

## Juryrapport

### KHMW Proefschriftprijs voor de Maatschappijwetenschappen 2025 – Economische en bedrijfswetenschappen

**Dr. R. (Rafael) Escamilla Gonzalez Aragon**

*Managing the Nanostore Supply Chain: Base-of-the-Pyramid Retail in Emerging Markets*  
Tilburg University, september 2023

The evaluation committee had the absolute pleasure to read the best dissertations in the discipline of economics and business defended between January 1st 2021, and December 31st 2024. The committee consisted of Prof. Janka Stoker (University of Groningen), Prof. Kees Koedijk (Utrecht University), Prof. Beatrice van der Heijden (Radboud University Nijmegen), and myself Prof. Sjoerd Beugelsdijk (University of South Carolina, and University of Groningen). I want to thank my colleagues for their time and detailed reading of each thesis. It was an absolute privilege for us to read these dissertations for a couple of reasons. First, these are the best. Second, it gives a great overview of the diversity in topics PhD students in economics and business are working on. Third, it is really inspiring to see how frontiers of science are pushed by these young scholars, often explicitly combining the latest scientific insights and methods with a drive to make a societal contribution. To better understand phenomena that matter.

We have decided to award the Royal Holland Society for Sciences and Humanities prize for the best dissertation in Social Sciences - Economics and Business Administration to Rafael Escamilla. He defended his thesis titled 'Managing the Nanostore Supply Chain; Base-of-the-Pyramid Retail in Emerging Markets' in the auditorium of Tilburg University on September 12, 2023, about 1,5 years ago. Rafael was supervised by Prof. Jan Fransoo of Tilburg University and Prof. Prisca Brosi of Kuehne Logistics University in Hamburg, Germany. Rafael currently works as an Assistant Professor at Arizona State University. Let me elaborate on the reasons why Rafael's thesis stands out.

First and perhaps foremost, Rafael's work is based on the highest scientific standards in the field, in his case supply chain management. He uses a variety of research methods including randomized behavioural experiments, survey data analysis, and vignette experiment. Overall, his thesis contributes and advances the literature that is also referred to as behavioural operations management.

Second, Rafael's work matters. He focuses on what is called nanostores. These are small and independently-owned retail microbusinesses. Nanostores often cater to the immediate neighbourhood. When we think of retail, we often think of big corporations. The reality is that nanostores form the world's largest retail channel. Rafael unpacks the supply chain of these nanostores. He looks at sales and distribution channels, financial flows (including informal credit systems), and how digital systems can be leveraged in a system that has some informal economy aspects to it as well.

Third, Rafael's thesis 'breathes' nanostores. He knows what he is talking about and deeply understands the inner workings of the phenomenon of nanostores. It reads as if he has been running a nanostore himself.

Finally, Rafael's thesis is a joy to read. It is well written.

Rafael, congratulations from the entire committee and thank you for the wonderful contribution to economics and business research.

*Prof. dr. S. (Sjoerd) Beugelsdijk, hoogleraar International Business Rijksuniversiteit Groningen*  
*Prof. dr. B.I.J.M. (Beatrice) van der Heijden, hoogleraar Strategisch Human Resource Management Radboud Universiteit*  
*Prof. dr. C.G. (Kees) Koedijk, hoogleraar Finance Universiteit Utrecht*  
*Prof. dr. J.J. (Janka) Stoker, hoogleraar leiderschap en organisatieverandering Rijksuniversiteit Groningen*

De juryvergadering vond plaats via MS Teams op 9 april 2025, onder voorzitterschap van KHMW-maatschappelijk lid drs. C.M.L. (Cateautje) Hijmans van den Bergh MBA. Tevens was ter vergadering aanwezig prof. dr. W.B. (Wim) Drees, secretaris geestes- en maatschappijwetenschappen KHMW.