

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) "Gambitting 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." |
| WP.5 | van Dijk, R. & J. van Lit . "When push comes to shove: the normalization of political violence." 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> course coordinator and lecturer · BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level | 2025 - present |
| · | Comparative Politics: Democratization with Carolien van Ham course lecturer · BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level | 2023 - present |
| · | Advanced Research Methods with Erika van Elsas course lecturer · MSc in Political Science · graduate level | 2022 - present |
| · | Academic Skills for Political Scientists <i>Academische Vaardigheden voor Politicologen</i> course coordinator (2021 - 2025) and seminar tutor · BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level | 2020 - present |
| · | Introduction to Data Science for Social Scientists with Michal Mochtak course lecturer · MSc in Political Science · graduate level | 2024 - present |
| · | BSc Thesis supervision BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level | 2020 - 2024 |
| · | Comparative Research Methods project supervisor · Research Master in Social Cultural Science · graduate level | 2024 |
| · | Internship supervision BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level | 2023 |
| · | Introduction to R for PhD Candidates course lecturer · IMR Graduate School · PhD level | 2022 |
| · | Explanations of Political Attitudes and Political Behavior in the Netherlands <i>Verklaringen van Politieke Houdingen en Politiek Gedrag in Nederland</i> seminar tutor · BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level | 2021 |

Leiden University

| | | |
|---|---|------|
| · | Statistics <i>Statistiek</i> | 2020 |
| | seminar tutor · BSc in Public Administration · undergraduate level | |
| · | Policy, Governance, and Organisation <i>Beleid, Bestuur, en Organisatie</i> | 2020 |
| | seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level | |
| · | Public Management and Organisations <i>Publiek Management en Organisaties</i> | 2020 |
| | seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level | |
| · | Public Management <i>Publiek Management</i> | 2020 |
| | course lecturer and course coordinator · Pre-Master Public Administration | |
| · | Organisational Theory <i>Organisatietheorie</i> | 2019 |
| | seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level | |
| · | Quantitative Methods <i>Kwantitatieve Methoden</i> | 2019 |
| | seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level | |
| · | Introduction to Social Scientific Research <i>Inleiding Sociaal Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek</i> | 2019 |
| | seminar tutor · BSc Public Administration · undergraduate level | |
| · | Public Administration and Administrative Sciences <i>Openbaar Bestuur en Bestuurswetenschappen</i> | 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 (<i>Dag van het Bestuur</i>). 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? [<i>on Dutch democracy during election day</i>]. Link . |
| 09.2025 | SPIL news [youth focused online news outlet]: Is Amerika nog een democratie? [<i>on US democracy and the cancellation of Kimmel's show</i>]. Link . |
| 09.2025 | EenVandaag: Brokkelt de democratie in Nederland langzaam af? Jullie vragen over autocratie beantwoord [<i>on the difference between autocracy and democracy</i>]. Link . |
| 09.2025 | Radio1 / EenVandaag: Feit of fictie [<i>on the prevalence of autocracies and democracies worldwide</i>]. 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 [<i>on anti-democratic tendencies in the EU</i>]. 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 | <i>Workshop director</i> |
| 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 | <i>Workshop director</i> |
| 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 | <i>Workshop director</i> |
| 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