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## **Revitalizing Grassroots Democracy: A Failed Attempt from a Sri Lankan Municipal Council**

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Participatory budgeting promotes grassroots democracy, and social justice so as to empower civil society. Such a budgeting practice creates a new space for citizens to raise their voices. As demonstrated in the literature, the intended outcomes and effects of PB could be different by its design, socio-economic and political context, and legal background in which a local authority operates. Similarly, many studies demonstrate how PB is used by local governments in different international contexts. However, one particular study has paid attention to PB in Sri Lanka. Drawing on Bourdieu's relational approach, this study aims to explore how the PB practice becomes instrumental to revitalize local democracy through the budgeting process at a Sri Lankan Municipal Council. This qualitative study is based on semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and field observation. This study reveals that local politicians do not interfere in the collection of the council's revenue. However, they utilize various forms of capital to pursue political gain. This means that PB could particularly be exploited by the local politicians for their personal advantage. In contrast to grassroots politicians, bureaucratic leadership emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the social well-being of residents in the process of budgeting. Bureaucracy is not leaned to organize the public meetings to obtain resident's proposals as they perform duties on the basis of the regulatory procedures. Such behaviour keeps the citizen participation away from the budgetary process and does not contribute to promoting and revitalizing grassroots democracy.

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