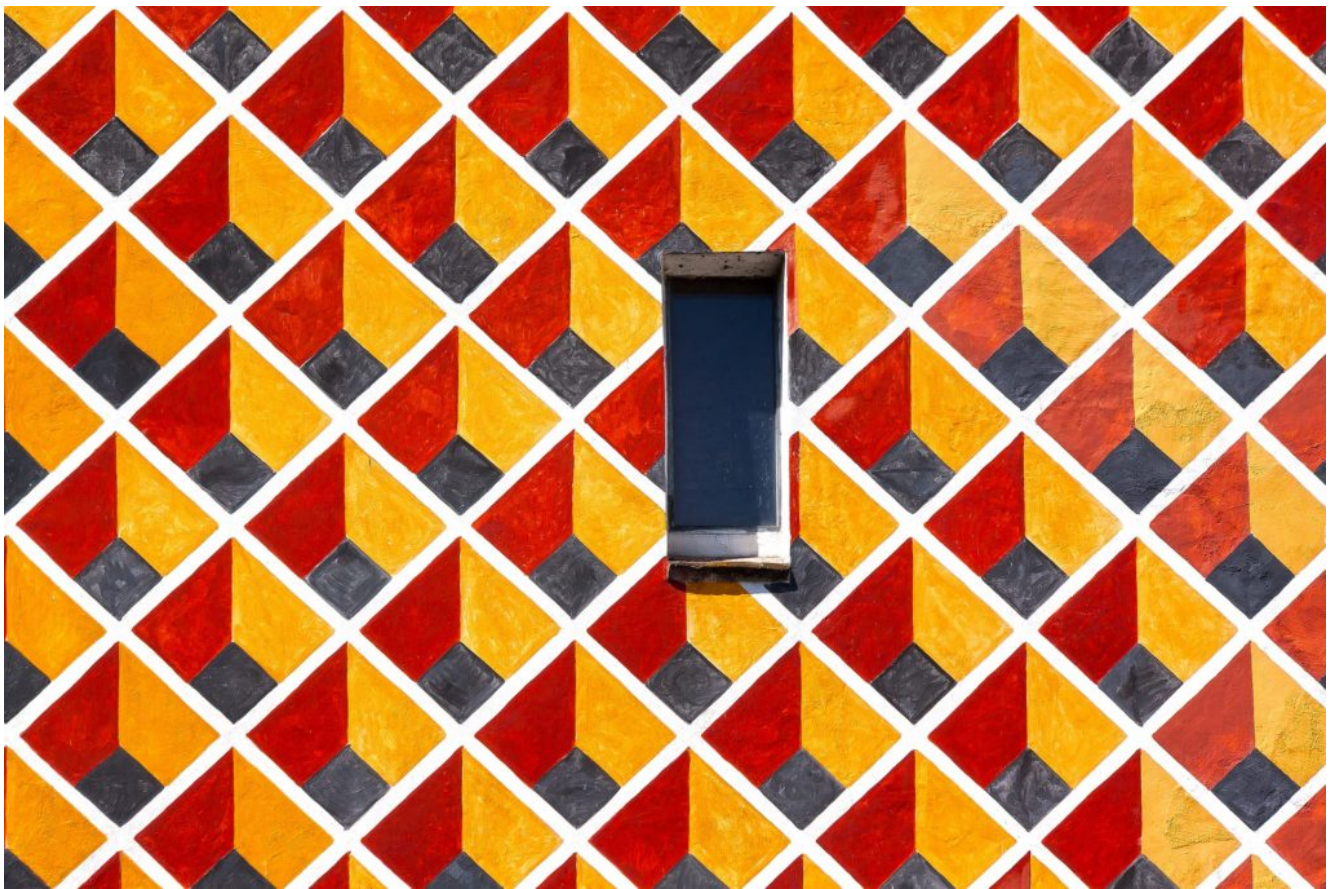


Navigating the world of academic publication as an early career scholar - experiences involving Regional Studies, Regional Science



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In this Research Hacks contribution, Rhiannon Pugh highlights the special support offered by the Regional Studies Association through its open access

journal *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science*, in particular its early career section.

We've all heard the mantra "publish or perish", and we all, no matter whether at the start or well into our careers, feel the pressure of needing to publish our work regularly and in prestigious outlets. Whether we write books, book chapters, blog articles, or journal publications, it is clear that writing and publishing are an essential element of our work as researchers in the regional studies domain. However, especially for early career scholars, navigating the publication world can feel a little like being lost on a mountain without a map or a compass. We might not know how the system works, where to send our work, how to prepare our manuscripts, what style of writing is necessary, how to deal with reviewer's comments, and where to turn to for help. But the good news is that help is at hand...

In a nutshell, the early career section of RSRS offers a route to publication for early career scholars, according to the RSA definition of students or those within five years of their PhD defence. This route is mentored, which means authors receive one-on-one support from one of the early career editorial team to develop their paper, and also throughout the process of dealing with reviews and preparing the final manuscript for publication. We also provide a set number of fee waivers to early career colleagues who do not have access to open access funds from their institutions or funders, which means your work is published fully open access in RSRS at no cost to the individual. This leads to work being read and cited more than if it were behind a paywall, and so is a real benefit provided by the Association. We also work closely with our reviewers to ensure that the process is as constructive and supportive as possible for authors, helping them to learn the "tricks of the trade" of academic publication and building their confidence to publish and disseminate their work. We also work hard to publicise early career work following publication via social media, and through initiatives such as special issue collections.

I first came across the mentored early career section of RSRS as a final year PhD student: I was trying to write up the research I had done and get it published, and heard about this option to publish in one of the RSA's outlets but with the support of senior colleagues to help me in this task. Following this, with my first paper published in RSRS, I came on board as a guest editor for a special issue collection

of RSRS, showcasing work that had been published on theorising innovation policy. Soon after this, I was approached by one of the incumbent editors when a call went out for new members of the editorial team. Reflecting on my own experience, being a part of the early career mentored route was massively valuable to me in terms of a learning and confidence building process, and directly following this experience I went on to publish more of my PhD work in the major journals in my field, such as *Regional Studies*. This experience has also been echoed by several other early career authors who have progressed from the mentored route to becoming widely published and cited authors, and key figures emerging in our community.

But don't just take my word for it. Here is what other early career colleagues have to say about publishing through the early career mentored route of RSRS:

"The guidance and internal feedback by the editorial team of the Early Career Papers section of Regional Studies, Regional Science have been extremely constructive for writing my article." (Dr. Moritz Breul, University of Cologne).

"The mentoring process and contact with the editing team was really helpful in improving my paper. The feedback from them was always constructive but, crucially, they also gave advice on interpreting the other reviewers comments." (Dr. Martin Quinn, Leicester University, UK).

"After publishing my first manuscript with Regional Studies/Regional Science I found that there are not many things in publishing process that are more fruitful than a mentored constructive review trajectory characterized by scientific advice, genuine interest, and encouragement. Regional Studies/Regional Science covers all three with perfection. Absolutely a must-submission journal for any researcher with a brilliant manuscript." (Dimitra Komninaki, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Greece)