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978-0-521-36480-5 - Coping with City Growth During the British Industrial Revolution

Jeffrey G. Williamson

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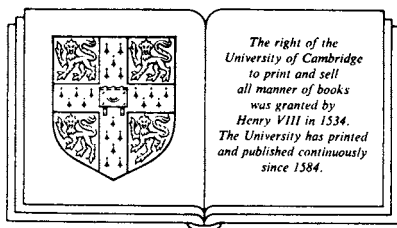
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Coping with city growth during the British industrial revolution

JEFFREY G. WILLIAMSON
Department of Economics, Harvard University



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Acknowledgments

The idea for this book began to sprout in the summer of 1982, when I returned to the University of Wisconsin from a year's leave at the World Bank. Two different research projects seemed to converge at that time. Allen Kelley and I had almost finished another fruitful collaboration, this one to be published in 1984 as *What Drives Third World City Growth?* The collaboration entailed an ambitious effort (too ambitious, we sometimes thought) to model Third World urbanization experience from the early 1960s to the 1980s, during a period of spectacular progress and enormous problems in cities throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Fresh from studying these contemporary industrial revolutions, I then resumed work on the First Industrial Revolution, which had been left brewing on the back burner, an effort that eventually appeared in 1985 as *Did British Capitalism Breed Inequality?*

It occurred to me that these two interests might be merged with profit. That is, the book with Allen Kelley suffered from ignoring historical precedents while my work on the British industrial revolution had ignored the urban dimensions that attracted so much contemporary interest in the nineteenth century, long before the same debates resumed in the 1960s. Indeed, *Coping with City Growth* makes extensive use of contemporary Third World experience. It exploits the contemporary Third World literature to help sharpen the historical issues, and it also uses Third World evidence to help form comparative judgments of city-growth performance and problems during the First Industrial Revolution. I hope the reader finds some value in writing history backwards in this way. I certainly have.

I have accumulated many intellectual obligations along the way. Although Allen Kelley has never seen this book, my collaborative work with him in the past has had a clear impact on it. He has my belated thanks. Others have read bits and pieces of this book along the way, and have been otherwise helpful in sharing their data and expertise. I feel extraordinarily fortunate to have so many friends to thank, and here they are: David Bloom,

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Most important, I want to thank my children for putting up with my compulsiveness over the years. Apparently it did them little harm, since Amy, Kirk, Hilary, and Megan have all turned out to be marvelous adults, and they are great company besides. This book is dedicated to them.

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