

## **After D-day? Destruction, Catch up, and Leapfrog**

What are the long-term economic effects of conflicts? This paper investigates this question by focusing on the case of the Allied landings in 1944 Normandy. Using a difference-in-differences estimator, we show that cities exposed to combats for a longer period experienced a fall of their population just after the war, then caught up and even overtook non-affected municipalities. This trend is specific to combat exposure and not to civilian casualties or bombings. Additional results clarify the conditions explaining this effect. We analyze a large inventory of all dwelling units 25 years after the war. The reconstruction of larger and better dwelling units explains our results. Reconstruction then drove both internal and external migration to affected cities.