grand-parents too. Thus the system of family ties facilitates a wide circle of relatives. For further reference on the Buginese family, see Millar 1989, Pelras 1976, 1996, 2000, Mattulada 1974, and Andi Faisal Bakti 2004. For an example of the familial way Buginese expand their power in Johore-Riau, see L. Andaya 1995.

well as Forest and Soil Conservation (Perhutanan dan Konservasi Tanah) are led by cousins of the Puang.⁵ Furthermore, 10 out of 14 sub-district heads are aristocrats, and they all claim a place in the family tree of the Puang. Four are non-aristocrats, but are connected to the Puang through his relatives.⁶

Since 1988, the Puang had secured the support of members of the aristocracy and wealthy educated non-aristocrats within Golkar. His relatives included the second deputy-chairperson, second deputy-secretary, and third treasurer of Wajo's branch of Golkar. Three out of five section heads are relatives of his, while one of his sisters-in-law was chief of the Women's Affairs section. Apart from relatives, wealthy cronies included the first deputy secretary and the first and second treasurers. Other sections were headed by friends of his.

Although members of the aristocracy formed a minority within Golkar, they still held strategic positions.⁷ Non-aristocrats form a majority in the Wajo district parliament, many of whom managed to graduate from Hasanuddin University in Makassar. As students, many had been active in organizations like Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI, Islamic University Students' Association), Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Students' Union), or Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII, Indonesian Islamic University Students' Movement). Usually, having joined one of these organizations, students also joined the Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia (KNPI,

⁵ In the non-departmental sphere a cousin of the Puang heads the Water Supply Agency (Perusahaan Daerah Air Minum, PDAM), where funds are also literally pouring in. Strangely though, the Logistics Depot (DOLOG, formerly BULOG), a lucrative section which manages agricultural products, in particular rice, is led by an individual not related to the Puang family. One respondent explained: 'The head of DOLOG is a Javanese, and is probably placed there by the central government'.

⁶ Out of 176 *lurah/kepala desa* (urban and rural village heads), 59 are aristocrats and relatives of the Puang. While both govern the same village-sized unit, a *lurah* is in charge of a more developed village. *Kepala desa* are required merely to have a high school diploma. However, *lurah* are required to have an academic degree, preferably from a government academy like the Domestic Government Academy (Akademi Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, APDN). One of these was formerly located in Makassar, before being moved to Bandung and given the status of College of Internal Government Science (Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, STIPDN). Most *lurah* belong to the aristocracy. Many Wajo bureaucrats, in particular in the district office, sub-district heads and their deputies, graduated from these government institutions. The networks of these state schools were further strengthened in South Sulawesi when Ryaas Rasyid, a 1976 alumni of APDN, became rector of the Institute of Ilmu Pemerintahan (IIP) in Jakarta, which also trains bureaucrats. In mid-1998, during the presidency of Habibie, he was appointed Director General of Regional Autonomy. He was then appointed Minister of Regional Autonomy and drafted the regional autonomy policy in Indonesia. Jamaluddin Santo is a close friend of Ryaas Rasyid, and also, through his wife, a relative of the Puang. Jamaluddin Santo's wife is a daughter of Datu Mungkace, a highly respected noble in Wajo, himself related to the Puang. Santo's wife also graduated from APDN and now works in Bappeda, under the leadership of the Puang.

⁷ See H. Schulte Nordholt in this volume for a comparable decline of aristocrats in Bali.

Indonesian National Youth Committee), an association affiliated with Golkar. It was considered to be a 'highway' (*jalur tol*) to Golkar membership. These organizations were quite successful in training emerging non-aristocrats in leadership, organization, and management, as well as administration in South Sulawesi, as elsewhere.⁸ Some aristocrats were also active in these organizations, but they remained marginal.

The Puang was also deputy leader of ICMI's advisory board in the region through which he played a central role.⁹ As the Puang advised on the names of new board members, he had a strong control over the organization. Interestingly, ICMI's treasurer was the same businessman who was also treasurer of Golkar. Another treasurer of ICMI Wajo also headed the Financial Bureau of the district (Badan Keuangan Daerah, BKD). While non-aristocrats are more numerous within the ICMI leadership than aristocrats, interviews show that they greatly respect the Puang.

The Puang also maintained close contacts with businesspeople. All wealthy individuals in Sengkang's central market, such as retailers and store owners, maintain a relationship with Golkar and make regular donations. Apparently, Golkar has a monitoring system to ensure that they remain faith-

⁸ In order to gain political power in South Sulawesi, one needs to gain access, via HMI and KNPI, to Golkar. This was also seen as an avenue for strengthening the position of modernist Islam. Some of these new emerging Muslims, like Marwah Daud, eventually dominated Golkar in South Sulawesi, and established direct links with party leader Akbar Tanjung in Jakarta, who had been a HMI and KNPI leader in the 1970s. However, during Habibie's presidency, this group was disappointed by Akbar Tanjung who competed with Habibie for the Golkar leadership presidency. Habibie comes from Sulawesi and was the preferred leader to South Sulawesians. After Habibie's defeat, disappointed Muslim Golkar leaders established a regional caucus within Golkar named Iramasuka (Irian Maluku, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan). In the late New Order period, the role of other parties (PDI and PPP) was limited. Only those who strongly believed in political Islam supported PPP, while PDI was basically supported by the Toraja minority of Christians in Sengkang, Bottodongga, Siwa, and Lauwa.

⁹ ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) was established in the early 1990s and provided then-Minister of Technology Habibie with a strong constituency. In many cases, governors and district heads became ICMI leaders. ICMI soon branched out throughout the world, in particular in cities with Indonesian embassies and consulates. As a result of ICMI's popularity, ambassadors and consuls almost automatically became ICMI leaders abroad. In South Sulawesi, the retired governor was the advisory board leader of the provincial ICMI branch. A number of former rectors and university professors became deputies or secretaries. In addition, Muslim entrepreneurs, including the spouse of the 2004-2009 elected vice president Jusuf Kalla and her associates were named treasurers.

As ICMI is closer to so-called modernists than to traditionalist Muslims, many among ICMI's board members belong to the Muhammadiyah or HMI. A university professor at the Alauddin Institute (IAIN Alauddin), who graduated from the University of Michigan, became an advisor for ICMI in Wajo and South Sulawesi. He is also the top leader of the As'adiyah Pesantren in Wajo. The Puang supported this *pesantren* financially. While ICMI's board of South Sulawesi mostly includes hajis and non-aristocrats, Wajo board members are mostly hajis and aristocrats with family connections to the Puang.

ful to the party and to consider whether these entrepreneurs should be promoted within Golkar. In fact, one of the biggest businessmen was made treasurer of Golkar.¹⁰ The Puang granted contracts to wealthy entrepreneurs, all Golkar district parliamentarians and who included the treasurer of Golkar, for the construction of district offices and the public transportation terminal in Sengkang. These government projects thus benefited both the Puang and his cronies. As Golkar treasurer, the wealthy Wajo entrepreneur was granted a large number of contracts by the government, including the construction of a road between Ana'banua and Tarungpakkae, a ring road in Sengkang, and a road between Sidrap and Siwa. Apparently, government projects are routinely offered first to state-owned companies (Badan Usaha Milik Negara, BUMN) and then sub-contracted to his company.¹¹

Reformasi and regional autonomy (1998-2003)

After Reformasi the Puang further strengthened his position and took advantage of regional autonomy by keeping relatives and cronies in key posts. Even appointments in companies and NGOs which are not under his direct authority ultimately end up on his desk for approval.

As a result of regional autonomy, the district head is no longer controlled by the provincial governor and the central government. The district head is no longer accountable to the provincial governor but to the members of the district parliament. This explains why the Puang is struggling to ensure that these members – and not only his own Golkar people – are loyal to him. Since 1999, the struggle to obtain parliamentary seats is quite open and new parties have mushroomed. Although Golkar and the military (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, ABRI) fractions continued to dominate, the 1999 elections brought change as PAN, PKB, PPP, PDR, PBB and PDI-P each obtained one seat.¹²

¹⁰ His business includes ten motorbike dealerships, construction companies, textile production, bookstores, contracting offices, etcetera. He also has branch offices in Makassar and Jakarta.

¹¹ Working closely with the Puang is a Chinese businessman. He owns PT Nei Dua Karya Persada, which deals in real estate, construction/development, car rental, gold and electronic equipment retailing. He has been a Golkar treasurer II (Deputy Treasurer) since 1988, when the Puang recruited him. This businessman has financed Golkar and contributes to Golkar's electoral campaigns. In return he gained access to various government projects.

¹² Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN, Party of the National Message); Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, Party of the Awakening of the Nation); Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP, Unity and Development Party); Partai Daulat Rakyat (PDR, Islamic People's Sovereignty Party); Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB, Crescent and Star Party); and Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDI-P, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle).

The power of the Puang was strengthened through his relatives and cronies in the administration from the district to the village levels, as well as in parliament, so that it reached a state of near hegemony. The case of Wajo does, however, not represent South Sulawesi as a whole, where aristocratic hegemony is less evident as only 12 out of 28 district heads belong to the aristocracy.

In 1999, the Puang was elected by the DPRD as chairman for another term. Golkar still dominated the 1999 elections as it won 26 seats. Although the aristocracy formed a minority in the DPRD (with only 10 out of 36 members) the Puang controlled the non-aristocratic members as well. Wealth, education, or marriage into the nobility made it possible for non-aristocrats to become members of the DPRD.¹³ They were approached by the Puang to join Golkar and they even constitute the majority in Golkar (19 out of 26).

In contrast to the composition of the DPRD, the top layer of the Wajo bureaucracy is heavily dominated by the aristocracy, as they occupy 90% of the higher positions. They are all believed to have entered the bureaucratic elite through the Jalur Jati.

The general government assistant, simultaneously head of information and communication, and the tax revenue head are uncles of the Puang. The Puang's cousin, formerly a sub-district head, now heads the Environmental Protection Programme, with a significant budget for ecology. While his brother-in-law heads the General Government Administration Section (Kabag Tata Pemerintahan Umum), his cousin, son of a former district head in the 1960s-1970s, was named district secretary. His two brothers remain in their positions, as respectively district government assistant for economy and development, and provisions section head. The Head of the Incomes Section remained under the leadership of his nephew. Two relatives from Gilirang, the town of origin of the Puang, are head of Information and Communication, and Third Assistant (Administrative and Finance). The head of transportation is a close relative of the Puang. Two relatives of the Puang also remained at their posts as head of Agriculture and Forest, and of Soil Conservation. The chief of the Security Bureau is the Puang's cousin. Ten out of fourteen sub-district heads are said to have been promoted through Jalur Jati. The sub-district head of Tempe (Sengkang) is the Puang's cousin. The General Election Committee (Komite Pemilihan Umum, KPU) was also headed by a close relative of the district chief. A son of a former district head (in the 1960s) was appointed head of Guidance and Counselling (*penyuluhan*), while the district secretary is a son of another former district head, and an aristocrat.

The Puang also maintained his grip on the Wajo business community and in particular the small group of Chinese entrepreneurs. Regional autonomy

¹³ Thirteen members of the DPRD are hajis, which indicates their wealth.

had changed the way in which these entrepreneurs operate. As one entrepreneur explained:

Regional autonomy facilitates our business and lobbying. During the previous period, the bureaucracy was very complicated and we had to lobby in Jakarta. Now, everything is done here. The DPRD is also independent now, so we can easily lobby each parliamentarian. Under the previous district head [1998-2003], the district government was strong. But, imagine, since regional autonomy and a district head who is an aristocrat [referring to the Puang], government is even stronger now! In addition, under regional autonomy, there is less paperwork and lobbying is easier. I attended the same school as the current district secretary, which makes it easy to have access to the bureaucracy. I am also a close friend of the head of Facilities and Provisions, who is a brother of the Puang. These links helped me join Golkar, and become deputy-treasurer. This position gives me an opportunity to have access to Golkar's leaders. I was even asked to become a Golkar legislative candidate in the last elections, but I declined, as I prefer to do business.

In Wajo, civil society organizations were not able to establish an independent counterweight to the dominance of the Puang. Instead, they were incorporated into his regime.

As'adiyah, the oldest religious school (*pesantren*) in Wajo is affiliated with the Nahdlatul Ulama, but supports Golkar. In return the Puang granted the *pesantren* various facilities, such as a school and a dormitory, mosques, and houses for teachers, and donated Rp 100 million to renovate the *pesantren* leader's house.

Similarly, Muhammadiyah in Wajo is also not very critical. But DPRD members of PAN, the political party most closely related to Muhammadiyah, voiced criticism about corruption and the dominant role of the aristocracy, as a result of which they were eventually isolated by the Puang group.

Among the 400 NGOs in Wajo, only four are perceived as critical. They include AISS (Aku Ingin Sehat Sejahtera, 'I would like to be healthy and prosperous'), and the Sabri Study Club. The leader of AISS complained that many NGOs stopped criticizing government wrongdoings once they were seduced by money or coerced by the Puang. She criticized in particular the Puang, his relatives and followers for monopolizing the leading positions in Wajo. She mobilized people in Sengkang in order to clean up the Muslim cemetery, the dilapidated state of which had been left unnoticed by the government. While some bureaucrats under the Puang have called her mad or strange, she has a growing number of sympathizers, as her actions demonstrated that it is possible to criticize the government without being arrested.

The Sabri Study Club has cooperated with AISS, but its leader's preoccupations basically lie with education and language. He is worried about the fate of the Buginese language, and the reluctance of the government to promote local cultures and Islamic education. According to him, Islam should

allow anyone, irrespective of his or her origins, to rule the region.

According to another NGO activist it seems that regional autonomy has made bureaucrats at the district level into warlords:

District secretaries are very powerful. In addition, all staff members have to 'obey' the district head, which for them represents the aristocracy. They have been coerced to vote Golkar. Individuals are also promised they will keep their positions or will be promoted following the election of a selected candidate. Usually, politicians promise a community or a village they will get a road or a mosque, if they are elected. The government has also given money to opinion makers. A motorbike was promised to each village head (*kepala desa*), while individuals were offered a trip to Mecca as a reward for their support.¹⁴

In South Sulawesi several cities have their own newspapers. The city of Makassar has *Pedoman Rakyat* and *Fajar*, the most widely read newspapers in South Sulawesi. The *Parepare Pos* is published in Parepare, while Palopo, a city in the north, has the *Palopo Pos*. Sengkang had the *Merdeka Pos*, which was closed in January 2004, after two years in business. Many believe that this latter newspaper was created by the Puang for the sole purpose of supporting his election as district head. After the Puang was elected, the newspaper lost its usefulness and was closed.

Some of the newspapers were quite critical of the misconduct of the South Sulawesi government including the Wajo administration. *Pedoman Rakyat*, *Fajar*, *Parepare Pos* and *Palopo Pos* often published articles and letters to the editor on malpractices by Wajo bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and members of parliament.¹⁵ However, it appears that journalists have also been approached and bribed by government representatives in order not to publish these stories. The practice occurs on both sides. According to an NGO leader:

We sometimes meet journalists seemingly 'without a press', who have introduced themselves and interviewed us. As we were critical of the Puang administration, they asked us to pay them in order to print this interview, to make the news. However, although we paid, we have never seen that interview published, either because the newspaper for which this journalist supposedly worked does not exist, or because this journalist was bribed further in order for his article not to be published.¹⁶

¹⁴ Apparently, some members of the 'Success Team' of the Puang were brought to Mecca for *umrah* (short pilgrimage).

¹⁵ For example the inappropriate involvement of the Puang's cronies in the various projects has been exposed. Quite often, local issues are covered, such as embezzlement of project funds (a Rp 20.3 billion port construction project in Bansalae, North Wajo, see for example *Fajar* 2-3-2005) and the controversy about a rice processing centre in Ana'banua, Wajo.

¹⁶ See also McCarthy in this volume.

The elections of 2004: old networks in a new context

Four months before the general elections in April 2004, the Puang was elected by the members of the parliament as district head, and was officially inaugurated in February 2004. His 'opponent', who received only three votes, was an aristocrat from his own family whose candidacy had to demonstrate that democracy is operative in Wajo. The position of district head was the crowning of a long political career, but soon his solid powerbase in the DPRD would be challenged.

During the elections of April 2004 for the district parliament, Golkar had to face a serious decline in popular support as it lost 9 seats (from 26 to 17).¹⁷ As a result, Golkar also lost the majority in the DPRD of Wajo. The decline of Golkar would have been more dramatic without the efforts of the Puang to consolidate the position of Golkar. According to a member of the KPU (the General Election Committee), a letter of the Puang circulated among the members of the KPU and the bureaucracy in which he instructed the lower administrative officials to secure a Golkar victory.

The main challenge to his regime came from two modernist Islamic parties, PAN and PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Prosperous Justice Party). PAN managed to win five seats and based its emergence on a substantial Muhammadiyah following. PKS is a new party without a strong local constituency, which nevertheless won four seats. Its rise can largely be attributed to the fact that the party used Habibie's picture on its campaign leaflets throughout South Sulawesi, thus suggesting that Habibie was its presidential candidate (although Habibie was at the time not even in Indonesia).

These changes did not immediately imply that the Puang had lost his dominance in the DPRD. The number of DPRD members with an aristocratic background rose from 10 to 14, the majority of whom were in one way or another connected with the Puang.¹⁸ Also in terms of wealth, representatives of the upper middle class, many of whom are allied with the Puang, still dominate the DPRD of Wajo.¹⁹

Conclusion

In general, tensions between aristocrats and non-aristocrats seem to have

¹⁷ In 1999 the members of parliament numbered 36, but since the military seat was removed after the 2004 elections, this went down to 35. As Golkar won 17 out of 35, its share was reduced to less than 50%, a serious blow to Golkar's popularity.

¹⁸ Only 10% of the population belongs to the aristocracy, but this group occupies 40% of the seats in the Wajo DPRD.

¹⁹ Fifteen members of the DPRD are haji, and 19 have an academic title.

come to the surface, although they are rarely acknowledged explicitly. Within the aristocracy, competition has also increased as people prepare themselves for a power struggle once the rule of the Puang has come to an end.²⁰

The impact of the Puang on Wajo politics has been considerable. Although he was from aristocratic descent it was his career within the New Order state that brought him to power in Wajo. His rise within the army and his move into Golkar provided him with a powerful starting point, from whence he could expand his personal network, the core of which consisted of family relationships. So it was the strong New Order state that initially facilitated his political career in Wajo, but his rise to local power was based on the articulation of institutional power with a wide patron-client network. Together these framed the patrimonial rule of the Puang. Regional autonomy accelerated his career, which eventually resulted in his election as district head in 2004 and gave him the opportunity to establish a hegemonic regime in Wajo. What this case study has shown is that decentralization and regional autonomy have reinforced autocratic rule instead of establishing good governance, transparency and democracy.

However, electoral democracy enabled opponents to gain ground as Golkar lost its majority. The rule of the Puang was primarily based on his ability to control and command the local state and its DPRD. It remains to be seen to what extent this 'cacique democracy' can survive when in the future the new district head will be directly elected by the population.

²⁰ At the time of writing (mid-2005), the Puang's brother, who is now Assistant Two, was being prepared to replace him, in the event of the Puang being unable to continue.