

Joep van Lit

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Current Positions

Postdoctoral Researcher in Comparative Political Science

Department of European Studies, University of Fribourg

03.2026 - present

Postdoctoral Researcher in Comparative Political Science

Department of Political Science, Radboud University

11.2025 - present

Previous Positions

Lecturer in Comparative Political Science

Radboud University

10.2020 - 02.2026

PhD Candidate in Comparative Political Science

Radboud University

10.2020 - 10.2025

Visiting Researcher

Varieties of Democracy Institute, Gothenburg University

03.2023 - 06.2023

Lecturer in Public Administration

Leiden University

09.2019 - 10.2020

Education

Doctorate in Political Science

cum laude

Radboud University

Dissertation: *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.6 **van Lit, J.** (2026) "Administrative Democratic Defence: Under What Circumstances Do Civil Servants Counter Autocratization?", *European Journal of Political Research, Online First*. [Link](#) (open access).
- A.5 **Van Lit, J.**, M. Meijers & C. van Ham (2026). "When elites defend democracy, do citizens listen? How elites alert citizens to democratic recession", *Democratization, Online First*. [Link](#).
- A.4 **van Lit, J.** & C. van Ham (2026). "The Would-be Autocrats' Toolkit: What Do Incumbents Do When They Undermine Democracy?" *European Political Science Review, 18*(1), 138-157. [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, blogs, and non-peer-reviewed articles

- B.8 van Dijk, R. & **J. van Lit** (2026). What political violence does to citizens. *ECPR The Loop Blog*. [Link](#) (open access).
- B.7 **van Lit, J.** & C. van Ham (2025). A 'shopping list of autocratic actions': what would-be autocrats do to recede democracy. *University College London, Constitution Unit Blog*. [Link](#) (open access).
- 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.** (2023). "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 (for the 2023-elections). [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.4 **van Lit, J.** & C. van Alebeek (2026). "Democratie onder druk? Steun, zorgen en verdeeldheid onder Nederlandse kiezers", in the Dutch parliamentary election studies (for the 2025-elections).
- S.3 van Dijk, R. & **J. van Lit** (submitted in January 2026). "When push comes to shove: the normalization of political violence", *Political Behavior*. OSF Preprint.
Awarded the **best paper award** by the ECPR Standing Group on Political Violence at the 2025 ECPR General Conference
- S.2 **Van Lit, J.** . "De Rechtsstatelijke Rit van het Kabinet-Schoof" in S. Otjes and J. Vervliet (eds.), *Het Experiment Schoof*, to be published by the Montesquieu Instituut.
- S.1 **Van Lit, J.**, M. Meijers & C. van Ham (resubmitted after reviews in February 2026). "Credible Resistance or Political Ploy? When Parliamentarians Stand Up for Democracy", *Journal of European Public Policy*.

Conference papers

- WP.11 **van Lit, J.**. The Defenders' Toolkit: How Citizens Evaluate Strategies to Counter Autocratization
- WP.11 **van Lit, J.** & M. Mochtak. Multilevel Democratic Defence: Citizen Support for Multi-Level Resistance to Autocratization
- WP.10 **van Lit, J.** & M. Mochtak. The Science of Debriefing
- WP.9 **van Lit, J.**. De verdediging van de democratie: Van *ethos* naar *praxis*. *Christen Democratische Verkenningen*.
- WP.8 **van Lit, J.** & L. de Blok. "De weerbaarheid van de lokale democratie", in the Dutch local election studies (for the 2026-elections).
- WP.7 Wunsch, N., **J. van Lit** & T. Petrova. Justifying the Unjustifiable: In-party Cues and Citizen Acceptance of Democratic Transgressions. OSF Preprint.
- WP.6 Janssen, L., **J. van Lit** & H. Werner. Democratic Commitment under Autocratization: How Citizens Evaluate Moral Dilemmas in Resistance to Autocratization
- WP.5 **Van Lit, J.** & L. Janssen. The autocrat strikes back: Autocratic countermeasures against democratic defence.
- WP.4 **Van Lit, J.**. Deconstructing Understandings of Democracy.
- WP.3 **Van Lit, J.**. 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. Who Defends Democracy? Normative Commitment and Voter Resistance to Democratic Erosion

Teaching

(Evaluations available upon request)

Qualifications

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

Radboud University

- **Research Design in Political Science** *Ontwerp en Methoden van Politicologisch Onderzoek* course coordinator and lecturer · BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level 2025 - 2026
- **Advanced Research Methods** with Erika van Elsas course lecturer · MSc in Political Science · graduate level 2022 - 2026
- **Academic Skills for Political Scientists** *Academische Vaardigheden voor Politicologen* course coordinator (2021 - 2025) and seminar tutor · BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level 2020 - 2026
- **Comparative Politics: Democratization** with Carolien van Ham course lecturer · BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level 2023 - 2025
- **Introduction to Data Science for Social Scientists** with Michal Mochtak course lecturer · MSc in Political Science · graduate level 2024 - 2025
- **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** *Verklaringen van Politieke Houdingen en Politiek Gedrag in Nederland* seminar tutor · BSc in Political Science · undergraduate level 2021

Leiden University

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

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](#).
Including an interview for *Overheid van Nu*, the news platform for Dutch national civil servants. [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 / BNNVARA / NPO Radio 1:** 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 **EenVandaag / NPO Radio 1:** 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

- EPSS Annual Conference** 2026 (P.)
- ENPA Annual Conference** 2026 (P.)
- EPSA Annual Conference** 2023 (P.), 2024 (P.)
- APSA Annual Meeting** 2024 (P.)

Workshops

- 03.2026 **Turning the Tide** Viadrina European University, Frankfurt (Oder) (P.D.)
- 03.2026 **Democratic Resilience Meets Democratic Backsliding** TU Darmstadt (P.D.)
- 06.2025 **Is Dutch Democracy in Decline?** Annual Political Science Workshops of the Low Countries, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen *Workshop director*
- 05.2022 **Citizens' democratic commitment in times of affective polarisation** ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Charles University, Prague (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, Leuphana University, Lüneburg · [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, Sciences Po, Toulouse (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, Radboud University, Nijmegen *Workshop director*
- 04.2022 **Domestic responses to Democratic Backsliding: Citizens, Civil Society, and Parties** ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, University of Edinburgh (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 (*mother tongue*), English (*fluent, C2*)
- Free time** Marathon running, too-bad-for-words crime novels, classical music (cello)

Grants, Awards, and Academic Service

Grants

- 2025 **Hotspot Sustainable Democracy, Radboud University** €750 for developing a graduate-level workshop on experimental designs
- 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, Radboud University** €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, European Politics and Society

Grant Reviewer European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant (2026)

Expert surveys Chapel Hill Expert Survey (2025, SPEED Immigration)