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Miguel A. Ferreira, Pedro Matos, João Pedro Pereira, Pedro Pires

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Do Locals Know Better? A Comparison of the Performance of Local and Foreign Institutional Investors¹

Miguel A. Ferreira Nova School of Business and Economics

Pedro Matos University of Virginia - Darden School of Business

João Pedro Pereira² Nova School of Business and Economics

Pedro Pires

Nova School of Business and Economics

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Abstract

We compare the performance of local versus foreign institutional investors using a comprehensive data set of equity holdings in 32 countries during the 2000-2010 period. We find that foreign institutions perform as well as local institutions on average, but only domestic institutions show a trading pattern consistent with an information advantage. Our results suggest a smart-money effect of local institutions in countries subject to higher information asymmetry, non-English speaking countries, countries with less efficient stock markets, with poor investor protection, or high levels of corruption. The local advantage is more pronounced in periods of market turmoil and in illiquid stocks. Keywords: Mutual funds; Local and foreign; Institutional investors.

1. Introduction

Financial globalization and the substantial growth of the global mutual fund industry have

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² Contact author. Email: joao.pereira@novasbe.pt. Mail: Nova SBE, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Campus de Campolide, 1099-032 Lisboa, Portugal. Phone: (+351) 213 801 637.

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