



Republic of the Philippines  
**DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE**  
Roxas Boulevard Corner Pablo Ocampo, Sr. Street  
Manila 1004

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**REF: USEC GIL BELTRAN**  
**Chief Economist**  
**Department of Finance**  
**Email: [gbeltran@dof.gov.ph](mailto:gbeltran@dof.gov.ph)**

**DOF Economic Bulletin on Employment**  
**Jobless Growth or Unexamined Data?**

Mr. Mourdoukoutas claims that the Philippines under President Duterte faces jobless economic growth.<sup>[1]</sup> Indeed, as can be seen from **Table 2**, despite the economic growth rate of above 6%, the number of employed apparently declined in 2017 by 1.6%. From **Table 1**, one can see that the number of employed declined from nearly 41 million in 2016 to 40.3 million in 2017 or a "job loss" of more than 700,000. In contrast, the supposed number of jobs created between 2015 and 2016 was nearly 2.5 million. This translates to 5.8% growth rate, a very high number. Is this plausible? Was there "job destruction" in 2017?

**Table 1****Selected Labor Statistics (Level in thousands, Rate in Percent)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Population 15 yo & up	60,717	61,883	62,985	64,173	64,033	64,936	68,311	69,891	71,339
Labor Force	38,893	40,006	40,426	41,022	41,379	41,343	43,361	42,714	43,461
Employed	36,035	37,192	37,600	38,118	38,651	38,741	40,998	40,271	41,160
Unemployed	2,859	2,814	2,826	2,905	2,728	2,958	3,364	2,443	2,302
LFPR	64.1	64.6	64.2	63.9	64.6	63.7	63.5	61.2	60.9
Employment Rate	92.6	93.0	93.0	92.9	93.4	93.7	94.6	94.3	94.7
Unemployment Rate	7.4	7.0	7.0	7.1	6.6	6.3	5.4	5.7	5.3

Source: PSA

**Table 2****Growth Rates (%)**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Population 15 yo & up	1.9	1.8	1.9	(0.2)	1.4	5.2	2.3	2.1
Labor Force	2.9	1.1	1.5	0.9	(0.1)	4.9	(1.5)	1.7
Employed	3.2	1.1	1.4	1.4	0.2	5.8	(1.8)	2.2
Unemployed	(1.6)	0.4	2.8	(6.1)	8.4	13.7	(27.4)	(5.8)

Source: PSA

A look at the footnotes of the Philippine Statistical Yearbook shows that the PSA has done some updating and omissions. First, the PSA clearly stated that starting April 2016, the Labor Force Survey "adopted the 2013 Master Sample Design as well as the population projection based on the 2010 Census of Population and Housing (2010 CPH) while previous survey rounds were derived using the 2000 CPH population projections. Exclusion in the survey also occurred. Leyte was excluded in the 2015 survey while the 2014 annualized data excluded the January round. These mean that the survey years not comparable are 2013 and 2014, 2015 and 2016, and 2016 and 2017. The latter pair do not compare with each other because for 2016, the last three quarters used the 2013 Master Sample Design while the January round used the old Design.

These notes can explain why there was an apparent fall in the number of economically active population in 2014. The apparent surge in the number of employed in 2016 is accompanied by a surge in the economically active population, at 5.2%. The fall and sudden rise may be traced in part to the omissions and updating, respectively, which the PSA has been very clear in disclosing.

Observers and commentators alike should know well that they should only compare birds of the same feather. The claim of jobless growth is based on incompatible data comparison. Truly, an unexamined data set is not worth the analysis, however brilliant it may initially seem to appear. **“When you pay attention to details, the big picture will take care of itself”, George St. Pierre says.** By missing the details, Mr. Mourdoukoutas missed the whole picture and described the wrong economy, definitely not the Philippines.

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<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/panosmourdoukoutas/2019/02/10/dutertes-jobless-economic-boom/#28038a6b3ed3>

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