

Korea's Chip Machine

How electronics exports drive South Korea's economy and its stock market

FinzData Research · October 2026

finzdata.com · Korea Customs Service exports by HS code, in the FinzData macro store

September 2026: Korea's biggest export month ever

\$120.9bn

total exports, up 83.5% year on year: the first month above \$120bn

\$60.3bn

semiconductor exports, up 262.8%: about half of everything Korea sold abroad

\$54.1bn

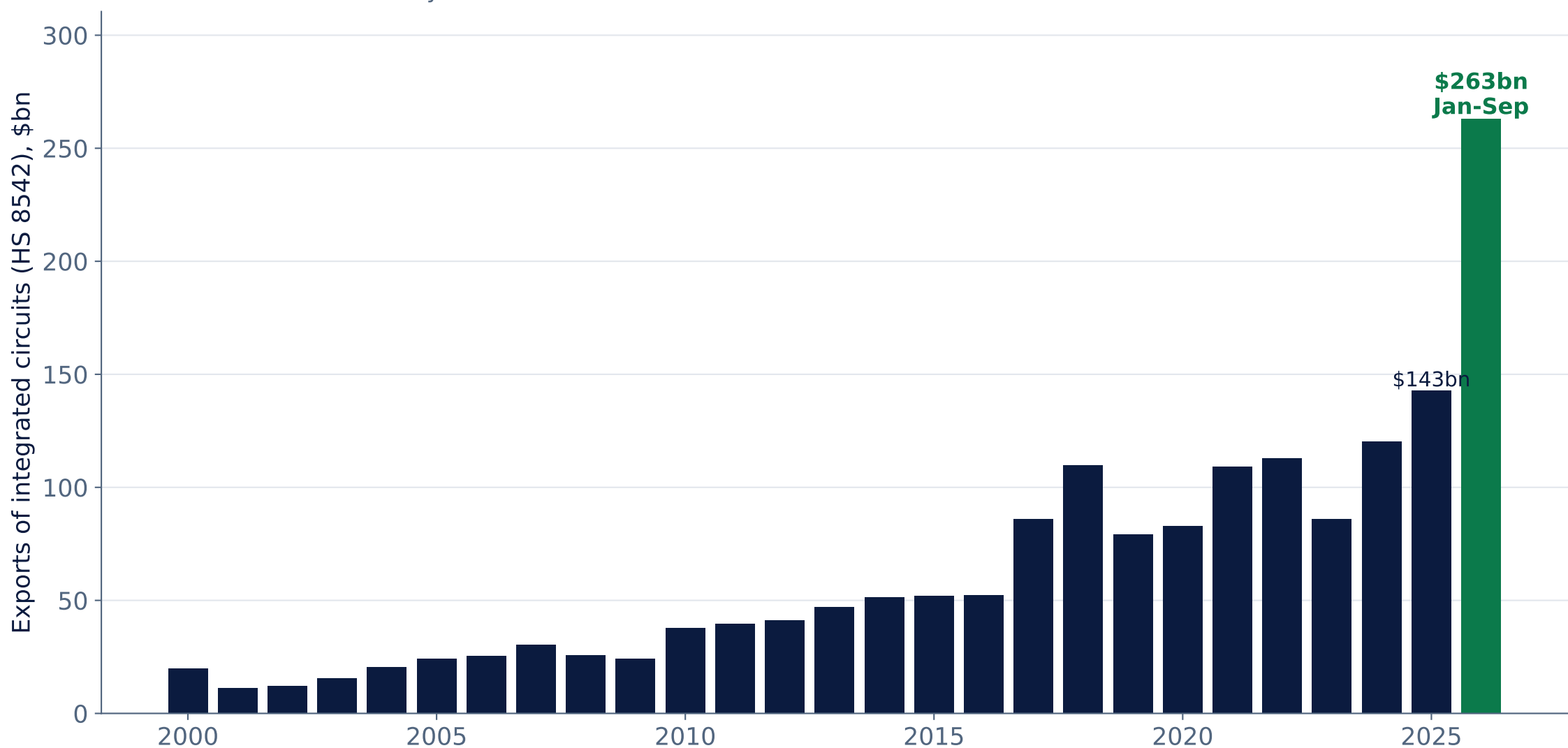
of that was memory chips, up 358.6%, as DDR5 contract prices rose to \$48 from \$37.5 in May

\$814.5bn

exported January to September, already above the full-year record of \$709.3bn set in 2025

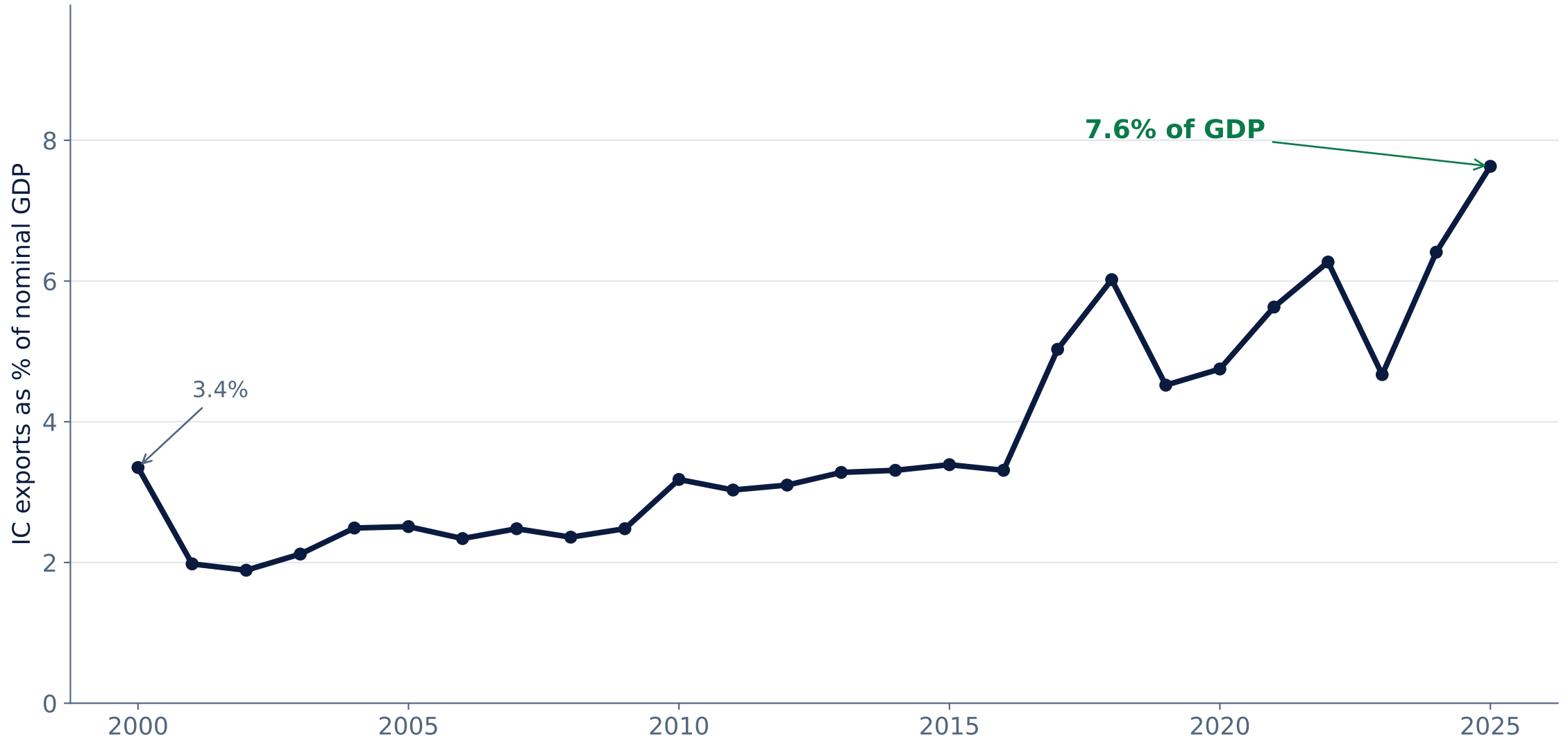
Korea's integrated-circuit exports, 2000 to 2026

Nine months of 2026 already total 1.8x the whole of 2025



Integrated circuits alone are 7.6% of Korea's economy

HS 8542 exports divided by nominal GDP, 2000 to 2025

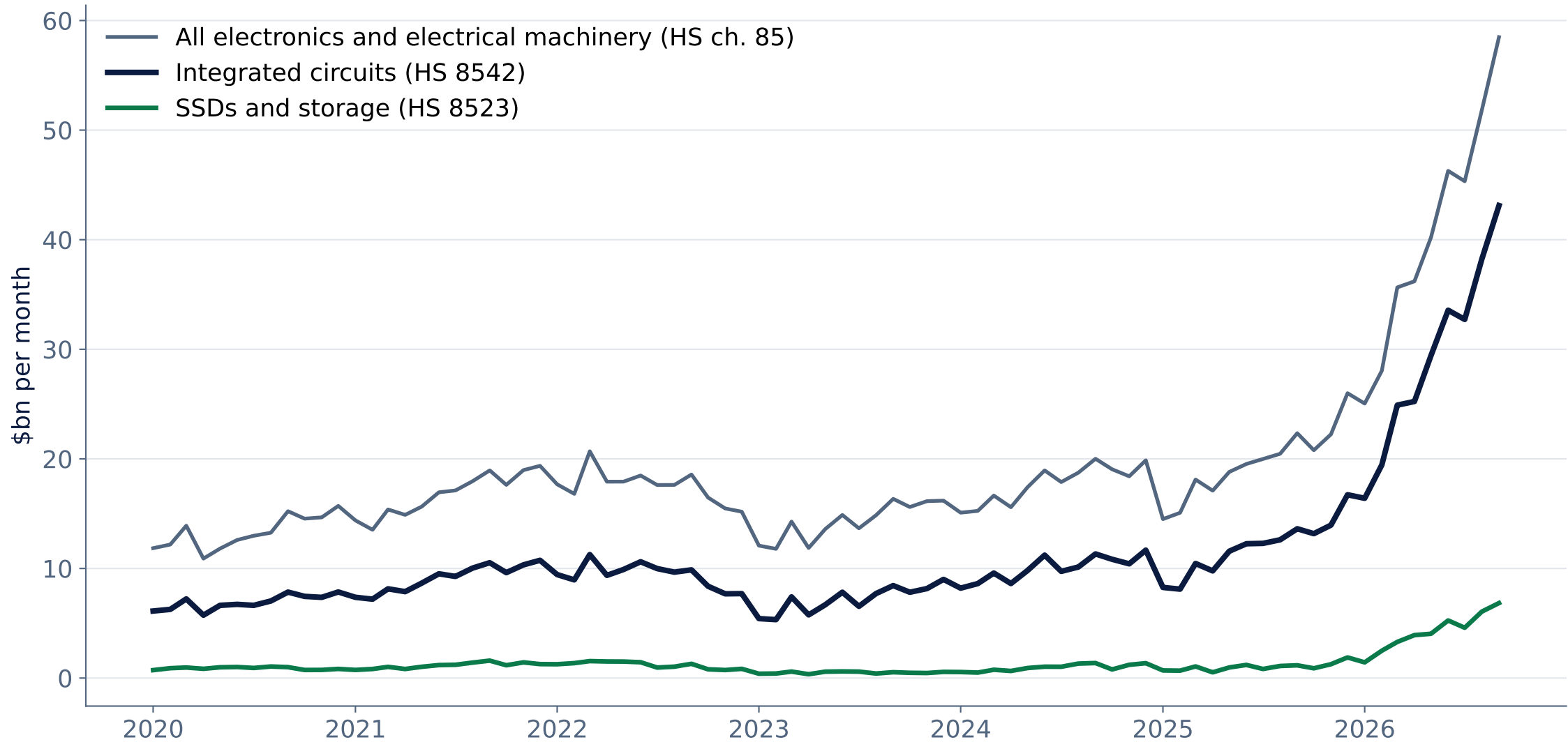


Source: FinzData (Korea Customs Service exports by HS code; Taiwan Ministry of Finance; World Bank GDP via FRED/ALFRED). finzdata.com

Monthly electronics exports: the AI memory boom

FinzData

September 2026: chips \$43.1bn (+216%), SSDs \$6.8bn (+489%)

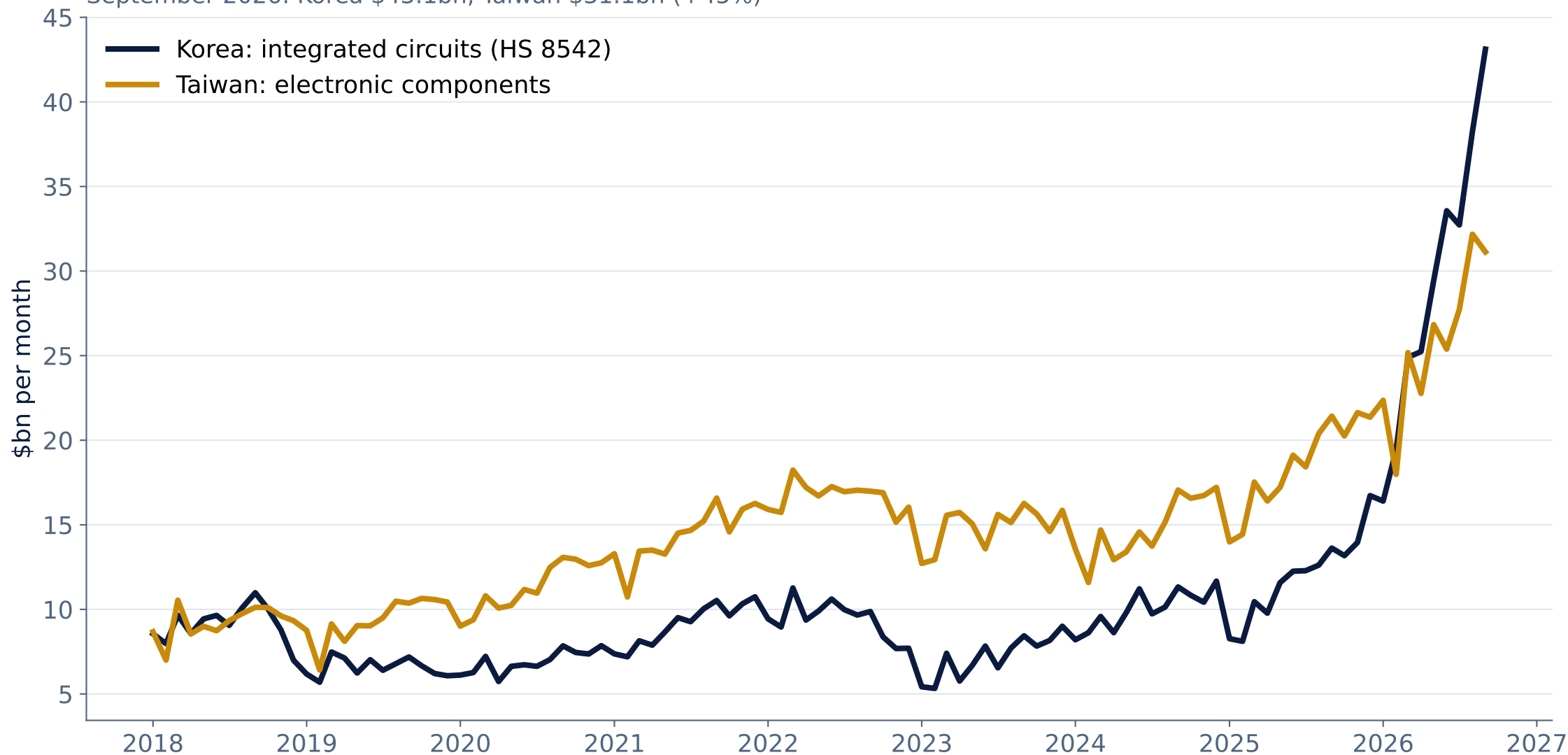


Source: FinzData (Korea Customs Service exports by HS code; Taiwan Ministry of Finance; daily prices). finzdata.com

Korea and Taiwan: the two export engines of the AI build-out

FinzData

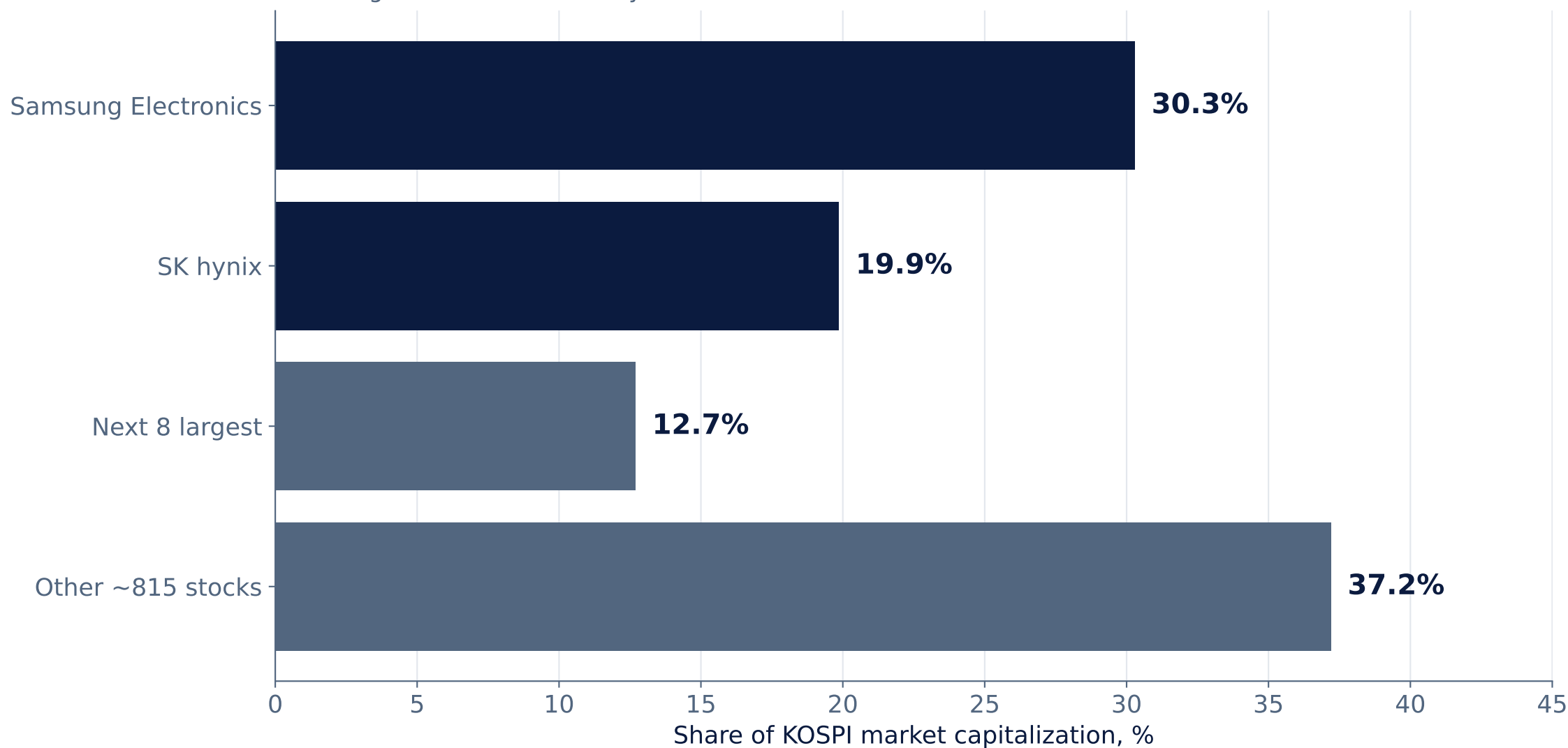
September 2026: Korea \$43.1bn, Taiwan \$31.1bn (+45%)



Two chipmakers are half of Korea's stock market

FinzData

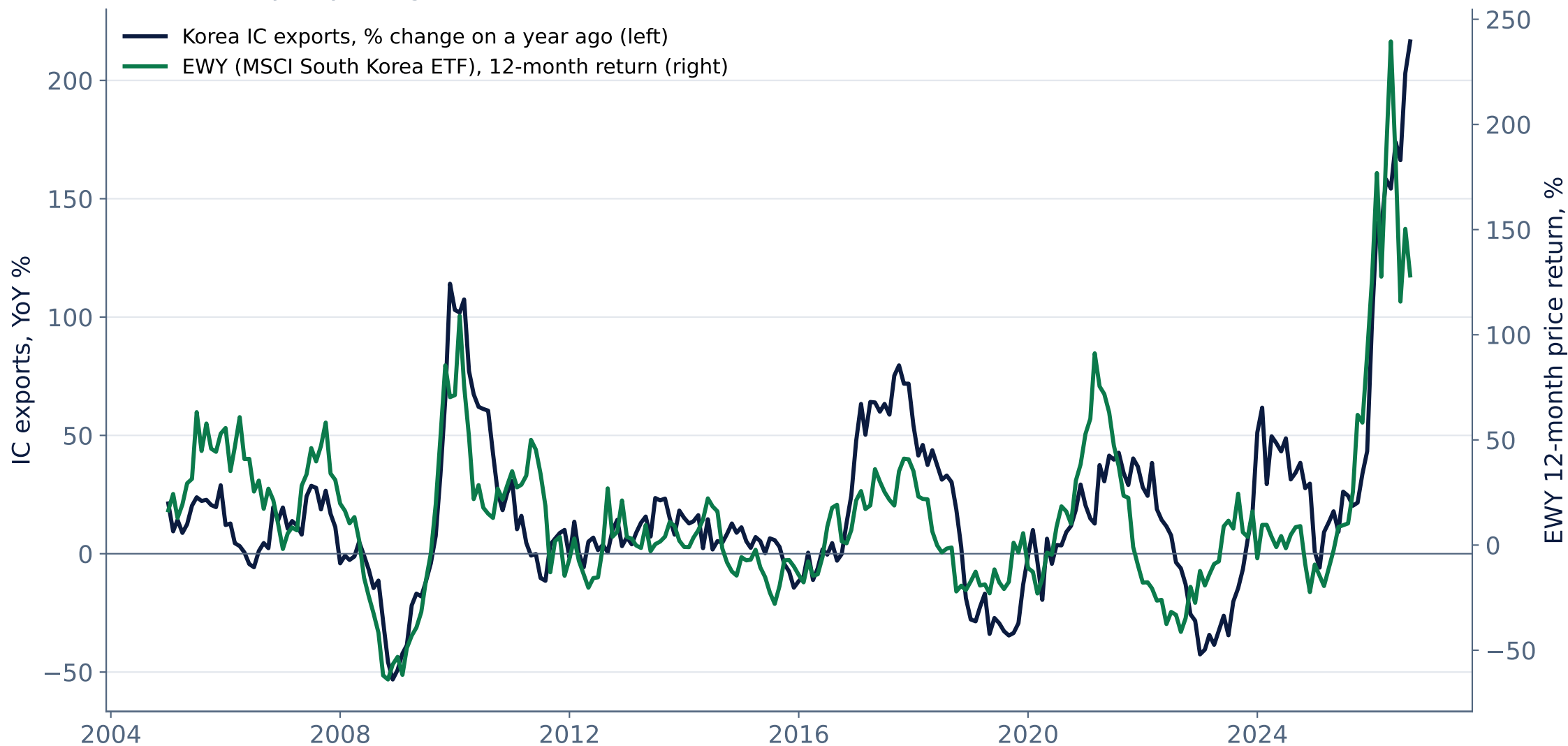
Samsung Electronics and SK hynix: 50.1% of the KOSPI



Chip exports and Korean stocks move together

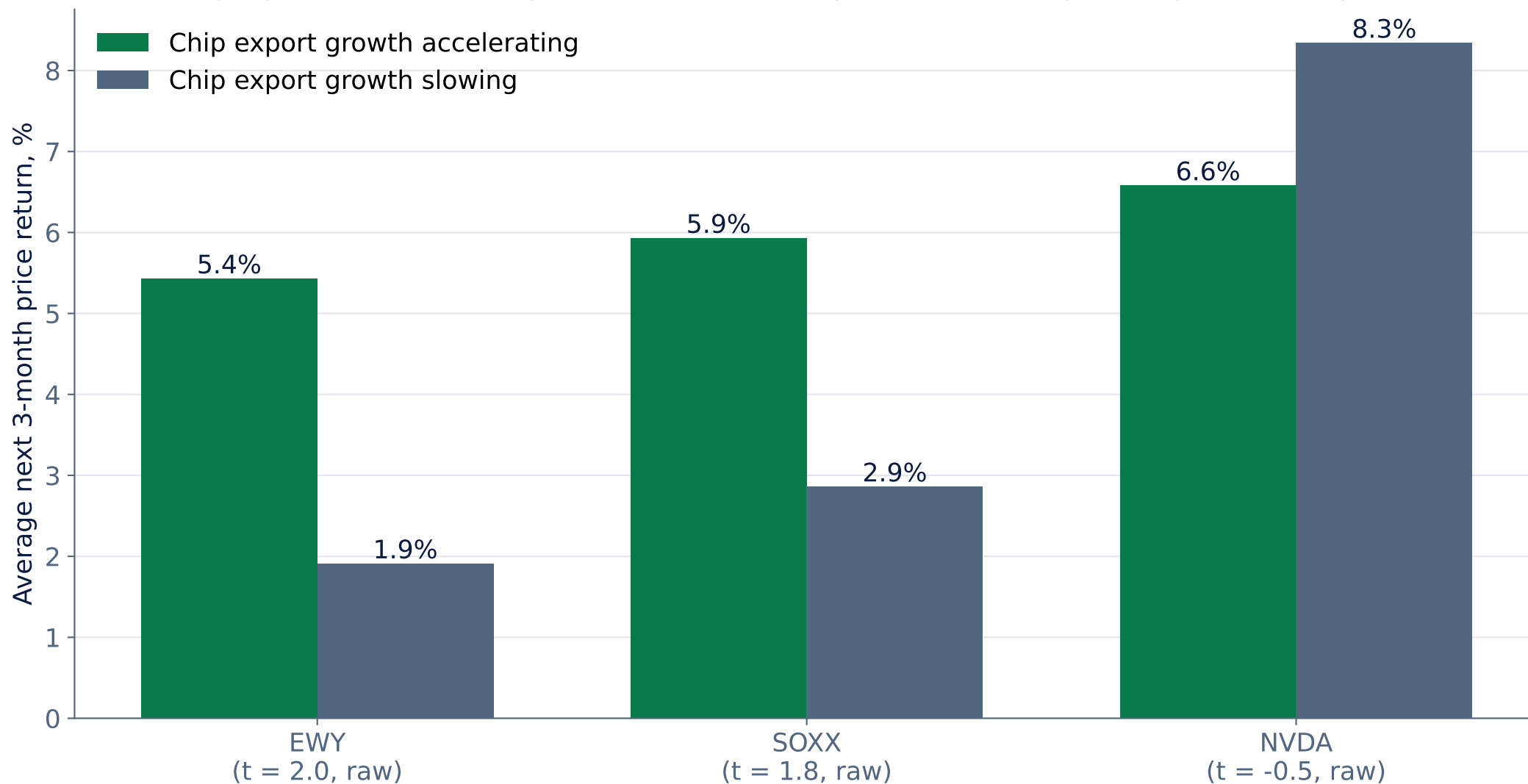
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Correlation of yearly changes since 2001: EWY 0.72, SOXX 0.65, NVDA 0.22



But the export data does not reliably predict returns

Accelerating exports were followed by better EWY and SOXX quarters, but not significantly once overlap is counted



What to watch each month

1st

of each month: the trade ministry's preliminary total and chip exports for the month just ended

10 / 20

day readings from Korea Customs mid-month: one of the earliest chip-demand prints in the world

~15th

Korea Customs final exports by HS code, in FinzData as KREXPIC, KREXPSSD, KREXPCH85

50%

of the KOSPI is two memory makers: Korea is now a leveraged bet on memory prices

The data behind this deck

7

Korea export series by HS code since 2000: KREXPIC, KREXPSEMIDEV, KREXPSSD, KREXPDISP, KREXPComp, KREXPTEL, KREXPCH85

4

Taiwan export series since 2001: TWEXPELEC, TWEXPICT, TWEXPMACH, TWEXPTOTAL

PIT

every revision kept as a dated vintage from first capture, next to 18,000+ US macro series

API

Python, REST and the MCP endpoint for AI agents: api.finzdata.com/mcp