



Module #3

Investment replica

Raffaele Zenti (raffaele.zenti@wealthype.it)

Co-Founder, COO, Chief Data Scientist, Wealthype-AI SpA

Portfolio replication in short

We want to track a given portfolio («target portfolio») without knowing its holdings

We do not know either which securities the portfolio contains or what weight each security has

We can only observe reported returns: for us, the target portfolio is a complete black box

We want to crack this black box and see how it is made inside



.....

Why on earth do
that???

PORTFOLIO

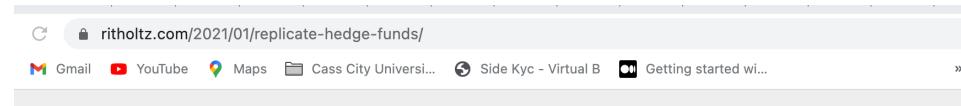


Julie Segal

Hedge Fund Replication Worked in January. Here's Why.

Replication passed a significant test in the volatile month of January when retail investors sent the stock of GameStop soaring and some equity long-short funds reeling.

February 12, 2021



BEYOND BASIC BETA CHANNEL

5 Hedge Fund Replication Strategy ETFs to Consider

Ben Hernandez Apr 18, 2019

Most might consider 13 to be an unlucky number, but for [hedge funds](#), it marks the best first quarter its had in as many years. According to the Hedge Fund Research index, which tracks the performance of hedge funds, it rose 5.7 percent in Q1 of 2019—its highest since 2006.

MiB: How to Replicate Hedge Funds in an ETF

January 26, 2021 10:00am by [Barry Ritholtz](#)

Apple Podcasts

22 GENNAIO · 1 ORA 14 MIN

Andrew Beer on the Hedge Fund Industry (Podcast)

Masters in Business

Barry Ritholtz

Riproduci Vedi altro ↗

Motivation 1 – Alternative Investments Clones

YOU WANT TO BE EXPOSED TO THE SAME KIND OF FINANCIAL RISK AND RETURN WHILE AVOIDING HIGH FEES AND LIQUIDITY RESTRICTIONS TYPICAL OF ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS (EG HEDGE FUNDS)

YOU HAVE A LONG POSITION IN AN ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT FUND, OR IN A PORTFOLIO OF ALTERNATIVES (FUND OF FUNDS), AND YOU MAY WISH TO HEDGE THE RISK OF A DOWNTURN

FOR RISK ANALYSIS PURPOSES YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHICH RISK FACTORS DRIVE THE ALTERNATIVE FUND





Motivation 2 – Index Tracking

You may want to track a very illiquid index - which is very costly if not impossible from the execution point of view

You may want to track a very big index - which means having huge Assets under Management (AuM): many funds have less than 100 million euros/US dollars, and you typically need billions, in order to physically replicate an index

1-BLOOMBERG Tabs are here! Options ×

GO F1 F2 F3 F4 PRINT HELP MEMO SEARC QUOTE QUOTE MONIT NEWS MSG MENU PG BA PG FW GOV CORP MTGE MUNI PFD EQUITY M-Mkt CMDTY INDEX CURNC CLIENT CMND index

< > | ISH JP \$EM BD \$D Equity ▾ | DES ▾ | Related Functions Menu ▾

MSG: +1 ★ ?

IEMB IM € ↓ 91.35 -0.20 M91.36 / 91.43M 704x2355
At 17:08 d Vol 31,891 0 91.55M H 91.55M L 91.15M Val 2.912M

IEMB IM Equity Export ▾ Page 1/5 Security Description: ETF

1) Profile 2) Performance 3) Holdings 4) Allocations 5) Organizational

ISHARES JPM USD EM BND USD D FIGI BBG0018QCZ55

Objective Fixed Income Emerging Market

iShares J.P. Morgan USD EM Bond UCITS ETF is an exchange-traded fund incorporated in Ireland. The Fund aims to track the performance of the J.P. Morgan Emerging Markets Bond Index Global Core Index. Settlement: ICSD.

6) Comparative Returns | COMP »

Bloomberg Classification

Fund Type	ETF
Asset Class	Fixed Income
Economic ...	Emerging Markets
Strategy	Government
Geo. Focus...	Global

Appropriations

Leverage	No
Actively Managed	No
Swap Based	No
Derivatives Based	No
Currency Hedged	No
Replication Strategy	Optimi...
Securities Lending	Yes

Characteristics

1) Und. Index	JPEICORE
Index Weight	Market Cap
1Y Px Track. Err...	2.433
1Y NAV Track. E...	1.380
Inception Date	11/09/10
Expense Ratio	.450%

7) Price EUR 91.35

8) NAV 05/07/21 EUR 91.12

INAV EUR 90.88

Fund Percent Premium 0.572%

52 Wk H 07/03/20 EUR 97.80

52 Wk L 02/25/21 EUR 89.59

Options No

Trading Data

Bid Ask Spread	0.050
90D Avg Agg Vol	667.5k
Implied Liquidity	N.A.
Market Cap	FUR 6.71B
Shares Out	73.5M
Total Assets	USD 11.29B

1-BLOOMBERG

Tabs are here! ▶ Options □ ×

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CMDN index

< > | ISHR WRLD €-H Equity ▾ | DES ▾ | Related Functions Menu ▾

NEWS ALERT ★ ?

IWDE IM € ↑ 70.58 -0.20 M70.62 / 70.65M 4259 x 12768
 At 16:59 d Vol 44,600 0 70.77M H 70.85M L 70.53M Val 3.154M

IWDE IM Equity Export ▾ Page 1/5 Security Description: ETF

1) Profile 2) Performance 3) Holdings 4) Allocations 5) Organizational

ISHARES MSCI WORLD EUR-H FIGI BBG001M0XDQ9

Objective Global

iShares MSCI World EUR Hedged UCITS ETF Acc is an exchange-traded fund incorporated in Ireland. The Fund aims to track the performance of the MSCI World 100% Hedged to EUR Index Net. The fund reinvests income received back into the fund. Settlement: ICSD.

⑥ Comparative Returns | COMP »

1 yr Tot Ret vs Index
 MXWOHEUR Index 40.5896
 IWDE IM Equity 40.1788

Jun Sep Dec Mar

⑦ Price EUR 70.58

⑧ NAV 05/07/21 EUR 70.71

INAV EUR 70.57

Fund Percent Premium 0.085%

52 Wk H 05/10/21 EUR 70.85

52 Wk L 05/14/20 EUR 47.76

Options No

Bloomberg Classification

Fund Type ETF
 Asset Class Equity
 Market Cap Large-cap
 Strategy Blend
 Geo. Focus... Global

Appropriations

Leverage No
 Actively Managed No
 Swap Based No
 Derivatives Based No
 Currency Hedged Yes
 Replication Strategy Full
 Securities Lending Yes

Characteristics

11) Und. Index	MXWOHEUR
Index Weight	Market Cap
1Y Px Track. Err...	4.778
1Y NAV Track. E...	.062
Inception Date	04/04/11
Expense Ratio	.550%

⑨ Trading Data

Bid Ask Spread 0.040

90D Avg Agg Vol 509.8k

10) Implied Liquidity 120.2M

Market Cap EUR 3.18B

Shares Out 45.0M

Total Assets EUR 3.18B

Motivation 3 – UCITS clones

Say that the company has an alternative fund for institutional investors, which invests in instruments that are not UCITS, that is, not eligible by the MIFID regulation (e.g. private debt, other alternative funds, etc.)

The company wants to create a retail products, that is, a UCITS vehicle (ie mutual fund) with similar financial characteristics, but made up of liquid instruments, e.g. Futures, ETFs, etc.,

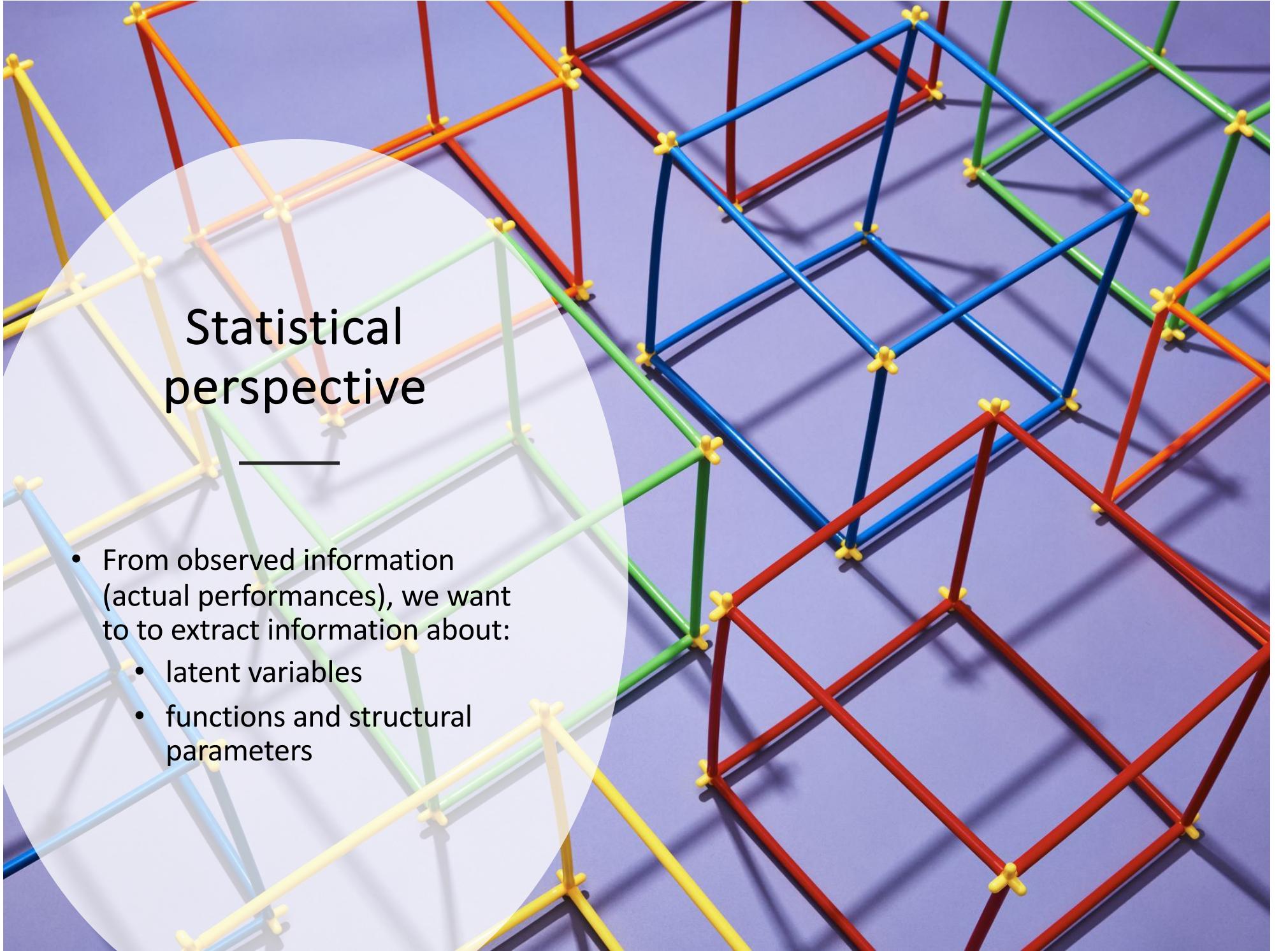
Motivation 4 – Risk Management

You want a standard tool that finds the key liquid financial factors behind any investment, even if the underlying assets are not disclosed

It can be used as an alternative to standard factor models

Useful during due diligences, or litigations

Useful for simple scenario simulation (instead of using thousands of securities, you simulate just a few factors)



Statistical perspective

- From observed information (actual performances), we want to extract information about:
 - latent variables
 - functions and structural parameters



Linear clones

- Portfolio return is a linear combination of asset returns
- So we need a linear model, a linear clone
- A linear clone is constructed by.
 - estimating some regression model using a time series of prior index and factor returns
 - using the resulting coefficient estimates as portfolio weights (ie investment positions in the underlying factors)
- Although index tracking is driven from the financial industry, it is in fact a pure signal processing problem: a regression of the (historical) data subject to some portfolio constraints with some caveats and particularities
- «**Sparse portfolio tracking**»: we use a small number of assets to (approximately) replicate a portfolio or an index



Using Futures, in short

- You have 100 millions EUR (normal mutual fund)
- Buy Futures contracts exposing yourself to 100 millions of S&P 500: only the money corresponding to the margins is paid
- Futures margin are typically 3-12% of the notional value of the contract
- The rest is invested in short-term "collateral" bonds that hopefully yield something and can easily sold in case of margin call
- So your financial exposure is (say): 90 short term bonds + 100 S&P 500 + 10 cash (margins) = 200% exposure
- Using Futures, you can financially expose yourself far beyond your capital: welcome to the LEVERAGE world

You can do
that
according to
UCITS/MIFID

Max leverage =

- 200%

Or

- Max 1M VaR(99%)
= 20%



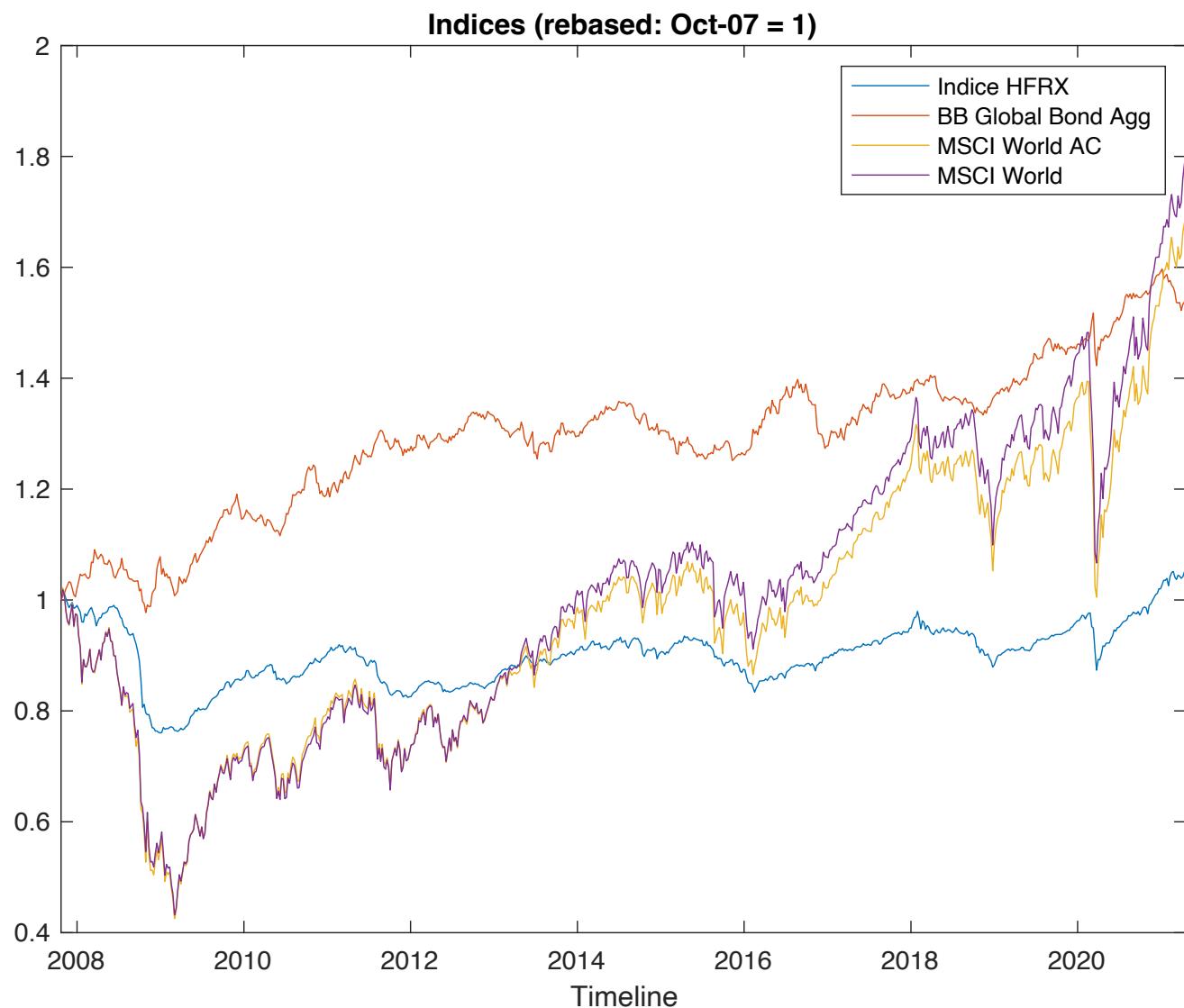
Let's look at
the data

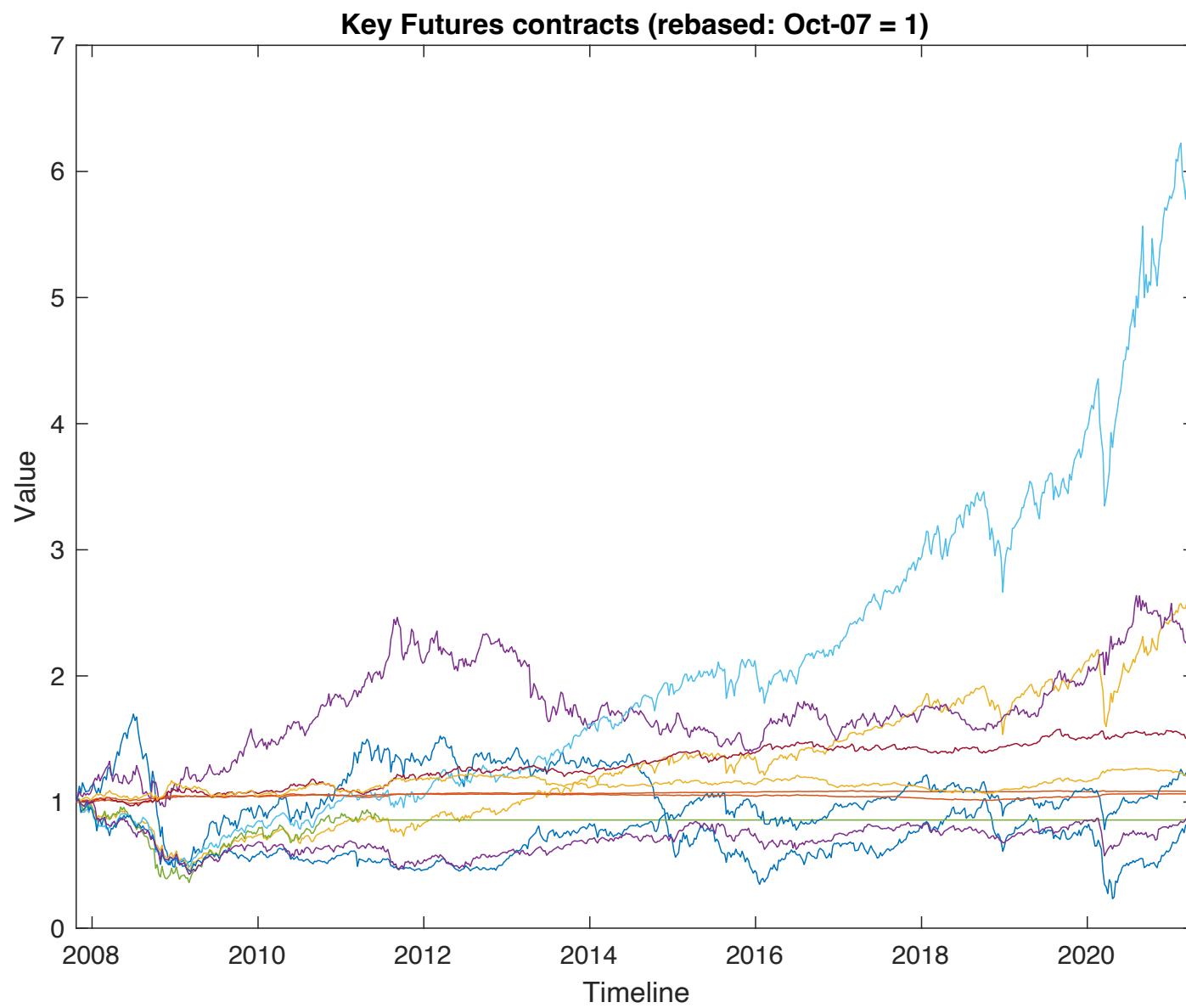


Data overview

Weekly data from
Bloomberg
(Oct-2007/Apr-2021)

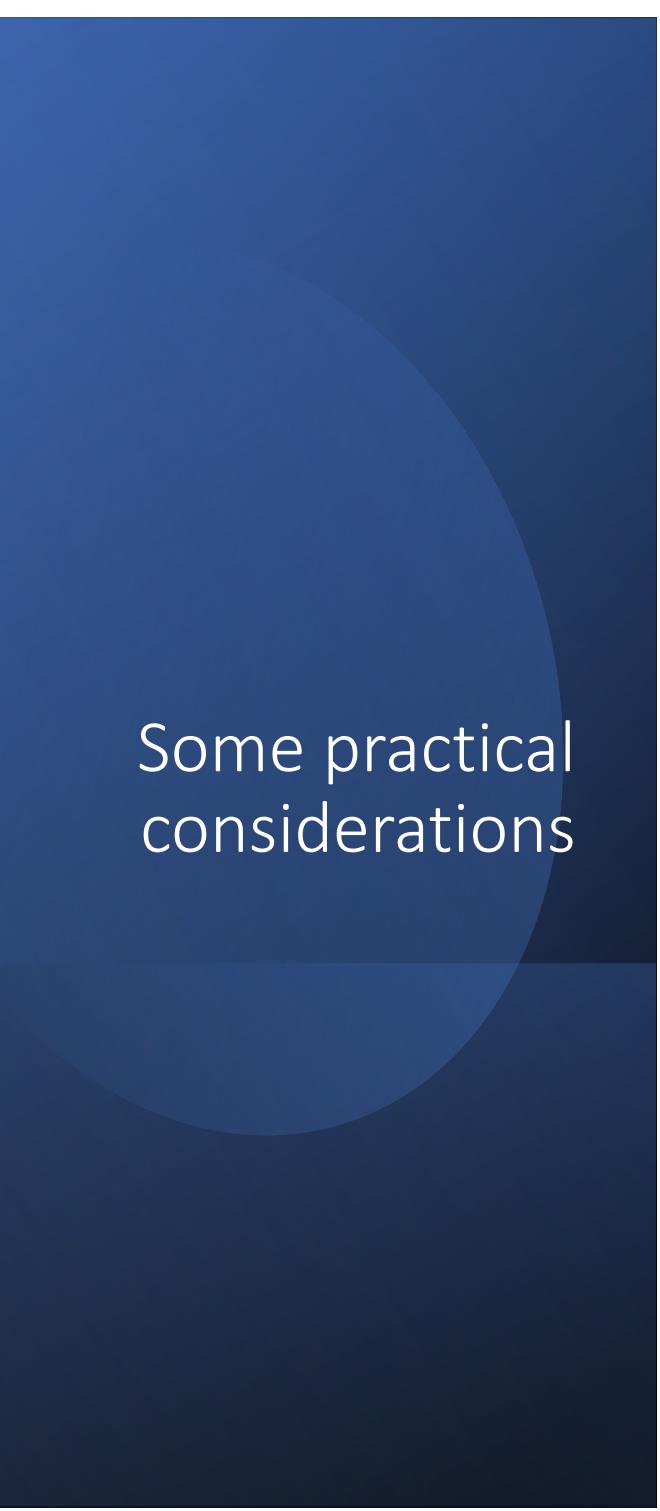
- A global Hedge Fund Index
- Global indices (bond/equity)
- Key Futures contracts







Coding session starts |



Some practical considerations

- We focus on the algorithm (after all, this is a Machine Learning lab for Fintech - we cannot go much farther in the territory of portfolio construction and trading)

However

- Anyone wishing to make the project-work on investment replication, and has a financial background, might go deeper
- In particular, with regard to:
 - Trading and transaction costs/revenues
 - Rebalancing times and methods
 - Tricks for minimizing execution costs

Trading costs

- Futures contracts are the most liquid and least expensive financial instruments to trade, on average
- Assuming that we are a mutual fund (or any other «UCI», Undertakings in Collective Investment product) of decent size – say >50 millions EUR – using automated program trading, direct trading costs can be 2-4 bps = 0.02%-0.04%



Rebalancing



- It can be weekly, monthly, quarterly, or event –based
- The change in the composition of the holding portfolio during rebalancing can be controlled by including a turnover penalty
 - we already take this into account if we use Machine Learning techniques with Regularization, such as LASSO (ℓ_1 shrinkage of the weights towards 0)
 - eliminate very small trades and eventually normalize the weights (preserve proportions among assets)
 - avoid trading if the distance between the vector of the "old" weights and the new ones is less than a certain threshold

Rollover effects

- To maintain a constant exposure to the Futures cointact, an expiring contract needs to be rolled into a new contract
- You face rollover effects when you switch from the contract that is close to expiration to another contract in a further-out month
- It can be positive or negative
- When you close the contract that expires soon, it is priced close to Spot, but the new contract that you enter into may be priced above or below Spot
- It has to do with contango and backwardation:
 - Contango = the forward price of a contract is higher than the spot price
 - Backwardation = the spot price is higher than future price

Some useful references

- Lan Wu, Yuehan Yang, Hanzhong Liu, (2014) «Nonnegative-lasso and application in index tracking», Computational Statistics & Data Analysis, Volume 70, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csda.2013.08.012>
- Tibshirani, R. (1996). Regression shrinkage and selection via the lasso J. R. Statist. Soc. B (2011) 73, Part 3, pp. 273–282 <https://tibshirani.su.domains/ftp/lasso-retro.pdf>
- Ali N. Akansu, Sanjeev R. Kulkarni, Dmitry M. Malioutov, (2016), «Financial Signal Processing and Machine Learning», Wiley-IEEE Press
- Roncalli, Thierry and Weisang, Guillaume, (2009) «Tracking Problems, Hedge Fund Replication and Alternative Beta». Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1325190> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1325190>