#### 2022 Colombian Stata Conference

# Introduction to lasso using Stata

Miguel Dorta

StataCorp LLC

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#### Outline



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- Overview of lasso in Stata
- Lasso for prediction and model selection
  - Motivation and basic theoretical aspects
  - Example for a linear model
    - Basic workflow
    - Some tools and options
  - A quick look at the menus

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- "Lasso was an acronym for 'least absolute shrinkage and selection operator'. Today, lasso is considered a word"



## Lasso for prediction and model selection

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- For example, a car dealer business needs to predict the market price of used cars, given many potential predictor variables
- If data have lots of covariates, which ones should we include in our prediction model?



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- A way to avoid overfitting is by penalizing the objective function

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- How does lasso penalize the objective function?



$$Q_L = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} w_i f(y_i, \beta_0 + \mathbf{x}_i \boldsymbol{\beta}') + \lambda \sum_{j=1}^{p} k_j |\beta_j|$$

Lasso (Tibshirani, 1996) minimizes the penalized objective function

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- As  $\lambda$  decreases, more variables are selected
- Least absolute shrinkage and selection operator (lasso)



Penalized objective function for lasso

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Penalized objective function for elastic net

$$Q_{en} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} w_i f(y_i, \beta_0 + \mathbf{x}_i \boldsymbol{\beta}') + \lambda \sum_{i=1}^{p} k_j \left\{ \frac{1 - \alpha}{2} \beta_j^2 + \alpha |\beta_j| \right\}$$

## Using penalized regression to avoid overfitting

Penalized objective function for lasso

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Penalized objective function for square-root lasso

$$Q_L = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}w_i(y_i - \beta_0 - \mathbf{x}_i\beta')^2} + \frac{\lambda}{N}\sum_{j=1}^{p}k_j|\beta_j|$$

This is the default selection method for  $\lambda$  in lasso for prediction

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- ullet select the  $\lambda*$  with the smallest average prediction error, and refit lasso using  $\lambda*$  on the original data

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- Covariates: main effects and interactions (117 covariates)
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- Among OLS, lasso, elastic-net, and square-root lasso, which method should be used to predict the infant birth weight?

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(Excerpt from Cattaneo (2010) Journal of Econometrics 155: 138154)
. set seed 1907
. splitsample, generate(sample) split(0.70 0.30)
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### Step 2: Create macro with factor variable syntax

```
. quietly regress bweight $covs if sample == 1
. estimates store ols
. quietly lasso linear bweight $covs if sample == 1
. estimates store lasso
. quietly elasticnet linear bweight $covs if sample == 1, alpha(0.2 0.5 0.75 0.9)
. estimates store elastnet
. quietly sqrtlasso bweight $covs if sample == 1
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• Step 3: Select  $\lambda$  parameter value using training sample

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- estimates store stores estimation results
- In elasticnet, option alpha () specifies some  $\alpha$  values for the penalty term

### • Step 4: Evaluate prediction performance using testing sample

. lassogof ols lasso elastnet sqlasso, over(sample)
Penalized coefficients

Name	sample	MSE	R-squared	Obs
ols				
	Training	304368.1	0.0800	3,249
	Testing	328554.5	0.0463	1,393
lasso				
	Training	310573.1	0.0613	3,249
	Testing	324874.6	0.0570	1,393
elastnet				
	Training	310358.5	0.0619	3,249
	Testing	324727.4	0.0574	1,393
sqlasso				
	Training	310176.3	0.0625	3,249
	Testing	324962.4	0.0567	1,393

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• Elastic-net is the best method (lowest MSE in the testing sample)

### Step 5: Compute predictions using the best estimator

```
. quietly elasticnet linear bweight $covs, alpha(0.2 0.5 0.75 0.9)
. estimates store elastnetfull
. use cattaneo2_new, clear
(New data)
. estimates restore elastnetfull
(results elastnetfull are active now)
. predict yhat_pen
(options xb penalized assumed; linear prediction with penalized coefficients)
. predict yhat_postsel, postselection
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```

- By default, predict uses the penalized coefficients
- The postselection option uses post-selection coefficients (OLS on variables selected by elasticnet). They are expected to perform better in out-of-sample prediction than the penalized coefficients

### Display lasso output

```
. estimates restore lasso (results lasso are active now) \,
```

. lasso

Lasso linear model No. of obs = 3,249No. of covariates = 117Selection: Cross-validation No. of CV folds = 10

ID	Description	lambda	No. of nonzero coef.	Out-of- sample R-squared	CV mean prediction error
1	first lambda	115.008	0	0.0003	330748.1
26	lambda before	11.23639	17	0.0514	313825.7
* 27	selected lambda	10.23818	17	0.0515	313799.9
28	lambda after	9.32865	19	0.0515	313823.9
39	last lambda	3.352543	28	0.0501	314281.9

 $<sup>\</sup>star$  lambda selected by cross-validation.

### Display lasso output

```
(results lasso are active now)
lasso
Lasso linear model
                                              No. of obs
                                                                        3,249
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                                                                          117
Selection: Cross-validation
                                              No. of CV folds
                                            No. of
                                                        011t.-of-
                                                                      CV mean
                                                                   prediction
                                           nonzero
                                                          sample
      TD
               Description
                                 lambda
                                             coef.
                                                      R-squared
                                                                        error
              first lambda
                                115.008
                                                          0.0003
                                                                     330748.1
                                                          0.0514
      2.6
             lambda before
                               11.23639
                                                                     313825.7
```

19

2.8

\* lambda selected by cross-validation.

selected lambda

lambda after

last lambda

• Notice that the number of nonzero coefficients increases as  $\lambda$  decreases

10.23818

9.32865

3.352543

313799.9

313823.9

314281.9

\* 2.7

28

39

. estimates restore lasso

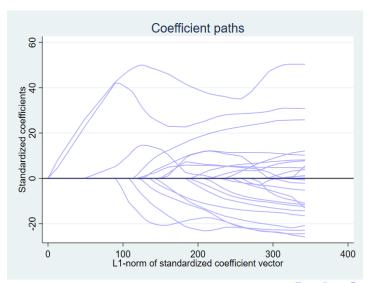
0.0515

0.0515

0.0501

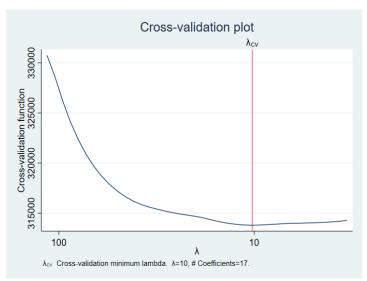
### Plot path of coefficients after lasso

. coefpath



### Plot cross-validation function after lasso

. cvplot



## Display knot table (lassoknots)

#### . lassoknots

ID	lambda	No. of nonzero coef.	CV mean pred. error	Variables (A)dded, (R)emoved, or left (U)nchanged
2	104.791	2	328633.1	A 0.msmoke#c.mage 1.mmarried#c.fedu
6	72.22835	3	320818.5	A 0.msmoke#c.fedu
11	45.36151	4	316613.1	A 0.mmarried
(output	omitted)			'
* 27	10.23818	17	313799.9	U
28	9.32865	19	313823.9	A 1.mhisp#c.medu
				2.msmoke#c.fage
29	8.499919	18	313863.1	R 0.msmoke#c.fedu
(output	omitted)			'
39	3.352543	28	314281.9	A c.mage#c.monthslb 0.prenatal1#c.mage

 $<sup>\</sup>star$  lambda selected by cross-validation.

### Display knot table (lassoknots)

		No. of	C17	
		nonzero	CV mean pred.	Variables (A)dded, (R)emoved,
TD	lambda	coef.	error	or left (U)nchanged
				or rere (0) hendinged
2	104.791	2	328633.1	A 0.msmoke#c.mage
				1.mmarried#c.fedu
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39	3.352543	28	314281.9	A c.mage#c.monthslb
				0.prenatal1#c.mage

• lassoselect can be used to pick a different  $\lambda$  value (sensitivity analysis)

## Methods for selecting the value of $\lambda$

 Cross-validation (default) computes out-of-sample predictions MSEs using 10 folds and selects the λ with minimum MSE (selection (cv))

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- Manual selection (lassoselect)

# Choosing $\lambda$ using the **selection()** option

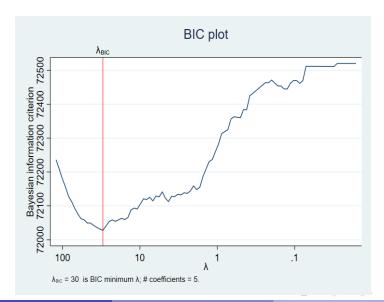
- . quietly lasso linear bweight \$covs
- . estimates store cv
- . quietly lasso linear bweight \$covs, selection(adaptive)
- . estimates store adaptive
- . quietly lasso linear bweight \$covs, selection(plugin)
- . estimates store plugin
- . quietly lasso linear bweight \$covs, selection(bic)
- . estimates store bic

# Display basic information about lassos (lassoinfo)

. lassoinfo Estimate: Command:	: cv	e piugin bi	С		
Dependent variable	Model	Selection method	Selection criterion	lambda	No. of selected variables
bweight	linear	cv	CV min. 9.867787		19
Estimate: Command:	: adaptive : lasso				
Dependent variable	Model	Selection method	Selection criterion	lambda	No. of selected variables
bweight	linear	adaptive	CV min.	3.64e+08	13
Estimate: Command:					
Dependent variable	Model	Selection method	lambda	No. of selected variables	
bweight	linear	plugin	.0627659	6	
Estimate: Command:					
Dependent variable	Model	Selection method	Selection criterion	lambda	No. of selected variables
bweight	linear	bic	BIC min.	30.1348	5

### Plot Bayesian information criterion function after lasso

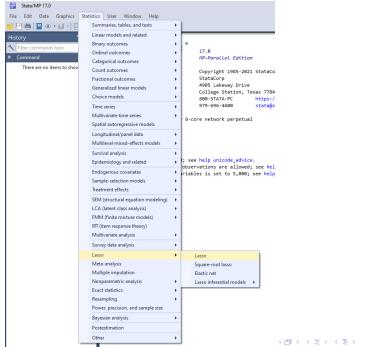
. bicplot



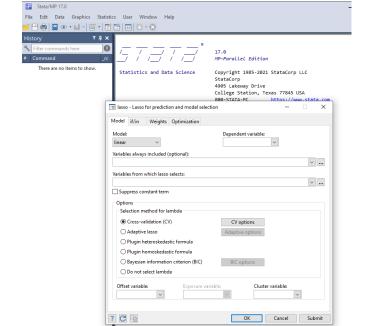
# Display coefficients after lasso (lassocoef)

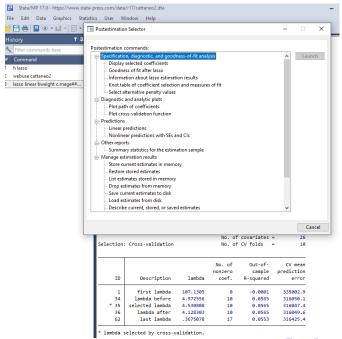
lassocoef cv adaptive plugin bic, display(coef, standardized)

	cv	adaptive	plugin	bio
mmarried Not married Married	-22.11483 8.19e-10	-41.92165	-3.921652 3.38e-10	-13.51986
msmoke 0 daily	19.53755			
mmarried#c.fage Not married	-7.447833	-5.868928		
mmarried#c.medu Not married Married	-1.549706 16.17073	15.6786	21.32031	14.89484
mmarried#c.fedu Married	13.60921		16.50398	19.33894
foreign#c.fage	-4.972952	-17.05522		
foreign#c.fedu 0	3.90694			
alcohol#c.mage	-3.167769	-6.859747		
msmoke#c.mage 0 daily	52.73363	84.46094	57.27693	63.43016



24/45





# Lasso for inference

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- In practice things are different. Consider the linear model

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- And, we would choose a model that we believe is the "best" to represent our theory or proposition. We apply an estimator and perform statistical inference
- But, if we do not account for the model-selection process, inference would be invalid
- Suppose there are many potential controls. Which controls should we include in the model? How to perform valid inference on the variables of interest?

Apply lasso for y on the variables of interest (d vector) and the controls (x vector) forcing the variables of interest to be in the model. This selects a subset of controls (x\* vector)

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    - Model-selection techniques inevitably make mistakes selecting controls
    - The actual sampling distribution of  $\alpha$  is not concentrated (multiple modes). (Leeb and Pötscher, 2005)

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- "These solutions all use multiple lassos and moment conditions that are robust to the model-selection mistakes that lasso makes"
- By default, all of the command above fit the lassos using selection (plugin)

$$\mathbf{E}[y|\mathbf{d},\mathbf{x}] = \mathbf{d}\boldsymbol{\alpha} + \beta_0 + \mathbf{x}\boldsymbol{\beta}'$$

• y = wage (monthly wages)

$$\mathbf{E}[y|\mathbf{d},\mathbf{x}] = \mathbf{d}\alpha + \beta_0 + \mathbf{x}\beta'$$

- y = wage (monthly wages)
- **d** = (educ, tenure)
  - educ: Years of education
  - tenure: Years with current employer

$$\mathbf{E}[y|\mathbf{d},\mathbf{x}] = \mathbf{d}\boldsymbol{\alpha} + \beta_0 + \mathbf{x}\boldsymbol{\beta}'$$

- y = wage (monthly wages)
- **d** = (educ, tenure)
  - educ: Years of education
  - tenure: Years with current employer
- x: vector of potential control variables
  - 6 continuous variables, 1 categorical variable, 5 binary variables
  - All main effects and all possible interactions generate 230 controls

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- y = wage (monthly wages)
- **d** = (educ, tenure)
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  - 6 continuous variables, 1 categorical variable, 5 binary variables
  - All main effects and all possible interactions generate 230 controls
- Number of observations: 722

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- y = wage (monthly wages)
- **d** = (educ, tenure)
  - educ: Years of education
  - tenure: Years with current employer
- x: vector of potential control variables
  - 6 continuous variables, 1 categorical variable, 5 binary variables
  - All main effects and all possible interactions generate 230 controls
- Number of observations: 722
- Which controls should we include in the model to perform valid inference on  $\alpha$ ?

### dsregress - Double-selection lasso linear regression

- . use nlsy80
  . global controls c.(meduc feduc sibs age iq kww)##(exper ///
  > pcollege married black south urban)
  . dsregress wage educ tenure, controls(\$controls)
  Estimating lasso for wage using plugin
  Estimating lasso for educ using plugin
  Estimating lasso for tenure using plugin
  Double-selection linear model

  Number of obs
  Number of controls
  - uble-selection linear model
     Number of obs
     =
     722

     Number of controls
     =
     230

     Number of selected controls
     =
     12

     Wald chi2(2)
     =
     17.03

     Prob > chi2
     =
     0.0002

wage	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	z	P> z	[95% conf. interval]
educ tenure	29.29732 5.105178	7.58747 2.950394	3.86 1.73	0.000	14.42615 44.16849 677488 10.88784

Note: Chi-squared test is a Wald test of the coefficients of the variables of interest jointly equal to zero. Lassos select controls for model estimation. Type lassoinfo to see number of selected variables in each lasso.

. estimates store ds plugin

# dsregress - Double-selection lasso linear regression

```
. use nlsv80
. global controls c. (meduc feduc sibs age ig kww) ## (exper ///
        pcollege married black south urban)
. dsregress wage educ tenure, controls ($controls)
Estimating lasso for wage using plugin
Estimating lasso for educ using plugin
Estimating lasso for tenure using plugin
Double-selection linear model
                                     Number of obs
                                                                        722
                                     Number of controls
                                                                        230
                                     Number of selected controls =
                                                                      17 03
                                     Wald chi2(2)
                                     Prob > chi2
                                                                      0.0002
                            Robust
       wage
              Coefficient std. err.
                                         z P>|z|
                                                        [95% conf. interval]
                29 29732 7 58747
                                       3.86 0.000
                                                       14.42615
                                                                    44 16849
       educ
     tenure
                5.105178
                           2.950394
                                       1.73 0.084
                                                        -.677488 10.88784
```

Note: Chi-squared test is a Wald test of the coefficients of the variables of interest jointly equal to zero. Lassos select controls for model estimation. Type lassoinfo to see number of selected variables in each lasso.

. estimates store ds\_plugin

• Inference on controls would not be valid; and so, they are not reported

### poregress - Partialing-out lasso linear regression

. poregress wage educ tenure, controls (\$controls)

Estimating lasso for wage using plugin Estimating lasso for educ using plugin

Estimating lasso for tenure using plugin

Partialing-out linear model

 Number of obs
 =
 722

 Number of controls
 =
 230

 Number of selected controls
 =
 12

 Wald chi2(2)
 =
 17.77

 Prob > chi2
 =
 0.0001

wage	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	Z	P> z	[95% conf.	interval]
educ tenure		7.455942 2.874894	3.97 1.74	0.000	15.00007 63893	44.22683 10.63045

Note: Chi-squared test is a Wald test of the coefficients of the variables of interest jointly equal to zero. Lassos select controls for model estimation. Type lassoinfo to see number of selected variables in each lasso.

### **xporegress** – Cross-fit partialing-out lasso linear regression

. xporegress wage educ tenure, controls(\$controls)

(output omitted)

Cross-fit partialing-out

 Number of obs
 =
 722

 Number of controls
 =
 230

 Number of selected controls
 =
 25

 Number of folds in cross-fit
 =
 10

 Number of resamples
 =
 1

 Wald chi2(2)
 =
 18.00

 Prob > chi2
 =
 0.0001

wage	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	Z	P> z	[95% conf.	interval]
educ	29.62034	7.430891	3.99	0.000	15.05606	44.18462
tenure	5.082955	2.808093	1.81		420805	10.58672

Note: Chi-squared test is a Wald test of the coefficients of the variables of interest jointly equal to zero. Lassos select controls for model estimation. Type lassoinfo to see number of selected variables in each lasso.

# lassoinfo after xporegress

. lassoinfo

Estimate: active Command: xporegress

		Selection	No.	of	selected	variables
Variable	Model	method		min	median	max
educ tenure wage	linear linear linear	plugin plugin plugin		5 1 4	7 . 2	9 3 8

### lassoinfo after xporegress

. lassoinfo

Estimate: active Command: xporegress

		Selection	No. of	selected v	variables
Variable	Model	method	min	median	max
educ tenure	linear linear	plugin plugin	5	7	9
wage	linear	plugin	4	6	8

• By default, lassoinfo displays summary of lassos by variable

## lassoinfo after xporegress

. lassoinfo

Estimate: active Command: xporegress

			No. of	selected v	variables
Variable	Model	Selection method	min	median	max
educ	linear linear	plugin	5	7	9
tenure wage	linear	plugin plugin	4	6	8

- By default, lassoinfo displays summary of lassos by variable
- The option each would display information of each lasso

#### General advice

 The cross-fit partialing-out estimators are the best ones (xporegress, xpologit, xpopoisson, xpoivregress). But, computations may take extremely long time

### General advice

- The cross-fit partialing-out estimators are the best ones (xporegress, xpologit, xpopoisson, xpoivregress). But, computations may take extremely long time
- If you do not have the time, use either the partialing-out estimator (poregress, pologit, popoisson, poivregress) or the double-selection estimator (dsregress, dslogit, dspoisson)

### Customize individual lassos

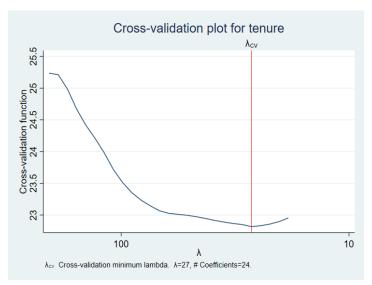
```
. dsregress wage educ tenure, controls ($controls) ///
> lasso(wage, selection(adaptive)) ///
> lasso(educ, selection(bic)) ///
   sgrtlasso(tenure, selection(cv))
Estimating lasso for wage using adaptive
Estimating lasso for educ using BIC
Estimating square-root lasso for tenure using cv
Double-selection linear model
                                      Number of obs
                                                                           722
                                      Number of controls
                                                                           230
                                      Number of selected controls =
                                                                           54
                                      Wald chi2(2)
                                                                        18.28
                                      Prob > chi2
                                                                        0.0001
```

wage	Coefficient	Robust std. err.	Z	P> z	[95% conf.	interval]
educ	34.66224	8.708087	3.98	0.000	17.5947	51.72978
tenure	4.881471	3.095039	1.58	0.115	-1.184694	10.94764

Note: Chi-squared test is a Wald test of the coefficients of the variables of interest jointly equal to zero. Lassos select controls for model estimation. Type lassoinfo to see number of selected variables in each lasso.

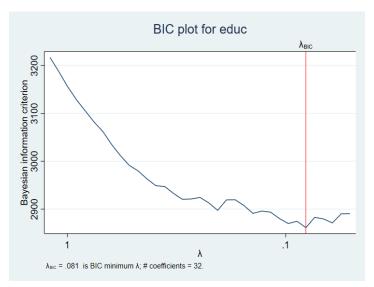
### cvplot for a particular lasso

cvplot, for(tenure)



# bicplot for a particular lasso

. bicplot, for(educ)

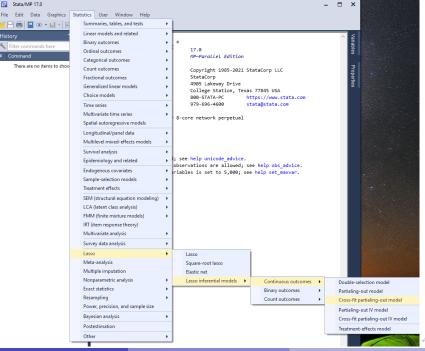


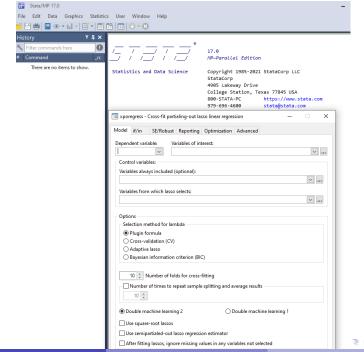
### Other options for selecting controls

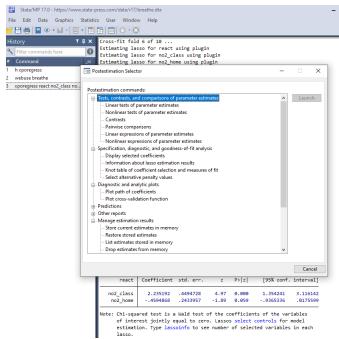
- . quietly dsregress wage educ tenure, controls(\$controls) selection(cv)
- . estimates store ds\_cv
- . quietly dsregress wage educ tenure, controls(\$controls) selection(adaptive)
- . estimates store ds adapt
- . quietly dsregress wage educ tenure, controls(\$controls) selection(bic)
- . estimates store ds\_bic
- . estimates table ds\_plugin ds\_cv ds\_adapt ds\_bic, b(%9.4f) se(%9.4f) p(%9.4f)

Variable	ds_plugin	ds_cv	ds_adapt	ds_bic
educ	29.2973	32.8323	34.1067	33.3164
	7.5875	8.8374	8.6690	8.6672
	0.0001	0.0002	0.0001	0.0001
	5.1052	5.1631	4.8216	4.6522
cenare	2.9504	3.0597	3.0784	3.0064
	0.0836	0.0915	0.1173	0.1218

Legend: b/se/p









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  - Also available for lasso and elasticnet, there are sub-commands for logit, probit, and Poisson models

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- Lasso estimators for inference
  - We used dsregress, poregress, and xporegress.

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  - We used dsregress, poregress, and xporegress.
  - Also available are dslogit, dspoisson, poivregress, pologit, popoisson, xpoivregress, xpologit, xpopoisson, telasso

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  - Using lasso for prediction and listing the selected variables in estimation commands will generally lead to invalid statistical inference. Instead, use lasso inferential commands

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  - Also available are dslogit, dspoisson, poivregress, pologit, popoisson, xpoivregress, xpologit, xpopoisson, telasso
  - Using lasso for prediction and listing the selected variables in estimation commands will generally lead to invalid statistical inference. Instead, use lasso inferential commands
  - Use cross-fit partialing-out estimators if you have the time; otherwise, use either the partialing-out estimator or the double-selection estimator



### References

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