

# EREN BILEN

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## Research Interests

Applied Microeconomics, Tournaments, Health Economics

## Education

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Ph.D. Economics, University of South Carolina                                              | Fall 2016-Present |
| <i>Committee:</i> Alexander Matros (chair), Philip Brookins, Lindsey Woodworth, Edsel Pena |                   |
| M.A. Economics, University of South Carolina                                               | May 2016          |
| C.A.S. Applied Statistics, University of South Carolina                                    | May 2016          |
| B.A. Economics, Izmir University of Economics                                              | May 2015          |
| B.A. International Trade and Finance, Izmir University of Economics                        | May 2015          |

## Job Market Paper

“The Superstar Effect: Evidence from Chess”, with Alexander Matros

**Abstract.** “Superstars” exist in many places – in classrooms, or in workplaces, there is a small number of people who show extraordinary talent and ability. The impact they have on their peers, however, is an ongoing research topic. In competition, they might intimidate others; causing their peers to show less effort. On the other hand, superstars might encourage higher effort, as their existence in a competition encourages them to “step up” their game. In this study, we analyze the impact of a superstar on their peers using evidence from chess. The existence of a contemporary superstar (and the current World Chess Champion) Magnus Carlsen, as well as, past world champions such as Garry Kasparov, Anatoly Karpov, or Bobby Fischer enables us to identify whether the existence of a superstar in a chess tournament has a positive or an adverse effect on other chess players’ performance. We identify errors committed by players using computer evaluation that we run on our sample with 35,000 games and 2.8 million moves with observations from 1962 to 2019, and estimate position complexity via an Artificial Neural Network (ANN) algorithm that learns from an independent sample with 25,000 games and 2 million moves. The results indicate that the effect depends on the intensity of the superstar. If the skill gap between the superstar and the rest of the competitors is large enough, an adverse effect exists. However, when the skill gap is small, there may be slight positive peer effects. In terms of head-to-head competition, the evidence shows that players commit more mistakes against superstars in similarly-complex games. Understanding the effect of superstars on peer performance is crucial for firms and managers considering to introduce a superstar associate for their team.

## Publications

1. “Online Cheating Amid COVID-19”, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 182, February 2021, pp. 196-211, with Alexander Matros.  
**News coverage on Forbes:** <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dereknewton/2020/09/30/research-students-may-opt-out-of-online-test-monitoring-with-big-catch/#6f8e0e9055c4>  
**San Francisco Chronicle:** <https://www.sfchronicle.com/education/article/Online-cheating-surges-during-the-pandemic-15696066.php>

## Working Papers

1. “Another One Bites the Dust: Peer Effects and Motivation in High Level Performers”, with Robert Pettis.
2. “When Trader Joe’s Comes to Town: The Effects of Trader Joe’s Store Openings on Adult Obesity”.
3. “To Drive or Bike?: The Effects of Transportation Method Choice on Obesity”.

## Work in Progress

1. “Optimal Size of Groups in a Group Contest: Evidence from Kaggle”, with Philip Brookins and Andrew Smyth.
2. “Disaster Preparedness and Experience: Evidence from Sales of Emergency Supplies Before and After Hurricanes”, with Tamara Sheldon and Crystal Zhan.
3. “Search Less for a Better Price”, with Chun-Hui Miao.
4. “Smoking and COVID-19: A Spatial Investigation Using Nielsen Homescan Data”, with SiQing Xu.
5. “Returns to Higher Education: Evidence from the 1997 Headscarf Ban in Turkey.”

## Seminar/Conference Presentations

|                                                                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Dickinson College (speaker), Carlisle PA                                             | March 2021     |
| Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (speaker), Edwardsville IL                 | February 2021  |
| Sabancı University (speaker), Istanbul, Turkey                                       | January 2021   |
| University of Nebraska at Omaha (speaker), Omaha NE                                  | January 2021   |
| Murray State University, (speaker), Murray KY                                        | January 2021   |
| Southern Economic Association Meetings (speaker), New Orleans LA                     | November 2020  |
| Lancaster University (speaker), Lancaster, UK                                        | October 2020   |
| Laboratory Innovation Science at Harvard (speaker), Boston MA                        | September 2020 |
| Economics Brownbag (speaker), University of South Carolina, Columbia SC              | September 2020 |
| Contests: Theory and Evidence (speaker), Norwich, UK                                 | June 2020      |
| American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) (poster), St. Louis MI               | June 2020*     |
| Evidence-Based Economics Summer Meeting 2020 (speaker), Munich, Germany              | June 2020*     |
| Economics Brownbag (speaker), University of South Carolina, Columbia SC              | February 2020  |
| Southern Economic Association Meetings (speaker/discussant), Fort Lauderdale FL      | November 2019  |
| American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) (discussant/poster), Washington D.C. | June 2019      |

## Teaching Experience

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Instructor</b> , Department of Economics, University of South Carolina         | 2018-present                          |
| Introduction to Economics                                                         | Spring 2019-2021, Fall 2018-2020      |
| Fall 2020 Evaluation: 4.3/5.0 <sup>†</sup>                                        |                                       |
| Spring 2020 Evaluation: 3.9/5.0 <sup>†</sup>                                      |                                       |
| Fall 2019 Evaluation: 4.0/5.0                                                     |                                       |
| Spring 2019 Evaluation: 4.3/5.0                                                   |                                       |
| Fall 2018 Evaluation: 4.4/5.0                                                     |                                       |
| <b>Teaching Assistant</b> , Department of Economics, University of South Carolina | 2015-present                          |
| Math Camp (Ph.D. level)                                                           | Summer 2020, Summer 2019              |
| Negotiations (Ph.D. level)                                                        | Spring 2020                           |
| Applied Microeconomics (Masters level)                                            | Fall 2018, Fall 2017                  |
| Applied Macroeconomics (Masters level)                                            | Spring 2017                           |
| Game Theory                                                                       | Spring 2021, Fall 2018, Spring 2017   |
| Introductory Econometrics                                                         | Fall 2016                             |
| Labor Economics                                                                   | Fall 2016                             |
| Development Economics                                                             | Fall 2017                             |
| Environmental Economics                                                           | Fall 2019                             |
| Economics of Sustainable Development                                              | Fall 2016                             |
| International Monetary Economics                                                  | Spring 2019, Spring 2017              |
| Intermediate Microeconomics                                                       | Spring 2021, Spring 2020, Spring 2018 |

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\*Cancelled due to COVID-19.

<sup>†</sup>Course switched online due to COVID-19.

|                                            |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Intermediate Macroeconomics                | Spring 2018, Summer 2017, Fall 2016 |
| Principles of Macroeconomics               | Fall 2015                           |
| Introduction to Economics (Honors College) | Fall 2019                           |
| Introduction to Economics                  | Summer 2016, Spring 2016, Fall 2015 |

## Professional Service and Activities

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Maintaining websites for two seminar series: <a href="http://ehealthecon.org">ehealthecon.org</a> and <a href="http://tobaccopolicy.org">tobaccopolicy.org</a> | 2020-present |
| Preparing for Future Faculty, Center of Teaching Excellence, University of South Carolina                                                                      | June 2020    |
| Reviewer, American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon)                                                                                                      | January 2020 |
| Referee, Discover USC Day, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC                                                                                           | April 2019   |
| International Student Ambassador, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC                                                                                    | Spring 2019  |

## Professional Societies and Affiliations

American Economic Association, American Society of Health Economists, Southern Economic Association

## Awards

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Moore School Research Grant \$5,000; \$3,000                                              | 2020, 2019   |
| Ph.D. Fellowship, Darla Moore School of Business                                          | 2016-present |
| MAEC Financial Award, Darla Moore School of Business                                      | 2015-2016    |
| High Honor Student Award, Izmir University of Economics                                   | 2015         |
| Full Undergraduate Scholarship, Izmir University of Economics                             | 2011-2015    |
| Project Development and Entrepreneurship Award, Turkish Industry and Business Association | 2013         |

## Computer Skills

|                                  |                                             |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Programming: Python, C           | Web: HTML                                   |
| Math/Stat: R, Stata, Matlab, SAS | Data-science: ML, text mining, scraping     |
| Database: SQL                    | Typography: L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X |

## Personal Information

South Carolina Chess Champion, 2019 (U1400)  
Citizenship: Turkey

## References

### Alexander Matros

*Professor, BPF Moore Fellow*  
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### Orgul D. Ozturk

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