

VIII Extensions of the Core Model

This section describes a number of extensions of the standard version of MULTIMOD Mark III and discusses their applications. The objective is to provide a flavor of the ease with which the model can be modified to analyze specific issues of topical interest. The virtue of keeping the core model simple and transparent in order to facilitate various modifications becomes apparent.

The extensions of the model can be divided into two broad and interrelated categories. The first category relates to the construction of specific models for individual countries or country groups that, in the core version of MULTIMOD, are aggregated with other countries or country groups. These models can be used to analyze the effects of employing parameters or incorporating macroeconomic features that are specific to a particular country (or group of countries), or to analyze the effects of shocks that impinge on a particular country. The second category involves modifications of the structure of the model in order to analyze broader macroeconomic policy issues.

Extensions of Country Coverage

As noted in earlier sections, small industrial countries are aggregated into a single block in the core version of MULTIMOD. It is, however, quite straightforward to construct a model for a specific small industrial economy under the maintained assumption that the macroeconomic structure of these economies is similar to that of larger industrial economies. Certain aspects do, however, need to be considered carefully for each country. The degree of openness to international trade needs to be accounted for properly in order to capture the dynamics of foreign trade and external debt variables, both of which are typically crucial for economic activity in these countries. Since the effects of domestic policy actions on external sector variables could have important implications for domestic price and activity variables, these relationships should ideally be estimated individually for the country under consideration. Other variables, such as the capital-output

Box 10. Steps Necessary to Integrate Additional Industrial Countries

- Develop a database from various sources, including the *World Economic Outlook* and OECD analytical databases, and develop a new trade matrix for the country disaggregation that is being chosen.
- Modify the program that creates the equations for the dynamic and steady-state models.
- Update the estimation programs and include the additional country codes to obtain estimates of the behavioral parameters for the added countries. If the parameter estimates are judged to be nonsensical—which is sometimes the case with small data samples, regime changes, and so on—impose pooled estimates or values obtained from other countries that have similar structures.
- Develop a baseline that includes history, the *World Economic Outlook* projection, and convergence to a steady-state balanced growth path.
- Modify the reporting system that generates standard MULTIMOD graphs and tables.
- Run standard tests to check the consistency of the dynamic and steady-state models.
- Run standard shocks on the individual country models as well as the full model.

ratio, should also be calibrated based on country-specific estimates.

The parameterization of a model of a small country can easily accommodate country-specific estimates of the main model parameters. For certain parameters, however, country-specific estimates may be imprecise, and pooled estimates from multicountry estimation might be preferred. This decision is left to the judgment of the modeler. Alternative specifications of certain equations can also be accommodated, although care should be taken to ensure that the accounting identities in the model are respected.

The operational procedure for building a small industrial country model is very straightforward—Box 10 provides a summary of the steps that are necessary to add an individual country model. To extract a

country from the bloc of small industrial countries and create a separate model for it, the first step would be to subtract from the bloc the macroeconomic aggregates related to this country. For instance, real GDP in the bloc of small industrial countries would be redefined by subtracting out the real GDP of this country. Next, the trade variables would have to be redefined in a manner that ensured consistency in the world trade matrix, and the appropriate weights for constructing the country's real competitiveness index and real effective exchange rate would have to be computed. Finally, the model code for the large industrial economies would then be replicated for the small industrial country, employing country-specific or average parameters for the small industrial countries as appropriate. Thus, at the end of this process, the enhanced version of MULTIMOD would have a similar structure as the original model, but with one additional country.

In most contexts, it is relatively easy to justify the assumption that small countries have negligible effects on other economies or, more generally, on the rest of the world. The computational complexities of the model are reduced substantially in this case because the model of the small country can then be simulated in isolation without allowing for feedback effects on the rest of the world, that is, by keeping conditions in the other country blocks constant.

An interesting example of recent work in this direction is that of Laxton and Prasad (1997), who construct a model of the Swiss economy in order to examine the possible short-term consequences of European Economic and Monetary Union for Switzerland. A number of enhancements to the core model were required for this analysis. For instance, with official short-term nominal interest rates in 1997 at less than 100 basis points, the potency of monetary policy was severely constrained. To capture the effects of the nominal interest floor at zero percent, a nonlinear money demand specification for Switzerland was estimated and adopted in this analysis. The interactions between this nonlinearity and the convexity of the Phillips curve turn out to have interesting policy implications.

There is, of course, no technical limitation on the number of small country models that can be inserted into the core model, although care needs to be exercised about modeling the interactions among these economies. One example of such an exercise is provided by Masson and Turtelboom (1997). These authors create country-specific models for each of the 15 countries of the European Union (except for Luxembourg, which is modeled jointly with Belgium) and then perform stochastic simulations of the model in order to examine the relative variability of macroeconomic variables under different assumptions about monetary arrangements within this group of countries.

Work has also commenced on separating a group of emerging market economies from the main developing country model. In the analysis for the December 1997 *World Economic Outlook*, an emerging market bloc was created, with a model structure analogous to that for industrial countries, in order to examine the global effects of a cutback in net capital flows to the emerging markets.

Other Modifications

The extensions discussed above have focused on modifying MULTIMOD to tackle issues that are best addressed with a different set of country groups than those contained in the core Mark III version. In other applications, the basic structure of MULTIMOD has been modified, without extending the country coverage, to enhance the analysis of various policy issues. The examples discussed below illustrate that the model is flexible enough to incorporate advances in economic theory that relate to key elements of the model's structure. Analyzing the implications of different policy scenarios when such features are included in the model can often be quite revealing.

Fiscal Consolidation

The core version of MULTIMOD can be used to examine the effects of fiscal restructuring and to compare the macroeconomic effects of changes in alternative fiscal instruments. Revenue and expenditure measures that have similar effects on the fiscal balance could have markedly different macroeconomic effects, both in the short run and in the long run. Further, the potentially larger distortionary effects of direct taxes compared with indirect taxes suggest that the composition of revenue measures could also be important. Similarly, reductions in government investment could have very different effects on long-term growth than reductions in current government expenditures.

MULTIMOD can be modified quite easily to focus on these issues. For instance, Bartolini, Razin, and Symansky (1995) incorporate an extended set of fiscal instruments in MULTIMOD to examine differences in the effects of the composition of fiscal consolidation measures in the seven major industrial countries. By introducing distortionary effects of taxation, they are able to demonstrate clear differences in the short-run and long-run output and welfare effects of expenditure reductions, increases in indirect taxes, and increases in taxes on factor income.

Another important consideration when examining the effects of fiscal consolidation is the degree of credibility associated with such a consolidation effort. The forward-looking behavior of economic

agents that is captured in MULTIMOD is clearly crucial for such an exercise. Bayoumi and Laxton (1994) use MULTIMOD to analyze the effects of debt reduction in Canada under different credibility scenarios. Their simulations underscore the importance of credibility as well as coordination between the fiscal and monetary authorities. This points to another strength of MULTIMOD—the ability to analyze the joint effects of different policy instruments on macroeconomic variables.

Endogenous Productivity Growth

One of the main developments in the economic growth literature in recent years has been the theory of endogenous growth (see, for example, Lucas, 1988 and Romer, 1990). Bayoumi, Coe, and Helpman (1996) extend MULTIMOD in this direction by allowing for externalities in the form of international spillovers of research and development (R&D) expenditures on total factor productivity growth. The role of international trade in facilitating these spillover effects and the interplay between R&D spending and capital investment are highlighted in their simulations, which also provide quantitative estimates of the effects of country-specific R&D spending on output growth in the global economy.¹²⁴

¹²⁴The Mark III version of MULTIMOD has also been extended to allow for endogenous total factor productivity—see Bayoumi, Coe, and Laxton (1998).

This example illustrates how recent developments in economic theory can be embedded in MULTIMOD. The model enables researchers to carefully analyze the quantitative importance of the overall effects of factors such as R&D spillovers, as well as the channels through which these effects permeate.

Military Expenditures

Another extension that highlights the usefulness of MULTIMOD in providing quantitative answers to interesting policy questions is provided by Bayoumi, Hewitt, and Schiff (1993). These authors explore the macroeconomic effects of a reduction in world military expenditures and show that, in the long run, the welfare effects of reductions in military spending can be quite large. In a related paper, Bayoumi, Hewitt, and Symansky (1995) show that these welfare gains can be even larger for developing countries and, by disaggregating these countries into four geographic groups, provide estimates of how much each of these groups of countries stands to gain from reductions in military expenditures.

In addition to the examples discussed above, numerous other extensions of MULTIMOD have been used in recent years to address a broad class of policy-related issues. Notwithstanding the substantial recent improvements incorporated into the core Mark III model, the sophisticated yet transparent and versatile structure of MULTIMOD remains one of its main virtues.

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