

Capstone Project: Predicting the Stock Market

__Problem Statement__

Is it more profitable for a trading/investing strategy to predict the **current** market regime (bear or bull market) or predict the **forward** price returns in advance?

Agenda

1. The extreme unpredictability of stock markets
2. A short intro to Hidden Markov Model
3. Part 1: HMM for Daily Market Regime Prediction
4. Part 2: HMM for Daily Price Return Prediction
5. Conclusion & Recommendations
6. Limitations & Caveats

Stock markets are extremely hard to predict
due to “**Reflexivity**”

“In situations that have thinking participants, there is a two-way interaction between the participants’ thinking and the situation in which they participate.”

~ George Soros, billionaire hedge fund manager who nearly bankrupted the Bank of England

★ MOST SUCCESSFUL CHIMPANZEE ON WALL STREET

Raven, a six-year-old chimpanzee, became the 22nd most successful money manager in the USA after choosing her stocks by throwing darts at a list of 133 internet companies. The chimp created her own index, dubbed MonkeyDex, and in 1999 delivered a 213% gain – outperforming more than 6,000 professional brokers on Wall Street.

"She quadrupled the performance of the Dow and doubled the performance of the Nasdaq composite," said Roland Perry, editor of the *Internet Stock Review*.



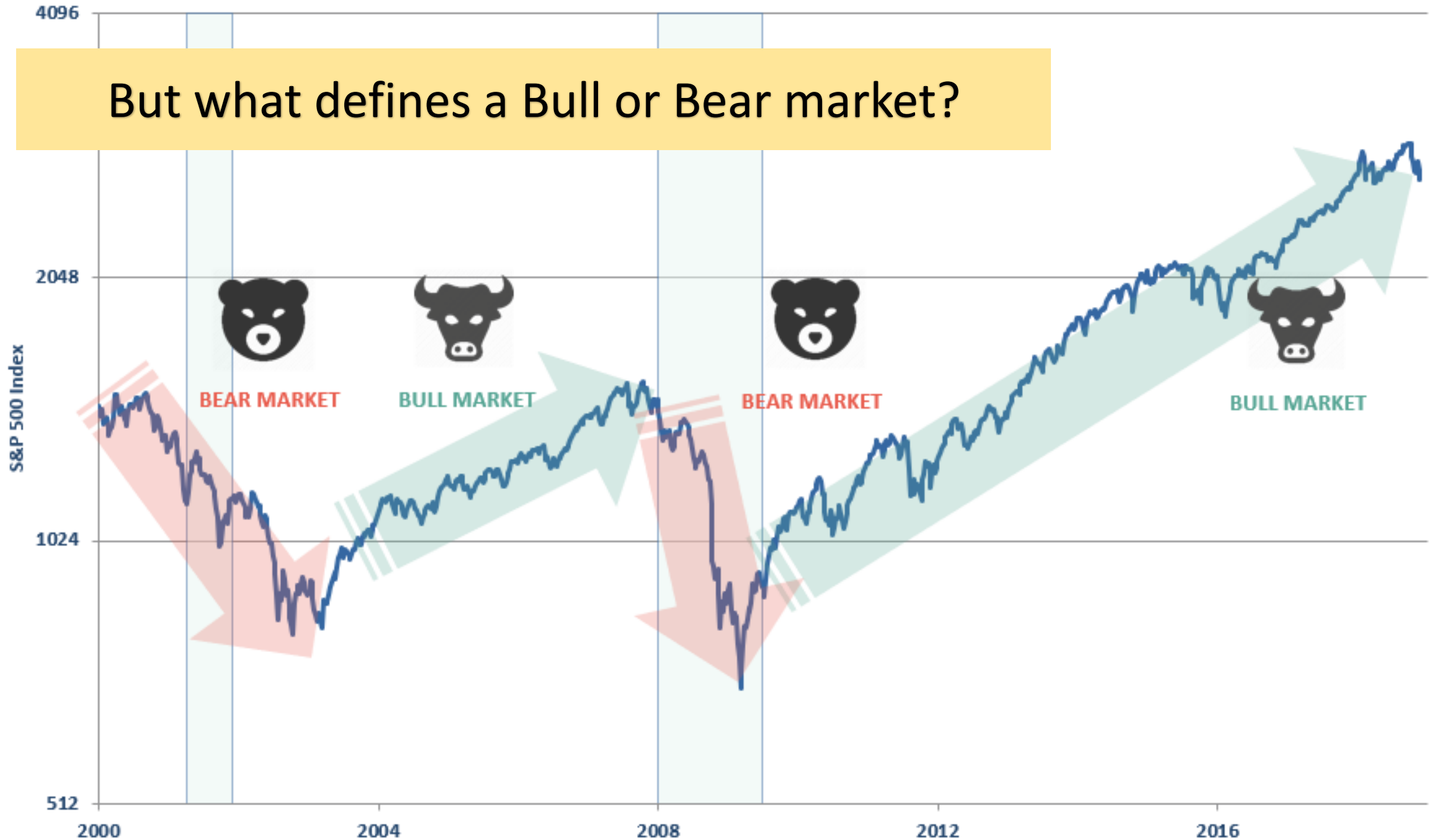
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..... 200.8 $\frac{1}{2}$	66.92 $\frac{3}{4}$	20.99	16 $\frac{1}{8}$	76	45 $\frac{3}{4}$	35 $\frac{3}{4}$ @ 6	97 $\frac{1}{8}$	100 $\frac{3}{4}$	64 $\frac{1}{8}$	76	45.14.90

“It’s a bull market.”

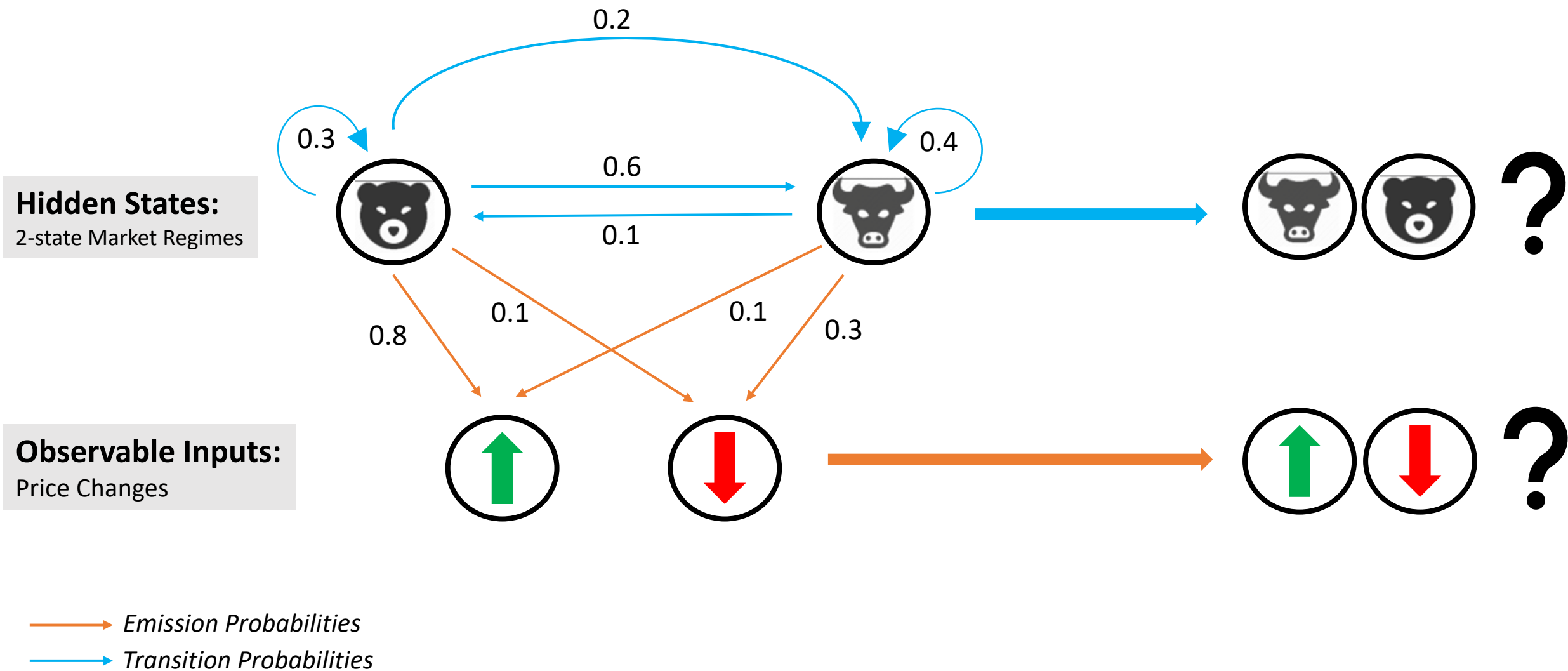
Mr Partridge, from The Reminiscence of the Stock Operator



But what defines a Bull or Bear market?



Hidden Markov Model



Part 1

Hidden Markov for Market Regime Prediction

Research Methodology

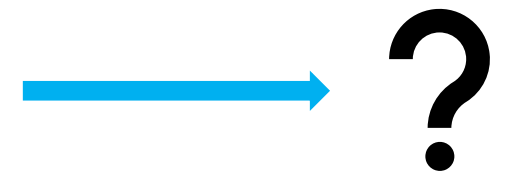
Asset	SPY ETF (underlying index: S&P500 Index)
Model Training Period	Since inception 1993-2009
Model Testing Period	2010-2023/1
Backtest Period	2018-2023/1
Model Evaluation Metric	Cumulative %Returns during Backtest Period

Backtesting Strategy:

- Daily trading strategy
- Long SPY when last regime=BULL; Short SPY when last regime=BEAR

Converting Price Observations into Technical Indicators

Hidden States:
Market Regimes

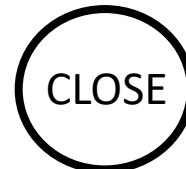


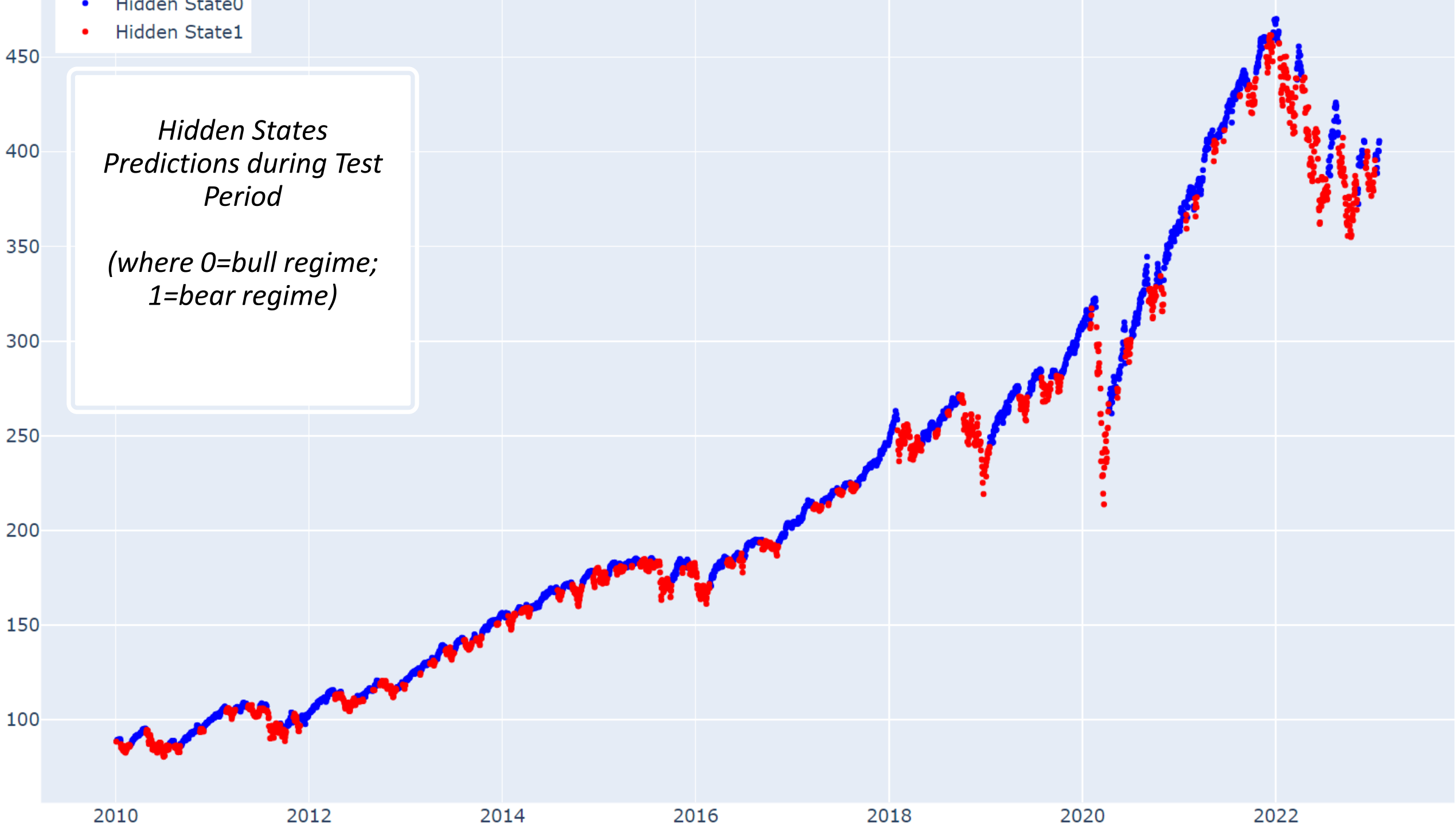
Observable Inputs:
Technical Indicators



[^] Average Directional Index
^{*} Relative Strength Index

Observable Output:
Prices





Strategy Backtest during 2018-2023/1

Start date	2018-01-02
End date	2023-01-27
Total months	60
Backtest	
Annual return	5.5%
Cumulative returns	31.1%
Annual volatility	19.1%
Sharpe ratio	0.38
Calmar ratio	0.19
Stability	0.36
Max drawdown	-28.6%
Omega ratio	1.07
Sortino ratio	0.55
Skew	NaN
Kurtosis	NaN
Tail ratio	1.02
Daily value at risk	-2.4%
Alpha	0.13
Beta	-0.39



Part 2

Hidden Markov for Daily Price Returns Prediction

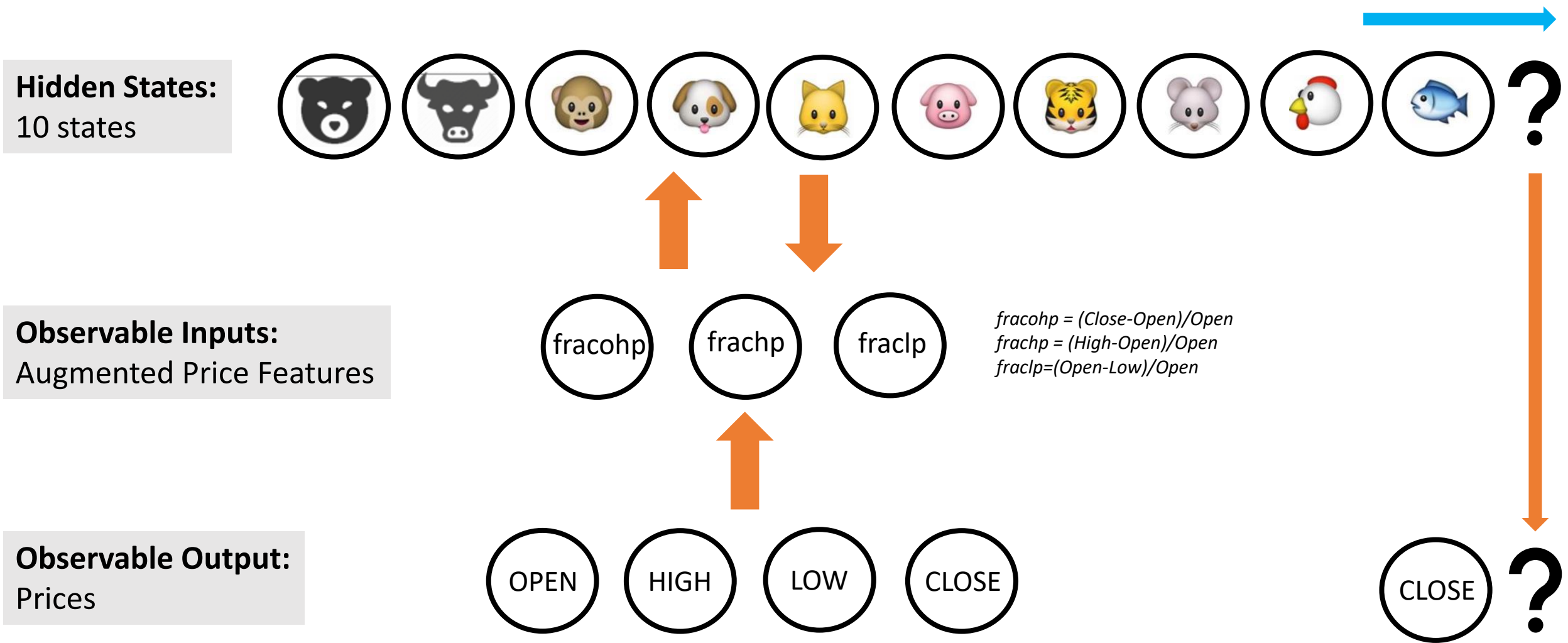
Research Methodology

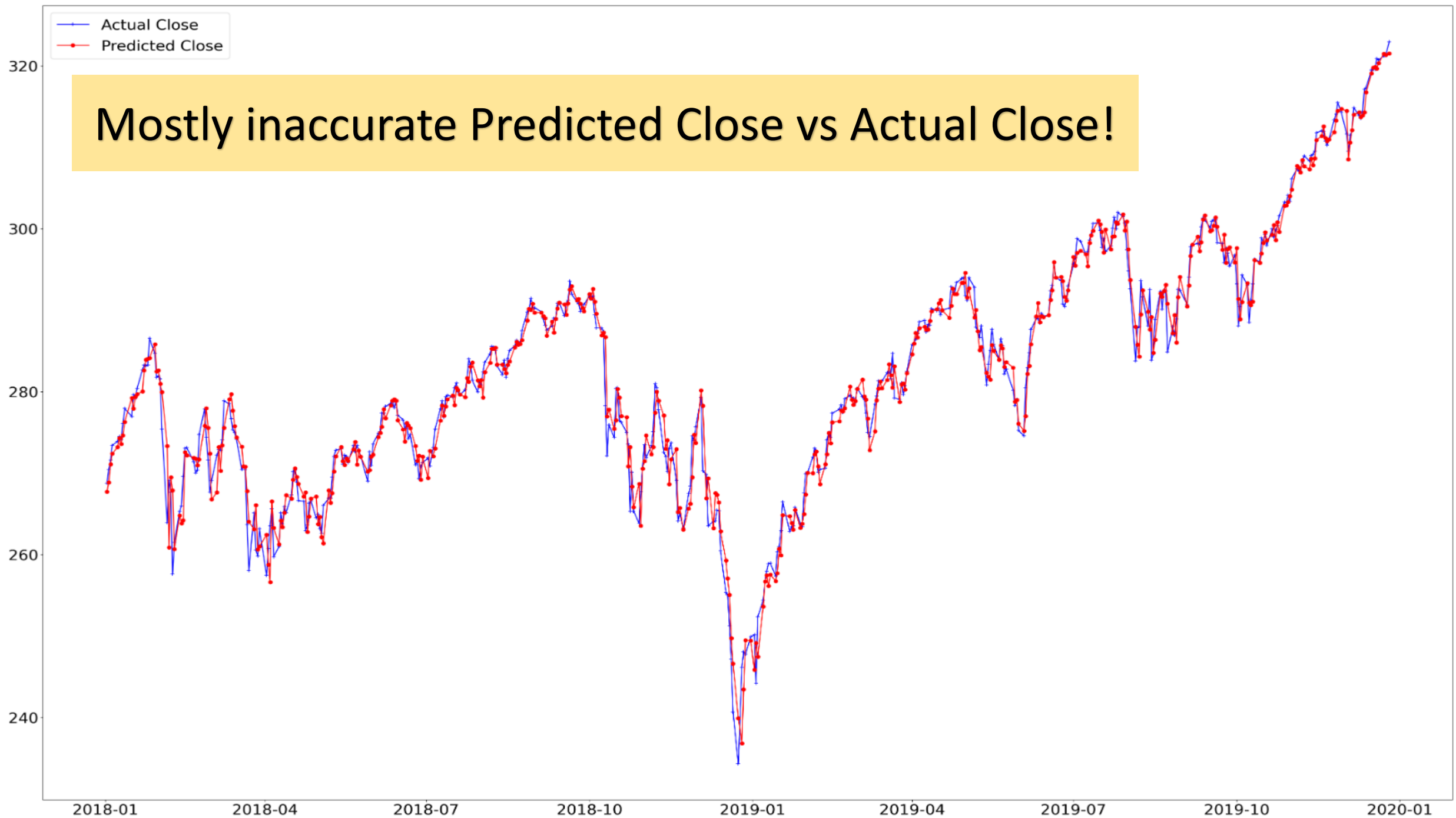
Asset	SPY ETF (underlying index: S&P500 Index)
Model Training Period	Since inception 1993-2009
Sampling Period for “Possible_Outcomes”	2010-2017
Model Testing Period	2018-2023/1
Backtest Period	2018-2023/1
Model Evaluation Metric	Cumulative %Returns during Backtest Period

Backtesting Strategy:

- Day trading strategy (to trade on the OPEN)
- If Predicted Close > Actual Open: Buy SPY at OPEN price and Sell at CLOSE
- If Predicted Close < Actual Open: Sell SPY at OPEN price and Buy at CLOSE

Using Augmented Price Features





Strategy Backtest during 2018-2023/1

Start date	2018-01-03
End date	2023-01-27
Total months	60
Backtest	
Annual return	0.8%
Cumulative returns	3.9%
Annual volatility	15.5%
Sharpe ratio	0.13
Calmar ratio	0.02
Stability	0.26
Max drawdown	-32.0%
Omega ratio	1.02
Sortino ratio	0.17
Skew	-0.27
Kurtosis	3.54
Tail ratio	0.95
Daily value at risk	-1.9%
Alpha	0.02
Beta	0.00



Conclusions & Recommendations

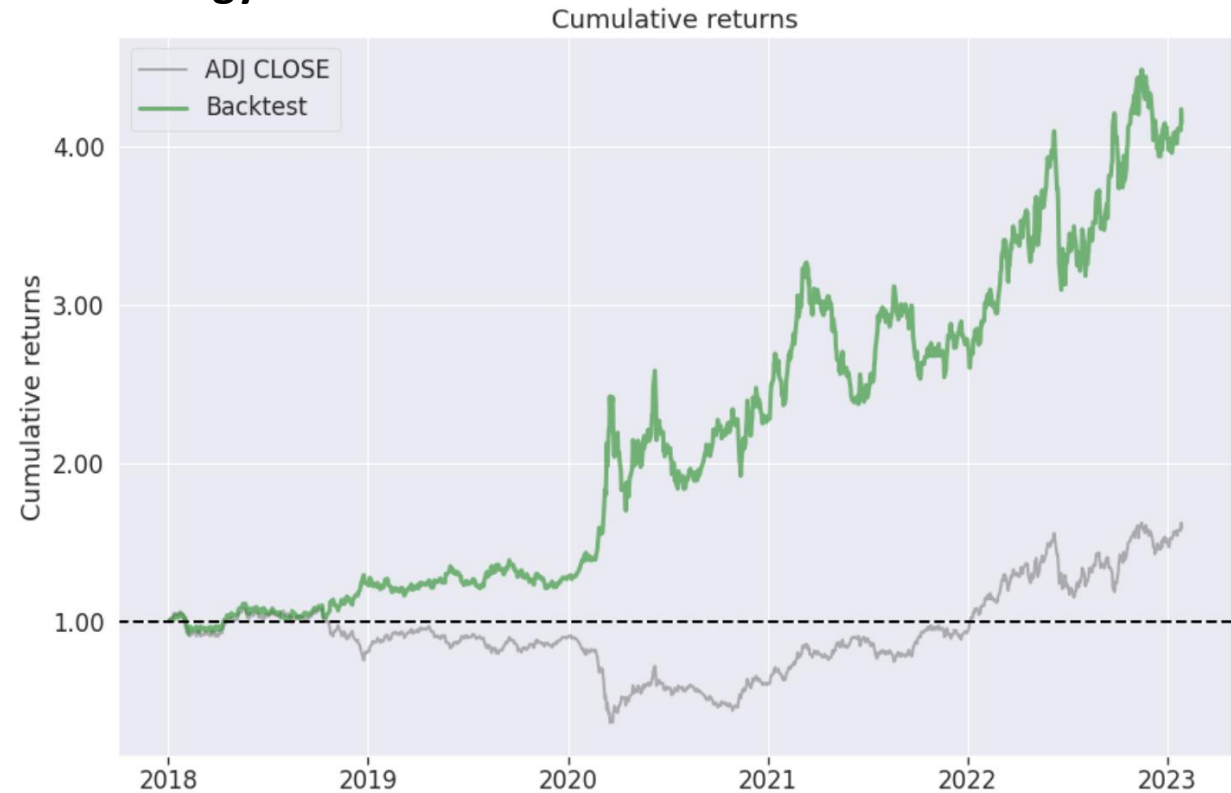
- Hidden Markov models proved to be reasonably capable of predicting current market regimes but underperformed considerably when trying to predict forward price returns.
- For the best alpha strategy, it is recommended to employ HMM models to **predict current market regime** just like Mr Partridge and not trade unnecessarily.

But market regime prediction strategy worked beautifully for some assets!

Gold: "GLD"



Energy Stocks: "XLE"



Limitations & Caveats

1. Trading Costs such as short-financing costs, trading commissions, slippage and market impact costs have not been simulated in the backtesting.
2. Use of non-timeseries feature inputs may not be sufficient to capture underlying statistical patterns
3. **Model Uncertainty**
 1. While HMM-clustering of SPY ETF market regimes enabled the model to outperform its benchmark up till Aug20, it failed to predict the market regime correctly following the global fiscal and monetary easing that fueled the unprecedented stock market recovery from Aug20-Dec21. From 2022, the model started to produce accurate regime classifications again.
 2. While the HMM regime-clustering model did not work as well for SPY ETF, it worked phenomenally well for more volatile assets such as oil and gold when a walk-forward training window was used to fit the HMM model.
 3. The choice of training window (static window, expanding window or walk-forward window) can result in vastly different backtesting profitability depending on the asset – this risks explicit overfitting.
 4. The inherent mathematical randomness of the HMM model can also yield very different results resulting in overfitting. To reduce this variance, extra care must be exercised during the cross-validation process.
 5. In all assets backtested with similar models (not all shown here in this slides), there are varying lengths of time periods when the model underperformed and posed a drag on profitability. This underscores the fact that HMM regime-clustering model, like most quantitative strategies, is no Holy Grail to consistent profitability. Rigorous empirical analysis needs to be conducted to reduce overfitting variance and ensure the statistical significance of regime signals.
4. Due to the inconsistencies of quantitative strategies, one needs to be especially clear about the characteristics of an asset that allowed the strategy to work and re-train the model if such characteristics changes in the future.

What's Next

- “Best model” forecasts as of 26 April 2023:
- **BULL** market for SPY
- **BULL** market for GLD
- **BULL** market for XLE