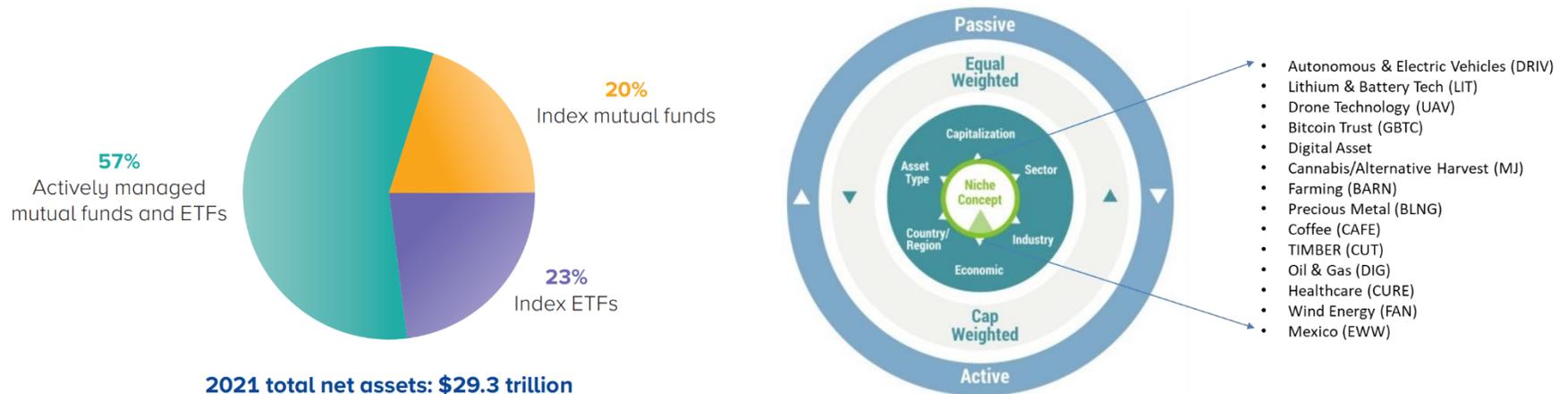


BCA Market Perspective © An Update to the Active vs. Passive Debate October 2022

John Bogle, the founder of Vanguard, created the first index mutual fund on August 31, 1976. The fund, which now is called the Vanguard 500 Index had approximately \$780 billion in assets at the end of September 2022. Given the tremendous inflows and increases in market share of index funds over the past decade, Wall Street and asset managers began opportunistically creating indexes for everything you can imagine, followed by investment banks quickly packaging them in the form of Exchange Traded Funds, Mutual Funds, CITs and Interval Funds.

In 2011, there were 123 exchange traded funds in the U.S. At the end of 2021, that number had grown to more than 2,600 funds. Alternative managers are also looking to capture a share of the rising investment flows into the passive space, hence creation of bitcoin futures ETFs, unitized private real estate funds, and private credit interval funds during the past five years.



The evolution of investment products is changing behaviors across the industry, as advisors are becoming portfolio managers by using niche index assets. Investments that were once reserved for large institutions are now available to individuals, and the line that divides active and passive is becoming more blurred with each passing week.

The debate today between active and passive may not be what John Bogle envisioned 50 years ago, but the rise in assets among index funds in all forms has had a net positive effect on fees. The average management fee for active equity and index mutual funds fell to 0.68% and 0.06%, respectively by the end of 2021, compared to 1.06% and 0.27% in 2001. However, investors should recognize that not all index funds were created equally. As Wall Street seeks to provide options for every risk appetite, niche offerings have become increasingly speculative and volatile, as is glaringly obvious with funds like the Direxion Daily S&P Bull and S&P Bear 3X Shares that utilize leverage to seek investment returns of 300%, or 300% of the inverse of the performance of the S&P 500 Index. These funds and others certainly fall outside the original scope of “passively capturing Market returns”.