

# Review of: "Forget the cake: let them work. Conflicting narratives towards work, health and the plight of asylum seekers in the UK"

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Collinson (2023) focuses on an important and contemporary topic – the rise of ethnonationalism and its impact on asylum seekers' rights in the UK. She argues that while the UK government values employment and has taken measures to restrict access to unemployment insurance as a way of encouraging people to work, they, at the same time, do not allow asylum seekers to work. The author juxtaposes the UK Government's belief that work is beneficial for one's mental health and the society at large, with the decision made by the UK Government to not allow asylum seekers to work. In doing so, the author effectively highlights the contradiction in such decisions, and calls for a review of asylum policies. To this end, the author also explains that while the media reinforces the idea that asylum seekers are economic immigrants trying to benefit from the UK labour market, this does not stand as asylum seekers are not allowed to work. In addition, the author relies on her own experience of screening asylum seekers to note the negative impacts of waiting for an asylum decision while not being able to work. Her observations offer important insights into the negative impact that being in-limbo has on the mental health of asylum seekers.

In addition to these strengths, there are several ways in which this article could improve. First, much of the information offered in the conclusion would be better placed in a "Literature Review" or "Background" section, as that information helps to contextualize the situation in the UK (something that is especially helpful for those who are not familiar with the UK Context). Second, the author notes that she is drawing from personal experience/observation, government policy announcements, and journal articles. The paper would benefit if the author offered more details about her experience and the observations she has made. These are briefly touched upon when discussing the screening process, but I would suggest the author situates herself early on in the paper, so the reader is aware of her positionality and her point of view. In addition, to ensure methodological soundness, it is important to describe which government policy announcements are reflected upon in the paper, and why these particular announcements were chosen. Third, the first paragraph needs to include in-text citations to support some of the claims that are made. These are all valid claims that need to be voiced, but I believe the paper would be strengthened if sources are cited. In addition, other claims made throughout the paper (two of which I have highlighted below) also need to be supported by cited sources, as it is not clear where the author received this information.

*The recent removal of the temporary £20.00 a week uplift to Universal Credit (introduced during the coronavirus lockdowns), in a country which already has the least generous unemployment benefits in North West Europe, as well as*

*the worst poverty levels, and is one of the most unequal countries in the developed world, has served to increase widespread dependency on food banks, and for many has led to the brutal 'heat or eat', despite 40% (2 million) of UC claimants being in work.*

*There remain significant inequalities in rates of TB: the most deprived 10% of the population have rates more than 7 times higher than the least deprived 10%, and people born outside the UK have rates 13 times higher than people born in the UK.*

Overall, this article focuses on an important issue and it is important to hear critical voices such as those offered by the author. However, I believe that further revisions are needed in order for the reader to have a better idea of the positionality of the author and the methodology followed for this analysis.