

# Philippine Collapse 2030

Start preparing

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An artistic depiction of a dystopian Philippine urban landscape in the 2030s, showing towering skyscrapers partially in ruins, surrounded by chaotic streets filled with stagnant traffic and overcrowded markets. Bureaucratic offices appear overgrown with vines and neglected, symbolizing inefficiency and collapse. The scene includes a contrast of a dilapidated government building next to modern yet disorganized constructions, under a smog-filled sky with a setting sun casting an eerie glow. A sense of economic and structural decay permeates the atmosphere.

Economic growth, often encapsulated by GDP, serves as a metric for national success. In the Philippines, GDP figures are regularly paraded to affirm economic progress. Yet GDP is a deceptive measure. It merely reflects aggregate activity without distinguishing between productive growth and wasteful expenditure. The construction of redundant government offices inflates GDP as much as investments in infrastructure that improve lives. As the 2030s approach, the Philippines faces a looming threat of systemic collapse, not from lack of GDP growth, but from the deeper failures of bureaucracy, debt, and misguided governance

Ludwig von Mises's theory of economic calculation is essential for understanding the problem. In a market system, prices emerge organically from voluntary exchanges, allowing resources to flow where they are most needed. Bureaucratic systems lack this mechanism. Decisions are not guided by clear signals of supply and demand but by layers of paperwork, assumptions, and political considerations. This disconnect creates inefficiencies that compound over time. The Philippine government, with its sprawling bureaucracy, exemplifies this dysfunction. Its centralized

nature ensures that decisions are often made far from the problems they aim to address, leading to delays, misaligned priorities, and wasted resources.

As bureaucracy grows, so does its complexity. Every new department, regulation, or initiative adds another layer to a system already bloated with redundancies. This might be manageable in periods of stability, but it becomes catastrophic in times of crisis. Decision-making slows as information becomes trapped in bureaucratic bottlenecks. The central government, overwhelmed by data it cannot process efficiently, loses its capacity to act decisively. In a country prone to natural disasters, political upheavals, and global economic fluctuations, such paralysis can lead to devastating consequences.

A symbolic illustration of bloated bureaucracy, featuring a vast, labyrinth-like office space filled with endless rows of desks, piles of paperwork, and filing cabinets stacked to the ceiling. Overworked employees appear overwhelmed and lost in the maze, while clock faces on the walls show different times, symbolizing inefficiency and delays. The color palette is muted and dull, emphasizing stagnation and complexity. A towering figure in a suit looms over the scene, representing centralized authority, while paths and exits are blocked by more paper and red tape.

The proposal for federalism, often heralded as a solution to the inefficiencies of centralization, risks aggravating the problem. While the decentralization of power sounds appealing in theory, the Philippine context reveals pitfalls. Federalism would likely multiply bureaucratic layers, introducing overlapping jurisdictions and inter-regional conflicts. Regions with weaker administrative capacity might falter under the added responsibilities, while those with stronger systems could leverage their autonomy at the expense of national cohesion. Rather than streamlining governance, federalism risks creating a patchwork of competing mini-states, each burdened by its own bureaucratic labyrinth.

Nassim Nicholas Taleb has warned of systemic fragility in modern

economies, pointing to national debts as a harbinger of collapse. For Taleb, debt is not merely a financial metric but a signal of deeper structural issues. A nation that perpetually borrows to sustain itself reveals an inability to live within its means. Debt serves as a crutch for systems that are too complicated and inefficient to function otherwise. In the Philippines, rising national debt mirrors the inefficiency of its governance. Borrowing to fund unnecessary programs or patch over bureaucratic failures is unsustainable. When debt reaches critical levels, any shock—whether economic, environmental, or geopolitical—could unravel the entire system.

The problem lies not in debt itself but in what it represents: a system that has become too complex to manage. Bureaucracy is the root cause. The Philippine government's slow and cumbersome processes hinder timely responses to urgent problems. In a crisis demanding immediate action—such as a pandemic, natural disaster, or financial crash—delays in decision-making can exacerbate damage. Complexity becomes the enemy, not just of efficiency but of survival.

A dramatic depiction of impending societal collapse, featuring a chaotic urban environment with collapsing buildings, panicked crowds, and vehicles stuck in gridlock. In contrast, a group of well-prepared individuals is shown calmly escaping the chaos, carrying backpacks, survival gear, and maps. The background includes dark, stormy skies and fires burning in the distance, emphasizing the sense of urgency and destruction. The fleeing group moves toward a serene, green horizon symbolizing hope and resilience, standing out against the dystopian setting.

GDP, often touted as proof of resilience, only masks these vulnerabilities. High GDP growth can coexist with government-backed cartels and hollow institutions. A country that invests in unproductive ventures while neglecting foundational issues is like a house with a freshly painted façade but a crumbling foundation. The Philippines has long been enamored with GDP figures, ignoring the structural weaknesses beneath. This obsession diverts attention from the reforms needed to address the inefficiencies of

governance.

The specter of collapse in the 2030s is not an inevitability, but the trajectory is clear. A government weighed down by bureaucracy, debt, and overcomplexity cannot endure indefinitely. The cracks in the system will become fault lines as the demands of governance outstrip its capacity to deliver. Reforms must begin with a reevaluation of priorities: simplifying bureaucratic processes, decentralizing intelligently without fragmenting, and focusing on systems that enhance responsiveness rather than hinder it.

GDP is not destiny. A nation's true strength lies not in its aggregate economic output but in its ability to adapt, respond, and endure. The Philippines must shed its dependence on superficial metrics and confront the structural inefficiencies that threaten its future. If it does not, the 2030s will not mark the culmination of progress but the reckoning of a system pushed beyond its limits.

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