

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



December 25, 2017

## Euthanasia – A Decadent Act

Suppose a child suffers from a serious illness which is intolerable for it, would one dare to euthanize it heartlessly to relieve it of the pain and suffering? What morality suggests in such a case? In other words, if one do this mercy killing, will it be right morally or one will feel a guilty conscience? Morality suggests that the "right to life" is inviolable and however kills one intentionally in one way or another for any reason, will be sinful/criminal. It further suggests that the ill must be taken care of and sympathized more than anyone.

Today, one of the most important public policy debates surrounds the issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide. Euthanasia refers to the practice of intentionally ending a life in order to relieve pain and suffering. In some countries, there is a divisive public controversy over the moral, ethical, and legal issues of euthanasia. Those who are against euthanasia may argue for the sanctity of life, while proponents of euthanasia rights emphasize alleviating suffering, bodily integrity, self-determination, and personal autonomy.

Analysts and observers are of the believe that not only killing someone but even letting someone dies is morally wrong. For instance, Ahmad is rushed into hospital after being stabbed. He arrives in casualty. Although he is bleeding heavily, he could be saved. The only doctor on duty wants to go home, and knows that saving Ahmad will take him an hour. He decides to let Ahmad bleed to death. Ahmad dies a few minutes later. Ahmad's mother arrives, and on learning what has happened screams at the doctor, "You killed my son!" The doctor replies, "No I didn't. I just let him die." Even though, the doctor did not kill him, he just let him die, but isn't the doctor guilty morally? Of course, he is. He should have saved him from dying. Does your morality suggest otherwise?

It should be noted that there is a moral difference between carrying out an action, and merely omitting to carry out an action. The philosopher James Rachels has an argument that shows that the distinction between acts and omissions is not as helpful as it looks. Consider these two cases:

Smith will inherit a fortune if his 6 year old cousin dies. One evening Smith sneaks into the bathroom where the child is having his bath and drowns the boy. Smith then arranges the evidence so that it looks like an accident.

Moreover, Jones will inherit a fortune if his 6 year old cousin dies. One evening Jones sneaks into the bathroom where the child is having his bath. As he enters the bathroom he sees the boy fall over, hit his head on the side of the bath and slide face-down under the water. Jones is delighted; he doesn't rescue the child but stands by the bath, and watches as the child drowns.

According to the doctrine of acts and omissions, Smith is morally guiltier than Jones, since he actively killed the child, while Jones just allowed the boy to die. In law Smith is guilty of murder and Jones isn't guilty of anything.

If one does not find the difference between killing and letting die persuasive in the Smith/Jones case, s/he would not find it effective in the case of the well-meaning doctor and euthanasia.

Anyhow, who is to say that the suffering of a teenager who has just flunked his most important class in school, lost his close friend, and been kicked off the football team, isn't a suffering too great for him to bear? What if he thinks it is? Do we allow him to commit suicide – because he has the right to determine the end of his life – or do we call a crisis hotline? The question is critical, because either people do not have the right to end their lives in any circumstance, or else they do have that right, and the circumstances don't matter.

A right is a moral claim. We do not have a claim on death; rather, death has a claim on us! Some see the "right to die" as parallel to the "right to life." In fact, however, they are opposite.

The "right to life" is based on the fact that life is a gift that we do not possess as a piece of property but rather is an inviolable right. It cannot be taken away by another or by the person him/herself. The "right to die" is based, rather, on the idea of life as a "thing we possess" and may discard when it no longer meets our satisfaction. The "Right to die" philosophy says there is such a thing as a "life not worth living."

For a Muslim and a Christian, however, life is worthy in and of itself, and not because it meets certain criteria that others or we might set.

Suicide is not criminalized in Afghanistan and many other countries. This is not because of any "right" to suicide. When penalties against suicide were removed, legal scholars made it clear that this was not done for the purpose of permitting suicide. Instead it was intended to prevent suicide. Suicide was decriminalized solely for the reason that it is not a punishable offence – it is of course impossible to punish a dead person. This is by no means a reflection of the general opinion of society.



## Unemployment Crises

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Based on various studies the rate of unemployment has been increasing in few last years in Afghanistan. The National Union of Afghanistan Workers roughly estimated that 60% of eligible workers in the country are suffering from unemployment issue. The latest release of Democracy International shows that 82% of the youths are suffering from joblessness. Comparing to 2013 and 2014, when the rate of unemployment was nearly 2 million eligible workers it upturned to more than 3 million in 2017. whereas, it is expected that four hundred thousand young workers are newly added to existing crisis by each year.

Moreover, some experts divulge a series of undebated dimensions of the issue such as: job insecurity, lack of rule of law, exploitations, systematic unemployment - against certain gender or tribe - and more importantly hidden unemployment which means, there are countless employees or self-employees who have extremely low income or even zero income. Sometimes tens of them are busy in a small business while few of them are able to do it effectively. Thus, the employer can dismiss employees whenever they wish and often they do not have any written contract to define the mutual responsibilities. These show that the depth of crisis is beyond the mentioned figure or what usually discussed in the media.

The other problem is related to new job seekers; they have the minimum chance for employment due to several reasons: First they do not have required skills and standard eligibility due to low quality education in university of the country. Secondly, companies usually hire people who already have jobs as people with jobs usually socialize in similar places and referrals increase their chances of getting new jobs. This really adds to the disappointment of unemployed people. Crime rates rise as people are unable to meet their needs and divorce rates often rise because people cannot solve their financial problems. In some cases, because of the unemployment the youths delay their marriage age which is also a prominent social problem. Unemployment is associated with elevated rates of mental and physical health problems. It increases morbidity and mortality rates, and can cause detrimental changes in family relationships and in the psychological well-being of families. Scientific studies have already pointed out that unemployment can contribute to increased rates of suicide and reduced life expectancy. Unemployment is a greater motivator to illegal and unauthorized means to receive benefits.

Unemployment has a progressive effect on the rise of violence and economic instability in Afghanistan. Most Afghans believe that unemployment is the main cause of continuous insurgency in the country. There are many examples that young unemployed Afghans joined the anti-government armed groups; In fact, they are not joining the extremists or insurgents to follow their ideology, and sometimes they are against their ideology but they joined them to earn money to

buy a loaf of bread for themselves and for their families.

It is obvious that the killing of insurgents has not weakened them; they seem to be stronger and the major reason can be the high rate of unemployment in country, which leads more of our unemployed youths to join the anti-government insurgent groups. Unemployed teens are used as suicide attackers, battle forces, or laborers for implanting Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and in some provinces unemployment has also led people to grow opium, poppy, and others are encouraged to join the extremist groups.

In brief, no strategy will succeed unless create millions of more jobs as president pledged during his election campaign. Imprisonment of poverty criminals is not a real solution to solve the problem of crime; it does nothing for the victims of crime, but perpetuates the idea of retribution, thus maintaining the endless cycle of violence in our culture. It is a cruel and useless substitute for the elimination of those conditions—poverty, unemployment, homelessness, desperation, racism, greed—which are at the root of most punished crime. The crimes of the rich and powerful go mostly unpunished.

The other solution is to understand that unemployment lies in active support of private sectors, national companies and domestic products. Government is responsible to pave the way for multi-lateral national and international trades to create jobs and ensure economic stability. The easier to run businesses, the easier to create more jobs in a functioning economy: let's simplify the process of registering new startups and international companies in Afghanistan. let's first invest in secure provinces. The old irrational practice has to be transformed into an efficient, technological and business friendly process that takes hours rather than days. Entrepreneurs and private sectors can create jobs and transition Afghanistan from aid dependency into self-sustainability. The government has to make doing business easy, support the private sector and not try to do business. The governments of the world are not good at doing business and should stay out. The Afghan government must ensure security, fight corruption and remove the barriers for private sector to deliver real value and change.

The final solution is to train and send job seekers to foreign labor market who are thirsty for labor force. There are many nations in the region who earn millions by sending their skilled workers to other countries through mutual state protocol. for instance, India annually make 86 milliard dollar, Indonesia 46 milliard dollar and Philippine 12 milliard dollar. But due to lack of such agreement, millions of Afghan workers are suffering from working in illegal labor markets. Sometimes they are not paid while cannot raise their voice due to lack of that formal contract. As Afghans are more hard working and reliable, they can be easily attracted if our government seriously look for such market.

Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com

## Monetary-Policy Normalization in Europe in 2018

By Carmen M. Reinhart

When the European Central Bank's Governing Council met on December 14, there was little to surprise financial markets, because no policy changes could be gleaned from public remarks. The previous meeting, in late October, had already set the stage for the normalization of monetary policy, with the announcement that the ECB would halve its monthly asset purchases, from €60 billion (\$71 billion) to €30 billion, beginning in January 2018.

The motivation behind normalization does not appear to be the eurozone's inflation performance, which continues to undershoot the target of roughly 2% by an uncomfortable margin. Inflation expectations, while inching up recently, also appear anchored well below target, despite recent soaring confidence readings. And the ECB's own forecast suggests that it does not anticipate that price growth will breach 2% anytime soon. What about the output gap? In step with the US Federal Reserve, the ECB nudged its growth forecasts higher. In that setting, R-star (the natural rate of interest) may be perceived as drifting up, in line with output moving closer to potential across a broad swath of eurozone economies.

Still, OECD estimates of the 2017 (and 2018) output gap for most of the eurozone countries (Germany and Ireland are notable exceptions) suggest that there is slack, and in numerous cases considerable slack. While German unemployment, now below 4%, is at its lowest level since reunification, EU unemployment still hovers around 9%. Given this, it appears premature to view fears of eurozone overheating as the main driver of monetary-policy normalization.

Perhaps there are other motives for normalization that the ECB doesn't discuss publicly. Financial stability comes to mind. After all, the Fed does not forecast recessions, and the International Monetary Fund usually does not issue public pronouncements on a country's odds of default. The silence reflects an understandable desire to avoid fueling a self-fulfilling process. The risks to financial stability from keeping interest rates too low for too long are neither new nor unique to the eurozone. At the risk of oversimplifying, the gist of these arguments is that ample and inexpensive credit inflates asset-price bubbles, encourages excessive risk taking, drives up leverage, and may even delay necessary economic reforms.

There is some basis for concern in the eurozone on all these fronts. While debt-service ratios are mostly low, that could change when interest rates rise. Moreover, property prices are increasing rapidly in some locales, and a few broad share indexes posted double-digit percentage gains over the past year.

It is hardly a coincidence, however, that financial stability risks have recently been emphasized by Germany's Bundesbank, the most hawkish of the eurozone's national central banks. In this context, it is important to ensure that policy normalization in the eurozone does not become Germanization, which was the status quo the last time eurozone conditions were "normal," before the financial crisis.

The Taylor rule (proposed by the Stanford University economist John Taylor in the early 1990s) is often used to describe central banks' interest-rate policies. Specifically, the rule shows how the policy interest rate responds to changes in inflation, the gap between potential and actual output, and other economic conditions. As part of a larger focus on exchange-rate and monetary policies worldwide, my recent study with Ethan Ilzetzky and Kenneth Rogoff presents estimates of individual Taylor rules for the eurozone countries from 1992 to 2015. The main lesson from that exercise is that, from the early days of the euro (1999) until approximately 2010 (when the crisis in Greece and the eurozone periphery erupted in force), ECB interest-rate policy was an extension of the pre-euro 1992-1998 Deutschemark (DM) policies of the Bundesbank (see figure). In effect, the actual Bundesbank/ECB rate moved closely in tandem with the interest rate predicted by a Taylor rule applied to Germany.

By contrast, for all the other eurozone members, there were large deviations between the ECB policy interest rate and the interest rates consistent with the Taylor rule. In the years before the crisis, interest rates were "too low" for eurozone countries, like Spain, that were booming. It is only after the 2010 episode that the ECB policy rate fell substantially and persistently below the interest rate consistent with a Taylor rule for Germany. While normalization and the related downsizing of the ECB's bond purchase program are part and parcel of the long-awaited recovery cycle in Europe, the modalities, magnitude, and speed of execution remain critical, especially when the post-crisis era is placed in historical context. With the exception of Germany, the European recovery from the 2008 global financial crisis has been among the slowest in more than a century's worth of cases. The ECB would do well to proceed with caution on two fronts in 2018. It must cope with mounting pressure from Germany for a more aggressive approach to normalization, and it must avoid becoming overconfident about the durability and breadth of the unfolding recovery. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Carmen M. Reinhart is Professor of the International Financial System at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



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