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Over the last 30 years, many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have experienced a strong expansion of their urban economy, irreversible changes to their rural economy, an increase in urban land values, internal migration, and the urbanization of the poor. Today, in many large cities of the region, these factors have facilitated and intensified the fragmentation of construction activity into almost separate spheres of production, with little or no reciprocal connections in training, know-how, and career-development paths, and consequent limitations in cross-system application of technology transfer.

In such context, the discursive references of vernacular to create technically and culturally exclusive niche markets for architectural production could only reinforce the cross-market compartmentalization of building knowledge, and the subsequent inability of architecture to engage in social building production activities. Instead, this paper looks at the vernacular from a labour policy-making point of view, that is to integrate its '*on-the-job*' training conceptions within a design and technological vocabulary that envisages real building projects as training grounds, thereby projecting the latter as a vehicle through which labour development opportunities are created and linked.

*Keywords:*

*Industrial fragmentation, Labour training, Vernacular practice, Robust technology, Architectural design*

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