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# A new information criterion-based bandwidth selection method for non-parametric regressions

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## ABSTRACT

Local linear estimator is a popularly used method to estimate the non-parametric regression functions, and many methods have been derived to estimate the smoothing parameter, or the bandwidth in this case. In this article, we propose an information criterion-based bandwidth selection method, with the degrees of freedom originally derived for non-parametric inferences. Unlike the plug-in method, the new method does not require preliminary parameters to be chosen in advance, and is computationally efficient compared to the cross-validation (CV) method. Numerical study shows that the new method performs better or comparable to existing plug-in method or CV method in terms of the estimation of the mean functions, and has lower variability than CV selectors. Real data applications are also provided to illustrate the effectiveness of the new method.

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Information criterion  
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## 1. Introduction

Given  $\{(X_1, Y_1), \dots, (X_n, Y_n)\}$  from the model

$$Y = m(X) + \epsilon, \quad (1)$$

where  $m(x) = E(Y | X = x)$  is a smooth function,  $E(\epsilon | X) = 0$  and  $\text{Var}(\epsilon | X = x) = \sigma^2(x)$ . Local linear approximation, among other methods, has been proposed to estimate  $m(x)$  and its features have been well studied. See, for example, Fan [1,2] and Fan and Gijbels.[3] In a small neighbourhood of  $x_0$ ,  $m(x) \approx m(x_0) + m'(x_0)(x - x_0) \equiv \beta_0 + \beta_1(x - x_0)$ . The problem of estimating  $m(x_0)$  is equivalent to the estimation of  $\beta_0$ , which is calculated by minimizing

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \{Y_i - \beta_0 - \beta_1(X_i - x_0)\}^2 K_h(X_i - x_0),$$

where  $K_h(t) = K(t/h)/h$ ,  $K(\cdot)$  is a kernel density function, and  $h$  is a smoothing parameter. Let  $\hat{\beta}_0$  and  $\hat{\beta}_1$  be the solutions. Then  $\hat{m}(x_0) = \hat{\beta}_0$ .

The selection of the optimal smoothing parameter  $h$  is crucial to the estimation of  $m(x)$ . Classical bandwidth selection methods, such as cross-validation (CV), generalized cross-validation (GCV) or Akaike information criterion (AIC), and plug-in methods have been popularly used. CV [4] and GCV [5] try to minimize an unbiased estimator of mean average squared error (MASE), while AIC

and improved AIC ( $AIC_c$ ) [6] are aiming at minimizing the expected Kullback–Leibler discrepancy. For example, CV selects the bandwidth that minimizes

$$CV(h) = n^{-1} \sum_{i=1}^n [Y_i - \hat{m}_{-i}(X_i)]^2 w(X_i),$$

where  $\hat{m}_{-i}(X_i)$  is the ‘leave-one-out’ estimate of  $m(X_i)$ ,  $w(X_i)$  is a weight function. Classical bandwidth selectors are totally automatic, but tend to choose highly variable and under-smoothing parameters. As a result, plug-in methods have been developed, which minimizes a large sample approximation of MASE. For example, Ruppert et al. [7] proposed the plug-in selector for the local linear estimator

$$h_{\text{opt}} = \left( \frac{R(K)}{\mu^2(K) \int m''(x)^2 f(x) dx} \right)^{-1/5} n^{-1/5},$$

where  $R(K) = \int K(t) dt$ ,  $\mu(K) = \int t^2 K(t) dt$ ,  $f$  is the density of predictor variables, and  $n$  is the sample size. For plug-in method, we need to replace the unknown quantity  $m''(x)$  by an estimator, such as based on a parametric fit. Compared to the classical bandwidth selector, plug-in methods yield more stable estimators, and does not tend to under-smooth in practice. However, plug-in methods have only been developed when the asymptotic optimal bandwidth has a simple form, and are criticized for not being able to minimize the average squared error (ASE) for the observed data set.[8–11] In addition, the plug-in selector generally requires preliminary parameters to be chosen by the researchers, and the properties of the final estimator can be sensitive to those choices.

More recently, some new bandwidth selection methods have been proposed for more complicated model settings. For a non-parametric functional regression model with homoscedastic errors and unknown error density, Shang [12] proposed a Bayesian bandwidth estimation procedure, which outperforms the likelihood CV for estimating the error density. Levine [13] studied a possible bandwidth selection approach for difference-based variance estimators in the non-parametric regression, basing on the CV idea adjusted for correlated data. For integrated time series data, Sun and Li [14] suggested using the least squares CV method to choose the smoothing parameter, and studied the asymptotic properties of both the local constant and local linear estimators.

In this article, we propose a new bandwidth selector for the local linear approximation of model (1), based on the idea of information criterion and the degrees of freedom proposed by Fan et al. [15] for non-parametric regression. Unlike the plug-in method, the new method does not require preliminary parameters to be chosen in advance, and is computationally efficient compared to the CV method. Numerical study shows that the new method performs better or comparable to existing plug-in method or CV method in terms of the estimation of the mean functions, and has lower variability than CV selectors. Some real data applications are also provided to illustrate the effectiveness of the new method.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. The derivations of the new method are given in Section 2. In Section 3 and Section 4, we use simulation studies and real data examples to show the effectiveness of the new method, and compare it with existing bandwidth selectors. A few discussions are provided in Section 5.

## 2. Bayesian information criterion-based method

In general, a Bayesian information criterion has the form:

$$n \log \left\{ \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2 \right\} + \text{df} \times \log n, \quad (2)$$

where  $\text{df}$  is the degrees of freedom, amounting to the complexity of the model, and the first term is a measure of goodness-of-fit of the model. To implement the information criterion, a measure of the

complexity of the model is needed. Unlike the parametric model, the model complexity is not well defined for non-parametric regression model. Here, we implement the degrees of freedom proposed by Fan et al.,[15] which is originally derived for non-parametric hypothesis testing. Based on Fan et al.,[15] the degrees of freedom of model (1) is:

$$df_N = r_K h^{-1} |\Omega| \left\{ K(0) - \frac{1}{2} \int K^2(t) dt \right\}, \quad (3)$$

where  $\Omega$  is the support of the covariate,  $K(\cdot)$  is a kernel density function, and

$$r_K = \frac{K(0) - (1/2) \int K^2(t) dt}{\int \{K(t) - (1/2)K * K(t)\}^2 dt}.$$

Therefore, we propose to select the bandwidth which minimizes

$$BIC_N = n \log \left\{ \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2 \right\} + df_N \times \log n, \quad (4)$$

where  $df_N$  is defined in Equation (3). Note that the degrees of freedom and, therefore,  $BIC_N$  depend on the bandwidth  $h$ . We propose to apply the information criterion on a wide range of bandwidths, and select the bandwidth which minimizes the information criterion (4). In case the support of the covariate is not a closed interval, we propose to use the range of the sample to approximate  $|\Omega|$ .

Zhang [16] also covered in detail the degrees of freedom of linear smoothers in non-parametric settings. For linear smoother  $\mathbf{S}$ , they proposed to use either  $\text{tr}(\mathbf{S})$ ,  $\text{tr}(\mathbf{S}^T \mathbf{S})$ , or  $\text{tr}(2\mathbf{S} - \mathbf{S}^T \mathbf{S})$  as the degrees of freedom. Among these, they showed, under some conditions,  $\text{tr}(2\mathbf{S} - \mathbf{S}^T \mathbf{S}) = (2K - K * K)(0)|\Omega|/h\{1 + o(1)\}$ , which is proportional to our  $df$ , with a multiplier  $r_K/2$ . However, the intuition behind the methods are quite different.

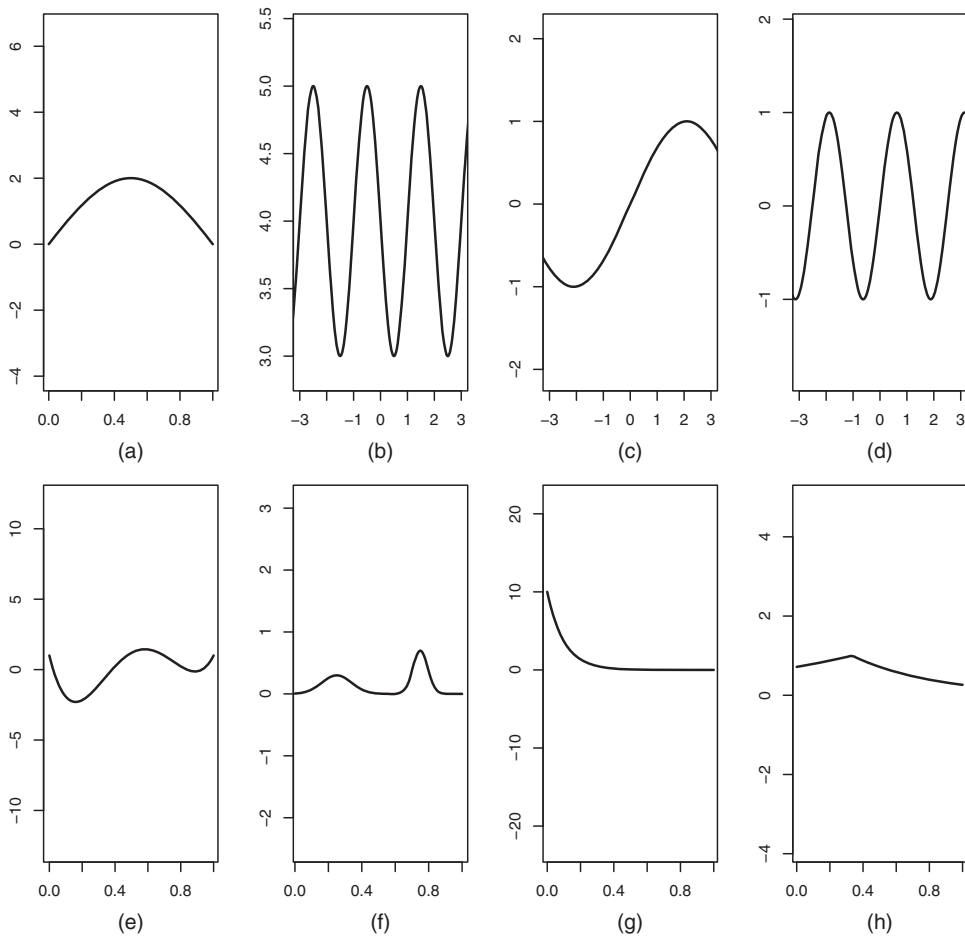
### 3. Simulation study

In this section, we use Monte Carlo simulations to investigate the finite sample performance of the newly proposed bandwidth selection method, and compare it with some existing bandwidth selectors.

Table 1 contains the eight examples considered in the simulation study. In Figure 1, a random sample of size  $n = 100$  is plotted for each example, accompanied by their mean functions. In Examples 1 and 2, the covariates are from a closed interval and an open set, respectively. Examples 3 and 4 were used by Fan,[1] where the mean function is approximately linear in Example 3, and the covariate in Example 4 is from a mixture of normal distributions. Examples 5–8 were suggested by Hurvich et al.,[6] where Example 5 represents a case with less fine structure or trend, Example 6 a case with noticeably different degrees of curvature for different values of the predictor, Example 7 a case with a trend but no fine structure, and Example 8 non-differentiable at  $x = 1/3$ . For each model, sample sizes of  $n = 100$ ,  $n = 200$  and  $n = 400$  are conducted over 500 repetitions.

**Table 1.** Models considered in the simulation study.

Mean functions	Density of covariate	Density of error
$2 \sin(\pi x)$	$U(0, 1)$	$N(0, 2^2)$
$4 - \sin(\pi x)$	$N(0, 1)$	$N(0, 0.2^2)$
$\sin(0.75x)$	$N(0, 1)$	$N(0, 0.6^2)$
$\sin(2.5x)$	$0.5N(-1, 1) + 0.5N(1.75, 0.25)$	$N(0, 0.6^2)$
$1 - 48x + 218x^2 - 315x^3 + 145x^4$	$U(0, 1)$	$N(0, 4.5^2)$
$0.3 \exp\{-64(x - 0.25)^2\} + 0.7 \exp\{-256(x - 0.75)^2\}$	$U(0, 1)$	$N(0, 1.25^2)$
$10 \exp(-10x)$	$U(0, 1)$	$N(0, 8^2)$
$\exp(x - 1/3)$ if $x < 1/3$ , $\exp\{-2(x - 1/3)\}$ if $x \geq 1/3$	$U(0, 1)$	$N(0, 1.5^2)$



**Figure 1.** Simulation examples: random samples of size  $n = 100$  and their corresponding density plots.

For each example, we assume that the data comes from model (1) and the local linear approximation with Gaussian kernel is used to estimate the mean functions. The performance of the new bandwidth selector is reported, and is compared with the plug-in method by Ruppert et al., [7] leave-one-out CV, and 10-fold CV. For the plug-in method, the least squares quartic fit is used to approximate  $m(x)$  and therefore  $m''(x)$ . If  $r$  is used to denote the range of predictors, then the grid of bandwidths is formed by taking 30 equally spaced points from  $0.01r$  to  $0.5r$ .

To assess the performance of the bandwidth selectors, we report the ASE of the estimators:

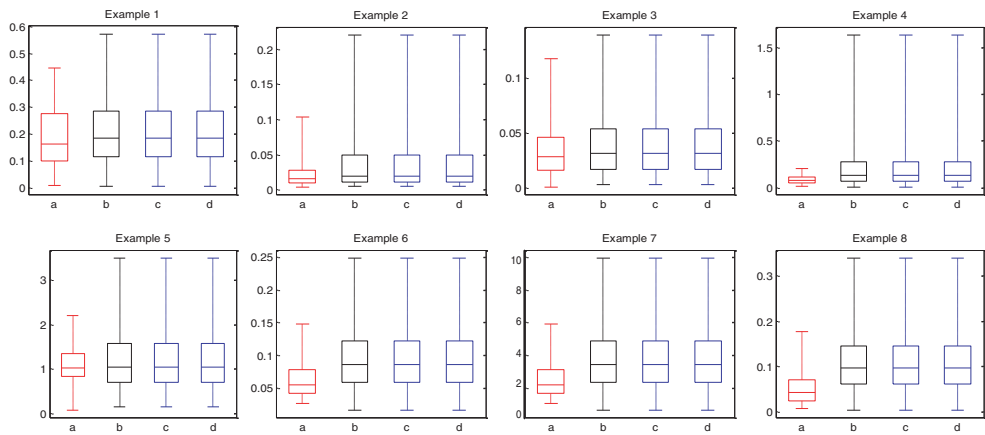
$$\text{ASE} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \{m(u_i) - \hat{m}(u_i)\}^2, \quad (5)$$

where  $\{u_1, \dots, u_N\}$  is a set of equally spaced grid points, and  $N$  is the number of grid points. In the simulation,  $N = 100$  is set for all examples.

Table 2 contains the mean and standard deviation of ASE of the four bandwidth selectors when  $n = 100$ ,  $n = 200$ , and  $n = 400$ , based on 500 repetitions. Figures 2–4 show the boxplots of ASE of Examples 1–8 with  $n = 100$ ,  $n = 200$  and  $n = 400$ , respectively. We can see that the  $\text{BIC}_N$  is most often best, and usually not far away from best otherwise. The performance of 10-fold CV and leave-one-out CV are close, and are slightly better than the plug-in method in most cases.

**Table 2.** Mean(Std) of ASE of the mean functions.

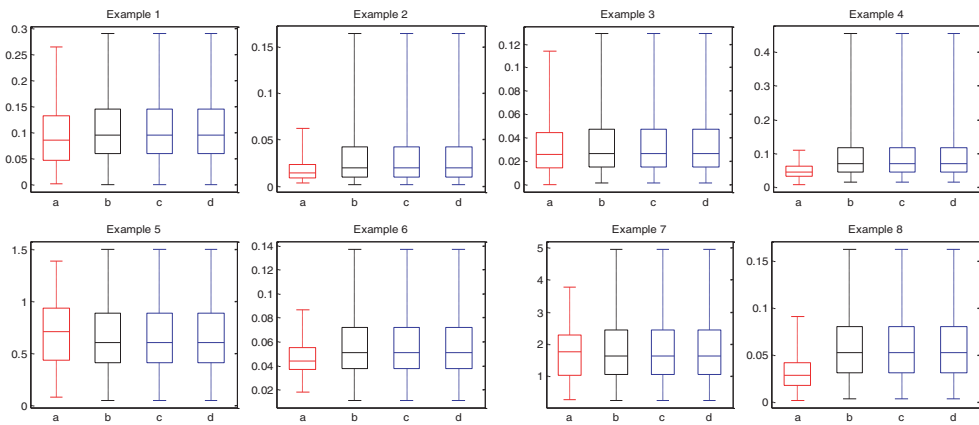
	Sample size	$BIC_N$	Plug-in	10-fold CV	Leave-one-out CV
Example 1	$n = 100$	0.201 (0.131)	0.235 (0.189)	0.215 (0.159)	0.212 (0.157)
	$n = 200$	0.105 (0.073)	0.117 (0.082)	0.113 (0.087)	0.113 (0.088)
	$n = 400$	0.055 (0.037)	0.063 (0.045)	0.061 (0.049)	0.062 (0.051)
Example 2	$n = 100$	0.084 (0.485)	0.135 (0.598)	0.167 (2.571)	0.172 (2.572)
	$n = 200$	0.072 (0.215)	0.096 (0.620)	0.166 (1.361)	0.144 (1.212)
	$n = 400$	0.042 (0.092)	0.077 (0.262)	0.083 (0.485)	0.083 (0.485)
Example 3	$n = 100$	0.040 (0.038)	0.069 (0.377)	0.056 (0.218)	0.070 (0.555)
	$n = 200$	0.037 (0.034)	0.041 (0.041)	0.039 (0.037)	0.039 (0.043)
	$n = 400$	0.028 (0.027)	0.032 (0.044)	0.031 (0.046)	0.030 (0.029)
Example 4	$n = 100$	0.117 (1.310)	0.748 (5.685)	0.108 (0.103)	0.102 (0.078)
	$n = 200$	0.095 (0.059)	0.397 (3.902)	0.072 (0.077)	0.082 (0.130)
	$n = 400$	0.051 (0.045)	0.185 (1.755)	0.065 (0.148)	0.057 (0.069)
Example 5	$n = 100$	1.135 (0.501)	1.345 (1.027)	1.241 (0.749)	1.255 (0.784)
	$n = 200$	0.760 (0.356)	0.718 (0.409)	0.732 (0.416)	0.724 (0.408)
	$n = 400$	0.416 (0.233)	0.393 (0.207)	0.408 (0.250)	0.408 (0.257)
Example 6	$n = 100$	0.068 (0.036)	0.106 (0.069)	0.085 (0.058)	0.087 (0.065)
	$n = 200$	0.050 (0.019)	0.062 (0.034)	0.055 (0.028)	0.055 (0.027)
	$n = 400$	0.037 (0.010)	0.036 (0.017)	0.037 (0.017)	0.038 (0.019)
Example 7	$n = 100$	2.754 (1.555)	4.197 (4.176)	3.295 (2.497)	3.410 (3.144)
	$n = 200$	1.857 (0.966)	2.054 (1.468)	1.908 (1.232)	1.999 (1.617)
	$n = 400$	1.117 (0.627)	1.142 (0.698)	1.132 (0.668)	1.117 (0.774)
Example 8	$n = 100$	0.060 (0.051)	0.126 (0.104)	0.079 (0.080)	0.082 (0.084)
	$n = 200$	0.036 (0.026)	0.065 (0.047)	0.047 (0.043)	0.047 (0.043)
	$n = 400$	0.022 (0.014)	0.033 (0.024)	0.027 (0.026)	0.028 (0.029)



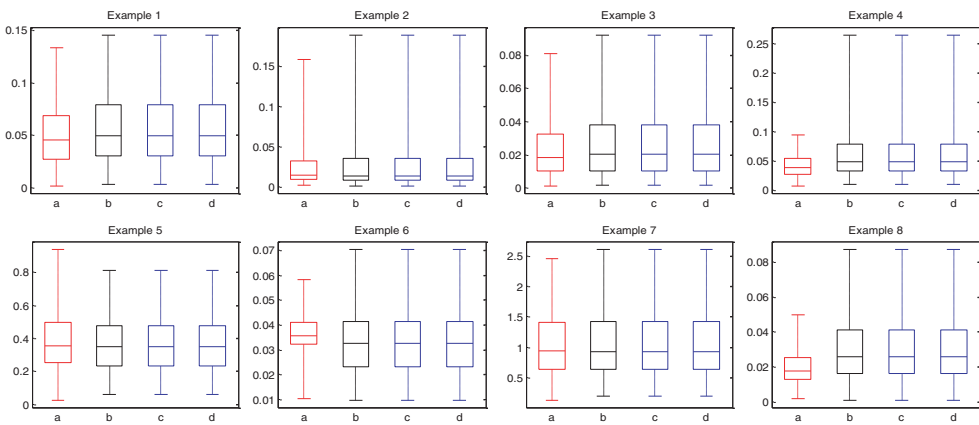
**Figure 2.** Boxplot of ASE of Examples 1–8 with  $n = 100$ , and the bandwidth selected by (a)  $BIC_N$ , (b) plug-in, (c) 10-fold CV, and (d) leave-one-out CV.

In addition to the estimation of the mean functions, we also compare the computation efficiency among different bandwidth selectors. The simulation is done through Matlab on a personal laptop with an i7-3610QM CPU and 8 GB of RAM. Table 3 reports the mean and standard deviation of calculation time (in seconds) of a repetition. As expected, the plug-in method is always the fastest method in all cases. The  $BIC_N$  method takes much less time than the 10-fold CV, and the leave-one-out CV takes the longest time to compute.

To assess the variability of the selected bandwidths, we also report the variance of the selected bandwidths over 500 repetitions, in Table 4. Among the eight examples considered, Example 3 has



**Figure 3.** Boxplot of ASE of Examples 1–8 with  $n = 200$ , and the bandwidth selected by (a)  $BIC_N$ , (b) plug-in, (c) 10-fold CV, and (d) leave-one-out CV.



**Figure 4.** Boxplot of ASE of Examples 1–8 with  $n = 400$ , and the bandwidth selected by (a)  $BIC_N$ , (b) plug-in, (c) 10-fold CV, and (d) leave-one-out CV.

significantly more variable bandwidths, due to the fact that its mean function is approximately linear. The plug-in selector has the least variable bandwidths in most cases. The  $BIC_N$  selector has relatively low variability compared to CV when the sample size is small, and the performance of 10-fold or leave-one-out CV are similar, in this respect.

Next, we consider the MSE and bias of the selected bandwidth. For each repetition, we find the optimal bandwidth which minimizes the ASE, defined in Equation (5). The plug-in selector and CV selector have a clear tendency towards undersmoothing, while the  $BIC_N$  tends to oversmooth in most cases. In terms of the magnitude of MSE and bias, the  $BIC_N$  gives most favourable result in Examples 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8, and comparable performance in other cases. The plug-in selector, in this cases, is the least satisfied bandwidth selector (Table 5).

#### 4. Real data analysis

**Example 1 (1995 British family expenditure data):** We illustrate the application of the new bandwidth selector to the 1995 British family expenditure data, available from R package ‘np’. The data set consists of a random sample taken from the British Family Expenditure Survey for 1995. The households consist of married couples with an employed head-of-household between the ages of 25 and

**Table 3.** Mean(Std) of calculation time (in seconds) of a repetition.

	Sample size	BIC <sub>N</sub>	Plug-in	10-fold CV	Leave-one-out CV
Example 1	$n = 100$	0.184 (0.071)	0.029 (0.017)	0.606 (0.232)	4.746 (1.764)
	$n = 200$	0.139 (0.022)	0.019 (0.003)	0.492 (0.068)	6.128 (0.805)
	$n = 400$	0.165 (0.031)	0.020 (0.004)	0.773 (0.129)	12.482 (2.013)
Example 2	$n = 100$	0.187 (0.079)	0.032 (0.033)	0.603 (0.234)	4.758 (1.771)
	$n = 200$	0.150 (0.029)	0.023 (0.022)	0.533 (0.105)	6.666 (1.260)
	$n = 400$	0.168 (0.029)	0.023 (0.008)	0.806 (0.127)	12.934 (2.058)
Example 3	$n = 100$	0.182 (0.074)	0.027 (0.011)	0.567 (0.233)	4.467 (1.802)
	$n = 200$	0.153 (0.035)	0.022 (0.005)	0.546 (0.127)	6.782 (1.537)
	$n = 400$	0.175 (0.029)	0.022 (0.004)	0.828 (0.141)	13.116 (2.021)
Example 4	$n = 100$	0.165 (0.067)	0.025 (0.010)	0.512 (0.214)	4.016 (1.634)
	$n = 200$	0.155 (0.038)	0.023 (0.005)	0.546 (0.130)	6.792 (1.508)
	$n = 400$	0.173 (0.028)	0.023 (0.004)	0.816 (0.125)	13.083 (2.078)
Example 5	$n = 100$	0.161 (0.045)	0.024 (0.006)	0.497 (0.140)	3.921 (1.101)
	$n = 200$	0.205 (0.003)	0.026 (0.015)	0.745 (0.223)	5.519 (1.225)
	$n = 400$	0.215 (0.092)	0.025 (0.011)	1.025 (0.439)	16.662 (7.227)
Example 6	$n = 100$	0.161 (0.044)	0.024 (0.006)	0.500 (0.143)	3.955 (1.104)
	$n = 200$	0.221 (0.058)	0.029 (0.010)	0.796 (0.206)	9.962 (2.550)
	$n = 400$	0.208 (0.064)	0.025 (0.007)	0.993 (0.295)	16.007 (4.568)
Example 7	$n = 100$	0.183 (0.096)	0.027 (0.014)	0.567 (0.301)	4.462 (2.363)
	$n = 200$	0.224 (0.091)	0.029 (0.012)	0.815 (0.335)	10.219 (4.139)
	$n = 400$	0.222 (0.082)	0.026 (0.010)	1.059 (0.393)	17.284 (6.442)
Example 8	$n = 100$	0.195 (0.104)	0.029 (0.014)	0.608 (0.326)	4.803 (2.556)
	$n = 200$	0.227 (0.068)	0.030 (0.012)	0.826 (0.259)	10.331 (3.159)
	$n = 400$	0.188 (0.054)	0.022 (0.007)	0.895 (0.261)	14.629 (3.814)

**Table 4.** Variance of selected bandwidths over 500 repetitions.

	Sample size	BIC <sub>N</sub>	Plug-in	10-fold CV	Leave-one-out CV
Example 1	$n = 100$	0.014	0.001	0.010	0.009
	$n = 200$	0.004	0.001	0.003	0.003
	$n = 400$	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.001
Example 2	$n = 100$	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.002
	$n = 200$	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.002
	$n = 400$	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.001
Example 3	$n = 100$	0.581	0.024	0.667	0.671
	$n = 200$	0.528	0.011	0.391	0.366
	$n = 400$	0.214	0.006	0.082	0.076
Example 4	$n = 100$	0.002	0.003	0.006	0.005
	$n = 200$	0.001	0.001	0.004	0.004
	$n = 400$	0.002	0.001	0.003	0.002
Example 5	$n = 100$	0.026	0.001	0.029	0.030
	$n = 200$	0.018	0.000	0.007	0.005
	$n = 400$	0.012	0.000	0.004	0.004
Example 6	$n = 100$	0.014	0.002	0.034	0.034
	$n = 200$	0.018	0.001	0.038	0.039
	$n = 400$	0.035	0.001	0.034	0.034
Example 7	$n = 100$	0.019	0.001	0.028	0.029
	$n = 200$	0.022	0.001	0.018	0.017
	$n = 400$	0.012	0.000	0.007	0.005
Example 8	$n = 100$	0.008	0.001	0.026	0.027
	$n = 200$	0.010	0.001	0.029	0.029
	$n = 400$	0.016	0.001	0.030	0.030



Table 5. MSE(Bias) of bandwidths.

	Sample size	$BIC_N$	Plug-in	10-fold CV	Leave-one-out CV
Example 1	$n = 100$	0.018 (0.082)	0.014 (−0.102)	0.010 (−0.006)	0.009 (−0.010)
	$n = 200$	0.006 (0.048)	0.004 (−0.059)	0.004 (−0.007)	0.004 (−0.011)
	$n = 400$	0.001 (0.029)	0.003 (−0.040)	0.002 (−0.006)	0.002 (−0.009)
Example 2	$n = 100$	0.000 (0.003)	0.003 (−0.040)	0.003 (−0.004)	0.003 (−0.007)
	$n = 200$	0.001 (0.024)	0.003 (−0.043)	0.003 (−0.013)	0.003 (−0.016)
	$n = 400$	0.002 (−0.014)	0.003 (−0.045)	0.004 (−0.040)	0.004 (−0.046)
Example 3	$n = 100$	0.509 (0.499)	0.757 (−0.739)	0.667 (0.035)	0.671 (0.033)
	$n = 200$	0.321 (0.341)	0.372 (−0.483)	0.391 (−0.005)	0.367 (−0.040)
	$n = 400$	0.151 (0.186)	0.113 (−0.286)	0.084 (−0.045)	0.079 (−0.054)
Example 4	$n = 100$	0.005 (0.050)	0.021 (−0.125)	0.008 (0.004)	0.006 (−0.006)
	$n = 200$	0.002 (0.035)	0.015 (−0.108)	0.005 (−0.003)	0.006 (−0.014)
	$n = 400$	0.003 (0.022)	0.011 (−0.092)	0.005 (−0.014)	0.004 (−0.021)
Example 5	$n = 100$	0.037 (0.126)	0.035 (−0.160)	0.029 (−0.009)	0.030 (−0.005)
	$n = 200$	0.027 (0.102)	0.013 (−0.087)	0.018 (0.003)	0.016 (−0.004)
	$n = 400$	0.011 (0.056)	0.003 (−0.038)	0.004 (−0.001)	0.004 (−0.004)
Example 6	$n = 100$	0.019 (0.073)	0.092 (−0.281)	0.036 (−0.049)	0.037 (−0.051)
	$n = 200$	0.033 (0.121)	0.076 (−0.240)	0.039 (−0.031)	0.040 (−0.030)
	$n = 400$	0.053 (0.157)	0.036 (−0.145)	0.034 (−0.021)	0.035 (−0.021)
Example 7	$n = 100$	0.033 (0.120)	0.041 (−0.182)	0.028 (−0.008)	0.029 (−0.006)
	$n = 200$	0.030 (0.109)	0.022 (−0.129)	0.017 (−0.005)	0.017 (−0.011)
	$n = 400$	0.013 (0.071)	0.007 (−0.067)	0.007 (0.000)	0.006 (−0.008)
Example 8	$n = 100$	0.013 (0.069)	0.097 (−0.294)	0.026 (−0.022)	0.027 (−0.023)
	$n = 200$	0.021 (0.100)	0.078 (−0.261)	0.030 (−0.020)	0.029 (−0.008)
	$n = 400$	0.028 (0.108)	0.059 (−0.226)	0.030 (−0.002)	0.030 (−0.009)

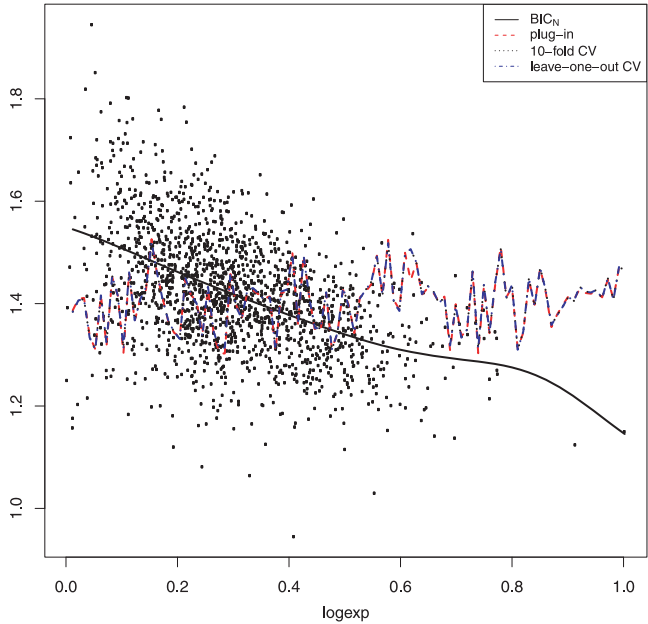


Figure 5. Scatter plot of the 1995 British family expenditure data, and its corresponding fitted models.

55 years. There are 1655 household-level observations and 10 variables in the original data set. In this example, we use logarithm of total expenditure (logexp) as a covariate to predict for expenditure share on food (food).

Assuming the two variables follow model (1), we apply local linear approximation to the data, using each of the foregoing bandwidth selection method for optimal bandwidths. Figure 5 shows the scatter plot and fitted models based on the four bandwidth selectors.

To compare the newly proposed bandwidth selector to existing methods, since the true regression function is unknown, we use 10-fold CV to check the prediction performance. The mean and standard deviation of the mean squared prediction error (MSPE) are reported in Table 6. The calculation time of each method is also reported.

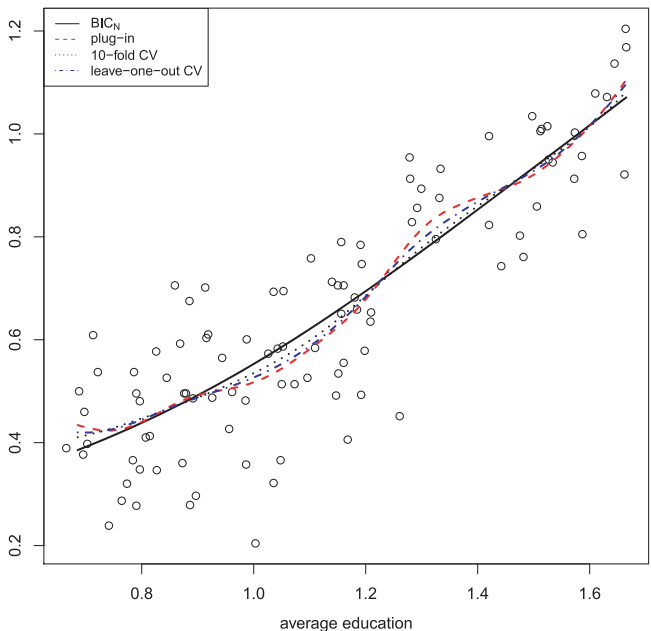
It can be seen that the newly proposed bandwidth selector works comparable to 10-fold CV or leave-one-out CV in terms of prediction performance, but with much less computation time. Since 10-fold CV targets the minimization of the MSPE, it indicates that the bandwidth chosen by the new method has the optimal prediction performance. The plug-in selector, in this case, has similar prediction performance and with the least computation time.

**Example 2 (Canadian prestige data):** Next, we apply the bandwidth selectors to the Canadian prestige data,[17] using average education of occupational incumbents (in 1971) to predict for prestige score, which is from a social survey conducted in the mid-1960s. The data set has 102 observations, corresponding to occupations.

Table 6 shows the MSPE and calculation time of each of the bandwidth selection methods. Similar to the British family expenditure data, the new bandwidth selector and plug-in method obtain the optimal bandwidth in terms of prediction, but with much less calculation time, which is desirable in

**Table 6.** Mean(Std) of 10-fold CV.

	$BIC_N$	Plug-in	10-fold CV	Leave-one-out CV
<i>1995 British family expenditure data</i>				
MSPE	0.011 (0.002)	0.011 (0.002)	0.011 (0.002)	0.011 (0.002)
Time	0.183 (0.008)	0.036 (0.003)	3.843 (0.041)	48.790 (0.377)
<i>Prestige data</i>				
MSPE	0.017 (0.009)	0.017 (0.010)	0.017 (0.010)	0.018 (0.010)
Time	0.077 (0.004)	0.014 (0.001)	0.348 (0.007)	2.627 (0.024)



**Figure 6.** Scatter plot of the Canadian prestige data, and its corresponding fitted models.

real data applications. Figure 6 shows the scatter plot and fitted models of the Canadian prestige data, based on the four bandwidth selectors.

## 5. Discussion

In this article, we proposed a bandwidth selector for local linear estimator, based on information criterion with the degrees of freedom originally derived for non-parametric inferences. The method can be easily implemented using any statistical software and is intuitively appealing. Simulation studies and real data examples show that the new selector outperforms the CV method in terms of the estimation of the mean functions and calculation time, and is less variable in most cases. In addition, unlike the plug-in method, the new method does not require preliminary parameters to be chosen in advance, and therefore, is desirable in real data applications.

In this article, we only investigate the bandwidth selector of local linear estimator. It is also of great interest to extend our work to the local polynomial context based on the work of Zhang.[16] Applications to other non-parametric regression models, such as varying coefficient models and varying coefficient partial linear models, would also be valuable.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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