Preface

A key step in writing a manuscript for publication is creating properly formatted tables presenting statistical results. There are many ways to approach creating such tables. You might create the tables manually, typing in each result. You might write a program to help automate the process. Or you might use one of the community-contributed tools that help create publication-quality tables from statistical output.

Starting with Stata 17, you have new options. You can use the tools built into Stata for creating publication-quality tables. These tools include the reimagined `table` command, the new `dtable` command (which requires Stata 18), the new `etable` command, and the new `collect` suite of commands. Each of these is based on the `collect` system and can be used independently or collaboratively. These tools can gather statistical results, format them as a table, customize the table, and export the table in various file formats (for example, a Word document, an Excel file, a PDF file, an HTML file, or a LaTeX file).

The focus of this book is on the `dtable` command and the `collect` suite of commands. The `dtable` command allows you to create tables of descriptive statistics, such as those shown in "Table 1" of a journal article. The `collect` commands for creating and exporting tables are general—they can be used with any estimation command and any command that stores results. These tools are flexible—you can format the tables in many ways. They are also powerful—you can combine and customize results from multiple commands. However, any tool that is general, flexible, and powerful will naturally be complex. I have specifically designed this book to address the unique challenges of learning these tools.

- **This book includes numerous complete examples**. The commands to create a table can feel like a jigsaw puzzle. Even if you have all the pieces, it can be unclear how to assemble them to make the picture. I show how the commands combine to create a table and show how to export that table. In fact, chapter 2 includes 24 sample tables. These samples are designed to illustrate how you can create many common tables. I hope that these samples can act as templates that you can use as starting points for creating your tables, letting you succeed in creating complex tables with many customizations.
- **This book focuses on both the trees and the forest.** While I do focus on complete examples, I also focus on building those examples one step at a time. Once an example is completed, I bring the pieces together in sections I call *Recap*, which show the assembled puzzle showing you the complete picture.

- **This book goes under the hood.** I take you under the hood in chapter 5 to explain the inner workings of creating tables, illustrating the contents of collections and the inner workings of the `collect` system. This chapter will help build your skills in understanding and creating tables.

Writing this book, which illustrates and explains how to create and export tables, has been uniquely challenging, perhaps the most challenging book I have written. I hope it is useful to you, and I hope you like it!

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