

Michael A. Navarrete
National Bureau of Economic Research
Cambridge, MA 02138
Email: navarrem@nber.org
Website: <https://mnav-umd.github.io/>

Employment

Postdoctoral Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research, July 2024-Present
Alice Rivlin Dissertation Fellow, Brookings Institution, November 2022-August 2024

Education

Ph.D. Economics, University of Maryland at College Park, 2024
M.A. Economics, University of Maryland at College Park, 2021
B.A. Economics and French, Williams College, 2016

Fields of Specialization

Macroeconomics, Labor Economics,

JOB MARKET PAPERS

“Geospatial Heterogeneity in Inflation: The Role of Retailer Dynamics” (with Seula Kim)

Inflation is an important economic indicator that is typically measured and reported at the national level. However, there is systematic geographical variation in inflation across metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) within the United States, which can affect spatial inequality. This paper studies how spatial variation in inflation rates affects income inequality and examines the role of retailer dynamics in driving these differences. Using Nielsen Retail Scanner dataset and the Business Dynamic Statistics, we document several stylized facts about the spatial heterogeneity in inflation and retailer dynamics. We find that the poorest MSAs experienced higher inflation rates than the richest MSAs on average from 2006 to 2020, accumulated to 10 p.p. higher inflation over this decade; poorer MSAs have fewer retailers and fewer varieties of goods with a larger (smaller) fraction of large (small) retailers; and poorer MSAs have higher retailer market concentration relative to richer MSAs. To explore the causal link between inflation and market concentration, we use a triple difference estimator, with a particular focus on the egg market during the 2015 bird flu episode. Our analysis suggests that retailers' market concentration and power can be a contributing factor to spatial divergence in price inflation. This channel can act as a potential catalyst for amplifying inequality among regions with varying income levels and create important policy implications.

“COBOLing Together UI Benefits: How Delays in Fiscal Stabilizers Affect Aggregate Consumption”

The United States experienced an unprecedented increase in unemployment insurance (UI) claims starting in March 2020. State UI-benefit systems were inadequately prepared to process these claims. In states that used an antiquated programming language, COBOL, to process claims, potential claimants experienced a larger increase in administrative difficulties, which led to longer delays in benefit disbursement. Using daily debit and credit card consumption data from Affinity Solutions, I employ a two-way fixed-effects estimator to measure the causal impact of having an antiquated UI benefit system on aggregate consumption. Such systems led to a 2.8-percentage-point decline in total credit and debit card consumption relative to card consumption in states with more modern systems. I estimate that the share of claims whose processing was delayed by over 70 days rose by at least 2.1 percentage points more in COBOL states relative to non-COBOL states. Based on a back-of-the-envelope calculation using 2019 data, my results suggest that the decline in consumption in COBOL states in 2020 after the pandemic-emergency declaration corresponds to a real-GDP decline of at least \$105 billion (in 2019 dollars).

Working Papers

“Why Don’t Taxpayers Bunch at Kink Points?” (with Andrew McCallum)

Work in Progress

“Measuring Real Sales and Inflation: Official Statistics vs Economics Transactions Data” (with Gabriel Ehrlich, John Haltiwanger, David Johnson, Seula Kim, Jake Kramer, Edward Olivares, R. Benjamin Rodriguez, and Matthew Shapiro)

“Unemployment Benefits and Business Formation” (with Joonkyu Choi, Samuel Messer, and Veronika Penciakova)

Research and Relevant Work Experience

Economist, Economic Measurement and Research Internship, U.S. Census Bureau, 2020-2024

Research Assistant, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2016-2018

Research Assistant, Williams College, 2015-2016

Research Fellow, American Economic Association, Summer 2015

Teaching Experience

Instructor, Introductory Macroeconomics, University of Maryland, Summer 2021, Winter 2022, Summer 2022, Winter 2023

Teaching Assistant, Labor Markets, University of Maryland, Spring 2020 and Fall 2020

Teaching Assistant, Introductory Macroeconomics, University of Maryland, Fall 2019

Teaching Assistant, Differential Equations, Williams College, Spring 2016

Grants and Awards

Postdoctoral Fellowship, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2024-2025

Doctoral Research Grant, Washington Center for Equitable Growth, 2023–2024 (Seula Kim, co-PI)

AEA Mentoring Program Conference Travel Support, American Economic Association, 2023–2024

BSOS Dean’s Research Initiative Travel Grant, University of Maryland, 2023

Jacob K. Goldhaber Travel Grant, University of Maryland, 2023

Alice Rivlin Dissertation Fellowship, Brookings Institution, 2022-2024

IAAE Travel Grant, Annual Conference of the International Association for Applied Econometrics, 2022

Jacob K. Goldhaber Travel Grant, University of Maryland, 2022

International Conference Student Support Award (ICSSA), University of Maryland, 2022

Conference and Seminar Presentations

2025: AEA Annual Meeting (planned), Brookings Institution (planned)

2024: AEA Annual Meeting, Office of Tax Analysis (Treasury), Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (Treasury), U.S. Census Bureau, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, DEI in Economics, Finance, and Central Banking, DC Urban Day, Barcelona School of Economics Summer Forum (BSE SF), UCL Stone Centre PhD Conference, WEAI Annual Conference, NBER SI Inequality and Macroeconomics (participant), NBER SI Labor Studies (participant), Federal Reserve Board (FRB), USDA (planned), Midwest Macro (planned), Federal Statistical Research Data Center (FSRDC) Annual Conference (planned), BLS (planned), Upjohn Institute (planned), SEA Annual Meeting (planned)

2023: Western Economic Association International (WEAI) Annual Conference, Brookings Institution, WEAI International Conference, FCSM Research and Policy Conference, SEA Annual Meeting, AEA Mentoring Pipeline Conference, U.S. Census Bureau, Williams College

2022: International Conference on Public Economic Theory (PET), Annual Conference of the International Association for Applied Econometrics (IAAE), RWI (Berlin Office), Brookings Institution, Southern Economic Association (SEA) Annual Meeting

2015: American Economic Association (AEA) Pipeline Conference

Professional Service

Referee for *B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy*

Languages

English (fluent), Spanish (fluent), French (proficient), Italian (beginner)

Personal

United States Citizen; Born in Miami, FL

Computational Skills

Stata, Mata, R, Matlab

REFERENCES

Prof. Judith Hellerstein	University of Maryland	hellerst@umd.edu	(301) 405-3545
Prof. John Haltiwanger	University of Maryland	halt@umd.edu	(301) 405-3504
Prof. Ethan Kaplan	University of Maryland	edkaplan@umd.edu	(301) 405-3501