Differences in Differences

One Diff is good. Two is doubly good!

May 2, 2023

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Introduction

- DID is one of the most popular methods of applied researchers aiming to analyze Causal Effects.
 - The canonical DID (2x2) compares the changes in the outcome of treated units with changes observed among non-treated/control units.
 - Under the Parallel Trends Assumption (PTA), and SUTVA, differences in those changes (DiD) identify the Average Treatment Effects of the treated units (ATT).
- Empirical research typically deviates from the Canonical design because:
 - Researchers have access to many periods. (T > 2)
 - ullet Treatment may occur at different points in time. (G>1)
 - ullet Groups may be different in terms of observed characteristics. (X's)



Introduction

- ullet Simple Solution: Identify the ATT (heta) by
 - Adding fixed effects for individuals or cohorts.
 - Adding time fixed effects.
 - Adding controls

$$y = \alpha_i + \delta_t + \beta X + \theta^{twfe} * (Eff_{-}Tr) + u$$

- Recent research (de Chaisemartin and D'Haultoeuille, 2020; Goodman-Bacon, 2021; Borusyak and Jaravel, 2017) has shown that this simple generalization (A.K.A. TWFE) may not be adequate to identify an ATT when effects are heterogeneous.
- While others (Abadie, 2005; Heckman et al 1997; Imbens and Wooldrige, 2009; Sant'Anna and Zhao, 2020) have proposed many alternatives to better account for differences in controls.

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Introduction

With this framework, today I'll focus on the following topics:

- The identification of the ATT using canonical DID designs, the role of covariates (based on Sant'Anna and Zhao (2020) - SZ), and its implementation via drdid.
- The problems related with the simple TWFE generalization of the DID estimators. (based on Goodman-Bacon (2021))
- The estimation of the DID effects with Multiple Periods (based on Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021)-CS), and its implementation via csdid.



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Setup

- Assume that we have access to a panel data where all units are followed over two periods: t=0,1.
- All units fall within two groups: Treated or untreated/control, status which cannot be changed (D_i) .

Under full heterogeneity, potential and observed outcomes for a unit i at time t can be written as:

$$y_{i,t}(W) = \mu_i + \gamma_i t + \theta_i W \times t$$
$$y_{i,t} = D_i y_{i,t}(1) + (1 - D_i) y_{i,t}(0)$$
$$y_{i,0} = y_{i,0}(1) = y_{i,0}(0)$$

In this framework, the treatment effect for unit i at t=1 is the difference between both Potential Outcomes:

$$\theta_i = y_{i,1}(1) - y_{i,1}(0)$$

And the ATT is:

$$ATT = E(\theta_i|D_i = 1) = E_1(\theta_i)$$

$$= E_1(y_{i,1}) - E_1(y_{i,1}(0))$$

$$= E_1(y_{i,1}) - (E_1(y_{i,0}) + E_1(\gamma_i))$$

$$= E_1(y_{i,1} - y_{i,0}) - E_1(\gamma_i)$$

If we can estimate $E_1(\gamma_i)$, (Change regardless of treatment) we can estimate the ATT.

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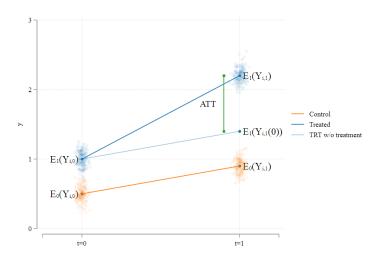
Thus, we rely on the Parallel trends Assumption (PTA)

$$E_1(\gamma_i) = E_0(\gamma_i)$$

$$E_1(y_{i,1}(0) - y_{i,0}) = E_0(y_{i,1} - y_{i,0})$$

This assumes that the change experienced by the control group $E_0(\gamma_i)$ should be the same as the change of the treated group $E_1(\gamma_i)$ in absence of the treatment.

$$ATT = [E_1(y_{i,1} - y_{i,0})] - [E_0(y_{i,1} - y_{i,0})]$$



Simple 2x2 DID identifies the ATT under Unconditional PTA. This may be appropriate if:

- The treated and control groups have similar characteristics; or if
- ullet The change in outcome γ_i does not depend on characteristics.

How reasonable are these assumptions? What to do if the assumptions do not hold?

SZ assumes that the PTA holds only when considering groups with the same characteristics (Conditional PTA):

$$E_1(\gamma_i|X) = E_0(\gamma_i|X)$$

$$E_1(y_{i,1}(0) - y_{i,0}|X) = E_0(y_{i,1} - y_{i,0}|X) = \gamma(x)$$

Thus, the ATT estimation should adjust for differences in characteristics.

$$ATT = [E_1(y_{i,1} - y_{i,0})] - [E_1(E_0(y_{i,1} - y_{i,0}|X))]$$

= $[E_1(y_{i,1} - y_{i,0})] - E_1(\gamma(x))$

What to kind of controls can be used?

Panel

- They should not be unique to treatment or control group (overlapping assumption)
- They should capture pre-treatment characteristics. (Avoid bias)
- Time varying variables are allowed only if the changes are strictly exogenous. (bad control risk)

Repeated Cross-section

- Time varying controls are possible but SZ assumes stationary in the covariates (Abadie, 2005).
- Changes should be strictly exogenous.
- Post-treatment units should represent their pre-treatment counterparts.

2x2 DID with Covariates: How?

How are ATT's Estimated?

SZ discusses the properties of three types of estimators, which accommodate to panel and repeated cross-sectional data.

- Outcome regression (Linear Regression model)
- Reweighting approach (IPW and IPT)
- Doubly Robust Estimators: Combining OR and RW

For simplicity, I will focus on panel estimators.

$$ATT = E(\Delta y_i | D_i = 1) - \hat{E}(\gamma_i | D_i = 1)$$

Outcome Regression

$$S1: \gamma_i = \Delta y_i = \gamma(x) + v_i \quad \forall i | D_i = 0$$

$$S2: E(\gamma_i|x) = \hat{\gamma}(x)$$

$$S3: \widehat{ATT}_{OR} = E(\Delta y_i | D_i = 1) - E(\widehat{\gamma}(x) | D_i = 1)$$

Depends strongly on the correct specification for the outcome change.

$$ATT = E(\Delta y_i | D_i = 1) - \hat{E}(\gamma_i | D_i = 1)$$

Re-weighted Approach

$$S1: P(D_{i} = 1|X) = F(X) \to \hat{\pi}(X)$$

$$S2: \omega(x) = \frac{\hat{\pi}(X)}{1 - \hat{\pi}(X)}$$

$$S3: \widehat{ATT}_{ipw}^{1} = E(\Delta y_{i}|D_{i} = 1) - \frac{E(\omega(x)\Delta y_{i}|D_{i} = 0)}{E(\omega(x)|D_{i} = 0)}$$

$$S3: \widehat{ATT}_{ipw}^{2} = E(\Delta y_{i}|D_{i} = 1) - \frac{E(\omega(x)\Delta y_{i}|D_{i} = 0)}{E(D_{i})/(1 - E(D_{i}))}$$

Depends strongly on the correct specification of the propensity score.

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$$ATT = E(\Delta y_i | D_i = 1) - \hat{E}(\gamma_i | D_i = 1)$$

Doubly Robust OPT 1

$$S1: P(D_i = 1|X) = \hat{\pi}(X) \to \omega(x) = \frac{\hat{\pi}(X)}{1 - \hat{\pi}(X)}$$

$$S2: \gamma_i = \Delta y_i = \gamma_\omega(x) + v_i \quad \forall i | D_i = 0 \quad weighted \quad by \quad \omega(x)$$

$$S3: \widehat{ATT}_{DR}^1 = E(\Delta y_i | D_i = 1) - E(\hat{\gamma}_\omega(x) | D_i = 1)$$

Both Doubly Robust estimators are consistent if either the outcome model or the propensity score is correctly specified

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$$ATT = E(\Delta y_i | D_i = 1) - \hat{E}(\gamma_i | D_i = 1)$$

Doubly Robust OPT 2

$$S1: P(D_i = 1|X) = \hat{\pi}(X) \to \omega(x) = \frac{\hat{\pi}(X)}{1 - \hat{\pi}(X)}$$

$$S2: \gamma_i = \Delta y_i = \gamma(x) + v_i \quad \forall i | D_i = 0$$

$$S3: \widehat{ATT}_{DR}^2 = E(\Delta y_i | D_i = 1)$$

$$-E(\hat{\gamma}(x)|D_i = 1) - \frac{E(\omega(x)(\Delta y_i - \hat{\gamma}(x))|D_i = 0)}{E(\omega(x)|D_i = 0)}$$

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drdid: Doubly Robust DID estimator

```
# Command is available from ssc
ssc install drdid, replace
# General Suntax
drdid y x1 x2 ... [if/in] [w=.], [ivar(pid)] time(tmt) treatment(trt) //
       [method] [SE CI options]
# ivar -> Panel, Otherwise RC. tmt and trt Should be Binary
# "Method" Options:
drimp [rc1] : ATT_DR OPT 1: p(trt=1|X)~IPT
dripw [rc1] : ATT_DR OPT 2: p(trt=1|X)~Logit
stipw
     : ATT_IPW OPT 1
ipw
    : ATT IPW OPT 2
reg : ATT_OR
all
            : Estimates all options
```

drdid: Doubly Robust DID estimator

```
# "SE/CI" options: Default Asymptotic Standard Errors
cluster(cvar)
                : Clustered Standard Errors (by ivar if panel)
wboot[(opt)]
                : Wildbootstrap:
  reps()
               : Repetitions, Default 999
  wbtype()
               : WBtype: mammen / rademacher
rseed()
                : Seed for replication
                : Estimation via gmm.
gmm
level()
                : Level of Confidence, Default 95
# Other options
noisily
                : Shows all intermediate steps
## Additional utilities
# Predicts IPWeights or Pscores
drdid_predict {newvar}, [weight pscore]
# Displays Intermediate Steps
drdid_display, bmatrix(name) vmatrix(name)
```

Example

```
use https://friosavila.github.io/playingwithstata/drdid/lalonde.dta, clear
. drdid re age educ black married nodegree hisp re74 if treated==0 | sample==2,
ivar(id) time(year) tr(experimental) dripw
                                                     Number of obs = 32.834
Doubly robust difference-in-differences
Outcome model : least squares
Treatment model: inverse probability
            | Coefficient Std. err. z P>|z| [95% conf. interval]
ATET
experimental |
   (1 vs 0) | -871.3271 396.0211 -2.20 0.028 -1647.514 -95.14007
```

Example

```
drdid re age educ black married nodegree hisp re74 if
treated==0 | sample==2, cluster(id) time(year) tr(experimental) drimp
# output Omitted
drdid_predict wgt, weight
```

tabstat age educ black married nodegree hisp re74 if treated==0 | sample==2 [w=wgt], by(experimental)

-	age	educ		married	_	hisp	
0 1	24.44706 24.44706	10.18824	.8	.1576471	.8141176 .8141176	.1129412	3672.485 3672.485
	24.44706				.8141176		

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GxT and the TWFE

As mentioned before, empirical research usually differs from the canonical approach: Many periods (T) and treatment at different times (G).

The common approach is to estimate this model using a TWFE:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \theta^{TWFE} * p_{it} + u_{it}$$
$$p_{it} = 1 \quad if \ already \ treated$$

This would capture the ATT only if the effect is homogeneous across units.

Limitations of TWFE

There are two ways of understanding the limitations of the simple TWFE estimator.

Negative Weights Assume a balanced panel and no controls:

$$\hat{\theta}^{TWFE} = \frac{\sum \tilde{P}_{it} y_{it}}{\sum \tilde{P}_{it}^2} \quad ; \tilde{P}_{it} = P_{it} + \bar{P} - (\bar{P}_i + \bar{P}_t)$$

 \tilde{P}_{it} : Also the residual from a LPM. (problems?)

Treated units $P_{it}=1$ should always receive a positive weight. however, \tilde{P}_{it} could be negative because:

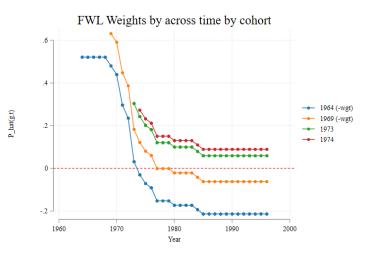
- ullet $ar{P}_t$ is larger at later periods
- \bar{P}_i is larger for units treated earlier

Thus, \tilde{P}_{it} could be negative for units treated earlier, but seen at later periods.

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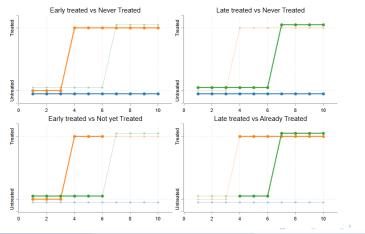
Negative Weights

Data:Bacon_example.dta



Good vs Bad Control groups

Goodman-Bacon (2021): TWFE estimator can be described as a weighted average of all 2x2 DID designs given the variation in the treatment status. But not all are good designs:



Solution: a more flexible estimator

The "problem" with TWFE is how LR computes coefficients.

The alternative is to use a more flexible specification, or/and avoiding "bad" control groups.

There are many options, but two are the easiest to understand:

Opt1: Sun and Abraham (2021) and Wooldridge (2021)

$$y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_{g=g_0}^{G} \sum_{s=g}^{T} \theta(g, s) * 1(G = g, t = s) + e$$

Opt2: Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021)

Breakdown a single GxT DID to multiple 2x2 DID.

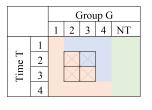
One can aggregate ATT's as needed

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- CS breaks down the problem from one GxT DID to many 2x2 DID, using only good designs.
- Each design estimates a particular ATT(G,T).
- drdid can be applied on each design independently.

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	Never	Treate	ed						

Figure: 2x2 to avoid

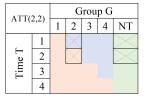


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		Group G					
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Figure: 2x2 Using Never Treated



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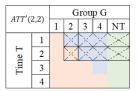
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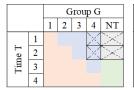
2x2 Using Not-yet Treated



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2x2 Pre-treatment trends



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'	4							

DID with Multiple Time Periods: ATT(g,t)

In CS, the main Building block is the ATT(g,t):

ATT(g,t)

The treatment effect for units treated at time g, measured at time t.

If $g \leq t$, it is useful to estimate treatment effects

$$ATT^{NT/NY}(g,t) = E(y_{i,t} - y_{i,g-1}|G_i = g) - E(y_{i,t} - y_{i,g-1}|G_i = NT \text{ or } G_i > t)$$

If g > t, it is useful for pre-trend tests:

$$ATT^{S}(g,t) = E(y_{i,t} - y_{i,t-1}|G_{i} = g)$$

$$- E(y_{i,t} - y_{i,t-1}|G_{i} = NT)$$

$$ATT^{L}(g,t) = E(y_{i,g-1} - y_{i,t-1}|G_{i} = g)$$

$$- E(y_{i,g-1} - y_{i,t-1}|G_{i} = NT)$$

Aggregating ATT(g,t)'s

CS identifies all feasible ATT(g,t)'s, but also suggests a series of possible aggregations.

General Structure:

$$ATT_{TYP} = \frac{\sum_{TYP} w_{g,t} ATT(g,t)}{\sum_{TYP} w_{g,t}}$$

where $w_{g,t}$ are based on the number of treated observations used in a particular ATT(g,t).

$$Simple: t \ge g$$
 $Group: t \ge g\&g = h$
 $Calendar: t \ge g\&t = s$
 $Event: t - g = e$
 $CEvent: c_1 < t - g < c_2$

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csdid: DID with Multiple Time periods

```
# Command is available from ssc, requires drdid
ssc install csdid, replace
# General Suntax
csdid y x1 x2 ... [if/in] [w=.], [ivar(pid)] time(T) gvar(G) //
        [method(@@@)] [long] [SE CI options]
# G=0 Never treated, and G subset of T (Not a O-1 dummy)
# method(@@) options:
drimp [rc1] (default); dripw [rc1]
stdipw ; ipw ; reg
# Pretreatment ATT
             : Long Gaps for Pretreatment ATT(g,t)
long
# SE option
pointwise : If "wboot" were requested, one can call for pointwise CI
              Default is uniform CI (valid for joint tests)
# One can save the RIF's into a file to save results.
saverif(file) [replace] : Useful for estimation of "wboot"
                          SE on other Aggregations
```

csdid: DID with Multiple Time periods

```
# Pre-Estimation:
gvar (cohort) can be estimated using:
egen gvar=csgvar(treat_post), ivar(@@) tvar(@@)
# Post-Estimation:
after csdid : estat [agg pretrend], [option]
using rif_file: csdid_stats [agg ], [option SE options]
# Possible aggregations
attgt , [post estore(@@) esave(@@) ]
simple , [post estore(@@) esave(@@) ]
calendar, [post estore(@@) esave(@@) ]
group , [post estore(@@) esave(@@) ]
event , [window(%1 %2)] [post estore(@@) esave(@@) ]
cevent , window(%1 %2) [post estore(@@) esave(@@) ]
# Visualization (after csdid, estat or csdid_stat),
csdid_plot, [options]: Plots previously estimated ATTGT's
```

csdid: Example

use https://friosavila.github.io/playingwithstata/drdid/mpdta.dta, clear tab year first_treat

-	first.treat						
year	0	2004	2006	2007	Total		
	+			+			
2003	309	20	40	131	500		
2004	309	20	40	131	500		
2005	309	20	40	131	500		
2006	309	20	40	131	500		
2007	309	20	40	131	500		
	+			+			
Total	1,545	100	200	655	2,500		

[#] DID estimation, using Panel estimators, and DRIPW method.

csdid lemp lpop , ivar(countyreal) time(year) gvar(first_treat) method(dripw)

[#] Asymptotic Standard errors

csdid: Example

use $\label{limits} https://friosavila.github.io/playingwithstata/drdid/mpdta.dta, clear tab year first_treat if <math display="block">\frac{runiform()}{0.05}$

first.treat										
	year		0	2004	2006	2007	Total			
	2003 2004		296 294	20 19	37 38	118 125	471 476			
	2005		299	18	35	122	474			
	2006 2007		294 292	19 20	40 39	123 116	476 467			
	Total	·+- 	1,475	96	189	604	2,364			

```
csdid lemp lpop , ivar(countyreal) time(year) gvar(first_treat) method(dripw)
saverif(rif)
File rif.dta will be used to save all RIFs
..... # Each dot is a successful 2x2 estimation. X Otherwise
file rif.dta saved
Difference-in-difference with Multiple Time Periods # Type of Model
Outcome model : least squares
Treatment model: inverse probability
            | Coefficient Std. err. z P>|z| [95% conf. interval]
      # Indicates the Cohort
g2004
t_2003_2004 | -.0145297 .0221292
                                   -0.66 0.511 -.057902 .0288427
t 2003 2005 | -.0764219 .0286713 -2.67 0.008 -.1326166 -.0202271
t_2003_2006 | -.1404483 .0353782 -3.97 0.000
                                                    -,2097882
                                                              -.0711084
t_2003_2007 | -.1069039 .0328865 -3.25 0.001
                                                   -.1713602 -.0424476
# t_#1_#2: Indicate which period was used as Pre (#1) and Post (#2) Periods
# Ommited Output for a2006 & a2007
```

Control: Never Treated

See Callaway and Sant'Anna (2020) for details

estat cevent, window(0 2)

ATT for events between 0 2 # Average of ATT from T+0 to T+2

Event Study: Aggregate effects

. estat event

ATT by Periods Before and After treatment

Event Study: Dynamic effects

	Coefficient	Std. err.	z	P> z	[95% conf. interval]
Pre_avg Post_avg Tm3 Tm2 Tm1 Tp0 Tp1 Tp2 Tp3	0000442 0803539 .0267278 0036165 023244 0210604 0530032 1404483 1069039	.0075204 .0189576 .0140657 .0129283 .0144851 .0114942 .0163465 .0353782	-0.01 -4.24 1.90 -0.28 -1.60 -1.83 -3.24 -3.97	0.995 0.000 0.057 0.780 0.109 0.067 0.001 0.000	014784 .0146955 11751010431978 0008404 .054296 0289555 .0217226 0516343 .0051463 0435886 .0014679 08504170209647 20978820711084 17136020424476

csdid_plot

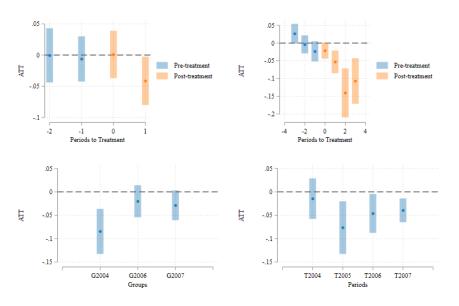


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Conclusions

- The use of DID estimators of ATT's using DID has changed drastically over the last couple of years.
- Today I showed commands to implement two of these estimators:
- drdid implements Sant'Anna and Zhao (2020) estimator, which emphasizes the benefits of doubly robust DID estimators.
- csdid implements Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021), which proposes a strategy to identify and aggregate the treatment effects for GxT DID.

For other examples, discussions, and explanations check https://friosavila.github.io/playingwithstata/index.html



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4D > 4A > 4E > 4E > E 990

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RC estimators

For next slides, I use the following notation:

$$E(y|D=d, T=t) = E_{d,t}(y)$$

where y is the observed outcome for an unit.

D=1 if a unit is in the treated group.

T=1 if we are considering the Post-period.

Thus, $E_{1,0}(y)$ is the average observed outcome for the treated group, pre-treatment (T=0).

and the ATT estimator will be:



RC Estimators: Regression Outcome

S1: Estimate 2 outcome models:

$$y = \theta_0(x) + e \text{ if } D = 0 \text{ and } T = 0$$
$$y = \theta_1(x) + e \text{ if } D = 0 \text{ and } T = 1$$
$$\hat{\gamma}(x) = \hat{\theta}_1(x) - \hat{\theta}_0(x)$$

S2: ATT:

$$ATT_{or} = E_{1,1}(y) - E_{1,0}(y) - E(\hat{\gamma}(x)|D=1)$$



RC Estimators: IPW1

S1: Estimate Pscore

$$P(D=1|X) = F(X) \to \hat{\pi}(x)$$

S2: Estimation of weights

$$\omega(x) = \frac{\hat{\pi}(x)}{1 - \hat{\pi}(x)}$$

S3: ATT

$$ATT_{IPW}^{1} = E_{1,1}(y) - E_{1,0}(y) - \left(\frac{E_{0,1}(\omega(x)y)}{E_{0,1}(\omega(x))} - \frac{E_{0,0}(\omega(x)y)}{E_{0,0}(\omega(x))}\right)$$



RC Estimators: IPW2

- S1: Estimate Pscore $\hat{\pi}(x)$ and Weights $\omega(x)$
- S2: Define $\pi = E(D)$ and $\tau = E(t)$
- S3: Expected growth absent of treatment

$$\hat{E}(\gamma(x)|D=1) = \frac{E_{0,1}(\omega(x)y)}{\pi/(1-\pi)} \frac{E(t|D=0)}{\tau} - \frac{E_{0,0}(\omega(x)y)}{\pi/(1-\pi)} \frac{1 - E(t|D=0)}{1-\tau}$$

S4: ATT

$$ATT_{IPW}^2 = E_{1,1}(y)\frac{E(D\,t)}{\pi\tau} - E_{1,0}(y)\frac{E(D(1-t))}{\pi(1-\tau)} - E(\gamma(x)|D=1)$$



RC Estimators: DR1

- S1: Estimate Pscore $\pi(x)$ and weights $\omega(x)$
- S2: Estimation of Outcome Regressions using WLS with $\omega(x)$ for the control group (D=0):

$$\theta^{w}_{0,1}(x) \ if \ t = 1 \ and \ \theta^{w}_{0,0}(x) \ if \ t = 0$$

S3: Estimate ATT as:

$$ATT_{DR}^{1} = E_{1,1}(y - \hat{\theta}_{0,1}^{w}(x)) - E_{1,0}(y - \hat{\theta}_{0,0}^{w}(x)) - \left(\frac{E_{0,1}(\omega(x)(y - \hat{\theta}_{0,1}^{w}(x))}{E_{0,1}(\omega(x))} - \frac{E_{0,0}(\omega(x)(y - \hat{\theta}_{0,0}^{w}(x))}{E_{0,0}(\omega(x))}\right)$$



RC Estimators: DR2

S1: Estimate Pscore $\pi(x)$ and weights $\omega(x)$

S2: Estimation of Outcome Regressions using WLS with $\omega(x)$ for the control group (D=0). And OR using OLS for the treated group (D=1):

$$\theta_{0,1}^w(x); \theta_{0,0}^w(x)$$

$$\theta_{1,1}(x);\theta_{1,0}(x)$$

S3: Estimate ATT as

$$ATT_{DR}^{2} = E(\hat{\theta}_{1,1}(x) - \hat{\theta}_{1,0}(x) - (\hat{\theta}_{0,1}^{w}(x) - \hat{\theta}_{0,0}^{w}(x))|D = 1)$$
$$-\left(\frac{E_{0,1}(\omega(x)(y - \hat{\theta}_{0,1}^{w}(x))}{E_{0,1}(\omega(x))} - \frac{E_{0,0}(\omega(x)(y - \hat{\theta}_{0,0}^{w}(x))}{E_{0,0}(\omega(x))}\right)$$

