ORDER OF MARKET ENTRY, MARKET AND TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION AND FIRM COMPETITIVE PERFORMANCE

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Order of market entry, market and technological evolution and firm competitive performance

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Abstract

In this paper, we seek to shed more light on the relationships between order of market entry, industry evolution, and firms' competitive performance. We identify two industry dynamics – i.e. pace of market change and technological discontinuity – and we elaborate on their impact on the competitive performance of first movers, second movers and third movers. We hypothesize that pace of market change and technological discontinuity negatively affects first movers' performance whereas their impact on followers' performance is positive. We test our hypotheses in the context of the European mobile communications industry and we find substantial support for our predictions. Important strategic and policy implications are derived and discussed.

Keywords: order-of-entry-based-advantages, mobile industry, pioneering, pace of market growth, technological discontinuity

JEL classification: M21, L96

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the existence or lack of order-of-market-entry-based and first-mover advantages (FMA) has been a popular topic in management, strategy and economics. Theories seeking to explain the FMA and order of market entry effect on competitive performance have progressed along three conceptual categories. First, the basic "isolating mechanisms" – mechanisms through which first movers can be protected from imitative competition – have been identified and classified (Rumelt, 1987; see Lieberman and Montgomery, 1988 for a review). A second stream of research has explored the firm-level resources and capabilities that allow organizations to exploit their market entry strategy (e.g. Robinson, Fornell, and Sullivan, 1992). Finally, a smaller number of researchers have investigated the relationship between environment and competitive advantage based on order of market entry (e.g. Lambkin, 1988). The empirical FMA literature has been unable to provide conclusive evidence supporting or against the existence of order of market entry advantages. Some empirical studies have provided evidence of a negative relationship between order of entry and firm's performance (Bond and Lean, 1977; Whitten, 1979, Robinson and Fornell, 1985; Robinson, 1988) whereas other studies have questioned the existence of such advantages, finding little or no evidence of a relationship between order of entry and market share (Lilien and Yoon, 1990; Schnaars, 1986; Golder and Tellis, 1993). Lieberman and Montgomery's recent strong claim (1998: 1111) that "many of the fundamental conceptual problems that we discussed [in their seminal 1988 paper on the topic] remain unresolved" is a hard but realistic assessment of progress with theory to date. Recent work by Suarez and Lanzolla (2008, 2007 and 2005) has started addressing some of these "fundamental issues", exploring, for instance, the impact of environmental dynamics on the effectiveness of the isolating mechanisms that drive first mover performance. Other

"fundamental issues" remain under investigated and existing literature has been unable to provide managers with coherent guidelines for their market entry strategies.

In this paper, building on Suarez and Lanzolla (2007) we expand upon the role of industry dynamics in the competitive performance of firms that enter a market at different points of time. We define two constructs – i.e. pace of market change and technological discontinuity – and we elaborate on their inter-relationships with the isolating mechanisms that can protect, or undermine, first mover, second mover, and third mover's competitive performance. By focusing on industry change, we bring a dynamic dimension into the macro side of order of entry theory – that is, the enabling or disabling effect of the environment on first-movers, second movers, and third movers advantages does not only depend on the environmental conditions at time of entry, but on their evolution over time.

We test our hypotheses in the context of the European mobile communications industry by estimating pooled OLS models on a longitudinal panel spanning the period 1998 to 2008. Data refers to the competitive performance of around 65 companies in 19 European markets. Model estimations show that technological discontinuity negatively affects first movers' profitability whereas its impact on second movers and third movers' profitability is positive. The role of pace of market growth is more controversial. High pace of market growth are likely to negatively affect the profitability of first movers whereas the relationship between pace of market growth and second and third movers' profitability appears to be weaker. Overall results point towards a clear trend. In the European mobile communications industry, first movers, irrespective of the technological and market dynamics, tend to always outperform second and third movers. These results have important strategic and policy implications which we describe in the last section of the paper.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. In the following section, we review the literature on first mover advantages. Section 3 provides a theoretical justification for the two

dimensions capturing environmental dynamics. The European mobile communications industry and the variables used are described in Section 4. In Section 5, we provide evidence showing the impact of the pace or market growth and the technological discontinuity on order-of-entry based advantages. We close the paper by discussing its main findings and its managerial and policy implications.

2. EXISTING LITERATURE

Theory development on first-mover and order-of-entry advantages has progressed in three conceptual categories: identification of the "isolating mechanisms" through which first movers can protect themselves from imitative competition; firm-level resources and capabilities that allow organizations to exploit FMA; investigation of the relationship between environment and competitive advantage based on order of market entry. The FMA "isolating mechanisms" have been polished, classified and reclassified several times. Golder and Tellis (1993) proposed producer-based versus consumer-based FMA drivers. Day and Freeman (1990) classified the drivers as resources pre-emption, proprietary experience effects and leadership reputation; Mueller (1997) proposed two broad groups: demand-related or "inertial advantages" and supply-related or "efficiency advantages"; and Kerin, Varadarajan and Peterson (1992) clustered them as economic factors, pre-emption factors, technological factors and behavioural factors. The most widely-accepted classification of FMA-isolating mechanisms is often attributed to Lieberman and Montgomery (1988), who proposed three categories: technology leadership; pre-emption of scarce assets; and switching costs/buyer choice under uncertainty. Given the importance of this latter paper in the FMA literature, we will use this classification as the first building block to develop a FMA theory for service products. Technology leadership first-mover advantages aggregate isolating mechanisms such as learning and experience effects, and R&D patenting that give a firm a

technological edge over competitors; pre-emptive mechanisms encompass cost advantages arising from advanced appropriation of scarce input resources, forestalling bids for product characteristic spaces and economies of scale due to pre-emptive investment in plants and equipments; and switching costs arise from habit formation in buyers or from the installed-base effect in the presence of network effects.

At the firm level, to the best of our knowledge, existing literature has exclusively focused on manufactured products. An important group of research studies has investigated the effect of firms' resources and capabilities on competitive advantages based on order of entry into markets. In this literature stream, fuelled largely by researchers in the resource-based view of the firm and in industrial economics, the key to capturing possible benefits is linked to firms' assets and strategic manoeuvring. In their view, a firm's ability to derive order-of-entry advantages should be assessed "with reference to the competence and capabilities which new entrants have, relative to the competitors" (Teece, Pisano, and Shuen, 1997: 529 – see also Robinson and Chiang, 2002; Fuentelsaz, Gomez and Polo, 2002).

Investigating the relationship between a firm's environment and FMA, McArthur and Nystrom (1987) and Covin and Slevin (1989) find environmental munificence to be a significant predictor of the strategy-performance relationship, and Lambkin (1988) provides a set of predictions concerning the order of entry strategies most likely to be successful under three environmental dimensions: variability, grain of the variability and uncertainty. More recently, Suarez and Lanzolla (2007) analyze the role of two environmental dynamics –the pace of market evolution and the pace of technology evolution – and show how these can affect the likelihood of obtaining FMA.

Empirical studies have provided evidence of a negative relationship between order of entry and a firm's performance, measured by market share (Bond and Lean, 1977; Whitten, 1979, Robinson and Fornell, 1985; Robinson, 1988), long-term profitability (Lambkin, 1988)

and survival (Robinson and Min, 2002). Other studies question the existence of FMA, finding little or no evidence of a relationship between order of entry and market share (Lilien and Yoon, 1990; Schnaars, 1986; Golder and Tellis, 1993), higher return on investment (Boulding and Christen, 2001) and failure risk (Shepherd, 1999). Several authors have identified important shortcomings in the empirical literature on FMA, which may explain some of the contradictory findings. Among these shortcomings are inconsistencies in the definition of the dependent variables; biased sample selection; and failure to control for entrant capabilities (Anderson and Paine, 1978; Ramanujam and Venkatraman, 1984; Szymansky, Troy, and Bharadwaj, 1995; VanderWerf and Mahon, 1997).

Yet, despite several progresses to date, the relationship between order of market entry and competitive performance remains substantially controversial.

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Suarez and Lanzolla's (2007) have claimed that to enhance the predictive power of the theory related to the order-of-market-entry-based advantages, scholars should explicitly and formally elaborate on the interlink between environmental variables and isolating mechanisms that underpin these advantages. In this paper, we expand upon this claim. We integrate arguments from economics, consumer behavior, service strategy and technology management to elaborate on the role of industry dynamics in the isolating mechanisms that underpin market entry timing based performance for firms. Building on Suarez and Lanzolla (2007) we identify two such dynamics – i.e. pace of market change and technological change – and we show how they interact with the isolating mechanisms – e.g. resource pre-emption, technology leadership, and buyer's switching costs (Lieberman and Montgomery, 1988) – to affect performance for first movers, second movers and third movers.

Pace of market change, order of market entry and firms' profitability

Market evolution in a given product category, often measured in sales, household penetration, or number of adopters, is influenced by several market-related dynamics: e.g. changes in consumer tastes or preferences (Moore, 1999), emergence of new regulations, degree of market fragmentation, and consumer learning (Agarwal and Bayus, 2002). Our core construct pace of market evolution reflects the combined effect of these market-related dynamics within a product category. Several researchers have studied the impact of market evolution on the relationship between order of entry and performance: Agarwal, Sarkar and Echambadi (2002) study 33 product innovations and find that an industry's growth pattern has a significant "conditioning effect" on the relationship between entry timing and firm survival; Bohlmann, Golder and Mitra (2002) suggest that first mover advantages are more sustainable in markets where horizontal (as opposed to quality-based) product differentiation, predominates – a situation more common in slow-growing (mature) markets (Utterback, 1994). The pace of market growth has important implications for the effectiveness of buyer pre-emption mechanisms. The ability of a firm to pre-empt scarce market resources has been shown to depend on the pace at which an industry is growing. A situation of high market growth implies that, at any point in time, there would always be sufficient market resources – e.g. enough buyers – for new entrants. This is consistent with the findings of theoretical models of industrial organization, where a fast-growing market in the presence of network effects has been found to be key to overcoming a new product's entry-timing advantage (Katz and Shapiro, 1992). Organizational theorists have shown that environmental munificence – the scarcity or abundance of critical resources needed by firms operating within an environment – effectively determines the rate at which new competitors can be effectively added to the population (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Overall, abrupt market dynamics have a high potential to undermine the effectiveness of isolating mechanisms for first movers.

Hypothesis 1a: The higher the pace of market growth the higher the loss in first mover's profitability.

Especially if technology does not change significantly, for later entrants it is easier to come up with higher-quality products, or innovative solutions that can enable powerful vintage effects (Bohlmann, Golder and Mitra, 2002). An abrupt market evolution will make it easier for later entrants to find market spaces that have not yet been exploited by incumbents in which to grow and survive (Christensen, 1997). Katz and Shapiro (1992) have shown that "excess inertia" – a bias towards the competitive advantage achieved by an earlier entrant – can be overcome under the assumption of fast market growth.

Hypothesis 1b: The higher the pace of market growth, the higher the gain in second mover's profitability.

Hypothesis 1c: The higher the pace of market growth, the higher the gain in third mover's profitability.

Technological discontinuity, order of market entry and firms' profitability

The pace at which technology evolves directly affects the possibility of deriving first-mover advantages through technology leadership. For instance, the advantage derived from entering first into a market can be linked to a firm's ability to keep up with the evolution of knowledge within the industry. Technology evolution may render a firm's knowledge obsolete, destroy existing competences (Leonard-Barton, 1992; Henderson and Clark, 1990; Tushman and Anderson, 1986; Schilling, 2002), and negate possible "experience curve" advantages (Lieberman, 1989). Bohlmann, Golder and Mitra (2002) provide theoretical and empirical evidence to show that first mover advantages are difficult to sustain in product categories with high "vintage effects" – i.e. where product quality significantly improves over

time. Christensen, Suarez and Utterback (1998) find that, in the fast-changing rigid disk drive industry, “the notion of first mover advantage is not applicable” (p. S207). Christensen (1997) shows how technological change allows for a new breed of late entrants in the steel and disk drive industries. Technology evolution also impacts on the effectiveness of patents and other forms of intellectual property protection. The economics literature on patenting has shown that a firm’s ability to protect its underlying product technology varies across industries with technology being a main moderator (Levin, Klevorick, Nelson and Winter, 1987). Empirical evidence suggests that about 60% of successful innovations are imitated within four years (Mansfield, Schawarts, and Wagner, 1991). A technological discontinuity may give latecomers plenty of opportunities to “invent around” a patent and come up with improved products that do not necessarily infringe on patent rights. These technology-driven options or gateways (Bain, 1956) to the market reduce the effectiveness of intellectual protection and provide more opportunities for later entrants to challenge first movers’ technology leadership. Technological evolution also affects key antecedents of buyers’ switching costs, such as domain expertise (Wernerfelt, 1985), or consumer preferences formation (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989). As has already been stated, technological discontinuity tends to result in a succession of different technology generations or “vintages” – each of which makes the previous one obsolete. When buyers perceive this “technological uncertainty”, they tend not to commit themselves to product-specific learning (Schmalensee, 1982; Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989) – a phenomenon particularly relevant for experience goods that can be evaluated only after purchase (Nelson, 1980) and to standards-war situations where two or more incompatible technologies compete for market dominance (Suarez 2004). First movers who risk introducing an “underdeveloped” product also incur the risk that “negative word of mouth” will make final customers more willing to switch to alternative products (Kalish and Lilien, 1986; Cady, 1985).

Hypothesis 2a: Technological discontinuity decreases first mover's profitability.

Hypothesis 2b: Technological discontinuity increases second mover's profitability.

Hypothesis 2c: Technological discontinuity increases third mover's profitability.

4. RESEARCH SETTING, SAMPLE AND VARIABLES

Research setting: the European mobile communication industry

To test our hypotheses we focused on the mobile communication industry. Mobile communications industry has had an impressive growth in the last two decades and it has been the focus of attention on an increasing number of researches (Kim and Kwon, 2003; Birke and Swann, 2006; Lee *et al.*, 2006; Doganoglu and Grzybowski, 2007; Grzybowski, 2007; Gomez and Maicas, 2008). Mobile communications industry constitutes an appealing laboratory for testing and analyzing order of market entry advantages for several reasons.

First, entry into the mobile telecommunication industry has taken place in a number of waves, most of times clashing with the introduction of a new generation of technology (GSM or UMTS). Therefore, we can properly identify different groups of operators depending on their entry timing - e.g. first entrants, second movers, late followers. Regarding entry, Boulding and Christen (2003) maintain that the conceptual issue of endogenous entry order has become one of the classic empirical issues. Entry in mobile communications industry is completely exogenous (Usero and Fernandez, 2008), as long as the national Governments have to decide when they want to put into the market new licences. The most accepted argument to defend Government intervention in this industry in terms of entry is that the radio spectrum is considered a scarce resource, so that entry is regulated by the Governments through licensing to a better allocation of this scarce resource. Therefore, companies must

acquire a licence to operate in a particular market.[1] These licences usually imply certain commitments in terms of infrastructure development and coverage. As a result of the previous discussion, some of the problems that arise with the endogenous nature of the entry (Vanderwef and Mahon, 1997) are avoided in our case.

Second, in spite of the existence of some exceptions (see, for example, Mascarenhas, 1998 or Song, Di Benedetto and Zhao, 1999), most of the empirical research on first mover advantages refers to just one country. Our paper, on the contrary, is based on the analysis of order of entry advantages across different countries. The significance of countries in explaining differences on order of entry advantages would give an important role to the context in a deeper understanding of FMA as a strategic management theory (Hitt *et al.*, 2007; Bamberger, 2008). Having the possibility of comparing a group of countries, important implications for regulatory policy could emerge.

Third, Lieberman (2007) suggests that first mover advantages are more likely to occur in markets with network effects. Telecommunications in general and mobile communications in particular are paradigmatic examples of the truly operation of network effects (Maicas, Polo and Sese, 2009).

Fourth, it is important to note that the European mobile communications industry has grown impressively in recent years. Its average penetration rate has increased from around 30% at the end of 1998 to slightly over 100% at the end of 2007. Gruber and Verboven (2001a, 2001b) have analyzed this process all over the world and postulate that this rapid diffusion can be attributed to the setting of one single digital standard (which implies a substantial reduction in costs, with the subsequent effect on prices) and to the introduction of competition in the second generation technology. Doganoglu and Grzybowski (2007) complement this view, pointing out that this fast development has had an additional driver:

[1] Auction or by beauty contest are the most common systems to allocate licences in mobile communications. See Klemperer (2002) for a more detailed review of these two alternatives.

the presence of a technology with significant network effects. To sum up, the period in which we have carried out our empirical research is characterized by an abrupt market growth during the late 90s' and the first years of 00s', following by a period in which the growth rate has considerably decreased – i.e. smooth pace of market evolution (see Table 1 for more details). Thus, the variable market growth has enough variability to test the hypotheses described above.

TABLE 1. MARKET GROWTH BY YEAR AND COUNTRY

Country	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Austria	0.87	0.60	0.22	0.02	0.06	0.09	0.08	0.09	0.08	0.09
Belgium	0.81	0.75	0.56	0.11	0.02	0.09	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.09
Czech Republic	--	1.22	0.61	0.39	0.15	0.12	0.09	0.06	0.07	0.06
Denmark	--	0.33	0.33	0.08	0.18	0.11	0.00	0.06	0.14	0.10
Finland	0.14	0.11	0.14	0.09	0.04	0.05	0.11	0.08	0.06	0.11
France	--	0.64	0.33	0.12	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.07
Germany	0.87	0.97	0.51	0.04	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.13
Greece	0.89	0.64	0.41	0.22	0.19	0.04	0.10	0.13	0.16	0.13
Hungary	--	0.47	0.39	0.54	0.23	0.12	0.05	0.08	0.10	0.14
Irland	--	--	0.36	0.11	0.07	0.11	0.12	0.10	0.09	0.09
Italy	0.50	0.44	0.29	0.10	0.05	0.09	0.12	0.14	0.12	0.07
Netherlands	1.03	0.71	0.29	0.03	0.06	0.17	0.11	0.01	0.06	0.08
Norway	--	0.18	0.16	0.10	0.07	0.10	0.08	0.06	0.02	0.02
Poland	--	--	--	0.40	0.31	0.29	0.30	0.26	0.18	0.08
Portugal	0.60	0.41	0.40	0.17	0.10	0.04	0.07	0.10	0.10	0.11
Spain	0.99	0.89	0.31	0.17	0.12	0.06	0.09	0.10	0.07	0.06
Sweden	0.23	0.23	0.16	0.12	0.09	0.10	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.09
Switzerland	--	0.75	0.20	0.14	0.04	0.07	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.08
United Kingdom	0.84	0.77	0.39	0.09	0.07	0.12	0.11	0.06	0.05	0.04
Average	0.74	0.59	0.33	0.14	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.09

Fifth, we can observe a clear technological discontinuity during our window of observations with the introduction of UMTS technology (see Table 2 to follow the evolution of operators that implement UMTS). In fact, this is not a firm specific technological change. So that, it cannot be understood as a strategic weapon through which firms can either innovate or differentiate themselves. As long as the technology is standardized, it is rather a

common shift available for all the operators in the same conditions. However, the implementation of UMTS has mainly allowed the introduction of new operators in the market. Therefore, this technological improvement has had important implications in terms of market structure.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF FIRMS OPERATING IN UMTS BY YEAR

Quarter	First Movers	Second Movers	Third Movers
2003-2	1	--	--
2003-3	1	--	--
2003-4	1	--	--
2004-1	2	1	1
2004-2	10	3	2
2004-3	12	4	4
2004-4	16	5	6
2005-1	21	6	7
2005-2	21	7	8
2005-3	23	7	8
2005-4	25	9	9
2006-1	27	10	11
2006-2	27	10	11
2006-3	27	12	11
2006-4	29	14	11
2007-1	30	14	13

Sample characteristics

We have conducted our empirical application on the European mobile communications industry. The available data belong to mobile telecommunications operators in 19 European markets between 1998 and 2008.[2] Our data contains the entire census of firms during the 1998-2008 period. Therefore, our sample does not suffer from survival bias for the period under analysis. The data for the sample was gathered from multiple sources, but the principal one is the Merrill Lynch Global Wireless Matrix. This publication yields quarterly

[2] The European countries considered in our research are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

information on several of the variables of interest such as the name of the operators, the number of subscribers, the number of operators per market and its performance. We have collected information about the date of entry of the operators and their status as a former state monopolist mainly from their websites and other industry reports. These data have been complemented with information from other sources such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Table 3 shows the evolution of the number of operators by period and number of years in the market from the last quarter of 1998, the first period for which data is available, to the second quarter of 2008. The number of firms ranges from 54 at the beginning of our observation period to 64 at the end.[3] Similarly, the number of operators in our time horizon ranges from 2 to 5 depending on the country analyzed. The distribution of the number of firms per country is relatively stable, with few entries and exits during the period considered. In particular, it is almost impossible to find operators exiting the market in our window. However, some entries took place coinciding with the licensing of the 3G technology. It is also important to note that network operators may sell services to consumers directly or indirectly through mobile virtual network operators (MVNO). However, the availability of data does not allow us to consider MVNO as individual entities. In fact, they are embedded in the operator to whom they purchase the radio spectrum.

[3] It should be noted that this analysis does not take into account those firms for which we do not have information about the dependent variable (EBITDA). Overall, the number of operators in the market is slightly higher.

TABLE 3. NUMBER OF OPERATORS BY QUARTER AND YEARS IN THE MARKET

Term	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
1998-4	10	3	7	3	6	9	14	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	54
1999-1	10	5	8	3	3	10	14	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	57
1999-2	11	5	6	5	--	9	14	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	58
1999-3	7	9	1	8	2	7	11	13	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	58
1999-4	6	9	3	7	3	6	9	14	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	59
2000-1	3	10	5	8	3	3	10	14	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	60
2000-2	4	11	5	6	5	--	9	14	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	62
2000-3	4	7	9	1	8	2	7	11	13	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	62
2000-4	3	6	9	3	7	3	6	9	14	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	62
2001-1	4	3	10	5	8	3	3	10	14	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	64
2001-2	2	4	11	5	6	5	--	9	14	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	64
2001-3	2	4	7	9	1	8	2	7	11	13	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	64
2001-4	2	3	6	9	3	7	3	6	9	14	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	64
2002-1	--	4	3	10	5	8	3	3	10	14	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	64
2002-2	--	2	4	11	5	6	5	--	9	14	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	64
2002-3	1	2	4	7	9	1	8	2	7	11	13	--	--	--	--	--	--	65
2002-4	1	2	2	6	9	3	7	3	6	9	14	2	--	--	--	--	--	64
2003-1	2	--	3	3	10	5	8	3	3	10	14	4	--	--	--	--	--	65
2003-2	3	1	2	3	11	4	6	5	--	9	14	8	--	--	--	--	--	66
2003-3	3	1	2	3	7	8	1	8	2	7	11	13	--	--	--	--	--	66
2003-4	5	1	2	2	6	8	3	7	3	6	9	14	2	--	--	--	--	68
2004-1	3	3	--	3	3	10	4	8	3	3	10	14	4	--	--	--	--	68
2004-2	2	3	1	2	3	11	4	6	5	--	9	14	8	--	--	--	--	68
2004-3	1	4	1	2	3	7	8	1	8	2	7	11	13	--	--	--	--	68
2004-4	1	4	1	2	2	6	8	2	7	3	6	9	14	2	--	--	--	67
2005-1	1	2	3	--	3	3	10	3	8	3	3	10	14	4	--	--	--	67
2005-2	1	1	3	1	2	3	11	3	6	5	--	9	14	8	--	--	--	67
2005-3	1	--	4	1	2	3	7	7	1	8	2	7	11	13	--	--	--	67
2005-4	1	--	4	1	2	2	6	7	2	7	3	6	9	14	2	--	--	66
2006-1	1	--	2	3	--	3	3	9	3	8	3	4	9	14	4	--	--	66
2006-2	1	--	1	3	1	2	2	10	3	6	5	1	8	14	8	--	--	65
2006-3	1	--	--	4	1	2	2	7	6	1	8	3	6	11	13	--	--	65
2006-4	1	--	--	4	1	2	1	6	7	2	7	4	5	9	14	2	--	65
2007-1	1	--	--	2	3	--	2	3	9	3	8	4	3	9	14	4	--	65
2007-2	2	--	--	1	3	--	2	2	10	3	6	6	--	8	14	8	--	65
2007-3	2	--	--	--	4	--	2	2	7	6	1	9	2	6	11	13	--	65
2007-4	2	--	--	--	4	--	2	1	5	7	2	8	3	5	9	14	2	64
2008-1	1	1	--	--	2	2	--	2	3	8	3	9	3	3	9	14	4	64
2008-2	1	1	--	--	1	3	--	2	2	9	3	7	5	--	8	14	8	64

Descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables that will be included in the analysis are reported in the Appendix. As it can be observed, our resulting panel contains 1,934 observations.

Dependent variable

Most empirical literature on first mover advantages uses market share as the dependent variable. According to previous research, this increases the likelihood of finding them and could strongly bias the results (VanderWerf and Mahon, 1997). Recently, Lieberman (2009) suggests that FMA's benefits *pertain to economic profit; however, many studies focus on market share, which is easier to measure*. For this reason, profitability is recommended as a more adequate proxy of performance when testing for first mover advantages (Lieberman and Montgomery, 1998). In our empirical setting the profitability of firm is measured through the margin EBITDA (Earnings Before Interests, Tax, Depreciation and Amortization) divided by Total Revenues of the firm. The availability of data allows us to use quarterly information.

Independent variables

Order of market entry. Different concepts of pioneering have been used when modelling first mover advantages. Brown and Lattin (1994) point out that there has been some disagreement about what exactly pioneering means. Whereas some researchers only use the order of entry as their main variable, other authors combine it with complementary variables. For example, Urban *et al*. (1986), in their model of relative market share, use what they call the lag between entries, measured as the number of years elapsed between the entries of two different brands. In a similar vein, Brown and Lattin (1994) introduce the ratio between the time in the market of a late entrant and the time in the market of the pioneer in a market share attraction model. Our identification of first movers take into account the idea we have 19

independent markets and the first mover advantage should be related to the order of entry in each of these markets. Accordingly, we define a set of dummy variables which takes into account whether the firm is the pioneer, the second entrant, the third entrant or a late follower, with the last category serving as the base case. To define pioneer we consider the first firm or the first two firms -when the lead time that separates both is negligible- to enter in a particular market.[4]

Pace of market growth. The theoretical development exposed above mentions the path of market evolution of a particular industry as one of the environmental enablers or disablers of order of market entry advantages. Market evolution is usually characterized by an initial period of slow growth, followed by an increase or “sales takeoff” and a later phase of market maturity or decline. This market evolution has been previously analyzed in the context of mobile communications industry in terms of its diffusion (Gruber and Verboven, 2001a, 2001b; Doganoglu and Grzybowski, 2007). We have calculated pace of market growth, using the population of users per market on a yearly basis. In this way, our market growth variable measures the increase in the number of users on a yearly basis.

Technology discontinuity. The pace of technology evolution has been also defined as an environmental enabler or disabler of first mover advantages. As Suarez and Lanzolla (2007:382) suggest *different product categories may experience very different paces of technology evolution up to OM*. In particular, European mobile communications has a very specific “guided” technology evolution. As we previously mentioned, technological change in mobile communications is not firm specific. More specifically, the development of the industry has been managed in supranational arenas. This has provided homogeneity and favoured, for instance, roaming agreements across European countries. Characterizing technology evolution in mobile communications, GSM and UMTS were established as

[4] There is no case with three or more operators entering the market at the same time.

technology standards in the Euro zone.[5] We account for technology evolution introducing a dummy variable called UMTS which takes value 1 from the moment in which the first company in a market adopts this technology and 0 previously to this moment. With this we assume that once a firm adopts a particular technology, this technology is available in the market.

Control variables

In addition to the variables used to test the hypotheses proposed above and the order of entry, we also control for other factors. First, we control for the fact that the operator was the former landline state monopolist. Former monopolists may have advantages in terms of market knowledge or they may be better able to cope with the specificities of the institutional context in which the activities are going to be developed. Additionally, there is evidence that shows that some governments could have chosen the timing of deregulation of their mobile markets according to the productivity of their national firms (Duso and Roller, 2003), which suggests the convenience of distinguishing between first mover advantages and other explanations of profitability differences. Despite the fact that monopolists were, in many instances, the pioneers, there are, at least, two differences with the variable accounting for the pioneer. On the one hand, in some countries the monopolist was not the first firm to enter the market. On the other hand, the way in which pioneers have been defined (the first firms entering the market in a window of six months) opens the possibility of having more than one "pioneer" for the same country. The expected sign is that former monopolists better perform than the rest of competitors, that is, we expect a positive and significant sign. We also calculate a measure for country specific rivalry counting the number of firms operating in each market. Our expectation is that less concentrated countries should show lower

[5] Gandal (2002) discusses the implications of setting a common standard vs. leaving the market to determine one (or several) of them.

profitability, that is, we expect negative and significant sign. Finally, we also define country and year time dummies in order to control for country and time specific influences respectively.

5. RESULTS

Table 4 shows robust estimates (pooled OLS) of the impact of pace of market change and technological discontinuity in order-of-market-entry-based firms' profitability. To test our hypotheses, we run six models. In Model 1 we only introduce the control variables. In Model 2 we add the dummy variables accounting for order of market entry. Model 3 introduces the direct effects of pace of market growth and technological discontinuity. The interaction variables in Models 4 to 6 show the impact of pace of market growth and technological discontinuities on the competitive performance of first, second and third movers. Model 4 show the role of these variables on pioneer's performance. Model 5 introduces the interaction between pace of market growth and technological discontinuity and second and third entrants' performance. In Model 6, we introduce dummy variables to account for time as long with all the other variables defined in this study.

TABLE 4. THE EFFECT OF PIONEERING ON PROFITABILITY

Dependent variable	EBITDA (1)	EBITDA (2)	EBITDA (3)	EBITDA (4)	EBITDA (5)	EBITDA (6)
Pioneer		0,394***	0,398***	0,471***	0,691***	0,690***
		(7,67)	(8,37)	(8,43)	(4,75)	(4,79)
Second entrant		0,258***	0,265***	0,278***	0,447***	0,449***
		(4,83)	(5,31)	(5,92)	(2,98)	(3,02)
Third entrant		0,174***	0,173***	0,182***	0,473***	0,474***
		(3,27)	(3,24)	(3,92)	(3,19)	(3,23)
Market growth			-0,305***	-0,379***	-0,306**	-0,095
			(-6,90)	(-5,08)	(-1,96)	(-0,60)
Technological discontinuity			0,048***	0,149***	0,470***	0,433***
			(4,72)	(7,80)	(3,49)	(3,25)
Pioneer*MG				0,185**	0,112	0,157
				(2,39)	(0,71)	(1,03)
Pioneer*TD				-0,189***	-0,510***	-0,519***
				(-9,01)	(-3,80)	(-3,90)
Second entrant*MG					0,198	0,234
					(1,18)	(1,43)
Second entrant*TD					-0,309***	-0,315**
					(-2,25)	(-2,32)
Third entrant*MG					-0,287	-0,251
					(-1,44)	(-1,30)
Third entrant*TD					-0,375***	-0,385***
					(-2,77)	(-2,87)
Former state monopolist	0,159***	0,038***	0,041***	0,038***	0,039***	0,039***
	(16,68)	(5,76)	(5,74)	(5,29)	(5,32)	(5,25)
Number of operators	-0,010	0,008	-0,049***	-0,052***	-0,054***	-0,078***
	(-0,80)	(0,72)	(-3,91)	(-4,38)	(-4,63)	(-6,07)
Constant	0,271***	-0,013	0,270***	0,239***	0,039	-0,033
	(5,05)	(-0,21)	(4,32)	(3,67)	(0,28)	(-0,23)
Year dummies	No	No	No	No	No	Yes***
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	1934	1934	1934	1934	1934	1934
Adjusted R-Squared	0.18	0.28	0.36	0.41	0.43	0.46
F-test vs. 1		96.64***	63.49***	54.54***	50.90***	33.24***
F-test vs. 2			57.30***	46.83***	35.04***	19.68***
F-test vs. 3				71.38***	32.62***	15.96***
F-test vs. 4					9.19***	6.27***
F-test vs. 5						5.60***

Focusing on the global fit of our estimations, we can observe that the adjusted R-squared varies between 0.18 and 0.46, depending on the model chosen. Importantly, the nested models present an increasing (and significant) fit, with the full model (Model 6) having the highest value (0.46) and being preferred to the other ones. This can be also inferred from the F-tests. In Model 2, as expected, the variables capturing the order of market entry are positive and highly significant. In other words, the order of market entry explains profitability differences between mobile telecommunication firms. Specifically, pioneers have a higher profitability than second and third entrants. Model 3 introduces the direct effects of pace of market growth and technological discontinuity. Surprisingly, the overall effect of pace of market growth on firms' profitability is negative, pointing out that firms are not able to benefit from the fact that new consumers use telecommunication services. Conversely, the overall impact of technological discontinuity on profitability is positive. Therefore, the changes in the technology that supports the telecommunication services provided are positive in terms of the profitability earned by the firms operating in the market. Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c focus on the role of pace of market growth and, jointly, Models 4 and 5 allow us to assess its net effect on order-of-market-entry-based firms' profitability. Model 4 and Model 5 show the moderating effect of pace of market growth and technological discontinuity distinguishing between the pioneer and its followers. Several of these interactions are significant and help us to explain profitability differences in the European telecommunication industry. The net effect of pace of market growth on first mover, second mover and third movers' profitability is negative. The interaction coefficients pioneer*MG, second entrant*MG and third entrant*MG are either not significant or, in the case of the pioneer (in Model 4), unable to compensate for the negative net direct effect. Overall, we can conclude that the pace of market growth negatively affects first, second and third movers' profitability.

Thus, based on Model 5, hypothesis 1a is confirmed whereas hypotheses 1b and 1c are not corroborated.

Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c focus on the role of technological discontinuity. In all models, the direct effect of technological discontinuity on the profitability of firms is positive whereas the net effect on the pioneer is negative. Given that our definition of the different types of entrants includes four categories, the estimation of column 5 adds the moderating effect of both pace of market growth and technological discontinuity for the second and third mover. Both direct effects remain significant and maintain their signs. A number of interaction effects between pace of market growth and technological discontinuity and order of market entry dummies are significant. The net effect of this variable is negative only in the case of the pioneer, with the second, third and subsequent entrants enjoying the benefits of changes in the technology that underlies the service provided. Consequently, hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c are supported.

Model 6 presents the full model, with the introduction of time dummies. The results of the F-test, which compares the nested models, lead us to conclude that this is the preferred model. The reason to delay the introduction of the time dummies up to this point has to do with their potential to capture the effects of market growth. In Model 6 we consider the possibility that the significance of market growth may be partially driven by the passage of time. In order to avoid any confounding effects– i.e. to disentangle the effect of market growth from other time related factors– we also control for time effects. In fact, the observation of the coefficients corresponding to this variable (both the ones accounting for direct and moderating effects) reveal that the introduction of time dummies in the model slightly modify some of our previous results. More precisely, the direct effect of market growth becomes non-significant whereas no change is observed for the effect of technical discontinuity on profitability. Pioneers' profitability is reduced with technology changes,

whereas all the followers (specially the last entrants) do benefit from them. Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c are confirmed. Conversely, nothing can be said about Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c.

A way to ease the interpretation of our results is to estimate average profitability via-a-vis order of market entry. Based on Model 6's coefficients and assuming average values for all the variables different from "order of entry" and its interactions. In Table 5 we calculate the average predicted profitability for first, second and third movers, in the case with technological discontinuity and without technological discontinuity. As it can be observed, pioneers do have a profitability advantage regardless of the technological context. Yet, pioneers' advantage is clearly eroded in the case in which technological discontinuities do occur. More precisely, a change in the technology supporting telecommunication services reduces their profitability from 0.40 to 0.32. Contrarily, second and third entrants seem to obtain clear benefits from technological discontinuities: the profitability of the second entrant increases from 0.18 to 0.30, whereas the one of the third entrant changes from 0.12 to 0.17.

TABLE 5. PROFITABILITY PREDICTIONS (EBITDA)

Full Sample (1998-2008)			
No tech discontinuity	**Pioneer**	**Second**	**Third**
	0.4	0.18	0.12
Tech discontinuity	**Pioneer**	**Second**	**Third**
	0.32	0.30	0.17

Sample 1 (1998-2001)			
	Pioneer	**Second**	**Third**
Mean + St.	0.29	0.24	-0.20
Mean	0.40	0.10	-0.08
Mean - St.	0.51	-0.04	0.04

Sample 2 (2002-2008)			
No tech discontinuity	**Pioneer**	**Second**	**Third**
Mean + St.	0.45	0.30	0.27
Mean	0.44	0.30	0.24
Mean - St.	0.43	0.30	0.22
Tech discontinuity	**Pioneer**	**Second**	**Third**
Mean + St.	0.41	0.36	0.32
Mean	0.40	0.36	0.29
Mean - St.	0.39	0.37	0.26

Additional results

In order to test for the robustness of our results, we then ran the same models shown in Table 4 by breaking down the sample into two subsamples. Figure 1 shows that two different periods can be clearly detected in the evolution of this industry. In the first one, from 1998 to 2001, market growth is abrupt and averages a 45%/year. In the second one, from 2002 to 2008, market growth stabilizes and averages a 10%/year. Based on these observations, we broke our samples into two separate periods: 1998 to 2001 and 2001 to 2008.

FIGURE 1. AVERAGE MARKET GROWTH (1998-2008)

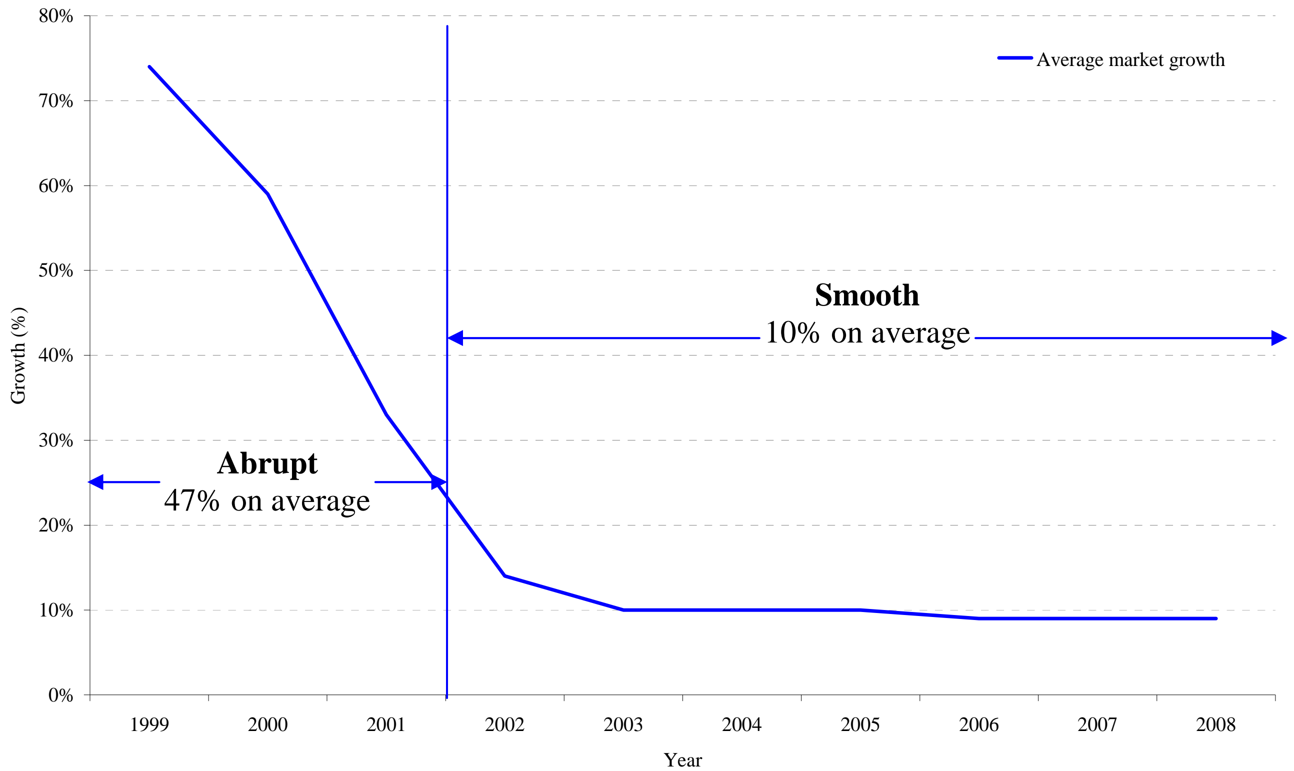

Table 6 shows model estimations for the first period (1998-2001). In this period, there is no possibility of analyzing the impact of technological discontinuity on performance, as UMTS was not in use in any of the countries analysed. Several points are noteworthy. First, we can observe a slight increase in the global adjustment of the model. Second, the full model (Model 6) presents the highest R-squared (0.49), although the improvement over Model 5 is not significant. Third, some of the control variables lose their significance. The condition of former state monopolist positively affects profitability but it is only significant in three over the six models we estimate. On the contrary, the number of firms operating in the market is not significant in any of the estimations. The pattern of influences of the dummies accounting for the order of entry is respected in models 2 and 3. In both cases pioneers have a higher profitability than followers, reinforcing the idea that pioneers advantages are important in our setting.

TABLE 6. THE EFFECT OF PIONEERING ON PROFITABILITY
1998-2001

Dependent variable	EBITDA (1)	EBITDA (2)	EBITDA (3)	EBITDA (4)	EBITDA (5)	EBITDA (6)
Pioneer		0.778***	0.779***	1.065***	0.806***	0.786***
		(10.14)	(-11.32)	(7.86)	(8.10)	(8.00)
Second entrant		0.452***	0.454***	0.540***	0.067	0.049
		(4.71)	(-5.06)	(6.33)	(0.52)	(0.38)
Third entrant		0.260***	0.254***	0.322***	0.336***	0.312***
		(3.07)	(3.30)	(3.87)	(3.06)	(2.81)
Market growth			-0.206***	-0.031	-0.351***	-0.257*
			(-2.98)	(-0.28)	(-2.87)	(-1.93)
Pioneer*MG				-0.425***	-0.055	-0.029
				(-2.69)	(-0.36)	(-0.20)
Second entrant*MG					0.881***	0.905***
					(4.19)	(4.31)
Third entrant*MG					-0.095	-0.064
					(-0.47)	(-0.33)
Former state monopolist	0.319***	0.036	0.040	0.039	0.058*	0.060*
	(-9.48)	(1.05)	(1.15)	(1.20)	(1.82)	(1.83)
Number of operators	0.251	0.246	0.248	0.250	0.249	0.171
	(1.00)	(1.08)	(1.09)	(1.20)	(1.33)	(0.88)
Constant	-0.969	-1.330	-1.184	-1.322	-1.076	-0.844
	(-0.96)	(-1.46)	(-1.29)	(-1.53)	(-1.43)	(-1.11)
Year dummies	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	405	405	405	405	405	405
Adjusted R-Squared	0.28	0.43	0.44	0.45	0.48	0.49
F-test vs. 1		54.66***	46.11***	34.53***	33.64***	29.07***
F-test vs. 2			8.88***	10.95***	9.97***	7.24***
F-test vs. 3				7.24***	7.79***	4.79***
F-test vs. 4					10.60***	5.46***
F-test vs. 5						1.11

The estimations presented in Models 3 to 6 assess the influence of pace of market growth on order of market entry performance. Model 3 analyzes the direct impact of pace of market growth on the profitability of market participants. The coefficient is negative and highly significant, meaning that, overall, market growth negatively affects performance. Model 4 introduces the moderating effect of market growth on pioneers. The result shows that the pace of market evolution negatively affects pioneers' profitability. Finally, Models 5 and 6

introduce the moderating effect of pace of market growth on the second and third entrants and leads to a similar conclusion: pioneers are worse off with an abrupt pace of market evolution. However, second movers benefit from an abrupt pace of market growth whereas third movers' profitability is negatively affected by an abrupt pace of market growth. Overall, these results provide some support for Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1b, whereas Hypothesis 1c is not confirmed.

Also in this case, to make the interpretation of our results more immediate, in Table 5 we show the predictions on profitability for the period 1998 to 2001 (Sample 1). The sequence followed for predicting profitability for the sample between 1998 and 2001 is analogous to the one followed for the full sample. We evaluate our profitability coefficients for three scenarios to account for the variability in pace of market growth in this period. Therefore, along with the profitability coefficients calculated in correspondence of the average pace of market growth – i.e. 45%/year – we also estimated coefficients for cases of even higher market growth – please refer to the line "mean + St.Dev." in Table 5– and for cases of lower market growth - please refer to line "mean - St.Dev." in table 5. Pioneers obtain a higher performance regardless of the pace of market growth. However, their advantage is strongly eroded in the case of very high pace of market growth is considered and pioneer's profitability is reduced by 11%. Conversely, second entrants obtain clear benefits from high rates of market growth: in this case the profitability of the second entrant increases from 0.10 to 0.24. Third entrants' profitability is also reduced by the effect of market growth (-12% when a change in one standard deviation in market growth rates is considered).

The results for the second period estimations (2002-2008) can be seen in Table 7. The fit of the 6 models ranges from 0.29 to 0.57, with Model 6 being the preferred, according to the F-test. Control variables are highly significant for all the models and present the expected signs. Order of entry has, again, a positive effect on the profitability of the operator,

reinforcing the conclusion that pioneering is important in this industry. Turning to Model 6, it can be observed that market growth has a slightly positive and significant impact on first mover profitability. Therefore, in a scenario with a smooth market growth, the effect of this variable changes, being slightly beneficial for the competitive performance of the first mover. This small impact of the pace of market growth on profitability also affects second and third entrants, although with different signs. In this case, second entrants' profitability is almost unaffected by the pace of market evolution, while third entrants' profitability slightly benefits from it. Regarding technological discontinuity, the results are consistent with the full sample estimations. Regardless of the scenario considered, the pioneer is always worse off with a change in the technology supporting the services. In contrast, all the followers benefit from it. Overall these estimations provide support for hypotheses 2a, 2b and 2c whereas no clear evidence is provided for hypotheses 1a and 1b.

TABLE 7. THE EFFECT OF PIONEERING ON PROFITABILITY
2002-2008

Dependent variable	EBITDA (1)	EBITDA (2)	EBITDA (3)	EBITDA (4)	EBITDA (5)	EBITDA (6)
Pioneer		0.328*** (6.24)	0.327*** (6.35)	0.401*** (7.96)	0.323*** (3.27)	0.311*** (3.23)
Second entrant		0.246*** (4.61)	0.245*** (4.69)	0.255*** (4.96)	0.192* (1.92)	0.188* (1.93)
Third entrant		0.180*** (3.33)	0.178*** (3.37)	0.181*** (3.57)	0.091 (0.91)	0.088 (0.91)
Market growth			0.059 (0.94)	-0.064 (-0.57)	-3.300** (-2.11)	-3.331** (-2.16)
Technological discontinuity			0.038*** (4.44)	0.103*** (6.76)	0.441*** (3.78)	0.422*** (3.84)
Pioneer*MG				0.117 (1.00)	3.344** (2.13)	3.450** (2.22)
Pioneer*TD				-0.127*** (-8.18)	-0.466*** (-4.00)	-0.461*** (-4.10)
Second entrant*MG					3.227** (2.06)	3.305** (2.13)
Second entrant*TD					-0.361*** (-3.06)	-0.361*** (-3.16)
Third entrant*MG					3.629** (2.29)	3.708** (2.37)
Third entrant*TD					-0.372*** (-3.17)	-0.375*** (-3..30)
Former state monopolist	0.118*** (15.96)	0.036*** (6.86)	0.035*** (6.65)	0.037*** (5.90)	0.037*** (6.62)	0.038*** (6.68)
Number of operators	-0.045*** (-3.57)	-0.027*** (-2.45)	-0.036*** (-3.17)	-0.035*** (-3.16)	-0.037*** (-3.49)	-0.052*** (-4.26)
Constant	0.473*** (9.24)	0.215*** (3.62)	0.221*** (4.01)	0.183*** (3.34)	0.274** (2.42)	0.292*** (2.65)
Year dummies	No	No	No	No	No	Yes***
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	1529	1529	1529	1529	1529	1529
Adjusted R-Squared	0.29	0.43	0.44	0.48	0.55	0.57
F-test vs. 1		111.83***	71.67***	74.53***	52.76***	35.08***
F-test vs. 2			10.20***	23.23***	14.97***	10.41***
F-test vs. 3				33.69***	15.39***	11.11***
F-test vs. 4					3.43***	5.37***
F-test vs. 5						4.72***

Profitability predictions for pioneers, second and third entrants for the period 2002-2008 can be also found in Table 5. Consistently with our previous conclusions, pioneers always perform better than followers, reinforcing the intuition that FMA not only exist, but they are highly sustainable in the mobile telecommunications industry. As mentioned above pioneers slightly benefit from a higher pace of market growth when this variable evolves smoothly. More precisely, a higher pace of market evolution increases their profitability from 0.44 to 0.45 in a context of no technological discontinuities (from 0.40 to 0.41 with technological discontinuity). The pace of market growth seems to be almost irrelevant for second movers, given that it always presents values around 0.30 in a scenario with no technological discontinuity and 0.36 with technological discontinuity. Third entrants clearly take advantage from a higher pace of market growth. Their profitability increases from 0.24 to 0.27 when there is no technological discontinuity and from 0.29 to 0.32 when the technological discontinuity occurs. Apparently, the pace of market growth has a negligible impact on the profitability of pioneers and second movers and only third movers obtain a slightly significant advantage from it. The impact of technological discontinuity on performance presents a clearly defined pattern: it penalizes first movers' performance and benefits the followers' position. Importantly, technological discontinuities erode pioneers' profitability regardless of the sign of market growth, decreasing their performance. Consistently with the previous findings, our results show that a technological discontinuity serves as a weapon through which followers could see the advantage of the pioneer eroded.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we have sought to shed more light on the relationships between pace of market evolution, technological discontinuity, order of market entry, and firms' profitability.

Our paper contributes to the existing literature along several dimensions. First, we formally bring in existing literature the role of environmental dynamics in order-of-market-entry-based advantages. We have hypothesized that pace of market evolution and technological discontinuity affect the performance of first mover, second movers and third movers in a different way. Building upon industrial economics and technological management literature, we have hypothesized that technological discontinuity decreases first mover's profitability whereas it has the potential to increase second mover and third mover's profitability. We have tested our hypotheses in the context of the European mobile communication industry and model estimations provide very strong support for our hypotheses. Our results confirm that, overall, technological changes serve as a mechanism through which followers can decrease their profitability gap via-a-vis first movers. As mentioned above, this supports our hypothesis and the conclusions of Suarez and Lanzolla (2007). We have then elaborated on the role of pace of market growth and hypothesized that it negatively affects first mover's profitability whereas its impact on second movers' and third movers' profitability is positive. Model estimations point to mixed results.

In terms of the effect of market growth our results are somewhat ambiguous. Although they tend to support the assertion that the higher the pace of market growth, the higher the loss in first mover's profitability, they present variations depending on the model estimated and the sample used. Therefore, a conservative assessment of our results should lead us to conclude that the effect of this variable should be further investigated.

Second, we provide an empirical test of order of market entry based advantages in the service sector context – i.e. mobile communications. One of the most surprising gaps in the literature is the absence of evidence for service firms. Virtually existing theory to date has been developed, implicitly or explicitly, with respect to manufactured products (Song, Di Benedetto and Zhao 1999). Manufactured products and service products cannot be equated

(e.g. Lovelock 1983; Bharawaj, Varadarajan and Fahy, 1993) and generalizations of applying existing FMA theory to services are likely to be misleading. The lack of a FMA theory for service products is even more surprising if we consider the growing importance of the service industry. Services now account for more than 50% of the labour force in Brazil, Russia, Japan and Germany, as well as 75% of the labour force in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Third, the additional results we have run trigger some important considerations. The analysis of market growth clearly shows two different periods: in the period 1998 to 2001 market growth was abrupt when compared to the period 2002-2008. We have used this breakdown to split the sample. As expected the hypotheses on the role of technological discontinuity are confirmed in both samples. Conversely, the pace of market growth behaves differently, and in an opposite way, in the two samples. This prompts us to induce that the relationship between pace of market change and competitive performance might be non linear. Specifically, we hypothesize that it should have an inverted U-shape. This consideration opens up an avenue for further investigation.

With respect to the managerial and policy implications, our results clearly show that, irrespective of market and technology dynamics, overall, first movers are more profitable and that only the pace of technological discontinuity can clearly decrease the extent of this advantage. While this is good news for first movers, it opens up concerns for followers. For the latter, focusing on technological innovation should be the strategic priority.

Our results show that former state monopolists seem to have an inherited advantage from their previous position. Similarly, they show that the lower the number of competitors in a particular market, the higher their average profitability. Jointly, these results might have very strong policy implications. The circumstance that first movers seem to enjoy constantly higher profitability than their followers, prompts us to argue that policy makers may try to

create more favourable conditions for the latter. Some of these measures have already been taken, for example, in terms of mobile number portability or the concession of new licensees. However, in light of our results they seem not to have been effective enough.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 8. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (FULL SAMPLE)

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
EBITDA (1)	1,934	0.29	0.26	-3.57	0.58	1.00							
Pioneer (2)	1,934	0.51	0.50	0	1	0.38	1.00						
Second entrant (3)	1,934	0.21	0.41	0	1	-0.10	-0.53	1.00					
Third entrant (4)	1,934	0.24	0.43	0	1	-0.26	-0.58	-0.30	1.00				
Market growth (5)	1,934	0.18	0.20	-0.13	1.22	-0.23	-0.02	0.00	0.01	1.00			
Technological discontinuity (6)	1,934	0.51	0.50	0	1	0.17	-0.02	-0.02	0.02	-0.44	1.00		
Former state monopolist (7)	1,934	0.36	0.48	0	1	0.31	0.60	-0.32	-0.34	0.02	-0.03	1.00	
Average market share (8)	1,934	3.54	0.76	2	5	-0.17	-0.21	0.02	0.17	-0.06	0.22	-0.14	1

TABLE 9. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (1998-2001)

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EBITDA (1)	405	0.16	0.44	-3.57	0.58	1						
Pioneer (2)	405	0.51	0.50	0	1	0.50	1					
Second entrant (3)	405	0.21	0.41	0	1	-0.18	-0.53	1				
Third entrant (4)	405	0.25	0.43	0	1	-0.34	-0.60	-0.30	1			
Market growth (5)	405	0.47	0.27	0.07	1.22	-0.09	-0.15	0.00	0.12	1		
Former state monopolist (6)	405	0.37	0.48	0	1	0.37	0.65	-0.40	-0.34	0.00	1	
Average market share (7)	405	3.39	0.70	2	5	-0.20	-0.20	0.05	0.14	0.18	-0.14	1

TABLE 10. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (2002-2008)

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
EBITDA (1)	1,529	0.32	0.16	-1.8	0.57	1							
Pioneer (2)	1,529	0.51	0.50	0	1	0.41	1						
Second entrant (3)	1,529	0.21	0.41	0	1	-0.07	-0.53	1					
Third entrant (4)	1,529	0.24	0.43	0	1	-0.27	-0.57	-0.30	1				
Market growth (5)	1,529	0.10	0.07	-0.1	0.59	0.02	0.08	0.02	-0.10	1			
Technological discontinuity (6)	1,529	0.64	0.48	0	1	0.06	-0.03	-0.03	0.04	-0.21	1		
Former state monopolist (7)	1,529	0.35	0.48	0	1	0.35	0.59	-0.30	-0.34	0.06	-0.03	1	
Average market share (8)	1,529	3.58	0.77	2	5	-0.26	-0.21	0.01	0.17	-0.11	0.21	-0.13	1

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