

Leigh, Andrew. *Randomistas: how radical researchers are changing our world*. Yale, 2018. 279p index ISBN 9780300236125, \$27.50; ISBN 9780300240115 ebook, contact publisher for price.

Randomistas are not, as one might surmise from the title, members of an international terrorist organization. Rather, as the book jacket labels them, they are “radical researchers” who, according to Australian economist turned government official Leigh, practice RCT—randomized control trial experiments that assign participants to treatment or control groups to assess the validity or benefits of a new drug, surgical procedure, crime reduction program, or other personal, business, educational, or political decision-making strategy or innovation. The author walks readers through a myriad of laboratory and field experiments in medicine and health, homelessness and global poverty, job searching, the classroom and early childhood education, prison populations, agriculture, and the high-tech, data-driven world of online purveyors, political campaigns and charitable giving, and behavioral insight teams and “nudge units” in Britain that have migrated elsewhere. Along the way, Leigh tips his cap to experimental pioneers, addresses the potential ethical aspects inherent in these approaches, and acknowledges the skepticism of some researchers (this reviewer is one) with regard to the lack of replication and other shortcomings. Though a strong RCT advocate, Leigh's superb endnotes and objectivity pervade his “treatment.” Summing Up: Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.