

Joep van Lit

Department of Political Science, Radboud University, Nijmegen

✉ joep.vanlit@ru.nl

Current Position

Postdoctoral Researcher in Comparative Political Science

Radboud University

11.2025 - present

Lecturer in Comparative Political Science

Radboud University

10.2020 - present

Previous Positions

PhD Candidate in Comparative Political Science

Radboud University

10.2020 - 10.2025

Visiting Researcher

Varieties of Democracy Institute, Gothenburg University

03.2023 - 06.2023

Junior Lecturer in Public Administration

Leiden University

09.2019 - 10.2020

Education

Doctorate in Political Science

cum laude

Radboud University

Dissertation title: *Beautiful Spark of Democracy: The Conditions for Democratic Defence Against Incumbent-led Democratic Recession*

10.2020 - 10.2025

Supervisors: prof. dr. Carolien van Ham and prof. dr. Maurits Meijers

MSc. res. in Political Science and Public Administration

cum laude

Leiden University

09.2017 - 09.2019

BA in African Studies

cum laude

Leiden University

09.2015 - 05.2018

BSc in Political Science

Leiden University

09.2012 - 03.2016

Publications

Peer-reviewed articles

- A.5 **van Lit, J.** (forthcoming) "Gambiting democracy: When civil servants do (or do not) defend democracy", accepted at *European Journal of Political Research*.
- A.4 **van Lit, J.** & C. van Ham (2025). "The Would-be Autocrats' Toolkit: What Do Incumbents Do When They Undermine Democracy?" *European Political Science Review, First View*, 1-20. [Link](#) (open access).
- A.3 **van Lit, J.** & M. Meijers (2025). "Defending Democracy: Investigating the Efficacy of Elite Democratic Defence in a Competitive Information Environment" *West European Politics, First View*, 1-34. [Link](#) (open access).
- A.2 Honingh, M., **J. van Lit** & C. van Ham (2025). "Democratie als ge(s)laagd samenspel." *Beleid en Maatschappij*, 52(2), 88-104. [Link](#).
- A.1 **van Lit, J.**, C. van Ham & M. Meijers (2023). "Countering Autocratization: A Roadmap for Democratic Defence." *Democratization*, 31(4), 765-787. [Link](#) (open access).

Books, book-chapters, reports, and non-peer-reviewed articles

- B.6 **van Lit, J.** (2025). *Beautiful Spark of Democracy: The Conditions for Democratic Defence Against Incumbent-led Democratic Recession*. Doctoral dissertation, Radboud University Press. [Link](#) (open access).
- B.5 **van Lit, J.** & C. van Ham (2025). "Duurzame democratie op het decentrale niveau" in *Met het oog op de toekomst: Essaybundel bij de Staat van het Bestuur 2024*, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. [Link](#) (Dutch, open access).
- B.4 van Wessel, M., van Paassen, B. & **J. van Lit** (2025). *Tegen democratische erosie: Samen scherp op inpoerking van maatschappelijke tegenmacht*. [Link](#) (Dutch, open access).
Translated as *Against democratic recession: Recognizing suppression of civil counterpower*. [Link](#) (English, open access).
- B.3b **van Lit, J.**, M. Meijers & C. van Ham (2024). "Normbesef en Normstelling" in M. Honingh and C. van Ham (eds.) *Verkenning en verdieping democratische erosie en respons in Nederland*, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. [Link](#) (Dutch, open access).
- B.3a **van Lit, J.**, C. van Ham & M. Honingh (2024). "Startnotitie expertmeeting democratische erosie" in M. Honingh and C. van Ham (eds.) *Verkenning en verdieping democratische erosie en respons in Nederland*, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. [Link](#) (Dutch, open access).
- B.2 **van Lit, J.** (2024). "Opvattingen over democratie in Nederland" in R. Voogd *et al.* (eds.), *De verkiezingen van 2023. Van onderstroom naar doorbraak: Onvrede en migratie*, the Dutch parliamentary election study (2023). [Link](#) (open access).
- B.1 Ruth-Lovell, S., R. Kindt, **J. van Lit** & M. Theuwis (2024). "Populism and Democracy" in R. Huber and M. Jankowski (eds.), *Populism: An Introduction*, Sage. [Link](#).

Working Papers

Submitted and under review

- S.2 **van Lit, J.**, M. Meijers & C. van Ham (resubmitted after reviews in September, 2025). "Credible Resistance or Political Ploy? When Parliamentarians Stand Up for Democracy", *Journal of European Public Policy*.
- S.1 **van Lit, J.**, M. Meijers & C. van Ham (resubmitted after reviews in November, 2025). "Who are effective democratic defenders? How elites shape citizen awareness of democratic recession", *Democratization*.

Conference papers

- WP.8 Wunsch, N., **J. van Lit** & T. Petrova. "Justifying the Unjustifiable: In-party Cues and Citizen Acceptance of Democratic Transgressions." OSF Preprint.
- WP.7 Janssen, L., **J. van Lit** & H. Werner. "Democratic Dilemma: How Citizens Evaluate Resistance to Autocratization that Violates Democratic Principles."
- WP.6 **Van Lit, J.** & L. Janssen. "The autocrat strikes back: Autocratic countermoves against democratic defence."
- van Dijk, R. & **J. van Lit**. "When push comes to shove: the normalization of political violence."
- WP.5 Awarded the **best paper award** by the ECPR Standing Group on Political Violence at the 2025 ECPR General Conference
- WP.4 **J. van Lit**. "Deconstructing Understandings of Democracy."
- WP.3 **J. van Lit**. "Autocratic Counterfactuals: Rethinking the Role of Institutions in Sustaining Democracy."
- WP.2 Petrova, T., **J. van Lit** & N. Wunsch. "The Double-Edged Sword of Democratic Accountability: Party Normative Leadership and the Electoral Costs of Democratic Transgressions."
- WP.1 Petrova, T., **J. van Lit** & N. Wunsch. "Negotiating Democracy: Uncommitted Majorities, Eroding Democracies."

Teaching

(Evaluations available upon request)

Qualifications

2020 **University Teaching Qualification (BKO)** Leiden University

Radboud University

Research Design in Political Science	<i>Ontwerp en Methoden van Politicologisch Onderzoek</i>	2025 - present
course coordinator and lecturer	· BSc in Political Science	undergraduate level
Comparative Politics: Democratization	with Carolien van Ham	2023 - present
course lecturer	· BSc in Political Science	undergraduate level
Advanced Research Methods	with Erika van Elsas	2022 - present
course lecturer	· MSc in Political Science	graduate level
Academic Skills for Political Scientists	<i>Academische Vaardigheden voor Politicologen</i>	
course coordinator (2021 - 2025) and seminar tutor	· BSc in Political Science	undergraduate level
Introduction to Data Science for Social Scientists	with Michal Mochtak	2020 - present
course lecturer	· MSc in Political Science	graduate level
BSc Thesis supervision		2020 - 2024
BSc in Political Science	· undergraduate level	
Comparative Research Methods		2024
project supervisor	· Research Master in Social Cultural Science	graduate level
Internship supervision		2023
BSc in Political Science	· undergraduate level	
Introduction to R for PhD Candidates		2022
course lecturer	· IMR Graduate School	PhD level
Explanations of Political Attitudes and Political Behavior in the Netherlands		
<i>Verklaringen van Politieke Houdingen en Politiek Gedrag in Nederland</i>		2021
seminar tutor	· BSc in Political Science	undergraduate level

Leiden University

Statistics Statistiek		2020
seminar tutor · BSc in Public Administration · undergraduate level		
Policy, Governance, and Organisation Beleid, Bestuur, en Organisatie		2020
seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level		
Public Management and Organisations Publiek Management en Organisaties		2020
seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level		
Public Management Publiek Management		2020
course lecturer and course coordinator · Pre-Master Public Administration		
Organisational Theory Organisatietheorie		2019
seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level		
Quantitative Methods Kwantitatieve Methoden		2019
seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level		
Introduction to Social Scientific Research Inleiding Sociaal Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek		2019
seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level		
Public Administration and Administrative Sciences Openbaar Bestuur en Bestuurswetenschappen		2019
seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level		

Outreach and Valorisation

Policy advice

- 12.2025 Expert panel on democratic resilience with civil servants at the Dutch Ministry of the Interior
- 06.2025 Lecture to the strategic coordinators of the Dutch provinces on the resilience of democracy
- 03.2025 Lecture on the role of sub-national governance in the resilience of democracies at the Dutch Day of Governance (*Dag van het Bestuur*). [Link](#).
- 01.2025 International Conference on Democratic Resilience, organized by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
- 06.2023 Roundtable with the Permanent Committee on the Interior of the Dutch Parliament on the resilience of Dutch democracy. [Link](#) (Dutch).

Media appearances

- 10.2025 **De Nieuws BV:** Steeds meer autocratieën: Hoe staat Nederland ervoor? [*on Dutch democracy during election day*]. [Link](#).
- 09.2025 **SPIL news** [youth focused online news outlet]: Is Amerika nog een democratie? [*on US democracy and the cancellation of Kimmel's show*]. [Link](#).
- 09.2025 **EenVandaag:** Brokkelt de democratie in Nederland langzaam af? Jullie vragen over autocratie beantwoord [*on the difference between autocracy and democracy*]. [Link](#).
- 09.2025 **Radio1 / EenVandaag:** Feit of fictie [*on the prevalence of autocracies and democracies worldwide*]. [Link](#).
- 06.2025 **Reuters:** Dutch government collapses after far-right leader Wilders quits coalition. [Link](#).
- 12.2024 **Vrij Nederland:** Hoe uiterst rechts de EU van binnenuit ondermijnt [*on anti-democratic tendencies in the EU*]. [Link](#).

Invited public talks

- 11.2025 Lecture and discussion on the appeal of autocracies at Studium Generale, Tilburg University [Link](#).
- 11.2025 Discussion on resilient democracies at Tegenlicht Meet-Up, Utrecht [Link](#).
- 09.2025 Debate on the future of Dutch Democracy at Erasmus University Rotterdam. [Link](#).
- 06.2025 Debate on democratic erosion in the Netherlands at Arminius Debatcentrum. [Link](#).
- 06.2025 Lecture at Radboud Reflects: Voter or Capital: Who Defines Democracy? [Link](#).
- 06.2025 Lecture at Radboud Reflects: Equality according to Piketty and Sandel. [Link](#).
- 02.2025 Lecture at Radboud Reflects: Trump, Musk, and DOGE. [Link](#).
- 01.2024 Lecture at Radboud Reflects: Anti-democratic Politics in Europe. [Link](#).
- 12.2023 European Strategic Dialogue on the implications of the Polish electoral shift. [Link](#).
- 11.2022 Wat is er KROM in je rechtsstaat? Ralk show about the Dutch rule of law. [Link](#).
- 10.2022 Autocratic Backsliding. Presentation and Q&A at the Dutch festival of democracy, Grondfest. [Link](#).

Conferences and Workshops

(P - Paper & Presentation, D - Discussant, C - Chair)

Conferences

APSA Annual Meeting 2024 (P.)

EPSA Annual Conference 2023 (P.), 2024 (P.)

Workshops

06.2025	Is Dutch Democracy in Decline? Annual Political Science Workshops of the Low Countries	Workshop director
05.2022	Citizens' democratic commitment in times of affective polarisation ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops	(P.D.)
09.2024	Resilience against Extremism Free University of Amsterdam	(P.)
07.2024	Responding to Demand? Voters' grievances, PRR success, and mainstream party strategies University of Swansea	(P.)
05.2024	Democracy and its Discontents University of Pavia	(P.)
04.2024	Roots of Resilience: Democratic Durability, Renovation and Re-Democratization University of Birmingham	(P.)
03.2024	Sounding the Alarm: Comparing Early Signs of Democratic Recession in Established and Backsliding Democracies ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops ·  more info	Workshop director
09.2023	Resisting the autocratic turn: Can (and should) autocratization be prevented, stopped, and resisted? Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)	(P.D.)
08.2023	Citizens' Attitudes towards Democracy: Measurement, Causes, and Consequences ETH Zürich	(P.D.)
04.2023	Judicial Resilience and Democratic Decay ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops	(P.D.)
06.2022	Turning the Tide – Autocratization and Democratic Defence during the Third Wave of Autocratization Annual Political Science Workshops of the Low Countries	Workshop director
04.2022	Domestic responses to Democratic Backsliding: Citizens, Civil Society, and Parties ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops	(P.D.)

Skills

Programming	R, \LaTeX , Atlas.ti, Markdown, Qualtrics
Methods	Surveys, experiments, big data, quantitative text analysis, data visualisation, elite interviews
Office Software	MS Office, Adobe Creative Suite, Zotero, Obsidian
Languages	Dutch (<i>mother tongue</i>), English (<i>fluent, C2</i>)
Free time	Marathon running, too-bad-for-words crime novels, classical music (cello)

Professional Development

Grants

- 2025 **University of Zürich** approx. €9.500 (CHF 9.000) for experimental research, with Lisa Janssen and Hannah Werner
- 2025 **NWO Open Competition SSH-XS** €50.000 for the development of research into experimental deepfakes · research associate, with Michal Mochtak ·  [more info](#)
- 2024 **Hotspot Sustainable Democracy** €1.500 for experimental research, with Rozemarijn van Dijk
- 2023 **Erasmus+ Research Fellowship** €5.987 for research stay
- 2022 **ECPR Early Career Scholar Grant** approx. €2.000 for conference attendance

Awards

- 2025 **Best Paper Award** of the ECPR Standing Group on Political Violence for the paper "When push comes to shove: the normalization of political violence", co-authored with Rozemarijn van Dijk
- 2024 **PhD of the Year** Nijmegen School of Management
- 2020 **Annual Research Award as "Team Democracy"** Nijmegen School of Management

Reviewer

Democratization, European Journal of Political Research, Acta Politica