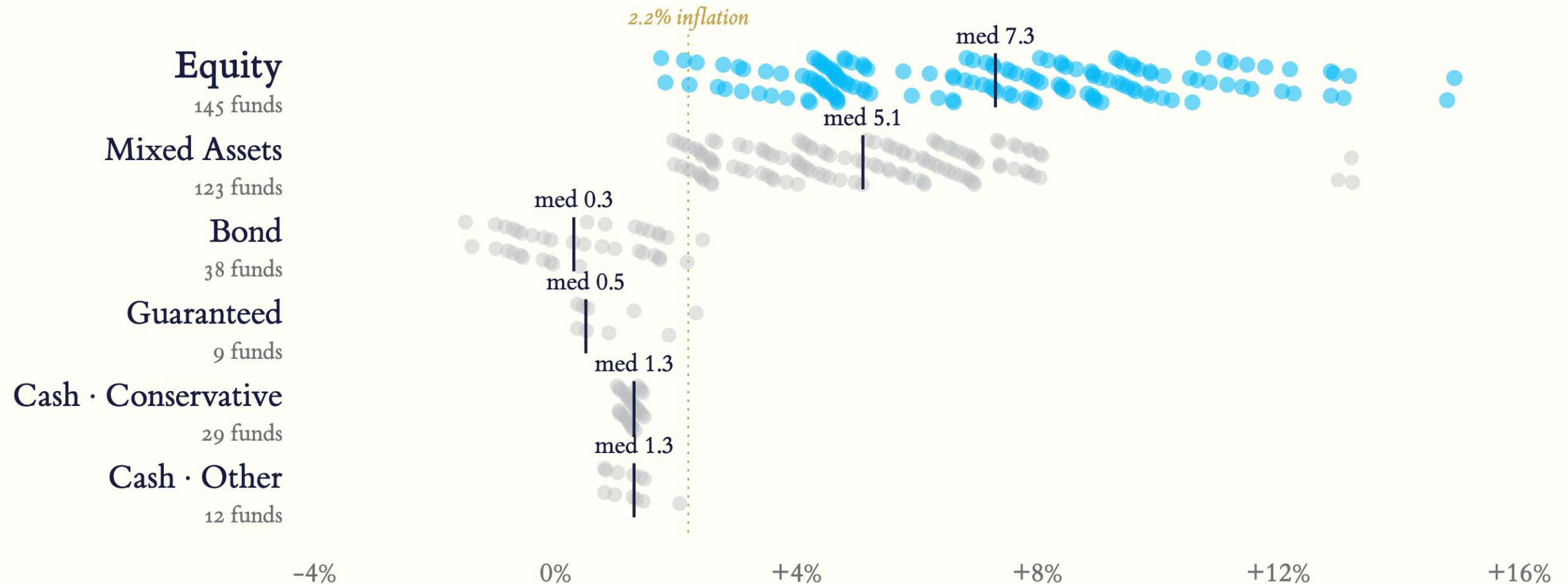


All the Funds Merely Players

Equities were the only class that compounded* — and the only one where the fund you pick swung the result by **ten points a year**. Each dot is one fund's 10-yr return; the navy tick marks the class median.

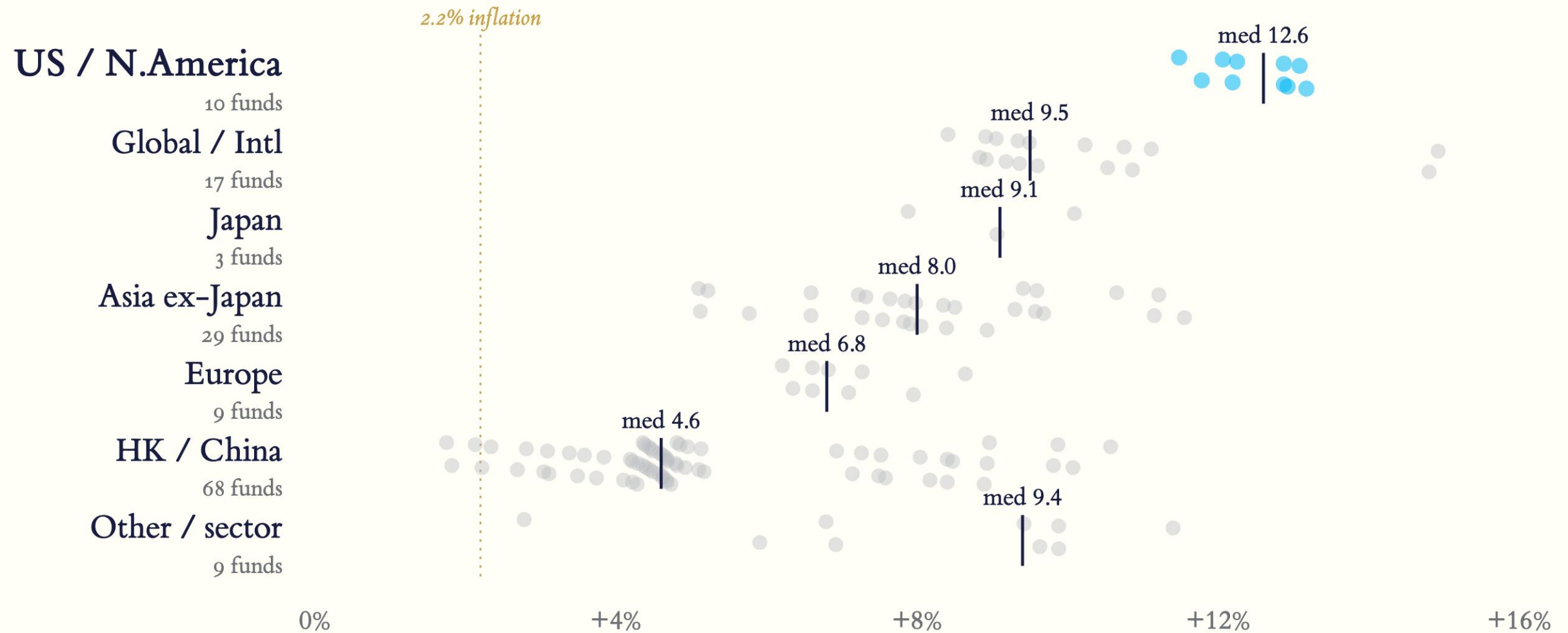


* The MPFA's own data puts the median mixed-asset fund at 67% equities.

Source: MPFA platform, annualised returns net of fees, as at 30 Apr 2026. The gold line marks 2.2% inflation, the real-return breakeven. n = 356 funds with a 10-yr record.

Star-Crossed by Geography

Each dot is one equity fund's 10-yr return a year by target region; the navy tick marks the median. US equity beat Hong Kong / China by **~8 points a year for ten years** — and HK / China is the most-offered bucket on the menu.

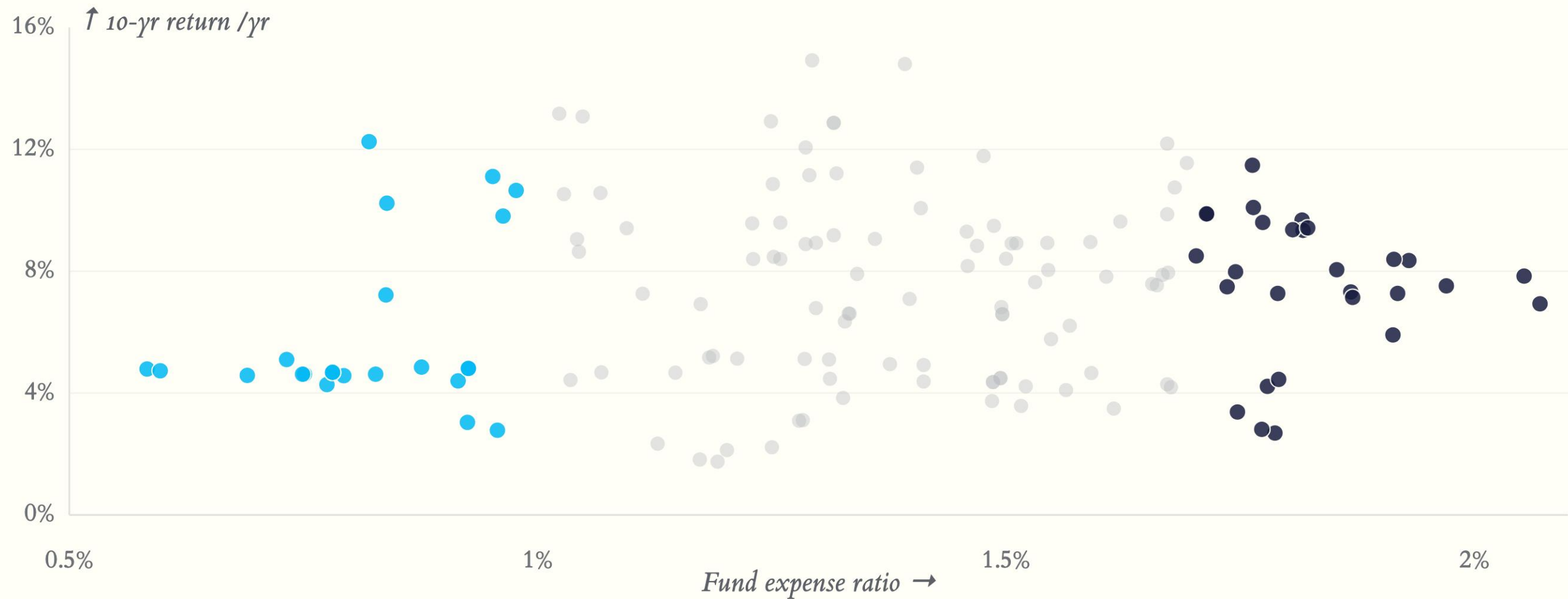


Source: MPFA platform as at 30 Apr 2026. Regional tags name-based; the gold line marks 2.2% inflation, the real-return breakeven.

Much Ado About Nothing

Every equity fund with a 10-yr record: fee against net return. Higher fees would climb the cloud to the right. It stays flat — $r = 0.14$, indistinguishable from noise. Returns are already net of fees, so this is the strong form.

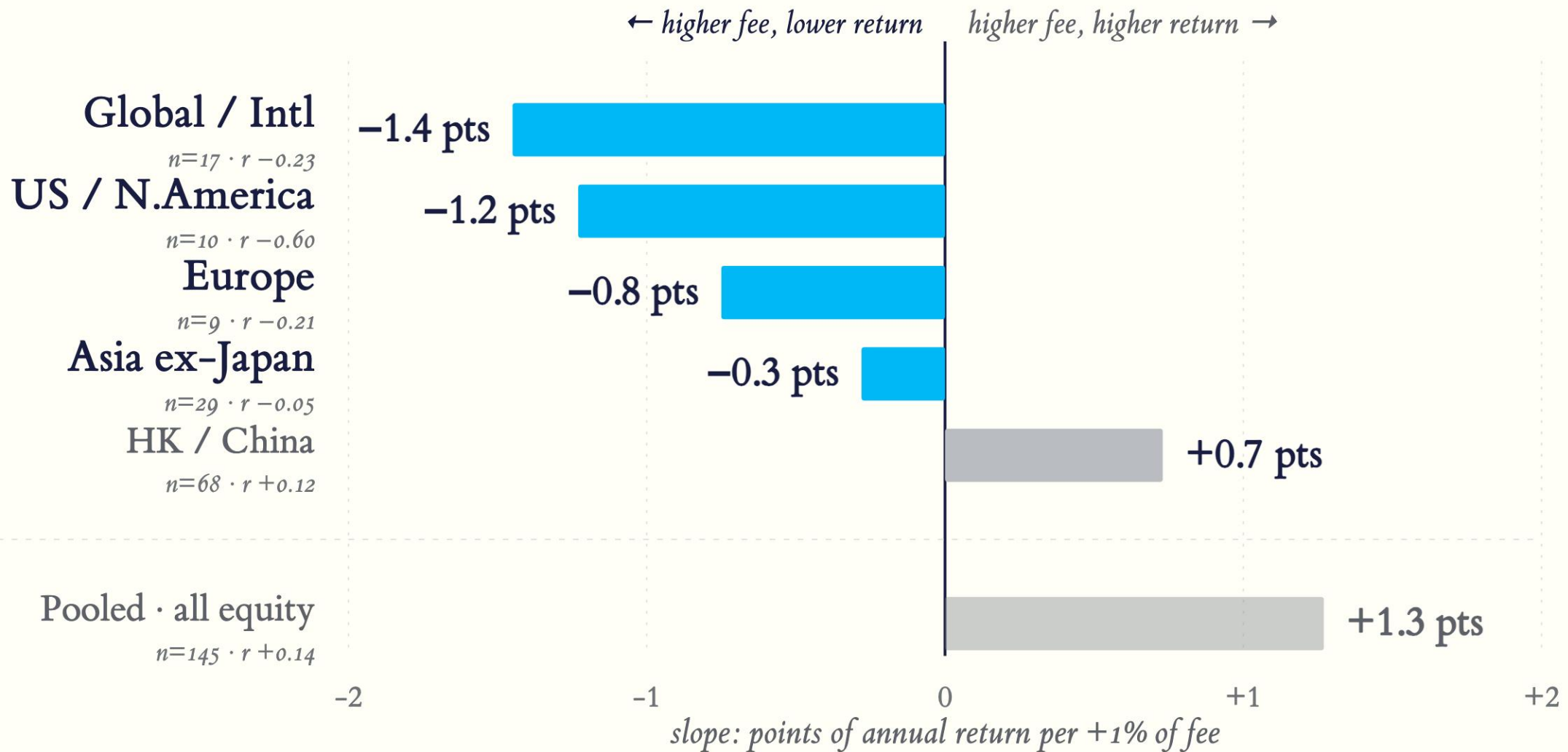
● cheapest (<1.0% FER) ● dearest (>1.7% FER) ● the rest



Source: MPFA platform; returns net of fees as at 30 Apr 2026, FER as at 31 Dec 2024. Pearson r over n = 145 equity funds.

Truth Will Out

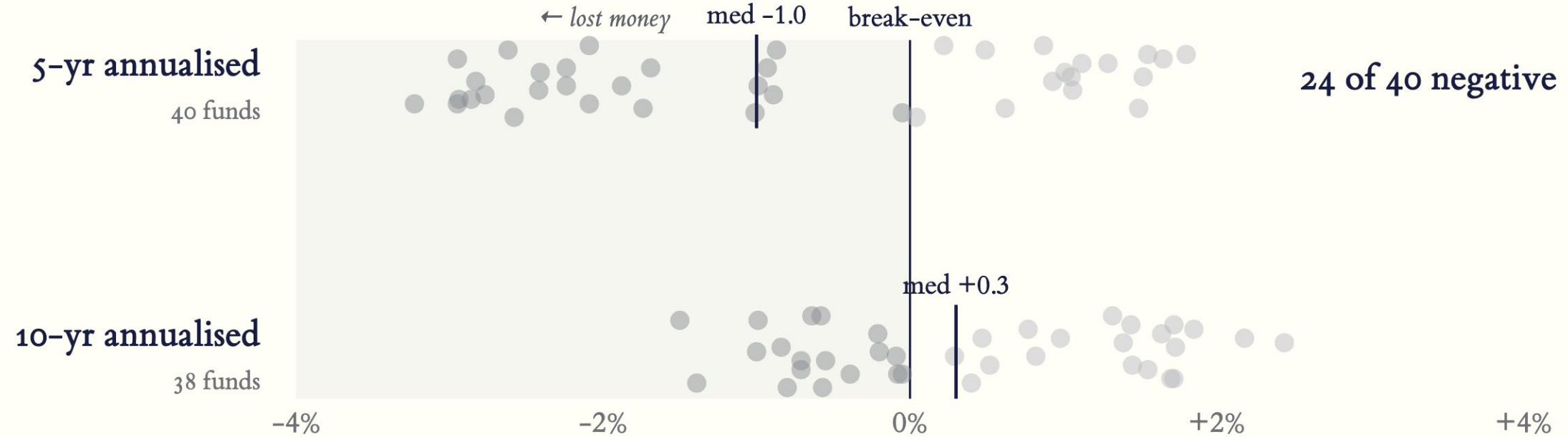
The fee penalty hides until you hold region constant. Pool every region and an eight-point US-vs-HK gap drowns the signal; split it out and the penalty surfaces — in US funds, **each extra 1% of fee drained about 1.2 points of return a year.**



Source: MPFA platform; 10-yr annualised return net of fees vs FER, by name-based region. Slope = OLS return per +1% FER. US n = 10, Europe n = 9 — magnitudes directional; Japan (n = 3) and a 9-fund sector mix omitted.

Now Is the Winter of the Bondholder's Discontent

Duration repriced the asset class; each dot is one fund, the navy tick marks the median. The cautious member's safe choice spent the rate cycle going backwards — **24 of 40 funds lost money** over five years.



Source: MPFA platform as at 30 Apr 2026. n = 40 bond funds with 5-yr data, 38 with 10-yr. Five-year median -1.0%, ten-year +0.3%.

The Rest Is Silence

Stripped down, the MPF is long-only regional equity, plain bonds and cash. Every comparable mandatory system reaches the strategies that defined the decade — the MPF reaches almost none of them.

STRATEGY / ASSET	HONG KONG MPF	US 401(K)	AU SUPER	UK SIPP
Single emerging market (India, etc.)	✗	◐	✓	✓
Nasdaq / US tech / sector tilt	✗	◐	✓	✓
Gold / precious metals	✗	◐	✓	✓
Commodities	✗	◐	✓	✓
Crypto / digital assets	✗	◐	◐	◐
Thematic / factor tilts	✗	◐	✓	✓
Direct listed shares	✗	◐	✓	✓
Listed & direct property	✗	✓	✓	◐
ESG / low-carbon	◐	✓	✓	✓
Self-directed escape hatch	None	Brokerage window	SMSF · member-direct	The SIPP itself

✓ available ◐ indirect or conditional ✗ not available

The conditional marks are the honest part: the 401(k) reaches these only through an opt-in brokerage window many employers don't offer; AU assumes member-direct or an SMSF; UK SIPP crypto is ETN-only (professional) and SIPP property commercial-only.

Cabined, Cribbed, Confined

Every mandatory pension funnels savers into a short default menu. The others each pair it with an open-architecture route out — a SIPP, an IRA or brokerage window, an SMSF. The MPF alone has no way out.

Hong Kong MPF

mandatory · short menu

✗ *no way out*

UK workplace · NEST

auto-enrolment · short menu

via SIPP ...

US 401(k)

employer plan · short menu

via IRA / window ...

Australia Super

MySuper default · short menu

via SMSF ...

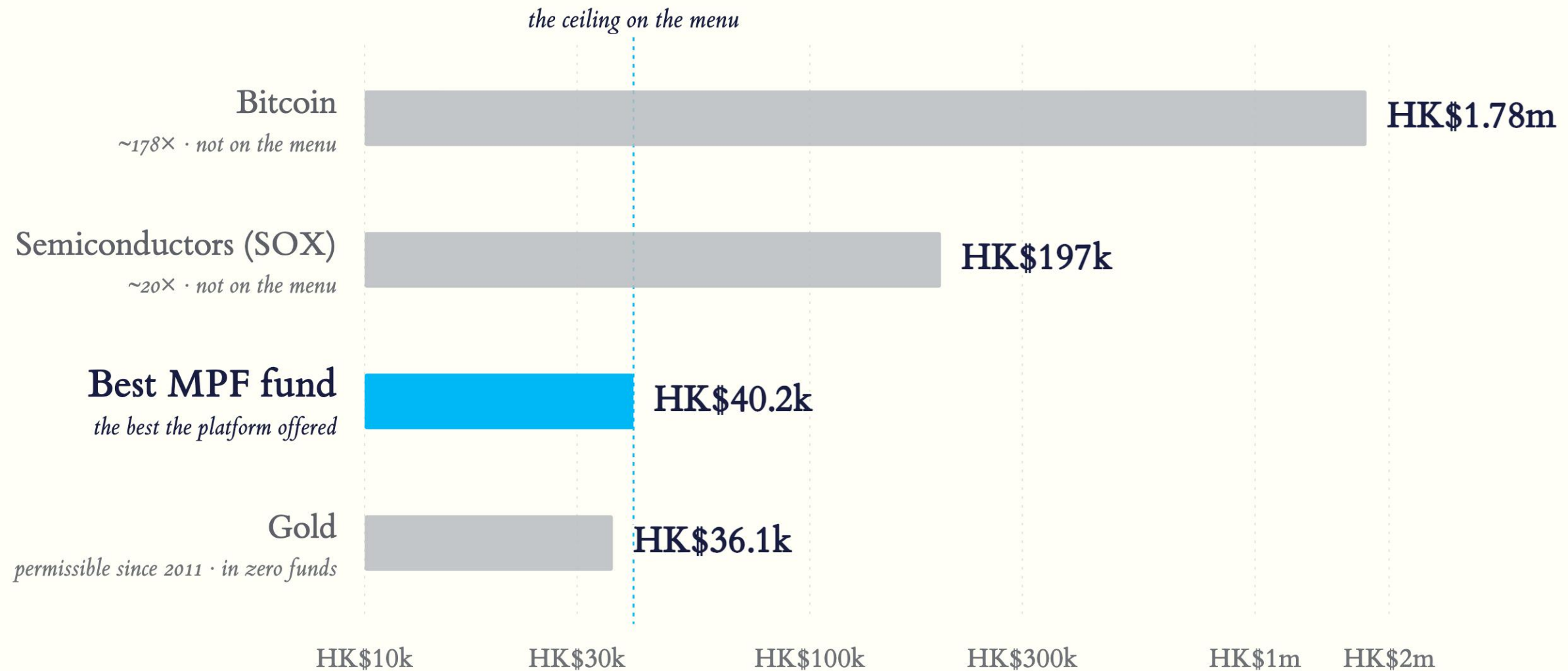
OPEN ARCHITECTURE

hold almost anything

- Single stocks & ETFs
- Gold & precious metals
- Commodities
- Crypto / digital assets
- Single-country / EM funds
- Nasdaq / sector / factor tilts
- Direct & listed property
- ESG / low-carbon

To Buy or Not to Buy

What HK\$10,000 became over ten years (log scale): the best fund the platform offered, against assets no member could touch. Even **gold** — the safest of the four — had no compliant route, not even a 5% sleeve.



Source: HK\$10,000 grown at each asset's price return over 10yr. MPF fund net of fees (Haitong Global Diversification). External assets — Bitcoin, SOX, gold spot — illustrative, shown for access context.

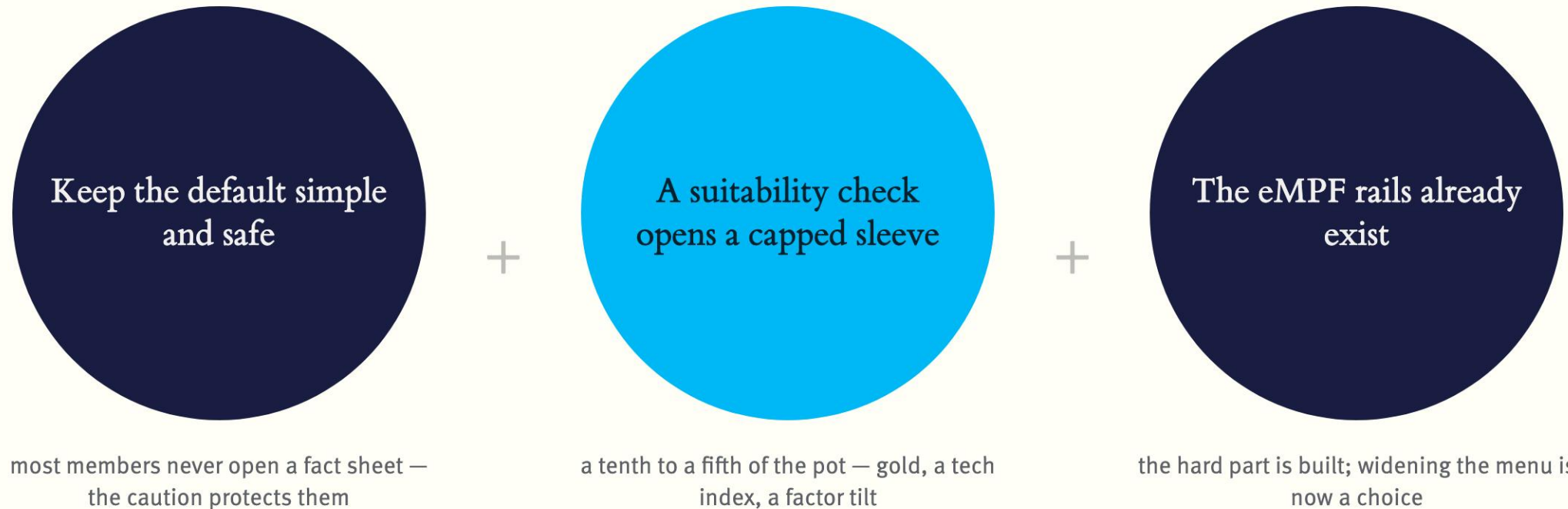
Ay, There's the Rub

For a system holding an entire workforce's retirement, the data poses questions it should be able to answer.

- 1 Why is the decade's best inflation hedge **uninvestable**? Gold has been permissible since 2011, yet none of 447 funds offers it; commodities and digital assets aren't permissible at all.
- 2 Why **over-supply the worst region and starve the rest**? 73 Hong Kong / China funds, 3 Japan, 1 Korea, zero India — and Hong Kong is an IFC.
- 3 If fees predict nothing, who are the guaranteed funds charging ~2% to deliver ~0.5% a year for? (*rhetorical, I know.*)
- 4 Where are the **factor and thematic options** — value, quality, min-vol, technology, healthcare — that every modern defined-contribution pension offers as standard?

My kingdom for some flexibility

Hong Kong has just passed Switzerland as the world's largest cross-border wealth centre, yet the one pot its workers are **forced** to fund bars gold, sectors and factors. Protection and choice can coexist:



We know what we are, but know not what we may be

A shelf this narrow quietly herds everyone into whatever has just worked. The lack of options left me defaulting to US equities — itself the recency trap the data should warn against. *The rails and the data are there; what happens next is a choice.*

Credit where it is due: the MPFA now puts every fund's record in the open — net-of-fee returns, costs, the lot — which is what made this exercise possible. That shifts the work onto the rest of us: managers to build products worth holding, and members to move toward the ones who do.

For reference

The best, the cheapest, and where Hong Kong's HK\$1.63 trillion actually sits.

The top performers were almost all North America

The strongest 10-yr records on the platform. Region did the work again — and none of them was the cheapest fund on the shelf.

FUND	SCHEME	10YR %/YR	FER %
Haitong Global Diversification	Haitong MPF	14.9	1.29
Allianz Oriental Pacific	Manulife RetireChoice	13.2	1.31
BOC-Prudential North America Index	BOC-Prudential Easy-Choice	13.2	1.02
US Equity Fund	MASS MPF	13.1	1.05
BEA North American Equity	BEA Master Trust	12.9	1.25
North American Equity Fund	HSBC SuperTrust Plus	12.9	1.32

Source: MPFA platform, annualised 10-yr returns net of fees, as at 30 Apr 2026. Share-class duplicates collapsed to the leading class.

The cheapest funds were trackers and Hong Kong index funds

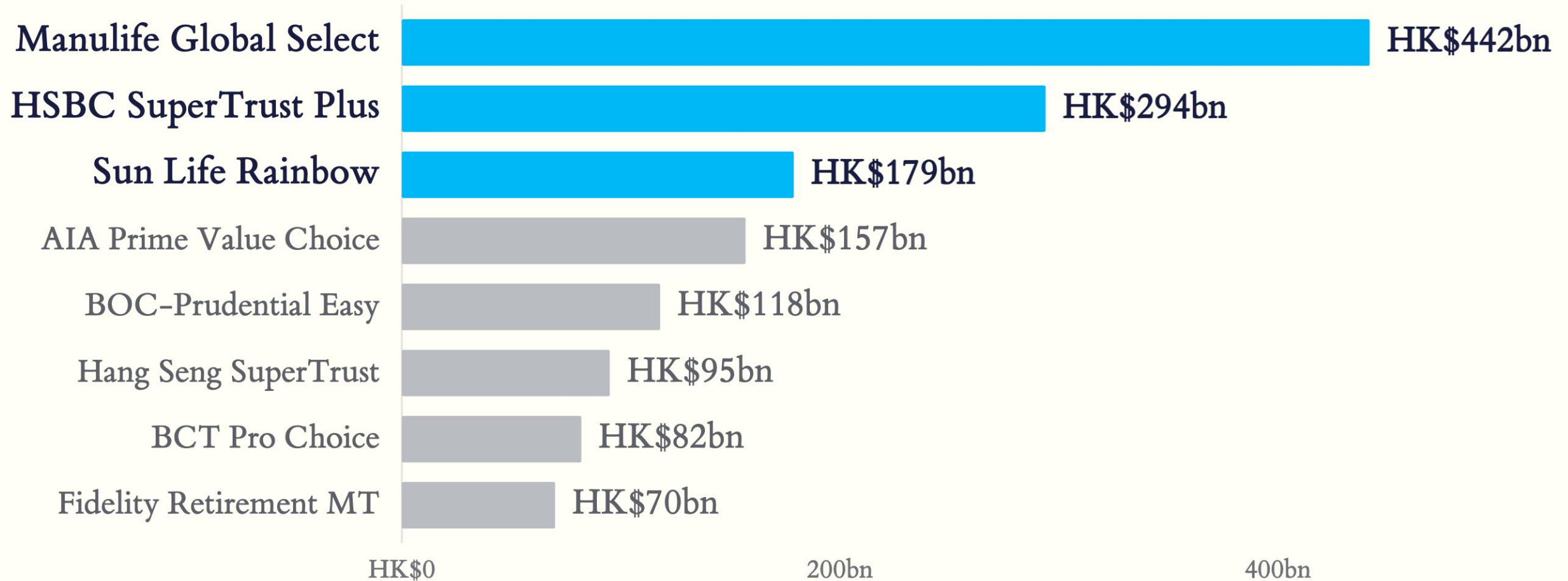
The lowest fees on the platform sit in passive trackers and conservative funds — **a different list entirely** from the top performers.

FUND	SCHEME	FER %	10YR %/YR
BOC-Prudential RMB & HKD Money Market	BOC-Prudential	0.56	2.1
BEA Hong Kong Tracker	BEA Industry Scheme	0.58	4.8
SHKP MPF Fund	SHKP Employer Sponsored	0.66	7.4
Invesco MPF Conservative	BCT Strategic	0.69	1.4
My Choice Hong Kong Tracking	My Choice MPF	0.73	5.1

Source: MPFA platform; FER as at 31 Dec 2024, returns net of fees to 30 Apr 2026.

Three schemes hold over half of Hong Kong's HK\$1.63 trillion pot

The three largest schemes hold more than half the pot. By trustee, **HSBC's arm administers HK\$460bn – 28% of the whole system.**



Source: MPFA MPF Fund Platform, schemes by asset size, as at 30 Apr 2026.

All That Glisters

The gold the MPF won't let you hold. The complete data story — every figure computed from the platform — lives at barnabyrobson.org/hong-kongs-mpf-visualised

SOURCE

MPFA MPF Fund Platform (mfp.mpfa.org.hk), all 24 registered schemes. Returns net of fees, NAV-to-NAV; annualised and cumulative.

AS AT

Returns to 30 April 2026. Fund expense ratios as at 31 December 2024. 447 funds; 426 with a full return record.

METHOD

Every fund scraped into a databook and recomputed independently. Regional tags are name-based. External assets shown for access context only.