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Starting Small: Building a Macroeconometric Model of the Philippine Economy

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PIDS

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List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADOU	Asian Development Outlook Update
AMFM	Ateneo Macroeconomic and Forecasting Model
ARDL	Autoregressive Distributed Lag
BSP	*Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPI	consumer price index
DBCC	Development Budget Coordination Committee
DRI	Data Resources Inc.
DSGE	dynamic stochastic general equilibrium
ECM	error correction model
FPAS	Forecasting and Policy Analysis System
GDP	gross domestic product
GFC	global financial crisis
ICD	Institute for Capacity Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LSE	London School of Economics
MAE	mean absolute error
MAPE	mean absolute percentage error
MARTIN	Macroeconomic Relationships for Targeting Inflation
MEM	Multi-Equation Model
MMPH	Macroeconomic Model for the Philippines
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NEDA-QMM	NEDA Quarterly Macroeconometric Model
NRMSE	normalized root mean square error
OLS	ordinary least squares

PAMPH	Policy Analysis Model for the Philippines
PIDS	Philippine Institute for Development Studies
RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia
RBC	real business cycle
RRP	reverse repurchase rate
SEM	Single-Equation Model
USD	United States dollar
VAR	vector autoregression
WEOU	World Economic Outlook Update

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Abstract

This study presents a small macroeconometric model of the Philippines. The model covers the basic parts of the economy—namely, private consumption and investment, international trade, employment, prices, and basic monetary sectors. Behavioral equations are estimated in error-correction form (using Autoregressive Distributed Lag methodology) on quarterly data from 2002 to 2017. The model's validity is evaluated through various simulation exercises. It generates satisfactory in-sample and out-of-sample predictions for gross domestic product (GDP) growth, consumer price index inflation, and employment rate but is less successful in tracking the movement of domestic interest rates. The model also shows plausible responses to exogenous shocks emanating from government consumption, world oil prices, and global GDP. Briefly, a government spending shock elicits increases in investment and imports, a shock to world oil prices generates faster inflation, while a global recession is transmitted to the domestic economy mainly through lower exports and investment. The next steps needed to extend the model beyond improving the existing blocks include developing the supply side, incorporating expectations, and adding fiscal and financial blocks.

Introduction

A literature scan reveals a dearth of macroeconometric models in the Philippines today. While new macroeconometric models were still being introduced in the country during the mid-2000s, activity in the area virtually died by the 2010s. This mirrored developments overseas, when major critiques of large-scale macroeconometric models beginning in the late 1970s led to a shift toward systems that aimed to build on stronger microeconomic foundations, mainly toward a dynamic stochastic general equilibrium (DSGE) framework, which became the dominant approach by the turn of the century. However, the failure of such models to anticipate the global financial crisis (GFC) and Great Recession in 2008/2009—or generate appropriate policies to address the crises—led to a similar disenchantment with the method.

There now appears to be a consensus that distinct types of macroeconomic models are needed to meet different purposes (Vines and Wills 2018). To analyze macroeconomic policy issues, Blanchard (2018) recommends approaches intended to study the impact of specific shocks and alternative policy scenarios, with such policy models allowed to be less stringent about microfoundations. Wren-Lewis (2018) likewise proposes continued development of models closer to the actual data to help improve policy advice, specifically for more traditional structural econometric models, which are arguably still better placed to monitor developments in the economy and note the emergence of important relationships (e.g., between the real economy and the financial sector) than DSGE models. Less restrictive models with greater data congruence are also more likely to be successfully maintained over time, indicating an edge in quantitative economic analysis (see Hendry 2020).

In the Philippines, there is certainly room for broader frameworks that can be used for comprehensive policy analysis. A few important macroeconometric models helped aid government planning in the past, but virtually none seem to have been updated or maintained. DSGE models have also not been developed to take their place. A working structural macroeconometric model is especially needed at times when the country has to enter unprecedented policy territory, such as during or after a crisis. A system that summarizes interrelationships in the economy and thus deepens the understanding of these relationships can provide better guidance than unsighted economic analysis.

In view of this important gap in macropolicy research, this study presents a small macroeconometric model of the Philippine economy. This model will serve as the building block for a larger full-system model. The ultimate goal is to build a tractable and easy-to-maintain macroeconometric model that allows for quick yet sound policy analysis with some degree of forecasting power. Like the small models in recent literature, this macroeconometric model initially focuses on the demand side. It covers the basic parts of the economy—namely, private consumption and investment, international trade, employment, prices, and monetary sectors. Behavioral equations are estimated in error-correction form (using Autoregressive Distributed Lag [ARDL] methodology) on quarterly data from 2002 to 2017, allowing economic theory and intuition to guide the long-run properties of the model.

Literature Review: Developments in Macroeconometric Modeling[1]

A brief history of macroeconometric modeling

Approaches to macroeconometric modeling have generally followed theoretical developments through the years, with failure to predict important turning points typically leading to a reconsideration of the current dominant method. Hendry (2020) identifies four distinct phases in macro modeling history: (i) empirical demand modeling in the early 1900s; (ii) economic forecasting in the 1920s, which failed during the Great Depression; (iii) empirical macroeconomic system modeling that fell out of favor due to oil crises and stagflation in the 1970s; and (iv) DSGE modeling, which also faltered during the Great Recession.

The Great Depression could not be explained by the prevailing economic theory, leading Keynes (1936) to study the possibility of

[1] See Yap (2003), Reyes et al. (2017), and Reyes et al. (2018) for more detailed literature reviews of foreign and domestic trends in macroeconometric modeling.

equilibrium unemployment and the mechanisms behind it. His ideas[2] were subsequently formalized by Meade (1937) through a complex 9-equation system; Hicks (1937), who extracted the 2-equation IS-LM model from this system; and Samuelson (1951, 1955), who clarified the interpretation of Keynes' ideas and created a much simpler system in his "neoclassical synthesis" (Vines and Wills 2018). These marked a shift in economic thinking, leading to a golden age of macroeconomic policymaking and macroeconometric modeling.

Golden age of macroeconometric models in the 1950s and 1960s

Several other developments marked the era of large-scale macroeconometric systems during the 1950s and 1960s. One set of advancements had been the provision of macroeconomic data, particularly the computation of national income accounts and related measures. Another included breakthroughs in econometric theory and methods during the mid-1940s, especially with the creation of the Cowles Commission after World War II.[3] Important papers were also published on stabilization policy, arguing that a well-designed fiscal program could be expected to generate good economic outcomes (e.g., Phillips 1954, 1957).

The strongest impetus came from the success of large-scale macroeconometric models in predicting the effects of a fiscal stimulus on the US economy in the early 1960s. These included the Brookings and Data Resources Inc. (DRI) models, followed by the FRB-MIT-PENN model, which evolved into the current FRB/US model, and the global macroeconometric models built under Project LINK.

Large macroeconometric models, however, eventually met systematic forecasting failures in the 1970s amid global oil crises and stagflation. This period, which overlapped with the Great Inflation

[2] Keynes' ideas, as generally appreciated, included adding nominal rigidities (particularly in wages) to the macroeconomic analysis and introducing the consumption function, multiplier, and liquidity preference theory to explain a macroeconomic equilibrium with unemployment.

[3] The Cowles Commission was a special team formed to develop a more scientific approach to economic modeling and involved prominent personalities such as Tjalling Koopmans, Kenneth Arrow, Trygve Haavelmo, T.W. Anderson, Lawrence Klein, G. Debreu, Leonid Hurwitz, Harry Markowitz, and Franco Modigliani (Valadkhani 2004). Other leading names in empirical macroeconomics during the time were Frisch, Goldberger, Stone, and especially Tinbergen, who built the first estimated macroeconometric system in 1930 (Hendry 2020).

(1965–1982), saw a breakdown of the Phillips curve (which featured a negative relationship between price inflation and unemployment), striking a blow to the theoretical bases of the large empirical models (Hendry 2020).

The Lucas Critique

Major criticisms of the existing large systems included the Lucas Critique, which noted that "any change in policy will systematically alter the structure of econometric models" (Lucas 1976, p.41). This highlighted the issue of structural instability, where estimated coefficients of a macroeconometric model may vary as private actors adjust their behavior in response to a policy change or even as their expectations about policies turn. Hence, since economic actors not only learned to adapt to policy changes but also to anticipate them, models based on historical correlations could produce invalid results. Lucas, therefore, rejected using such models for policy analysis.

Different areas of macroeconomics and econometrics gained influence after this period, which revealed theoretical and empirical weaknesses of the existing systems. One had been monetarism, with Friedman and Schwartz (1963, 1982) arguing against Keynesian beliefs (and associated aggregate demand policies) and for the role of money (and the need for rules-based monetary policy to maintain macroeconomic stability). This led to the flourishing of monetarist macroeconometric models such as those found at the London Business School (Hendry 2020). Another had been the use and development of vector autoregression (VAR), which made minimal use of theory as an alternative technique to large-scale macroeconometric models following Sims' Critique. Sims (1980) proposed this method after noting the "incredible" identification restrictions imposed, based on prevailing economic theory, on these large macroeconometric systems.[4]

A few other approaches emerged during the period, namely those associated with Hendry (1980) and Leamer (1983). The former, also known as the London School of Economics (LSE) methodology, recommended a "general-to-specific" approach to modeling where

[4] A VAR model is the vector extension of an autoregressive model, where all included variables are treated as endogenous, and the reduced form kept unrestricted.

theory provided the explanatory variables, while the data revealed the nature of the relationship. This method featured cointegration analysis, thus avoiding spurious regressions when dealing with nonstationary macroeconomic data (also a criticism of the large-scale macroeconometric models), and typically involved a battery of diagnostic tests and forecast performance measures. The Leamer method supported a Bayesian technique, the main idea being that pure macroeconometric modeling could not replace judgment in policy formulation or even in macroeconomic assessment (Bodkin et al. 1991; Valadkhani 2004).

DSGE dominance at the turn of the century

The Lucas Critique left an indelible impression on macroeconomic modeling, with theoretical modelers subsequently urged to adopt an optimizing framework with "rational" or "model-consistent" expectations. Lucas and Sargent (1979) stated that new models should incorporate expectations consistent with model-predicted outcomes and describe behavior derived from optimization by economic agents who held such beliefs or forecasts. They argued that only such models could precisely capture how the private sector would respond to external changes, including economic policy shifts, and make policy analysis acceptable. The goal correspondingly turned to investigating the "deep structural parameters" of microfounded models, such as those relating to tastes and technology.

The shift in thinking initially led to the construction of real business cycle (RBC) models characterized by competitive equilibrium with rational expectations (e.g., Kydland and Prescott 1990). These models attributed economic cycles to productivity shocks rather than to aggregate demand fluctuations, and money and stabilization policies were deemed irrelevant. However, the supposed ineffectiveness of Keynesian policies, which had been the main result of the early RBC models, could not be firmly supported. Further theoretical work (e.g., Fischer 1977; Taylor 1980; Calvo 1983) showed that frictions in price setting, such as staggered changes in wages and prices, meant aggregate demand policies—both monetary and fiscal policy—could still influence output.

This evolution resulted in a broader class of models designed to have better microfoundations to escape the Lucas Critique. DSGE models started to dominate the field during the 1990s as the profession switched away from large-scale macroeconometric systems (Cherrier 2017; Boumans and Duarte 2019). The New Keynesian DSGE model (i.e., the RBC model with nominal rigidities) became the benchmark framework by the 2000s, being widely taught in graduate schools worldwide.[5] It also became a fixture in many central banks.

DSGE models differed the most in terms of technique from the other models. Unlike traditional macroeconometric systems, which were estimated equation by equation across blocks (sets of equations) using basic least squares techniques and then subsequently solved, they often required calibration for most parameters and some (Bayesian) estimation. This made them quite hard to validate statistically.[6] Despite great efforts to strengthen theoretical foundations, DSGE models failed to anticipate the Great Recession. Moreover, they were unable to provide the reasons for the crisis or the policies needed to address it. This prompted macroeconomists to embark on a reassessment of their field.

Rebuilding macroeconomic models

As part of the Rebuilding Macroeconomic Theory Project conducted after the GFC and Great Recession, Blanchard (2018) highlighted the need for five types of macroeconomic models: (i) foundational models for making a deep theoretical point with no intent to capture reality closely (e.g., Samuelson's consumption-loan model); (ii) DSGE models for examining macroeconomic implications of distortions or sets of distortions, requiring them to be reasonably close to reality; (iii) policy models for investigating the dynamic effects of specific shocks and explore the impact of alternative policies, where the aim is to have a tight fit with the data (e.g., macroeconometric models); (iv) toy models for providing quick answers to urgent questions or to simplify a more complex model (e.g., IS-LM and Mundell-Fleming models); and (v) forecasting models, where the sole aim is forecast accuracy (e.g., atheoretical time series models).

[5] The New Keynesian DSGE models of Smets and Wouters (2007) and Christiano et al. (2005) are said to form the basis of what can be viewed as the benchmark DSGE model (see Vines and Wills 2018).

[6] Under a calibration approach, parameters would have to be adjusted when the simulated model diverged from actual data.

Blanchard (2018) emphasized that policy models should capture actual dynamics from the data while having enough theoretical structure to allow model users to map out the effects of policies and shocks.[7] He added that such models should nonetheless be built on solid partial equilibrium foundations and empirical evidence.

In the same project, Hendry and Muellbauer (2018) argued that approximate consistency with relevant theory trumped closer consistency with a highly stylized theory that bore little resemblance to reality. Stiglitz (2018) asserted that policymakers would have done far better in predicting the GFC and Great Recession and coping with the fallout if they had used alternative models (e.g., on housing and financial contagion) even though they were less fully articulated than the existing DSGE models.

Meanwhile, Wren-Lewis (2018) believed that macroeconomists may have responded better to the Great Recession if more traditional structural econometric models had been developed alongside microfounded ones, as real economy and financial sector linkages may have been more thoroughly explored. He proposed models that were closer to the data and thus able to give better policy advice than DSGE models, the main value of which would be to improve the internal consistency of workhorse policy models.

In summing up the Rebuilding Macroeconomic Theory Project, Vines and Wills (2018) highlighted two important lessons. First, macroeconomists had to remove the bias for microfoundations in their models and allow greater room for the development and use of policy models. Second, on a related point, they needed to encourage more pluralism in the field.

Evolution of Philippine macroeconometric models[8]

Until the mid-2000s, macroeconomic modeling in the Philippines mostly kept pace with theoretical advances abroad (Yap 2003). While

[7] Blanchard (2018, p.51) avered that having both a tight theoretical structure and tight fit with the data may be "a dangerous illusion" akin to "the marriage of a carp and a rabbit", adding that the goal of full integration has been proven counterproductive.

[8] Since this section focuses on macroeconometric and comparable modeling, advancements in computable general equilibrium models were excluded, although there have been numerous works in this area on the Philippines. For those interested, Yap (2003) provides a comprehensive review of the development of this class of models in the country until the mid-2000s.

macroeconometric models were built in the 1970s and 1980s,[9] it was in the 1990s and 2000s when larger full-system models emerged, especially with the later versions of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies-National Economic and Development Authority (PIDS-NEDA) Annual Macroeconometric Model and the development of the NEDA Quarterly Macroeconometric Model (NEDA-QMM).[10]

The PIDS and NEDA models

The PIDS-NEDA Annual Macroeconometric Model was created to provide a comprehensive framework for the medium-term development plan of the country. Later versions were essentially structuralist models, taking into account supply bottlenecks in some sectors and allowing the economy to settle at less than full employment (Reyes and Yap 1993; Yap 2000). They also had Keynesian elements, with spending specified according to the standard income-expenditure model.

The version presented by Yap (2000) contained four blocks: the real sector (e.g., production, spending, employment, wages, prices), the fiscal sector, the financial sector, and the external (trade) sector. It had 34 behavioral and 26 identity equations. Improvements over earlier versions include explicit treatment of unique features of the Philippine economy and stronger linkages among sectors.

Reyes and Buenafe (2001) later broadened the framework to include a social sector component to create the NEDA Annual Macro Social Model. They also switched the estimation technique from ordinary least squares (OLS) to cointegration analysis through a 2-stage error correction model (ECM). In this method, the first stage determined the long-run relationship among variables, while the second stage captured short-run dynamics as variables adjusted to deviations from the long-run relationship.

The NEDA-QMM (1996 and 2000) was built by a team guided by Peter Pauly of the University of Toronto (Yap 2003). The model, an

[9] These include macroeconometric models by Encarnacion et al. (1972, cited in Reyes and Buenafe 2001), Villanueva (1977), Zialcita and Alfiler (1977), Zialcita (1983), and various PIDS-NEDA macroeconometric models from 1985, 1987, and 1989 (Reyes and Buenafe 2001). Velasco (1979) and Bautista (1988) provided comprehensive reviews of macroeconomic modeling in this era.

[10] See Annex 1 for a summary of the features of the various macroeconometric models of the Philippine economy that were introduced during the period 1990–2021.

intergovernmental agency effort, was of a larger scale than the previous Philippine models, with much greater information requirements. Its structure largely follows that of the PIDS-NEDA annual model but with private consumption disaggregated into food and nonfood components.

As an upgrade to previous models, it tried to capture inflation expectations by estimating an inflation function and inserting this into the macroeconomic model (after adjusting the variables by one period). The system was estimated following an ECM approach through an Engle-Granger 2-step procedure. Following the LSE tradition, the method applied a battery of diagnostic tests for nonnormality, serial correlation, and heteroskedasticity to help ensure the robustness of each equation.

The NEDA-QMM was used to simulate fiscal policy scenarios for consideration by the interagency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) and provide empirical support to policy recommendations made by NEDA to Congress. It was last revised and updated in the late 2000s. The last known version of the model (Bautista et al. 2009) dropped the cointegration methodology and estimated the model equations using simple OLS. While losing the advantages of an ECM approach in dealing with nonstationary macroeconomic data, the model tried to adhere to modern macroeconomic general equilibrium analysis and provided a stronger theoretical basis for modeling inflation expectations.[11] The revision/update had 48 behavioral equations and 56 identities.

Nongovernment macroeconometric models

In the academe, Rodriguez and Briones (2002), in the early 2000s, built the quarterly Ateneo Macroeconomic and Forecasting Model (AMFM) based on the short-run version of the Murphy model of Australia (Murphy 1988). The model had Keynesian elements, capturing slow adjustment of prices and unemployment, and was designed for both forecasting and policy analysis. To this end, its modelers tried to meet several criteria in their specification search—first, estimated parameters were required to be consistent with economic theory; second, equations

[11] The core block of their model was based on a general equilibrium macroeconomic model with monopolistic competition following Blanchard and Kiyotaki (1987).

had to track actual data closely; and third, they also had to pass a series of statistical tests (i.e., for serial correlation, heteroskedasticity, and misspecification).

The AMFM had 4 major blocks comprising real, government, financial, and external sectors, with 13 stochastic equations, 53 identities, and 3 supplementary equations. Unlike the NEDA models, output in the AMFM was determined from the demand side. Also, the model accounted for forward-looking inflationary expectations through a fitted regression of an inflation function. Its estimation strategy was unique in that it combined OLS with an ECM-like approach specifically for the production sector, with parameters of the production function obtained through a mix of calibration and estimation techniques.[12]

In the mid-2000s, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), through a team led by Duo Qin of the University of London, developed macroeconometric models of select ADB member countries for forecasting and policy simulation. The model designed for the Philippines (Cagas et al. 2006; Ducanes et al. 2005) paid special attention to the government block of the model to enable fiscal simulations, as the country's fiscal and debt burdens were exceptionally high during that period. The estimation strategy highlighted a general-to-specific dynamic specification and ECM methodology.

While the ADB's Philippine model was tagged as a small macroeconometric model, it was medium sized by current standards with 8 blocks (private consumption, investment, government, trade, production, price, monetary, and employment sectors), 48 behavioral equations, and 25 identities. It tried to improve on previous models by minimizing the use of impulse dummy variables, which were restricted to seasonal dummies, and by ensuring that behavioral equations had economic meaning and that parameter estimates were robust and time invariant. However, the model did not attempt to deal with inflation expectations.

[12] In the two-stage process adopted for the production sector, the first stage involved profit optimization of the representative firm to obtain the equilibrium values of key variables (i.e., gross output, exports, imports, domestic goods price, and labor), while the second stage characterized the adjustment of the actual values to their equilibrium values in the stochastic equations.

Central bank models for inflation targeting

There had been, for the most part, a lull in macroeconometric modeling in the second half of the 2000s and the succeeding decade. In contrast, quantitative research at the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* (BSP) gained momentum after the adoption of an inflation targeting framework for monetary policy in 2002. The shift naturally required leveraging all available information to increase precision in inflation forecasting and thus help avoid missing official targets.

Under the new monetary framework, the BSP initially headed in a different direction (i.e., away from structural macroeconometric models) and used small models that focused on anticipating price pressures, especially those coming from known sources. The models used by monetary authorities for macroeconomic forecasting and policy simulation during the transition consisted of (i) the Multi-Equation Model (MEM), a set of estimated simultaneous equations that aimed to capture the main channels of monetary transmission in the country; and (ii) the Single-Equation Model (SEM), equivalent to the inflation equation of the MEM. The two models were developed under the guidance of Roberto Mariano of the University of Pennsylvania in 1997, with an update in 2013.

Both MEM and SEM remain as workhorse models in the BSP's suite of models. The MEM in its current form comprises equations for inflation, interest rates (relating to government securities of different maturities and bank lending), base money, and oil prices, all of which are estimated using an ECM approach. The monthly year-on-year inflation equation serves as the primary equation, with long-run prices following the quantity theory of money but augmented by supply-side variables (e.g., nominal wages, oil prices), and short-run prices explained by supply-side and demand-side variables and inflation expectations. Through additional (i.e., non-ECM) equations and identities, the MEM also models the links with GDP growth, the output gap, domestic liquidity, and exchange rates.

Apart from establishing nowcasting models, the BSP has been aiming to add a model with greater structure to its collection. It attempted to develop a small open economy DSGE model "for policy analysis and insight" to complement its workhorse models, with the initial specification and results presented in McNelis et al. (2009, p.1).

However, in 2012, the DSGE model was replaced by the Macroeconomic Model for the Philippines (MMPH), a small-scale semistructural policy model outlined in Bautista et al. (2013). In 2019/2020, the MMPH was, in turn, replaced by the Policy Analysis Model for the Philippines (PAMPH).

The PAMPH is based on the Forecasting and Policy Analysis System (FPAS) model blueprint developed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Alarcon et al. 2020). The BSP subscribes to the FPAS as the framework for analyses needed to support monetary policy formulation. The model extends the MMPH by incorporating Philippine-specific features, such as a disaggregated consumer price index (CPI), into core, food, and energy components, as well as remittances from overseas Filipinos and business process outsourcing firms.

The BSP describes the model as taking a spot between a statistical (time series) model, a VAR, and a DSGE (Alarcon et al. 2020). It is similar to a standard open economy New Keynesian DSGE in that it exhibits the structural, stochastic, and general equilibrium properties of that model, incorporates adaptive and rational expectations of agents, and uses calibrated (rather than estimated) parameters. However, it is not strictly microfounded because of the intent to fit the data more closely and to include the country's unique features.

The semistructural PAMPH contains 15 equations relating to the output gap, Phillips curve, monetary policy rule, and uncovered interest parity in addition to external and commodities blocks. The model is respecified, and the parameters recalibrated as needed, under continuous review and assessment of the BSP.

Current and future advances in Philippine macroeconomic modeling

In general, a scan of the evolution of Philippine macroeconometric models shows only a loose correlation with technical/theoretical advances at the turn of the century. The rise in DSGE modeling abroad during the period did not spill over locally except for pockets of activity at the central bank (i.e., the abovementioned small open economy DSGE for the BSP built in the late 2000s under the guidance of Paul McNelis of Fordham University), at PIDS (Majuca 2011), and in academia (e.g., Majuca 2014; Majuca and Dacuycuy 2014; Pagaduan and Majuca 2016).

In the meantime, interest in macroeconometric modeling in the country weakened considerably, mirroring developments overseas, notably as the bias for microfounded models deepened. None of the macroeconometric models of the Philippines that emerged in the 1990s and 2000s remain active today (see Reyes et al. 2018).

Several other reasons for failing to update and/or upgrade traditional macroeconometric models can be raised. Lindé (2018) noted the hefty requirements of building and maintaining large-scale models in terms of resources and capital. Even the medium-sized ones would require a research team to keep them up and running (e.g., trained staff to tweak the functional forms, handle the data, adjust specifications to fit the data, fix the frontend of the program, and make the model user-friendly for nonspecialists, in addition to the availability of various experts on important sectors of the economy).

In the Philippines, critical factors also include key researchers' retirement, resignation, or relocation. Continuity may be disrupted if complete program codes (including manuals and other vital documentation) are not turned over or if the software becomes obsolete, requiring rewriting the codes for the macroeconometric model. Failure to train able successors may stall progress in model development, especially if glitches occur in the estimation or the system fails to solve with changes in specification or data updates, leading to the eventual abandonment of the project.

Lindé (2018) argued that DSGE models, which tend to be smaller, are cheaper to maintain, especially for smaller policy institutions with limited funding, noting the opportunity to hire researchers from universities to work on model development or to consult with prominent academics on various issues regarding macroeconomic theory. However, this has proven to be an insufficient condition for developing a suitable working model domestically.

The tepid reception for DSGE models among policymakers, even at the central bank, which had the financial resources to assemble a research team and develop such systems, may have been partly a matter of timing. As discussed earlier, there was disillusionment with the method after it failed to anticipate the GFC and Great Recession or offer explanations for the crises during the late 2000s, about the same time that such models were being built locally.

Writing on the use of DSGE models in monetary policy committees, Gerlach (2017) pointed out that such models, despite supposedly having deep structural parameters, failed to display stability when the distribution of shocks changed. Moreover, he said DSGE models in their current state relied on a rather limited number of economic indicators and transmission mechanisms, while policy discussions were often driven by broader research based on a richer set of empirical facts. Like Blanchard (2017, 2018), he remarked on the complex nature of DSGE models, which, by not allowing a full narrative, made them ineffective communication devices.[13] Gürkaynak and Tille (2017) noted that many central banks continued to use large-scale macroeconometric models and statistical methods, such as structural VARs, for policy analysis and forecasting alongside DSGE models, given the latter's shortcomings.

As discussed previously, the BSP has moved toward establishing a small semistructural policy model under the FPAS framework (see Laxton et al. 2009) to complement the central bank's workhorse models, allowing them to receive technical help from international experts. In mapping the ways forward for the Philippine central bank, Abenoja et al. (2022) reported that the research department of the BSP intends to review and improve the PAMPH and eventually make the model its workhorse for monetary policy analysis.

The BSP has also started consultations with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to collaborate on projects related to macroeconomic modeling and forecasting and the IMF's Institute for Capacity Development (ICD) to obtain technical assistance on the extension of the standard Quarterly Projection Model for the Philippines (see Guo et al. 2019; Karam et al. 2021). The extended model, which is also New Keynesian in design, incorporates credit cycle and macroprudential blocks to capture responses to shocks in the financial system (e.g., shocks to credit demand, bank profitability). The intent is to provide the BSP's research team with the capacity to further improve on the PAMPH by including features relevant to monetary policymaking, such as credit aggregates and reserve requirements.

[13] Other shortcomings of DSGE models stated by Blanchard (2018) include their unappealing or constraining assumptions; unconvincing or questionable estimation technique that relies on a-priori methods (mix of calibration and Bayesian estimation); and similarly unconvincing normative implications.

Quite recently, the BSP also collaborated with PIDS to create the PIDS-BSP Annual Macroeconometric Model for the Philippines (Reyes et al. 2020), indicating the (perceived) usefulness of a more flexible model that can provide a clearer narrative. Additionally, as noted earlier, the PAMPH uses a calibration technique akin to that applied in DSGE modeling, a method that may not be as convincing as direct estimation (Blanchard 2017, 2018). The PIDS-BSP model closely followed the PIDS-NEDA Annual Macroeconometric Model in the overall framework but allowed for greater disaggregation of household spending, wage, fiscal, and external trade sectors. It had four blocks like its predecessor but was much bigger in size, with a total of 132 behavioral equations (i.e., 65 for the real sector, 20 for the fiscal sector, 30 for the trade sector, and 17 for the monetary sector) estimated through an ARDL-ECM method.

A Small Macroeconometric Model for the Philippines

Starting small: Model selection considerations

While macroeconomic modelers at home had initially kept abreast of theoretical and empirical developments overseas, a visible break in activity occurred during the DSGE-dominated period. As the literature review has shown, hardly any of the Philippine macroeconometric models built in the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s remain active. Yet, no institution, whether in government or the academe, has maintained a functional DSGE model.

Despite the shift toward microfounded models in response to the Lucas Critique, many institutions continue to use more traditional macroeconometric models as their main analytic tool, such as the US Federal Reserve, which has retained the US-FRB model of the US economy. Other central banks have created non-DSGE models, including the Bank of Canada, the Norges Bank, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), and the European Central Bank (Hendry 2020).

Meanwhile, only a few policy institutions have been able to develop DSGE models in Asia. In a recent survey by the Policy Research Institute of Japan's Ministry of Finance, only three in the region, apart from the BSP, were reported to have built a DSGE model (Yagihashi 2020).

These comprised the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Bank of Japan (which maintained the M-JEM model), and the Bank of Thailand.[14]

In building a policy simulation model for India, Mundle et al. (2011) underscored two reasons why traditional macroeconometric models remained attractive among policymakers despite the Lucas Critique. First, they noted that not all policy choices require selecting among alternative policy rules and that some choices simply fall within a given rule. Therefore, policy choices need not alter behavior or lead to structural changes in the economy.[15]

Second, they claimed that the information requirements of microfounded models are often exceedingly large and unavailable, especially in the case of developing economies. This being so, they argued that (Bayesian) DSGE models, while remaining an important field of research, may not yet be viable tools for studying alternative policy options.

For examining the effects of policy changes, Blanchard (2018) recommended policy models that closely fit the data but are less stringent about microeconomic foundations, in contrast to DSGE models, which are more closely tied to theory. Wren-Lewis (2018) similarly argued for models closer to the data—specifically, for more traditional structural econometric models that can help improve policy advice.

Lately, new types of models, such as the RBA's Macroeconomic Relationships for Targeting Inflation (MARTIN) model, have emerged, taking the place between a fully data-driven system and one guided solely by theory (Cusbert and Kendall 2018). According to its developers (Ballantyne et al. 2019), the goal of MARTIN is to strike a balance between "empirical realism" and "theoretical rigor". Its key feature is the flexibility

[14] As mentioned earlier, the BSP's DSGE model (McNelis et al. 2009) was replaced by the MMPH in 2012 as complement to the monetary authority's workhorse models (the SEM and the MEM). The MMPH, in turn, was replaced by the PAMPH.

[15] This is similar to the argument of Leeper and Zha (2003), who stated that many policy options involve "modest policy interventions" (i.e., minor shifts from standard policy settings). Such modest interventions, the authors stated, do not significantly change agents' beliefs about the policy regime nor induce changes in their behavior, in contrast to what had been emphasized by Lucas (1976) in his famous critique.

in incorporating economic mechanisms that policymakers know to be important while also matching observable relationships in the data.[16]

This paper moves in a similar direction by embarking on a research program to build a policy model guided by economic theory yet still able to fit the data reasonably well. Learning from local experiences with building and sustaining macroeconometric models for policy analysis and prediction, this study adopts a pragmatic approach. It aims for usability, tractability, and ease of maintenance of the model, in addition to model validity and robustness.

As discussed earlier, developing and maintaining a macroeconometric model, even a medium-sized one, would require substantial resources and capital, both financial and human. Given the constraints, the authors start with a small model of the Philippine economy consisting of 5 blocks with 10 behavioral equations, 5 identities, and 23 variables, 16 of which are endogenous variables. It covers the basic parts of the economy: private demand, international trade, employment, prices, and in rudimentary form, financial and monetary sectors (the latter consisting mainly of the monetary policy rate, 2 benchmark market interest rates, and the nominal and real effective exchange rates).

As in some macroeconometric models of comparative size in contemporary literature (e.g., Kasimati and Dawson 2009; Hammersland and Traee 2014), the model developed in this study focuses initially on the demand side. However, it is meant to be a building block for a larger system down the road, as more sectors and linkages deemed important for policy analysis—and variables that policymakers typically monitor given their known influence on economic activity—are incorporated and developed. It is geared mainly toward policy analysis, though it aims for some degree of forecasting power.[17]

[16] Introducing features specific to a country, for instance, may be difficult to do in a model derived from a single theoretical framework as in a DSGE model. The downside is that causal mechanisms in such a model are less clear than in a DSGE model, which makes it hard to interpret the drivers of some relationships.

[17] Thus, model building in this paper was especially guided by the following selection criteria: consistency with economic theory or intuition (parameters with correct signs or estimates that were in line with expectations, ideally statistically significant); correct specification of each behavioral equation; parameter constancy/stability; and close fit with the empirical data. This is apart from meeting standard diagnostic tests for linear regressions.

Following most macroeconometric models in recent literature, including MARTIN, the ECM form for most behavioral equations[18] was used. This helps solve econometric issues associated with nonstationary macroeconomic data and allows the imposition of a theoretically coherent structure on the model's long-run properties while retaining flexibility to capture short-run dynamics from the data (Ballantyne et al. 2019). More concretely, the ECM framework allows incorporating economic theory and intuition through the chosen variables in the equations defining long-run equilibrium relationships as well as accounting for short-term empirical relationships observed in the data.

Data and estimation method

The data used in the model consists of quarterly series from 2002 to 2017, though some series begin at a later date for various reasons.[19] The sample coincides with the BSP's adoption of inflation targeting as the country's monetary framework starting in 2002 and includes the GFC of 2008/2009. Though the data are readily available, the COVID-19 pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 were excluded because of the atypical economic behavior and business settings during the period. Data from 2018 to 2019 was also set aside for model evaluation, particularly for assessing out-of-sample forecast performance.

Data series were seasonally adjusted using the X-13 routine in EViews. Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests were applied to determine the order of integration of the variables. Appendix A displays the results of the unit root tests, with most reported to be of order I(1), except for three that were stationary in levels.

Table 1 summarizes the basic features of the data used in constructing the model. The inflation and nominal market interest rates are notably the most volatile series during the sample period. The period also saw the real 91-day Treasury rate being negative on average, particularly due to the period of high inflation in 2018 and low interest rates in 2011–2014.

[18] This paper uses an ARDL-ECM method, which allows for estimation of long-run (cointegrating) relationships among variables of different orders of integration. Further details of the empirical method applied are discussed in the next section.

[19] The employment rate series starts in the second quarter of 2005 due to an important break in the definition of labor force participation, while the series on the retail price of rice begins in the fourth quarter of 2004.

Table 1. Data summary

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Gross domestic product (GDP)*†	64	14.83	0.25	14.42	15.29
Consumption*	64	14.55	0.23	14.16	14.97
Investment*	64	13.17	0.39	12.61	13.93
Government consumption*	64	12.60	0.29	12.18	13.13
Imports*	64	13.66	0.30	13.29	14.38
Exports*	64	13.48	0.27	12.99	14.06
Domestic demand*	64	14.89	0.26	14.50	15.39
Tax revenues*	64	12.75	0.29	12.22	13.34
Global GDP*	61	14.09	0.07	13.95	14.22
Employment rate (%)	48	93.09	0.75	91.91	94.73
Consumer price index (CPI)*	64	4.31	0.19	3.99	4.57
Inflation rate (%)	64	3.66	1.96	-0.04	9.82
World oil price (USD per barrel) *	64	4.08	0.49	3.05	4.77
Retail price of rice (USD per ton) *	53	6.46	0.26	5.88	6.81
Bank lending rate (%)	64	7.68	1.84	5.43	10.83
Real bank lending rate (%)	64	4.02	1.82	-0.95	7.71
91-day Treasury rate (%)	63	3.48	2.18	0.00	7.83
Real 91-day Treasury rate (%)	63	-0.11	2.08	-4.12	4.15
Central bank policy rate (%)	64	5.08	1.61	3.00	7.50
Nominal PHP-USD exchange rate*	64	3.87	0.09	3.71	4.03
Real effective exchange rate*	64	4.56	0.12	4.32	4.72
Inflation target (%)	64	4.13	0.72	3.00	5.50

Obs. = observations; std. dev. = standard deviation; min = minimum; max = maximum; USD = United States dollar; PHP = Philippine peso
Notes: GDP, consumption, investment, government consumption, imports, exports, domestic, demand, and tax revenues are in millions of pesos in 2018 prices. Global GDP is the trade-weighted aggregation of the real GDPs (2014 prices in million USD) of the Philippines' major export partners (see footnote 42). All variables are seasonally adjusted or derived from seasonally adjusted variables, except the central bank policy rate and market interest rates.
* Log-transformed variables
† GDP is equal to the sum of aggregate demand components, omitting statistical discrepancy.
Source: Authors' calculation

Behavioral equations were estimated using the ARDL method in ECM form. Lag lengths were optimally selected using the Akaike Information Criterion restricted to a maximum of 2 lags. Cointegration between level variables was tested using the bounds test approach developed by Pesaran et al. (2001). We chose specifications such that estimated coefficients of variables that enter the long-run equation display signs consistent with theory; variables with parameters that failed to conform with expectations based on either theory or intuition were relegated to the short-run equation or omitted altogether. In cases where the bounds test indicated the absence of cointegration, behavioral relationships were modeled as a short-run equation in first differences. Residual diagnostic checks testing for homoskedasticity, serial correlation, and normality were performed to ensure model adequacy.

We used EViews to solve the model, combining estimated behavioral equations and identities to obtain the dynamic numerical solution for simulation.[20] Various simulation exercises were subsequently conducted to validate the model.

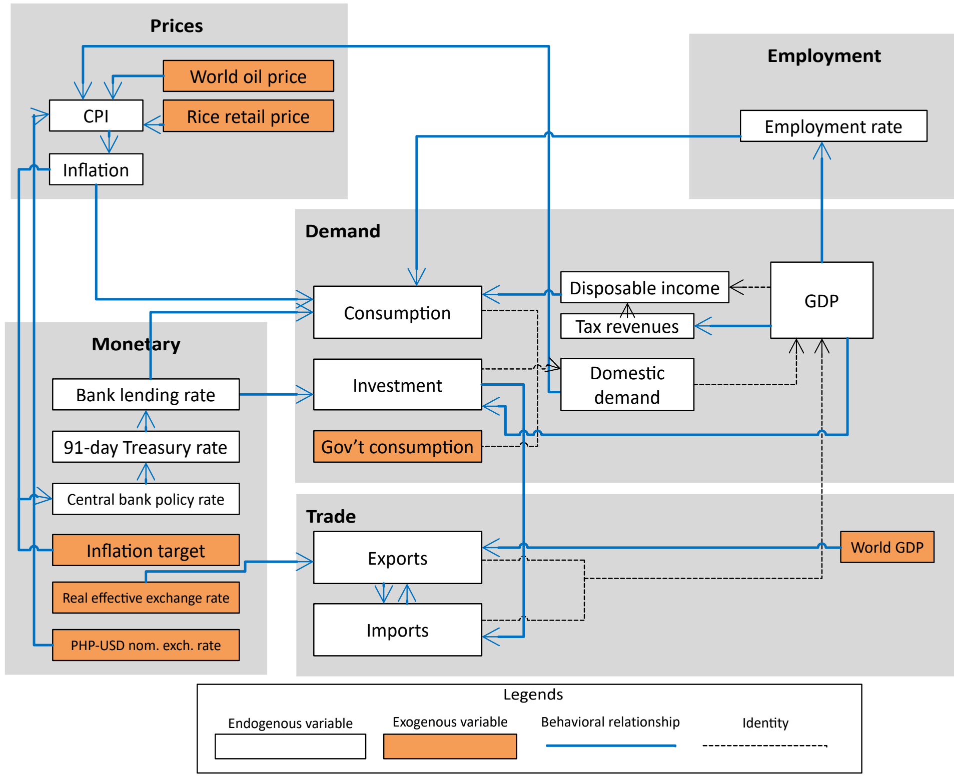
Model structure

Figure 1 illustrates the model's structure and linkages, while Table 2 enumerates the model's variables and equations in simplified form. This paper initially adopts a stylized framework with output determined from the aggregate demand side in the spirit of earlier Keynes-based models and some small macroeconometric models in recent literature. The model consists of a domestic demand block (consumption and investment), a trade block, an employment block, a monetary block, and a price block. Exogenous variables influencing the system include government spending, world income, the real effective exchange rate, the peso-dollar exchange rate, and world oil and domestic rice prices. A description of each block is provided below, with estimation results summarized in Appendix B.[21]

[20] The model was solved using the Broyden solution algorithm. For a description, see IHS Markit (2020, pp.1044 and 1324).

[21] Appendix B shows the estimated equations and the results of the bounds and residual diagnostic tests.

Figure 1. Model structure



CPI = consumer price index; GDP = gross domestic product; gov't = government
Source: Authors' illustration

Table 2. Model equations and variables

Equations	Variables
Aggregate demand block	
$\log(C_t) = f(\log(YD_t), \tilde{r}_t, \pi_t, emp_t)$	*C* = private consumption*
$\log(I_t) = f(\log(Y_t), \Delta\tilde{r}_t)$	*I* = investment*
$\log(TX_t) = f(Y_t)$	*G* = government consumption
$Y_t \equiv C_t + I_t + G_t + X_t - M_t$	*TX* = tax revenues*
$DD_t \equiv C_t + I_t + G_t$	*Y* = GDP*
$YD_t \equiv Y_t - TX_t$	*DD* = domestic demand*
	YD = disposable income*
Trade block	
$\log(X_t) = f(\log(Y_t^{World}), \log(M_t), \log(reer_t))$	*X* = exports*
$\log(M_t) = f(\log(I_t), \log(X_t))$	*M* = imports*
	Y^{World} = major trading partners' GDP
	reer = real effective exchange rate
Employment block	
$emp_t = f(Y_t)$	*emp* = employment rate*
Monetary block	
$tr_t = f(rrp_t)$	*tr* = 91-day Treasury rate*
$r_t = f(tr_t)$	*r* = bank lending rate*
$\Delta rrp_t = f(\Delta(\pi_t - \pi_t^T))$	*rrp* = BSP policy rate*
$\widetilde{tr}_t \equiv tr_t - \pi_t$	$\widetilde{tr}$ = real 91-day Treasury rate *
$\tilde{r}_t \equiv r_t - \pi_t$	$\tilde{r}$ = real bank lending rate*
	π^T = BSP inflation target
Price block	
$\Delta\log(CPI_t) = f(\Delta\log(oil_t), \Delta\log(rice_t), \Delta\log(DD_t), \Delta\log(er_t))$	*CPI* = consumer price index*
$\pi_t = \log(CPI_t) - \log(CPI_{t-4})$	π = inflation*
	oil = world price of oil
	rice = retail price of rice
	er = PHP-USD nominal exchange rate

GDP = gross domestic product; BSP = *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*; PHP = Philippine peso; USD = United States dollar
* Endogenous variable
Source: Authors' specification

Domestic demand block[22]

The long-run equation for consumption is formulated as a function of disposable income, defined as the difference between GDP and tax revenues (in turn, determined by GDP); the employment rate; the real

[22] Domestic demand is computed as the sum of private consumption, investment, and exogenous government consumption, while GDP is the sum of domestic demand and net exports.

bank lending rate; and inflation.[23] As in Kasimati and Dawson (2009), the latter is included to capture wealth effects in the absence of an appropriate indicator. Meanwhile, short-run consumption growth is mainly a function of its own lag. In line with accelerator theory, long-run investment is cast as a function of GDP. Investment growth, however, is additionally influenced by changes in the real bank lending rate in the short run, though the impact is statistically insignificant.[24]

Trade block

The trade block consists of behavioral functions for exports and imports. The long-run export equation is specified as a function of world income (constructed from a trade-weighted aggregation of the GDP indicators of the Philippines' major export partners),[25] imports, and the real effective exchange rate. Short-run export growth is mainly influenced by import growth, reflecting the country's intermediate role in global production. On the other hand, imports are driven by private investment and exports in the long run. The real effective exchange rate as an explanatory variable is omitted from the levels equation of imports because the estimated coefficient takes the wrong sign (i.e., positive instead of negative). The same set of variables in the first differences is shown to be influential for import growth in the short run.

Employment block

The employment block consists solely of the specification for the domestic employment rate. The authors adopted a version of Okun's Law

[23] The authors also estimated long-run specifications that included remittances, given their presumed strong role in driving economic activity. However, estimated coefficients took the wrong (negative) sign, and the variable was eventually dropped.

[24] This representation interprets the estimated coefficient of the real bank lending rate in levels as having the wrong sign (i.e., it should be negative based on theory).

[25] The countries included in the trade-weighted aggregate world GDP are Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand from Southeast Asia; Japan, Hong Kong, and South Korea from East Asia; US and Mexico from North America; and the Netherlands, Germany, France, and the UK from Europe. On average, these economies comprise 74.88 percent of the market for Philippine exports from 2002 to 2019. The quarterly series used for each country is real GDP in 2014 prices converted to US dollars. The following major export partners were omitted: China (accounting for an average of 10.4% of exports during the period) and Taiwan (4.22%) due to the absence of comparable quarterly GDP data; and Vietnam (1.05%) and Indonesia (1.10%) due to their GDP series being short (starting only in 2010).

and model aggregate employment as a function of GDP. The country's employment rate is cast as a function of GDP in the long run, while changes in the employment rate depend solely on changes in its own lag in the short run. The authors did not formulate employment and labor force participation as separate behavioral functions since such treatment is not required by the model in its current form, given limited aggregate supply dimensions.

Monetary block

Given the shift to an inflation targeting framework, monetary policy is represented by the central bank's policy rate (the overnight reverse repurchase rate [RRP] rate). In the absence of long-run cointegration among variables, the policy rate is modeled as a short-run equation, where the monetary authority responds to the difference between the inflation rate and the inflation target.[26] The policy rate, in turn, influences the long-run path of the 91-day Treasury bill rate, which drives the bank lending rate in the short and long run. Movements in monetary policy are thus transmitted to the real economy through the (real) bank lending rate, which affects both consumption and investment.[27]

Price block

The paper models the CPI, which is the country's most closely monitored index, as a short-run equation driven by domestic demand, supply-side factors (the exogenous world price of oil and retail price of rice), and the (nominal) peso-dollar exchange rate.[28] This specification has elements similar to the BSP's SEM and MEM, the Philippine monetary authority's

[26] Specifications of the policy rate equation incorporating a variable that represented economic activity, as in a standard Taylor Rule, were not used because of wrong signs on the estimated coefficients (negative instead of positive). Both output gap and GDP growth rate were considered in the estimation.

[27] Granger causality tests based on vector autoregressions show that the policy rate does not Granger cause the 91-day Treasury rate (though it Granger causes the real Treasury rate based on bivariate tests), while the 91-day Treasury rate Granger causes the bank lending rate (both real and nominal and across methods). Meanwhile, estimated (behavioral) equations 7 and 8 in Appendix B corresponding to the 91-day Treasury bill rate and real bank lending rate, respectively, show the expected signs of (statistically significant) parameters, particularly for the long-run equations.

[28] The CPI was initially modeled as an ECM with money supply (M3 as a percentage of GDP) as the long-run determinant following the quantity theory of money. However, bounds tests showing the lack of evidence for cointegration between the two variables led the authors to specify the CPI equation as a short-run model.

most commonly used models in making policy decisions. The inflation rate is computed as the year-on-year change in the CPI.

Model Evaluation

In this section, the ability of the model, simulated as a complete system, to generate forecasts that are close to the actual data is assessed. Both in-sample and out-of-sample model evaluations are presented.

For in-sample evaluation, forecasts for the period 2012 Q1 to 2017 Q4 were generated through static and dynamic simulations in a deterministic setting, where model inputs are held fixed at their known values, and endogenous variables follow a single path over the forecast period. Static simulation produces a series of one-period ahead forecasts using actual (historical) values for lagged endogenous variables. In contrast, dynamic simulation uses values for lagged endogenous variables predicted (solved) based on previous periods.

For out-of-sample evaluation, forecasts for the period 2018 Q1 to 2019 Q4, which are beyond the estimation period, were generated through dynamic stochastic simulations, incorporating uncertainty in the projections. Five thousand simulations using bootstrapped innovations were performed, yielding a distribution of forecast paths for endogenous variables. The innovations were randomly drawn from the estimation residuals of each behavioral equation and added to these equations.

Several measures were computed to formally gauge forecast accuracy. For real GDP and its components, where forecast deviations are more easily interpreted in percentage terms, the mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) was used. For variables already expressed in percentage form (e.g., rates of change), where errors are better measured in percentage-point deviations, the mean absolute error (MAE) was used to assess their forecasts.

For comparability across variable types, the authors used the normalized root mean square error (NRMSE), with the sample standard deviation as the normalizing parameter to assess forecast performance. This measure is interpreted as the ratio of the overall forecast deviation with the overall variation of the data around its mean. NRMSEs close to zero are considered good forecasts, while those above 1 are considered poor.

The formulas of the three measures are as follows:

$$MAPE = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{t=1}^{n}\left|\frac{A_t - F_t}{A_t}\right|$$

$$MAE = \sum_{t=1}^{n}\frac{|A_t - F_t|}{n}$$

$$NRMSE = \frac{\sqrt{\sum_{t=1}^{n}\frac{(A_t - F_t)^2}{n}}}{\widehat{\sigma_A}}$$

where n is the number of observations, A_t are the actual values, F_t are the forecast values, and $\widehat{\sigma_A}$ is the sample standard deviation of A_t.

In-sample forecast performance

Figure 2 illustrates the in-sample forecasts alongside the historical data, while Table 3 presents predictive accuracy statistics. Next-quarter forecasts of real GDP and its components track actual data quite well in both static and dynamic simulations, while those of next-quarter (annual) GDP growth are able to capture many important turning points in the data (Figure 2).

GDP and its largest component, consumption, have the smallest prediction errors among real variable forecasts, with absolute percentage deviations of less than 1 and 2 percent on average for static and dynamic simulations, respectively (Table 3).[29] Meanwhile, investment forecasts have the largest deviations from historical values, followed by exports and imports, with MAPEs of above 2 percent in all simulations. However, NRSMEs are generally low for real variables, at far below 1 for both static and dynamic forecasts.

[29] Static predictions are naturally more precise than dynamic predictions, as forecast errors do not cumulate across periods.

Figure 2. In-sample simulations

GDP = gross domestic product; CPI = consumer price index
Source: Authors' calculation

Table 3. In-sample forecast accuracy, 2012 Q1–2017 Q4

	Static		Dynamic	
I. Real variables	**MAPE (%)**	**NRMSE**	**MAPE (%)**	**NRMSE**
GDP	0.67	0.08	1.80	0.18
Consumption	0.29	0.03	1.79	0.22
Investment	3.41	0.17	6.16	0.34
Exports	2.00	0.14	2.69	0.21
Imports	2.98	0.14	5.05	0.31
II. Rate variables	**MAE**	**NRMSE**	**MAE**	**NRMSE**
GDP growth rate	0.67	0.85	0.87	1.08
Employment rate	0.29	0.51	0.33	0.59
CPI inflation rate	0.28	0.30	0.77	0.89
Policy rate	0.15	0.64	0.42	1.20
91-day Treasury rate	0.32	0.66	0.98	1.76
Real 91-day Treasury rate	0.44	4.00	1.15	1.00
Bank lending rate	0.16	1.49	0.78	5.76
Real bank lending rate	0.36	0.39	1.08	1.20

Q = quarter; GDP = gross domestic product; CPI = consumer price index; MAPE = mean absolute percentage error; MAE = mean absolute error; NRMSE = normalized root mean squared error
Source: Authors' calculation

As GDP is modeled as an identity (sum of aggregate demand components), growth predictions may lose accuracy as they absorb the forecast errors of the components. Yet MAEs of 0.67 and 0.87 of a percentage point, respectively, for static and dynamic quarter-ahead GDP growth projections appear to be within an acceptable range.

Figure 2 shows simulations produce accurate representations of quarter-ahead inflation until 2015, after which dynamic forecasts diverge from historical data. Forecast errors are nonetheless still relatively low for both static and dynamic simulations of inflation. Employment rate projections also deviate minimally from actual values but are unable to capture the swings in the data.

Static forecasts of the policy rate mimic historical movements of the series, while dynamic forecasts seem to capture just the general trend. Similarly, while projections of the 91-day Treasury bill rate and bank lending rate from static simulations can replicate the path of actual data, projections from dynamic simulations are unable to do so. Static and dynamic predictions of real interest rates generally do a better job of mirroring the swings in the data than their nominal counterparts, largely because of the model's mostly good performance in predicting inflation.

Forecast errors are generally small for interest rate variables in static simulations, except for the bank lending rate. They tend to be much higher in dynamic simulations, particularly as measured by NRMSEs, which are above 1 for forecasts of the policy rate (1.20) and the 3-month Treasury bill rate (1.76) and exceed 5 for forecasts of the bank lending rate in nominal terms, reflecting well-known difficulties of reproducing the long-run behavior of such variables.

Out-of-sample evaluation

Figure 3 illustrates the dynamic stochastic out-of-sample forecasts, with the red broken lines depicting the average forecast path and the outer orange lines representing 95-percent confidence bounds. Table 4 provides the corresponding accuracy statistics based on deviations of the mean forecast with actual data.[30]

Simulations show that out-of-sample quarter-ahead GDP projections, mainly because of consumption performance, continue to compare reasonably well with actual outcomes (Figure 3). Absolute percentage errors of both forecasts are substantially less than 2 percent on average, while NRMSEs lie comfortably below 1 (Table 4). As had been the case with in-sample forecasts, the model's out-of-sample predictions for investment, exports, and imports are less precise than those for consumption, with MAPEs of between 2 to 5 and NRSMEs close to or above 1. The wider confidence bands of the three demand components (especially investment) also reflect a high degree of uncertainty.

Out-of-sample forecasts of next-quarter GDP growth deviate by 1.33 percentage points on average from actual values, which does not

[30] Mean forecast paths of endogenous variables and their corresponding accuracy statistics vary slightly with each stochastic simulation.

Figure 3. Out-of-sample dynamic simulations

GDP = gross domestic product; CPI = consumer price index
Source: Authors' calculation

Table 4. Out-of-sample accuracy of mean dynamic stochastic forecast, 2018 Q1–2019 Q4

I. Real Variables	MAPE	NRMSE
GDP	1.75	0.67
Consumption	1.01	0.37
Investment	5.12	1.58
Exports	2.13	1.03
Imports	3.10	0.99
II. Rate Variables	**MAE**	**NRMSE**
GDP growth rate	1.33	3.63
Employment rate	0.48	1.11
Inflation rate	0.56	0.34
Policy rate	1.26	2.23
91-day Treasury rate	2.85	2.72
Real 91-day Treasury rate	2.80	1.67
Bank lending rate	1.00	1.88
Real bank lending rate	1.26	0.70

Q = quarter; GDP = gross domestic product; MAPE = mean absolute percentage error; MAE = mean absolute error; NRMSE = normalized root mean squared error
Source: Authors' calculation

pale in comparison with the record of established forecasters with a large amount of resources and using a wide array of techniques.[31] The stochastic predictions for inflation also perform well, with the mean dynamic forecast replicating the historical path quite closely and with relatively small errors—mean absolute error at 0.56 of a percentage point and NRMSE of just 0.34.[32]

[31] As an indication, the MAE of current-year forecasts of GDP growth published by ADB in its Asian Development Outlook Update (ADOU), regularly released in September, for the years 2008–2011, which included crisis years, was 0.96 of a percentage point; the comparative figure computed by the IMF and published in the World Economic Outlook Update (WEOU, regularly released in October) was 1.94 percentage points (Ferrarini 2014). For the period 2000–2006, the comparative figure for the ADOU was 0.93 of a percentage point (ADB 2007). The MAEs are clearly not directly comparable, as the forecasts referred to by the mentioned study are of full-year GDP growth, but one can argue that the information content is similar, with actual performance of the first half of the year already known prior to estimation. On the other hand, the values for the exogenous variables used in our model forecasts are simply assumed to be at close to historical values.

[32] The model's performance in inflation forecasting (specifically, MAE of 0.55 percentage point) compares well with that of the ADOU and WEOU for the years 2008 to 2011—with MAEs of current-year full-year inflation projections calculated to be equal to 0.52 and 1.44 percentage points, respectively (Ferrarini 2014). The comparative figure for the ADOU was 0.89 of a percentage point for the years from 2000 to 2006 (ADB 2007). Similar qualifications apply as in the case of GDP growth forecast comparisons (see previous footnote).

As observed under in-sample simulations, out-of-sample employment rate projections continue to exhibit low absolute percentage errors (MAE of half a percentage point) but fail to track actual data. Mean forecasts of the interest rate variables are less satisfactory, with larger absolute errors (higher than 1 percentage point on average) and NRMSEs greater than 1. Deviations are largest for short-term interest rates, as reflected by the policy rate and especially the 91-day Treasury bill rate, with mean absolute errors of 1.26 and 2.85 percentage points, respectively, and NRSMEs above 2.

Figure 3 shows how stochastic predictions of the central bank policy rate are unable to capture the monetary policy tightening observed in 2018, with the flat trajectory mirrored in the forecasts of the 91-day Treasury rate and bank lending rate. Meanwhile, actual values of the 91-day Treasury bill rate during the forecast period lie outside of the model's 95-percent confidence band, indicating a failure to adequately forecast the series.

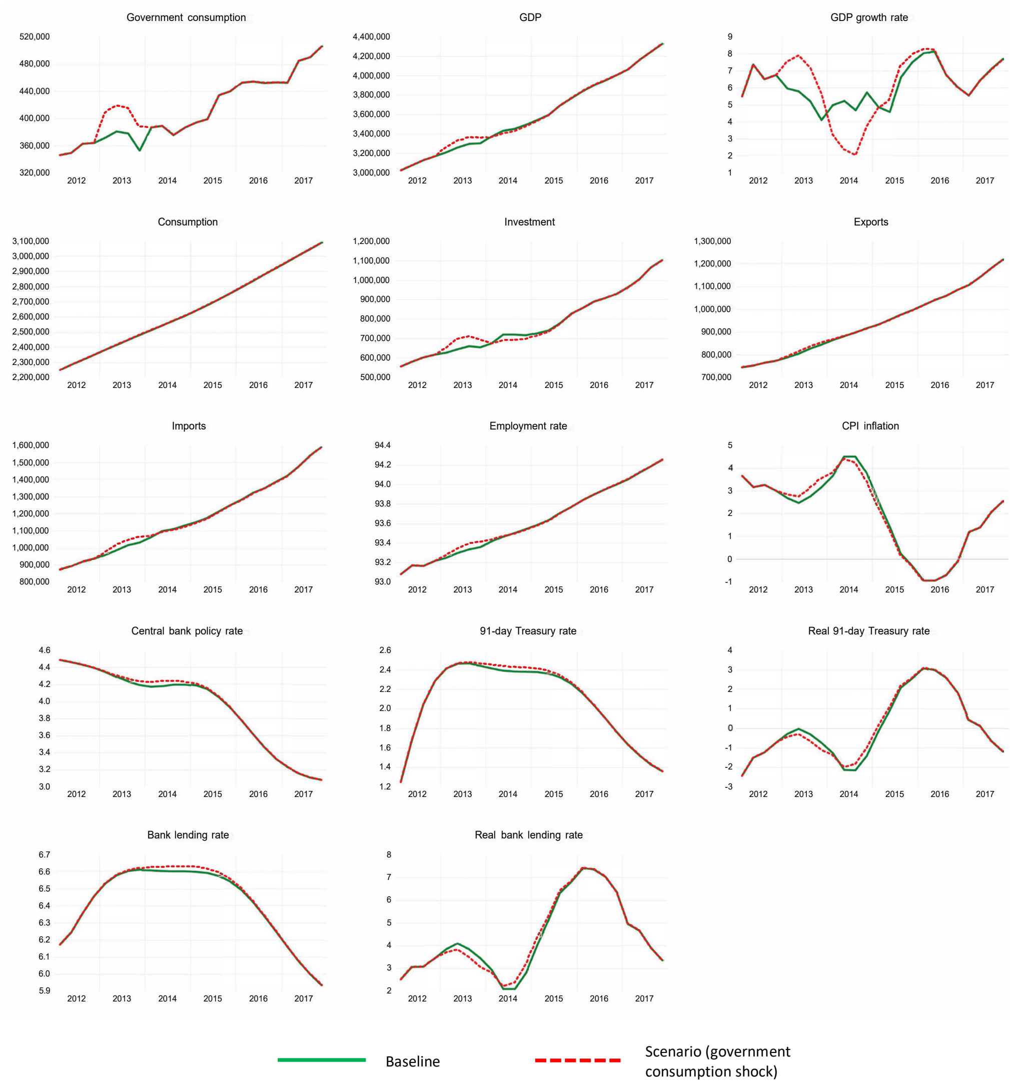
Impact Analysis (Analytic Shocks)

To further test the model, this study applied impulse (temporary) shocks to the exogenous variables and examined the reaction of the endogenous variables relative to their baseline paths from the deterministic dynamic simulation. Three shocks were considered (i) a positive shock to government consumption, (ii) a positive shock to world oil prices, and (iii) a recession in the country's major export partners. The succeeding figures illustrate the simulation results, with the green lines representing the baseline path of the variables and the red broken lines depicting the shocked paths.

Government consumption shock

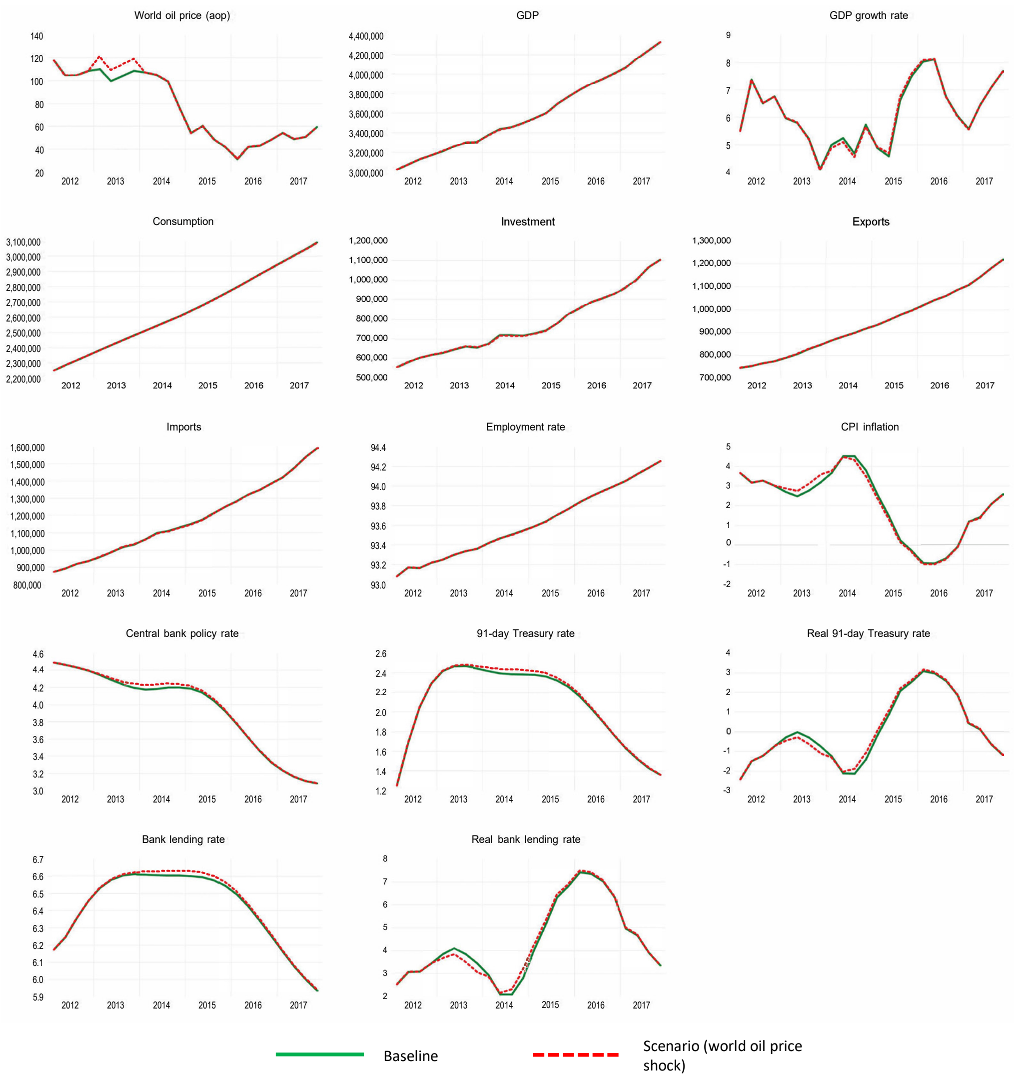
In this simulation experiment, government consumption was raised by 10 percent relative to its baseline path for all quarters of 2013. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Impact of government consumption shock



GDP = gross domestic product; CPI = consumer price index
Source: Authors' calculation

Figure 5. Impact of world oil price shock



GDP = gross domestic product; CPI = consumer price index
Source: Authors' calculation

During the shock period, investment and imports rise considerably relative to the baseline (by an annual average of 6.32% and 2.71%, respectively).[33] GDP growth, in turn, rises by an average of 1.82 percentage points above the baseline rate in 2013. The increase in GDP is short-lived, disappearing almost entirely by the first quarter of 2014. The cumulative government spending multiplier during all four quarters of the shock is 1.62,[34] higher than the short-term fiscal multipliers computed for the Philippines in the empirical literature.[35]

Higher domestic demand causes the inflation rate to inch up to above its baseline path by about 0.41 percentage points by the fourth quarter of 2013 before starting to reverse thereafter. The response of the monetary policy rate to higher inflation is quite small. Nevertheless, Treasury bills and bank lending rates follow the policy rate and rise incrementally. Overall, there is slight evidence of a "crowding-out" effect as private investment dips below its baseline path after the public spending shock due partly to higher Treasury bills and bank lending rates.

World oil price shock

In this scenario, the world price of oil is raised by 10 percent above its baseline path in 2013. The shock translates to the price of oil rising from an average of USD 105.42/barrel to an average of USD 115.96/barrel during the period considered. Figure 5 depicts the simulation results.

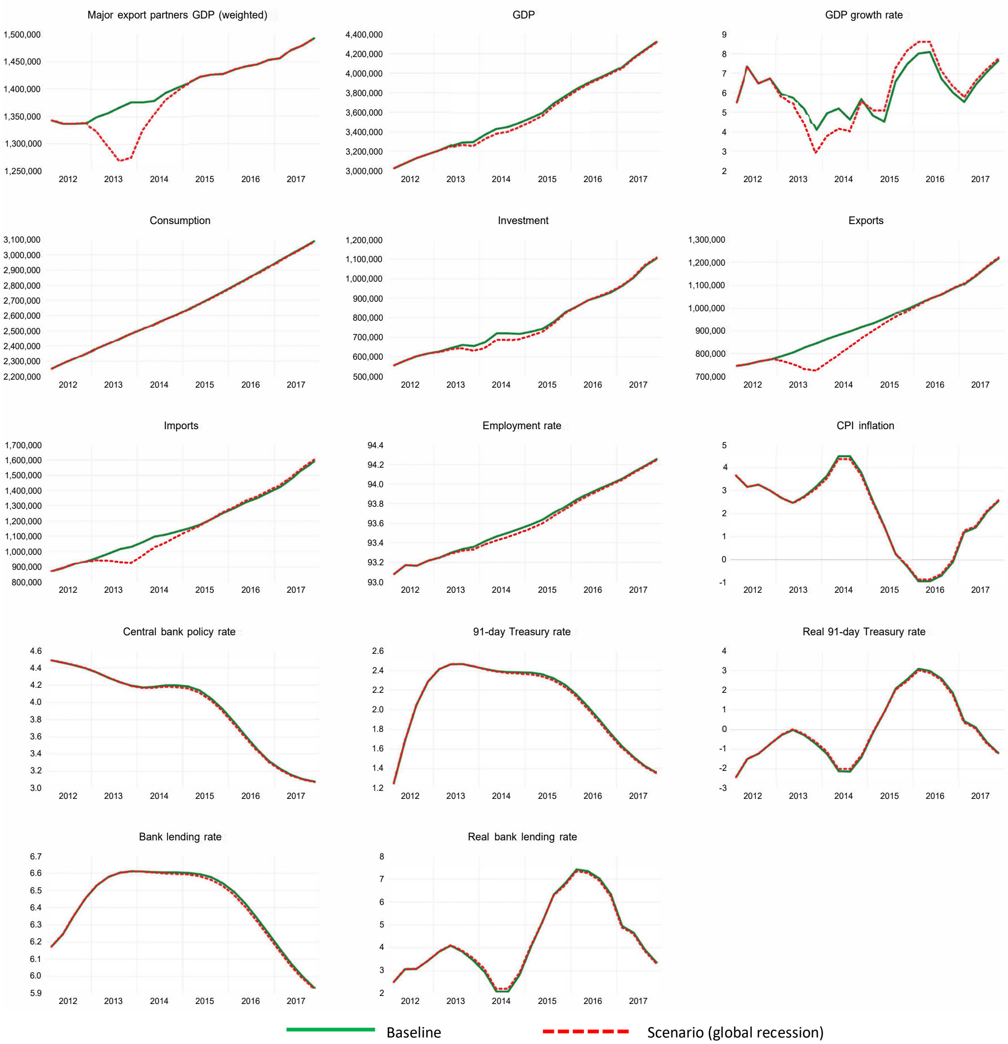
The higher price of oil causes inflation to accelerate, though not substantially, with the headline rate rising by only 0.30 percentage points on average relative to the baseline in 2013. Moreover, the effect starts to diminish by the first quarter of 2014. The rise in inflation leads to only a small adjustment of the policy rate and, in turn, of other interest rates. The increase in the policy rate relative to the baseline cumulates to just 5 basis points (0.05 percentage points) by the middle of the succeeding year and gradually peters out soon after. The slightly faster inflation produces only a small, negative effect on the real economy, with the simulation experiment reflecting an imperceptible decline in consumption and GDP.

[33] Consumption and the employment rate also rise, but the increases are not substantial.

[34] The cumulative multiplier is computed as the ratio between the cumulative change in output and the cumulative change in government spending during the shock period, $\sum_{t=2013Q1}^{2013Q4} \Delta Y_t / \sum_{t=2013Q1}^{2013Q4} \Delta G_t$, where ΔY_t is the difference between the shocked and baseline value of GDP at time *t*, and ΔG_t is the difference between the shocked and baseline value of government consumption at time *t*.

[35] The average for public spending (impact) multipliers is about 0.3. However, regional multipliers are computed to be around 1.2 (Debuque-Gonzales 2021).

Figure 6. Impact of global recession



GDP = gross domestic product; CPI = consumer price index
Source: Authors' calculation

Global recession

As a final experiment, the authors examined the domestic impact of a global recession on the Philippine economy by constructing a quarter-on-quarter contraction in the trade-weighted aggregate GDP of the Philippines' major export partners from 2013 Q1 to 2013 Q4 that mirrors the path observed in the same synthetic GDP measure from 2008 Q3 to 2009 Q1 during the GFC of 2008–2009. In year-on-year terms, the artificial recession translates to GDP growth declines of 1.43 percent in 2013 Q1, 3 percent in 2013 Q2, 4.94 percent in 2013 Q3, and 4.55 percent in 2013 Q4.[36] The simulation results are shown in Figure 6.

The global recession is transmitted to the Philippine economy through exports, which slips below its baseline path by an annual average of 8.61 percent in 2013. Meanwhile, the shock in total demand causes investment to fall below baseline by an average of 1.89 percent in the same period, but consumption and employment are largely stable. The drop in exports and weaker domestic demand combine to pull down imports by an average of 6.32 percent in the same period. GDP growth remains positive but slows by an average of 0.61 percentage points from 2013 Q1 to 2013 Q4. Mirroring the direction of global GDP, the country's exports, investment, and output remain below their baseline paths in 2014 but start to move toward recovery.

Conclusion

This paper presents a new macroeconometric model of the Philippine economy. In view of past difficulties in maintaining larger macroeconometric models, the authors aim for a more compact system that is tractable, easy to communicate, and relatively inexpensive to update and maintain. Following modern-day central bank models and models in the empirical literature, this study adopted a pragmatic approach that incorporates economic theory (and intuition) through long-run equilibrium relationships of the ECM while having the flexibility to capture immediate data dynamics through short-run equations.

[36] While the GFC had lasting effects on the global economy in that world GDP never returned to its precrisis path, this experiment assumes the shock to be temporary. After bottoming out in 2013 Q4, the authors let their measure of world GDP quickly rise and return to its baseline path by 2015 Q1.

The small macroeconometric model shown in this paper is just the first step toward building a more robust and structurally sound full-system model for policy analysis with enough forecasting power to make quick predictions. So far, the model constructed in this study has been validated through various simulation exercises. It has been able to track historical turning points of GDP growth and CPI inflation quite well and produce relatively low in-sample prediction errors for employment. Moreover, it has successfully generated out-of-sample forecasts of these three closely watched macro variables.

The small model has also shown strong potential for use in policy simulation, as it illustrates the probable impact of exogenous shocks reasonably well. A government spending shock, for example, elicits strong increases in investment and imports as well as GDP growth on impact, based on the model, while a shock to world oil prices shows greater resiliency of the Philippine economy than might have been anticipated. A global recession, meanwhile, is largely transmitted to the domestic economy, mainly through exports and a subsequent decline in investment.

Logical extensions to improve policy simulations entail developing the supply side of the model (especially as it relates to productivity), disaggregating important sectors, providing greater detail on determinants of key variables, strengthening linkages across sectors, and modeling and incorporating the role of expectations. To optimize the usage of the model, it would be necessary to add a fiscal/government block, further develop the monetary block, and introduce a more detailed financial block. Failure of the model in its current form to closely trace historical movements in domestic interest rates may be partly reflective of these shortcomings.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Results of Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests on model variables

	diff=0	diff=1	diff=2
log(GDP)	0.99	0.00	0.00
GDP growth rate	0.01	0.00	0.00
log(consumption)	1.00	0.00	0.00
log(government consumption)	0.95	0.00	0.00
log(investment)	0.99	0.00	0.00
log(imports)	1.00	0.00	0.00
log(exports)	0.95	0.00	0.00
log(disposable income)	0.99	0.00	0.00
log(tax revenues)	0.99	0.00	0.00
log(domestic demand)	1.00	0.00	0.00
log(employment rate)	0.94	0.00	0.00
Policy rate (reverse repurchase rate)	0.72	0.00	0.00
91-day Treasury rate	0.09	0.00	0.00
Real 91-day Treasury rate	0.02	0.00	0.00
Bank lending rate	0.07	0.00	0.00
Real bank lending rate	0.00	0.00	0.00
log(nominal PHP-USD exchange rate)	0.54	0.00	0.00
log(real effective exchange rate)	0.75	0.00	0.00
log(Consumer Price Index)	0.58	0.00	0.00
log(world price of oil)	0.16	0.00	0.00
log(retail price of rice)	0.13	0.00	0.00
log(world GDP)	0.80	0.00	0.00
Inflation	0.00	0.00	0.00
Inflation target	0.57	0.00	0.00
Inflation deviation from target	0.03	0.00	0.00

GDP = gross domestic product; PHP = Philippine peso; USD = United States dollar
Note: Figures are p-values from the Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests, with the null hypothesis being the presence of a unit root. The first, second, and third columns show the test result in levels, first difference, and second difference, respectively.
Source: Authors' computation

Appendix B. Estimated behavioral equations

1. **Consumption**
   Estimation sample: 2005 Q2–2017 Q4
   a. Long-run equation

$$\log(C_t) = 1.44_{[0.29]} + 0.34\log(YD_t)_{[0.26]} + 0.10 emp_{t[0.50]} - 0.08\tilde{r}_{t[-0.43]} - 0.10\pi_{t[-0.44]} + ec_t$$

   b. ECM form

$$\Delta\log(C_t) = -0.36\Delta\log(C_{t-1})_{[-2.82]} - 0.03 ec_{t-1[-9.57]} + \varepsilon_t$$

Adjusted R-squared (ARDL)	0.998
Adjusted R-squared (ECM)	0.32
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	2.55 (0.28)
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) F(5,42)	1.67 (0.16)
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) F(2,40)	1.65 (0.22)
F-Bounds test	13.70***

2. **Investment**
   Estimation sample: 2002 Q1–2017 Q4
   a. Long-run equation

$$\log(I_t) = -10.83_{[7.84]} + 1.60\log(Y_t)_{[7.84]} + ec_t$$

   b. ECM form

$$\Delta\log(I_t) = -0.29\Delta\log(I_{t-1})_{[-2.58]} + 2.40\Delta\log(Y_t)_{[3.37]} + 2.46\Delta\log(Y_{t-1})_{[3.23]} - 0.01\Delta\tilde{r}_{t[-1.10]} - 0.16 ec_{t-1[-3.44]} + \varepsilon_t$$

Adjusted R-squared (ARDL)	0.97
Adjusted R-squared (ECM)	0.32
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	0.75 (0.68)
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) $\chi^2(6)$	16.81 (0.01)**
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) $\chi^2(2)$	0.19 (0.91)
F-Bounds test	3.81*

3. **Exports**
   Estimation sample: 2002 Q4–2017 Q4
   a. Long-run equation

$$\log(X_t) = -21.86_{[-3.89]} + 2.14\log(Y_t^{World})_{[4.12]} - 0.19\log(reer_t)_{[-0.88]} + 0.44\log(M_t)_{[4.21]} + ec_t$$

   b. ECM form

$$\Delta\log(X_t) = -0.19\Delta\log(X_{t-1})_{[-2.13]} + 0.39\Delta\log(M_t)_{[4.21]} - 0.42 ec_{t-1[-5.16]} + \varepsilon_t$$

Adjusted R-squared (ARDL)	0.98
Adjusted R-squared (ECM)	0.47
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	11.68 (0.002)***
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) $\chi^2(6)$	4.31 (0.63)
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) $\chi^2(4)$	4.76 (0.31)
F-Bounds test	4.96**

4. Imports

Estimation sample: 2002 Q1–2017 Q4

a. Long-run equation

$$\log(M_t) = -1.20_{[1.78]} + 0.65\log(I_t)_{[6.94]} + 0.29\log(X_t)_{[2.93]} + ec_t$$

b. ECM form

$$\Delta\log(M_t) = -0.37\Delta\log(M_{t-1})_{[-5.06]} + 0.32\Delta\log(I_t)_{[9.01]} + 0.69\Delta\log(X_t)_{[10.81]} + 0.69\Delta\log(X_{t-1})_{[4.06]} - 0.21ec_{t-1_{[-4.22]}} + \varepsilon_t$$

Adjusted R-squared	0.99
Adjusted R-squared	0.75
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	0.66 (0.72)
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) $\chi^2(7)$	10.06 (0.19)
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) $\chi^2(4)$	5.52 (0.24)
F-Bounds test	4.22**

5. Employment rate

Estimation sample: 2005 Q4–2017 Q4

a. Long-run equation

$$emp_t = 40.83_{[6.13]} + 3.50\log(Y_t)_{[7.82]} + ec_t$$

b. ECM form

$$\Delta emp_t = -0.31\Delta emp_{t-1_{[-2.40]}} - 0.54ec_{t-1_{[-3.54]}} + \varepsilon_t$$

Adjusted R-squared (ARDL)	0.79
Adjusted R-squared (ECM)	0.46
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	0.71 (0.70)
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) $\chi^2(3)$	2.31 (0.51)
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) $\chi^2(2)$	4.08 (0.13)
F-Bounds test	3.99*

6. Policy rate

Estimation sample: 2002 Q3–2017 Q4

$$\Delta rrp_t = 0.30\Delta rrp_{t-1_{[2.44]}} + 0.03(\pi_t - \pi_t^T)_{[1.24]} + \varepsilon_t$$

Adjusted R-squared	0.08
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	186.41 (0.00)***
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) $\chi^2(3)$	1.82 (0.61)
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) $\chi^2(2)$	2.20 (0.33)

7. Treasury rate

Estimation sample: 2002 Q1–2017 Q4

a. Long-run equation

$$tr_t = -1.82_{[-1.59]} + 1.00rrp_{t[4.00]} + ec_t$$

b. ECM form

$$\Delta tr_t = 0.27\Delta\pi_{t[2.44]} - 0.26ec_{t-1[-4.16]} + \varepsilon_t$$

Adjusted R-squared (ARDL)	0.90
Adjusted R-squared (ECM)	0.23
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	3.38 (0.83)
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) $\chi^2(3)$	9.74 (0.02)**
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) $\chi^2(4)$	4.46 (0.11)
F-Bounds test	5.59**

8. Bank lending rate

Estimation sample: 2002 Q1–2017 Q4

a. Long-run equation

$$r_t = 4.75_{[13.33]} + 0.78tr_{t[7.88]} + ec_t$$

b. ECM form

$$\Delta r_t = 0.43\Delta tr_{t[7.47]} - 0.26ec_{t-1[-4.09]} + \varepsilon_t$$

Adjusted R-squared (ARDL)	0.96
Adjusted R-squared (ECM)	0.23
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	0.31 (0.86)
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) $\chi^2(3)$	11.15 (0.01)**
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) $\chi^2(4)$	4.93 (0.29)
F-Bounds test	5.39**

9. Consumer price index

Estimation sample: 2005Q1 – 2017Q4

$$\Delta\log(CPI_t) = 0.49\Delta\log(CPI_{t-1})_{[5.50]} + 0.23\Delta\log(CPI_{t-2})_{[2.82]} + 0.02\Delta\log(oil_t)_{[4.37]} + 0.06\Delta\log(rice_t)_{[8.40]} + 0.08\Delta\log(DD_t)_{[2.97]} + 0.05\Delta\log(er_t)_{[3.44]} + u_t$$

Adjusted R-squared	0.72
Residual diagnostics	
Residual normality (Jarque-Bera)	0.91 (0.63)
Homoskedasticity (Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey) $\chi^2(6)$	3.84 (0.70)
No serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) $\chi^2(4)$	7.44 (0.11)

Notes:

(1) In estimated equations, subscripted figures enclosed in square brackets are t-statistics.

(2) Figures enclosed in parentheses in residual diagnostic tests are p-values.

(3) Asterisks after F-Bounds test statistic are significance levels (*** 1%, ** 5%, * 10%).

The Authors

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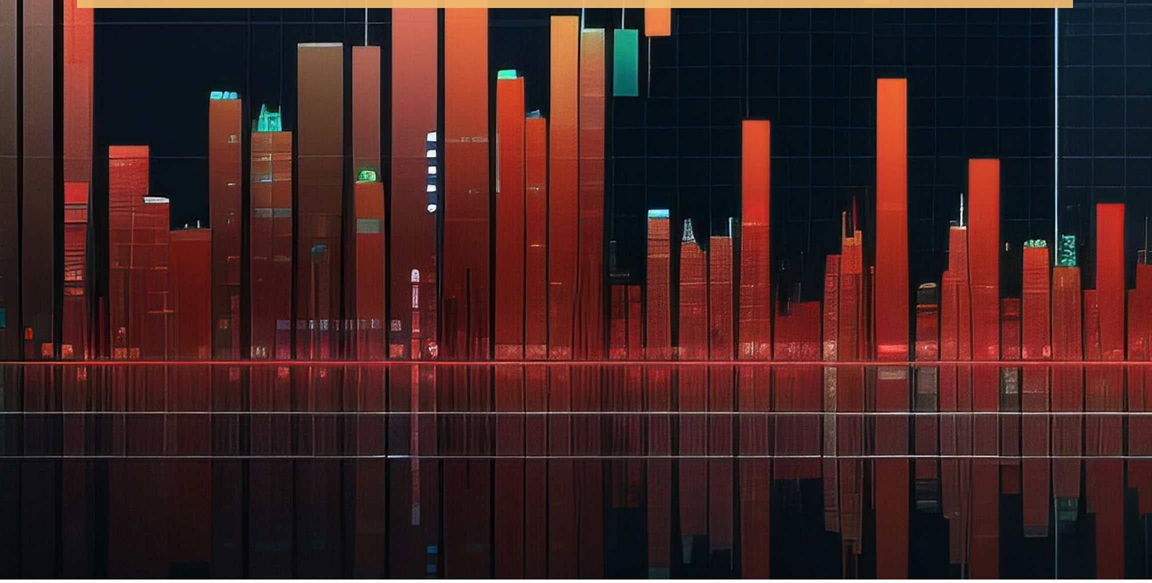
This study presents a small macroeconometric model of the Philippines. The model covers the basic parts of the economy—namely, private consumption and investment, international trade, employment, prices, and basic monetary sectors. Behavioral equations are estimated in error-correction form (using Autoregressive Distributed Lag methodology) on quarterly data from 2002 to 2017. The model's validity is evaluated through various simulation exercises. It generates satisfactory in-sample and out-of-sample predictions for gross domestic product (GDP) growth, consumer price index inflation, and employment rate but is less successful in tracking the movement of domestic interest rates. The model also shows plausible responses to exogenous shocks emanating from government consumption, world oil prices, and global GDP. Briefly, a government spending shock elicits increases in investment and imports, a shock to world oil prices generates faster inflation, while a global recession is transmitted to the domestic economy mainly through lower exports and investment. The next steps needed to extend the model beyond improving the existing blocks include developing the supply side, incorporating expectations, and adding fiscal and financial blocks.



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