Deurbanization: *(left)* Detroit, Michigan, August 1993; *(right)* same house, October 2002. Photographs by Camilo Vergara.

Three Episodes of Change

At the risk of some caricature: from a largely Western perspective, together with the flux of urban space in its contemporary progress, at least two broadly felt episodes have shaped the course of relevant events, with a third possibly in the offing.[6] The first occurred roughly between the late 1960s and into the 1970s. During this time, there was considerable social upheaval around issues of basic rights, social justice, and access to power. There was also widespread social concern for the sustainability of resources and limits to modern expansion. In addition, the marketplace was in a wrenching condition precipitated by, among other events, the oil embargo of 1973 and the onset of economic stagflation. Arising from this concatenation, there was widespread concern for diversity, concomitant increases in social pluralism and environmentalism, some decline in business confidence, a certain loss of faith in government, and a serious questioning of the hegemony of positivist interpretations of people and their worlds, at least in intellectual circles. More squarely in the realm of urban affairs, what this episode brought down or substantially weakened was an era of big plans and governmental programs—or at least their unquestioned ambition and strongly held beliefs in the possibility of social engineering and management. In a sense, for many, the idea of the "modern city"—the city of the 1956 conference—came to an end, coinciding with substantial real economic shifts toward post-Fordism and an appreciable rise in tertiary sectors of production and a spatial relocation of services, building, and infrastructure, usually pushing cities in decentralized yet multicentered directions, sometimes referred to as "bundled deconcentration."[7] User and citizen participation in municipal and other related affairs increased significantly, and civil society proliferated and extended its active reach, resulting