

**When Decentralisation becomes Centralisation:  
An Ethnographic Study about Teachers' Experiences of  
Participation in Decision-making in a Secondary School in the  
Pinetown District**

**Thamsanqa Thulani Bhengu and Yachna Gowpall**

*School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*

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**ABSTRACT** This paper presents the perspectives of three teachers from Rosemary Secondary School about their experiences of participation in decision-making processes and the extent to which their participation had an effect on teaching and learning in the classroom. The school is located in the Pinetown District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Restructuring and decentralisation of authority from the national levels to local levels has over the past 20 years or so, received increased attention worldwide including South Africa. This was based largely on the belief that where decision-making powers have been decentralised to local levels, better decisions and ownership prevail. However, the narratives from the teachers indicate that while decentralisation of power to school level has become a common feature in South Africa, centralisation tendencies can still be observed in certain schools such as Rosemary Secondary.