

Who makes History?

Authority, ownership and remembrance of the past in a multidimensional Leiden neighbourhood, Transvaal 1860-2025¹



Applicants

Supervisor Name	Discipline
Prof.dr. Ariadne Schmidt Professor of History of Urban Culture, senior lecturer Social and Economic History a.schmidt@hum.leidenuniv.nl	Institute for History
Prof.dr. Jan-Bart Gewalt Professor of African History and Director of the African Studies Centre Leiden j.b.gewald@ascleiden.nl	African Studies Centre
Dr. Alicia Schrikker Senior University Lecturer Colonial and Global History a.schrikker@hum.leidenuniv.nl	Institute for History

Project description (300 words)

Public history is a vast developing field that engages local communities in the making of history. It raises questions about how to connect academic history with the perceptions of the past of diverse

¹ Bronnen illustratie: Leiden.courant.nu; Collectie Stichting Industrieel Erfgoed/ N.J. Bavelaar, Pel suikerwerkenfabriek: medewerksters aan het werk op de beschilderafdeling, ca. 1960; L.E. Nieuwenhuizen Sperciebonen ErfgoedLeiden.nl; Museum de Lakenhal.

groups of individuals.² Shared authority is key.³ “Who makes history?” is therefore a relevant question, which this project applies to Transvaal: a Leiden neighbourhood named after an Afrikaner Boer republic in South Africa.

Transvaal, hidden between Leiden Central Station and the Rhine, is a goldmine for historians: large mansions on the Morsweg were built in the nineteenth century by Leiden’s new elite, many of whom made their fortune by investments in sugar in Java, Indonesia. In the early twentieth century streets were renamed after Afrikaner heroes of the Anglo-Boer wars. In many ways, Transvaal, resonates the high colonial and global moment in which the neighbourhood was borne. Yet new housing blocks, built for factory workers of the canned-food factory *De sleutels*, represent a highly localised history. In a unique way local, colonial and global history come together in Transvaal. After all, the canned vegetables produced by the local workers followed colonial tracks to remote islands of Indonesia.

The neighbourhood has changed tremendously over time. But some neighbours still remember the days of the factories. Also Transvaal’s infamous reputation as *hakbijlenbuurt* survived. With Leiden’s new urban development plans, further changes are under way.⁴ This makes the question urgent: what do neighbours of Transvaal tell each other about the history of their place and what would they like to know and pass on to the future?

By using a public-history approach this project will 1) reconstruct Transvaal’s Global and local history, 2) inventorise how the past is remembered and communicated in Transvaal and 3) identify ways in which to engage the neighbourhood itself in the production of this history.

Research Trainee Profile

“Who makes history” will be the first, preparatory, phase of our Transvaal public history project that we hope to integrate in the Leiden City of Science program of 2022 through education and research. The research trainees will help us set up this project from scratch, by inventorising archival material, conducting research, organise a meeting with community members and to help develop a BA3 course. Together with the supervisor they will work the first results into an academic article. The project thus offers students the chance to develop their research skill, alongside skills in community outreach and valorisation and course development.

The traineeships will be particularly suitable for first-year ResMA and MA Students or outstanding BA students from history or with a history related track in their program. Students with experience in public history or oral history are especially encouraged to apply. Students need to be able to read Dutch.

Collaboration (300 words)

The project improves collaboration and cross-pollination on various levels

1) The project brings together public history, social and economic history, global history, and African studies in a public history project.

² Faye Sayer, *Public History. A Practical Guide*. 2nd edition (London/New York 2019) 6-7; Thomas Cauvin, *Public History. A Textbook of Practice* (New York 2016) 107-108.

³ Cauvin, 14-15

⁴ https://gemeente.leiden.nl/inwoners-en-ondernemers/werkzaamheden-in-leiden/bouwen-aan-de-stad/demors/#c5310_tab2

2) The project transcends boundaries between academic history and public history and strengthens relations between the university and the city by cooperating with local stakeholders (neighbours, Wijkvereniging⁵, Sjoerd Schipaanbood). Partnerships with policy makers will be established with the help of <https://www.leidenkennisstad.nl/lerenmetdestad/> (Marieke van Haaren).

3) The project lays the basis for a BA3 seminar on the History of Transvaal, offered as a joint course for students of the different *secties* Algemene Geschiedenis, Economische en Sociale Geschiedenis and Nederlandse Geschiedenis, taught by the supervisors. Students participating in this course will contribute to a public history event for Leiden City of Science, 2022.

Prof. dr. Ariadne Schmidt is specialised in urban history, social and economic history and public history. In 2018 she was granted the Magdalena Moons Chair of the History of Urban Culture, in which capacity she plays a role in strengthening the relation between the university and the city, Leiden's heritage institutions and historical associations.

Prof. Dr. Jan Bart Gewalt works at the African Studies centre and is professor of African history, who specializes in the history of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th century. He will supervise the African dimension of the project, in particular in relation to the naming of the neighbourhood, and the controversial historical roles of the name-givers of Transvaal's streets.

Dr. Alicia Schrikker is specialised in colonial and global history and works mainly on the history of colonialism in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. She will be responsible for supervising the colonial dimension of the project. Furthermore as local inhabitant and member of the wijkvereniging, she is key in making connections in the neighbourhood.

Deliverables (160 words)

Items	Deliverables	By whom
Public outreach		
A1	Public research report (vlog or videoclip) on website www.Leidenhistorischlab.nl	Student 1&2
A2	Theme evening "Memory and history in Transvaal" Presentation of the results and dialogue with the neighbourhood with <i>Wijkvereniging</i> Transvaal and Leiden policy makers.	Student 1&2
A3	Public history activity as part of the Leiden City of Science 2022, in cooperation with local stakeholders	Supervisors & BA3 Seminar students (optional student1&2)
Educational outreach		
B1	Co-development of BA3 seminar, a joint course for students in Algemene Geschiedenis, Economische en Sociale Geschiedenis or Nederlandse Geschiedenis, on the (public) history of Transvaal,	Student 1&2 & supervisors

⁵ <https://www.transvaalleiden.nl/>

	2021/2022	
Scholarly outreach		
C1	Written research report presenting results of inventorisation of the archival material, history & public history of Transvaal to be used as input for 1) teaching activities 2) paper & article	Student 1&2
C2	Conference paper ESOF 2022 Public history & identity	Student 1&2 & supervisors
C3	Article peer reviewed journal <i>Stadsgeschiedenis</i>	Student 1&2 & supervisors

Planning (142 words)

	Kick-off meeting research team	1 February
	Inventorisation of archival material in Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, Literature and archival research on history of Transvaal.	February - April
	Fieldwork on the public history of Transvaal: talking and walking through the neighbourhood	April - May
A1	Public research report (Vlog or videoclip)	May
A2	Theme-evening: presentation results and dialogue with local stakeholders	June
C1	Writing research report	June
C2, C3	Draft paper/ article	June-August
B1	Co-development BA3 seminar	August
B1	BA 3 seminar 'History in Transvaal' With possibility for students 1&2 to give a guest lecture BA3 joint seminar (optional)	Academic year 2021/2022, Semester II
A3	Public history activity Leiden City of Science 2022	2022
	Finalizing paper and article by supervisors (optional for student 1&2)	Spring 2022
C2	Presenting paper ESOF by supervisors (optional for student 1&2)	Summer 2022
C3	Submitting article <i>Stadsgeschiedenis</i>	Summer 2022

Student Application

Applications should be sent to a.f.schrikker@hum.leidenuniv.nl, j.b.gewald@asc.leidenuniv.nl and a.schmidt@hum.leidenuniv.nl and should include a CV and a cover letter (max. 1,000 words) describing the student's interest in working in a public history project.