MULTI-SCALE MODELING OF FINANCIAL SYSTEMS USING NEURAL DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS: APPLICATIONS TO HIGH-FREQUENCY TRADING, REGIME SWITCHING, AND PORTFOLIO OPTIMIZATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the application of neural differential equations (NDEs) to model the multi-scale dynamics of financial systems, with a focus on high-frequency trading, regime-switching asset prices, and portfolio optimization. We propose a novel framework that integrates stochastic volatility and hierarchical architectures to capture both short-term fluctuations and long-term trends. e demonstrate the effectiveness of NDEs in predicting prices, identifying regime transitions, and optimizing portfolios across multiple time scales. The framework is compared with traditional methods such as GARCH and LSTMs, showing superior performance in terms of predictive accuracy, computational efficiency, and risk-adjusted returns. The results highlight the potential of NDEs for real-time applications in financial markets, offering a scalable and interpretable solution for modeling complex systems.

1 INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The application of neural differential equations (NDEs) to financial modeling builds on a rich body of work spanning machine learning, stochastic processes, and financial mathematics. Recent advances in neural ODEs (Chen et al., 2018) have enabled the modeling of continuous-time dynamics, making them particularly suitable for financial time series, which often exhibit multi-scale behaviors. Below, we review key works in this area, with a focus on cryptocurrency applications.

1.1 NEURAL DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS

Neural ODEs, introduced by Chen et al. (2018), provide a framework for modeling continuous-time dynamics using neural networks. This approach has been extended to stochastic differential equations (SDEs) by Tzen & Raginsky (2019), who demonstrated the theoretical foundations of neural SDEs and their applicability to time series modeling. Kidger et al. (2020) further generalized this framework to handle irregularly sampled data, a common feature in financial markets. In the context of cryptocurrencies, Chen et al. (2021) applied neural SDEs to model Bitcoin price dynamics, demonstrating their ability to capture high-frequency volatility and regime-switching behaviors.

1.2 MULTI-SCALE MODELING IN FINANCE

Multi-scale modeling of financial markets has been extensively studied in the context of stochastic processes and econometrics. Fouque et al. (2011) provided a comprehensive treatment of multi-scale stochastic volatility models, which capture the interplay between fast and slow market dynamics. More recently, Horvath et al. (2021) applied deep learning to multi-scale financial data, demonstrating the effectiveness of neural networks in capturing complex dependencies across time scales. In the cryptocurrency domain, Fantazzini & Zimin (2020) explored multi-scale models for Bitcoin and Ethereum, highlighting the importance of incorporating both short-term and long-term dynamics.

1.3 APPLICATIONS OF NEURAL NETWORKS IN TRADITIONAL AND DECENTRALIZED FINANCE

The use of neural networks in finance has grown significantly, with applications ranging from option pricing to portfolio optimization. Hutchinson et al. (1994) pioneered the use of neural networks for derivative pricing, while Sirignano & Spiliopoulos (2018) developed deep learning models for high-dimensional PDEs arising in financial mathematics. Zhang et al. (2019) applied reinforcement learning to portfolio optimization, highlighting the potential of AI-driven approaches in finance. In the cryptocurrency space, Jang & Lee (2021); Li et al. (2024a) used neural networks to predict Bitcoin prices, achieving state-of-the-art results by incorporating multi-scale features. Our integration with machine learning is inspired by Jang & Lee (2021) and Li et al. (2024b).

1.4 OPERATOR LEARNING AND SURROGATE MODELING

Operator learning, as introduced by Lu et al. (2021), provides a powerful framework for learning mappings between function spaces, making it well-suited for financial applications such as risk modeling and pricing. Surrogate modeling, particularly using physics-informed neural networks (PINNs), has been explored by Raissi et al. (2019) for solving high-dimensional PDEs, offering a computationally efficient alternative to traditional numerical methods. In the context of cryptocurrencies, Li et al. (2022) applied operator learning to model the cross-correlations between Bitcoin and Ethereum, demonstrating its effectiveness in capturing complex dependencies.

2 METHODOLOGY

We propose a novel framework for modeling cryptocurrency portfolios using neural differential equations (NDEs). The key innovation lies in the integration of multi-scale dynamics and stochastic processes into a unified neural architecture. Unlike traditional methods, our approach leverages the continuous-time modeling capabilities of NDEs to capture both short-term volatility and long-term trends in cryptocurrency prices. Below, we describe the methodology in detail, including the mathematical formulation, parameter tuning, and the role of machine learning/AI in improving the framework.

2.1 MATHEMATICAL FORMULATION

2.1.1 NEURAL ORDINARY DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS (NODES)

The core of our framework is a neural ODE, which models the continuous-time dynamics of the cryptocurrency portfolio. Let $h(t)$ represent the hidden state of the portfolio at time t, which includes features such as prices, volumes, and volatilities. The evolution of $h(t)$ is governed by the following differential equation:

$$\frac{dh(t)}{dt} = f_\theta(h(t), t) \tag{1}$$

where f_θ is a neural network parameterized by θ. The neural network f_θ is designed to capture the complex, non-linear relationships between the portfolio features.

2.1.2 STOCHASTIC VOLATILITY MODELING

To account for the high volatility of cryptocurrency prices, we extend the neural ODE to include stochastic volatility. Let $\sigma(t)$ represent the volatility at time t, which is modeled as a stochastic process:

$$d\sigma(t) = \alpha(\bar{\sigma} - \sigma(t))dt + \beta\sigma(t)dW_t \tag{2}$$

where α and β are parameters controlling the mean reversion and volatility of volatility, respectively, and W_t is a Wiener process. The neural ODE is then augmented to include $\sigma(t)$ as an additional state variable.

2.1.3 MULTI-SCALE DYNAMICS

To capture multi-scale dynamics, we introduce a hierarchical architecture with multiple time scales. Let $h_1(t)$,$h_2(t)$, and $h_3(t)$ represent the hidden states at minute, hourly, and daily time scales, respectively. The dynamics of each scale are modeled as:

$$\frac{dh_1(t)}{dt} = f_{\theta_1}(h_1(t), t)$$
$$\frac{dh_2(t)}{dt} = f_{\theta_2}(h_2(t), h_1(t), t)$$
$$\frac{dh_3(t)}{dt} = f_{\theta_3}(h_3(t), h_2(t), t)$$

where f_{θ_1}, f_{θ_2} and f_{θ_3} are neural networks for the respective time scales. This hierarchical structure allows the model to capture both short-term fluctuations and long-term trends.

2.2 PARAMETER DETAILS AND TUNING

For neural network architecture, we use the following parameters.

- The neural networks f_θ,f_{θ_1}, f_{θ_2} and f_{θ_3} are implemented as multi-layer perceptrons (MLPs) with 3 hidden layers and 64 units per layer.
- Activation functions: ReLU for hidden layers and tanh for the output layer to ensure smooth dynamics.
- Input features: Prices, volumes, and volatilities of the cryptocurrencies in the portfolio.

In the stochastic volatility model, we use the following parameters:

- α:Controls the speed of mean reversion. Initialized to 0.1 and tuned using grid search.
- β: Controls the volatility of volatility. Initialized to 0.2 and tuned using grid search.
- σ: Long-term average volatility. Estimated from historical data.

2.3 TRAINING AND OPTIMIZATION

The training process for our neural differential equation (NDE) framework is designed to ensure robust and efficient learning. The loss function used is the mean squared error (MSE) between the predicted and actual portfolio values, which ensures that the model minimizes prediction errors across all time scales. For optimization, we employ the Adam optimizer with a learning rate of 0.001, which is well-suited for training deep neural networks due to its adaptive learning rate capabilities. To handle the varying granularity of the data, we use different batch sizes for each time scale: 128 for minute-level data, 64 for hourly-level data, and 32 for daily-level data. This approach ensures that the model can effectively capture the unique characteristics of each time scale. To prevent overfitting and improve generalization, we implement early stopping, where training halts if the validation loss does not improve for 10 consecutive epochs. For hyperparameter tuning, we utilize Bayesian optimization to fine-tune critical parameters such as the learning rate, batch size, and network architecture. Additionally, we perform a grid search over the stochastic volatility parameters α (mean reversion speed) and β (volatility of volatility) to identify the optimal values that best capture the dynamics of cryptocurrency markets.

2.4 INCORPORATION OF MACHINE LEARNING

Machine learning and AI play a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness and scalability of our methodology. Traditional methods, such as GARCH and LSTMs, often struggle with the high-dimensional and irregularly sampled nature of cryptocurrency data. In contrast, neural differential equations (NDEs) excel in handling such challenges due to their continuous-time formulation, which naturally accommodates irregular time steps and high-frequency data. This makes NDEs highly scalable and suitable for large-scale cryptocurrency datasets. Furthermore, the interpretability of NDEs is a significant advantage over discrete-time models like LSTMs. By analyzing the learned

dynamics of the NDE, we can gain insights into the underlying factors driving cryptocurrency prices, such as volatility regimes and cross-asset correlations. Another key benefit is the ability of NDEs to adapt in real-time as new data arrives. This feature is particularly valuable for applications like high-frequency trading and dynamic portfolio management, where timely updates are critical. Overall, the integration of machine learning and AI into our framework not only improves predictive accuracy but also enables real-time decision-making and a deeper understanding of market dynamics.

We illustrate our methodology with an example from cryptocurrency. Consider a portfolio of three cryptocurrencies: Bitcoin (BTC), Ethereum (ETH), and Ripple (XRP). The hidden state $h(t)$ includes the following features:

- Prices: $P_{BTC}(t)$, $P_{ETH}(t)$, $P_{XRP}(t)$
- Volumes: $V_{BTC}(t)$, $V_{ETH}(t)$, $V_{XRP}(t)$
- Volatility: σ_t

The neural ODE for the minute-level dynamics is:

$$\frac{dh_1(t)}{dt} = f_{\theta_1}(h_1(t), t) \tag{3}$$

where $h_1(t) = [P_{BTC}(t), P_{ETH}(t), P_{XRP}(t), V_{BTC}(t), V_{ETH}(t), V_{XRP}(t), \sigma(t)]$ The stochastic volatility process is:

$$d\sigma(t) = 0.1(0.2 - \sigma(t))dt + 0.2\sigma(t)dW_t \tag{4}$$

.

The main contribution of our methodology are four-folds:

1. Novel Integration of Multi-Scale Dynamics: Unlike previous works that focus on single-scale modeling, our framework explicitly incorporates multi-scale dynamics, enabling more accurate predictions across different time horizons.
2. Stochastic Volatility in NDEs: We extend neural ODEs to include stochastic volatility, a critical feature for modeling cryptocurrency markets. This innovation allows the model to capture sudden price jumps and regime shifts.
3. Hierarchical Architecture: The hierarchical structure of our framework is a significant departure from traditional approaches. By modeling each time scale separately and coupling them through shared hidden states, we achieve a more robust representation of the data.
4. Application to Cryptocurrencies: While NDEs have been applied to traditional financial markets, their application to cryptocurrencies is novel. Our framework addresses the unique challenges of cryptocurrency data, such as high volatility and irregular sampling.

3 Application of Multi-Scale Modeling Using Neural Differential Equations with Machine Learning

We have studied multi-scale modeling using neural differential equations with machine learning in four different real-world instances. In each studied example, we compare our methodology with two alternative methods:

- GARCH (Generalized Autoregressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity): A traditional econometric model for volatility forecasting.
- LSTM (Long Short-Term Memory): A deep learning model commonly used for time series prediction.

3.1 High-Frequency Trading (HFT) Data with Microstructure Noise

In this example, we model the dynamics of high-frequency trading (HFT) data, which includes microstructure noise such as bid-ask bounce and market frictions. The dataset consists of 100,000+ data points representing price and volume data at millisecond intervals. Prices are simulated using

a jump-diffusion process, while volumes follow a mean-reverting process. The neural differential equation (NDE) framework is used to model the continuous-time dynamics of the price and volume processes, capturing both the rapid fluctuations and the underlying trends. The NDE is trained to predict short-term price movements and reconstruct the latent.

We included features such as: 1. Price $P(t)$ following a stochastic process with jumps (e.g., Merton jump-diffusion model). 2. Volume $V(t)$ modeled as a mean-reverting process. 3. Microstructure noise: Add Gaussian noise to simulate bid-ask bounce and other market frictions. Therefore, the equations becomes:

$$dP(t) = \mu P(t)dt + \sigma P(t)dW_t + J(t)dN_t$$
$$dV(t) = \theta(\bar{V} - V(t))dt + \eta dW_t^{'}$$

where W_t and $W_t^{'}$ are Wiener processes, $J(t)$ is the jump size, and N_t is a Poisson process.

Machine learning enhances this framework by enabling the NDE to learn complex, non-linear relationships in the data without requiring explicit assumptions about the underlying processes. The use of neural stochastic differential equations (SDEs) allows the model to handle the inherent noise and randomness in HFT data, while the continuous-time formulation ensures scalability to large datasets. Additionally, the model can be updated in real-time as new data arrives, making it suitable for high-frequency trading applications.

Table 2 shows that the NDE framework achieves the lowest mean squared error (MSE) of 0.0012 for minute-level predictions, outperforming both GARCH (MSE: 0.0056) and LSTM (MSE: 0.0023). While GARCH is faster to train (60 seconds), it struggles to capture high-frequency noise, resulting in higher prediction errors. The LSTM performs better than GARCH but is computationally expensive, requiring 300 seconds for training. The NDE strikes a balance between accuracy and efficiency, with a training time of 120 seconds and an inference time of just 5 milliseconds, making it suitable for real-time high-frequency trading applications.

3.2 Multi-Scale Asset Price Modeling with Regime Switching

This example focuses on modeling asset prices across multiple time scales (e.g., seconds, minutes, days) with regime-switching behavior. The dataset includes 100,000+ data points for asset prices over a 1-year period, sampled at multiple frequencies. The NDE framework is extended to include a hidden Markov model (HMM) that captures regime transitions (e.g., bull market, bear market, sideways market). The model is trained to predict prices at different time scales and identify regime transitions in real-time.

Machine learning plays a crucial role in this example by enabling the NDE to learn the complex dynamics of regime-switching behavior. The integration of neural networks with HMMs allows the model to automatically detect and adapt to changing market conditions. The hierarchical structure of the NDE ensures that the model can capture both short-term fluctuations and long-term trends, while the use of Bayesian optimization for hyperparameter tuning improves the model's robustness and accuracy.

In Table 3, the NDE framework consistently outperforms GARCH and LSTM across all time scales, achieving the lowest MSE for minute-level (0.0015), hourly-level (0.0038), and daily-level (0.0092) predictions. GARCH, while faster to train (70 seconds), fails to capture the complex dynamics of regime-switching behavior, resulting in significantly higher errors. The LSTM performs better than GARCH but is computationally expensive, requiring 350 seconds for training. The NDE's hierarchical architecture enables it to capture multi-scale dynamics effectively, with a training time of 150 seconds, making it a robust choice for modeling regime-switching behaviors.

3.3 Portfolio Optimization with Multi-Scale Risk Dynamics

We model the dynamics of a portfolio of assets across multiple time scales to optimize risk-adjusted returns. The dataset consists of 200,000+ data points for a portfolio of 10 assets over a 5-year period, sampled at daily intervals. The NDE framework is used to model the joint dynamics of the portfolio and macroeconomic factors, such as interest rates and inflation. The model is trained to optimize portfolio weights for risk-adjusted returns, such as the Sharpe ratio.

Machine learning enhances this framework by enabling the NDE to learn the complex relationships between asset prices, macroeconomic factors, and portfolio risk. The use of physics-informed neural networks (PINNs) ensures that the model incorporates domain knowledge, such as financial theory, while the continuous-time formulation allows for real-time updates. The model's ability to handle high-dimensional data and irregular time steps makes it highly scalable and suitable for dynamic portfolio management.

In Table 4, the NDE framework achieves the highest Sharpe ratio of 2.15, outperforming both GARCH (Sharpe ratio: 1.45) and LSTM (Sharpe ratio: 1.85). This indicates that the NDE-based portfolio optimization strategy delivers superior risk-adjusted returns. While GARCH is faster to train (90 seconds), it fails to capture the complex relationships between assets and macroeconomic factors, resulting in suboptimal portfolio weights. The LSTM performs better than GARCH but is computationally expensive, requiring 400 seconds for training. The NDE's ability to handle high-dimensional data and irregular time steps makes it highly scalable, with a training time of 180 seconds and an inference time of 8 milliseconds, making it suitable for dynamic portfolio management.

3.4 Multi-Scale Modeling of Cryptocurrency Portfolios

We study a cryptocurrency portfolio (e.g., Bitcoin, Ethereum, Ripple) across multiple time scales (minute, hourly, daily). The dataset includes 190,000+ data points for each cryptocurrency, with prices modeled as geometric Brownian motion with stochastic volatility. The NDE framework is used to model the price and volatility dynamics of the portfolio, capturing both short-term volatility and long-term trends. Typical input to the model is like what listed in Table 1. The input was preprocessed in similar way as in the work of Li et al. (2024b). The model is trained to predict portfolio values at different time scales and optimize portfolio weights dynamically.

Machine learning is integral to this example, as it enables the NDE to capture the high volatility and non-stationary behaviors of cryptocurrency markets. The use of neural stochastic differential equations (SDEs) allows the model to handle sudden price jumps and regime shifts, while the hierarchical structure ensures that the model can capture multi-scale dynamics. The model's ability to adapt in real-time makes it suitable for high-frequency trading and dynamic risk management in cryptocurrency markets. We use neural ordinary differential equations (NODEs) to model the price and volatility dynamics of the cryptocurrency portfolio. The NODE is defined same as Eq. 1, where $h(t)$ represents the hidden state of the portfolio (e.g., prices, volumes, and volatilities), and f_θ is a neural network parameterized by θ. The NODE is trained to minimize the mean squared error (MSE) between predicted and actual portfolio values.

According to the summary of average performances of NODE, GARCH and LSTM as shown in Table 5, the NODE achieves the lowest MSE across all time scales, demonstrating its superior ability to capture multi-scale dynamics. While GARCH is faster to train, it performs poorly on minute-level data due to its inability to handle high-frequency noise. The LSTM performs well on minute-level data but struggles with long-term dependencies, resulting in higher errors at daily intervals. This is similar to what observed by Li et al. (2024b) in their work.

The results highlight the advantages of NODEs for modeling cryptocurrency portfolios. Unlike GARCH, which assumes a specific parametric form, NODEs can learn complex, non-linear dynamics directly from data. Compared to LSTMs, NODEs are more interpretable and computationally efficient, particularly for long-term predictions. However, NODEs require careful tuning of hyperparameters and may struggle with extremely noisy data. Future work could explore hybrid models that combine NODEs with traditional econometric methods to further improve performance.

4 Conclusion and Future Research Direction

In this paper, we presented a neural differential equation (NDE) framework for modeling multi-scale financial dynamics, including high-frequency trading, regime-switching asset prices, and portfolio optimization. Using synthetic datasets, we demonstrated that NDEs outperform traditional methods like GARCH and LSTMs in terms of predictive accuracy, computational efficiency, and risk-adjusted returns. Future work could explore the integration of additional domain knowledge, such as macroeconomic factors, to further enhance the model's performance.

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A APPENDIX

Table 1: Input of 10 minutes data for cryptocurrency valuation

Timestamp	BTC Price	ETH Price	XRP Price	BTC Volume	ETH Volume	XRP Volume	Portfolio Value
10/1/23 0:00	26950	1675	0.52	1200	8500	2500000	1000000
10/1/23 0:01	26952	1674.8	0.519	1250	8400	2550000	1001523.45
10/1/23 0:02	26948.5	1675.3	0.521	1180	8600	2450000	998476.89
10/1/23 0:03	26951	1675.1	0.52	1220	8550	2520000	1003120.67
10/1/23 0:04	26953.5	1674.9	0.518	1300	8300	2600000	999187.23
10/1/23 0:05	26955	1675.5	0.522	1350	8700	2650000	1004567.12
10/1/23 0:06	26957	1675.7	0.523	1400	8800	2700000	1006123.78
10/1/23 0:07	26958.5	1675.9	0.524	1450	8900	2750000	1007456.34
10/1/23 0:08	26960	1676.1	0.525	1500	9000	2800000	1008923.56
10/1/23 0:09	26962	1676.3	0.526	1550	9100	2850000	1010456.89

Table 2: High-Frequency Trading (HFT) Data with Microstructure Noise

Model	MSE (Minute)	Training Time (s)	Inference Time (ms)
NDE	0.0012	120	5
GARCH	0.0056	60	2
LSTM	0.0023	300	10

Table 3: Multi-Scale Asset Price Modeling with Regime Switching

Model	MSE (Minute)	MSE (Hourly)	MSE (Daily)	Training Time (s)
NDE	0.0015	0.0038	0.0092	150
GARCH	0.0062	0.0135	0.0268	70
LSTM	0.0028	0.0071	0.0163	350

Table 4: Portfolio Optimization with Multi-Scale Risk Dynamics

Model	Sharpe Ratio	Training Time (s)	Inference Time (ms)
NDE	2.15	180	8
GARCH	1.45	90	3
LSTM	1.85	400	15

Table 5: Result Comparision Among NODE, GARCH and LSTM

Model	MSE (Minute)	MSE (Hourly)	MSE (Daily)	Training Time (s)
NODE	0.0012	0.0035	0.0087	121
GARCH	0.0056	0.0123	0.0254	59
LSTM	0.0023	0.0067	0.0156	297