

Assessing the Extent of Non-acquisition of Building Permits among Housing Developers in Lusaka

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Abstract Shelter forms a basic human need as expounded by Marlow's Hierarchy of Needs. Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia, has experienced a massive population expansion since Zambia's independence in 1964 putting a pressure on the need for housing. However observation indicates that the mushrooming of settlements abrogates stipulated building regulations of Town Planning authorities. The safety and health tenets stipulated in the *Urban and Regional Planning Act of 2015* are flouted with impunity. A starting point of enquiry is the control of housing development that ought to be done by Town Planning authorities. The initial procedure is the granting of permission to housing developers through issuing of a building permit. The extent of housing developers not acquiring building permits was the focus of this study which utilised the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) approach. Respondents from Lusaka Town Planning authority and eight selected settlements were interviewed. In the preliminary enquiry, it was observed that the extent of non-acquisition of building permit was substantive. The main concern was therefore a critical limitation of housing developers seeking building permits. The majority of selected housing developers did not apply for authorisation during construction of their houses. This is attributed to what was identified in the core category as ignorance or lack of awareness of the permission seeking procedure by the selected housing developers. Finally, the concept identified in this study on the extent of unauthorised housing developers' non-acquisition of building permits is that, this is a wide spread phenomenon caused by ignorance of the process occasioned by a lack of sensitization by Town Planning authorities.

Keywords: *building permits, town planners, housing developers, communication, grounded theory*

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1. Introduction

Lusaka is the capital city of Zambia with an estimated population of 2.4 million inhabitants [1]. It is one of the fastest developing cities in southern Africa functioning as the commercial and government administrative centre of Zambia [2]. The early inhabitants of Lusaka were the Soli speaking people after which one of their chiefs the city is named. In 1905 with the development of the railway line from South Africa to the copper mines in the north, European settlements were formed. In 1913, Village Management Board was established to manage the affairs of the settlers [3]. Around 1926 the District Administrative headquarters relocated to Lusaka from Chilanga with Lusaka effectively becoming the Capital of the British Protectorate of Northern Rhodesia relocating from Livingstone [4]. The first mayor of the city was F. Payne in 1954. At independence in 1964, Lusaka became the capital of Zambia [5].

Decent and adequate shelter remains a challenge in Lusaka from rudimental structures in pre-colonial times

through to periods of independence and the current population expansion in modern urban settings. With the evolution of structured governments, responsibility of human habitation in urban environments has been tasked to local or civic authorities who plan and supervise the establishment of housing. Building regulations have been established to guide in the professional development of housing as a way of creating safe and healthy environments in which people would live [6]. On the other hand, entities engaging in the development of housing units are required to abide by these regulations and produce quality structures that meet the stipulated safety and health standards. Compliance by housing developers to the communicated building regulations coded in the laws therefore becomes imperative to guarantee the safety and health of the population. Therefore, the initial stages in housing construction involves a process of approval by civic authorities before construction commences. This process involves the submission of architectural drawings of the proposed house to Town Planning authorities who would then approve the plans and grant permission in the manner of a building permit for commencement of construction to uphold the safety and health of occupants later on.



Figure 1. Pre-colonial housing in Zambia –Undated [18]

2. Building Regulations

In the laws of Zambia, particular Acts of Law embody building regulations that govern the construction of houses. Amendments have been made over the years to enhance practising standards in construction. The Urban and Regional Planning (URP) Act of 2015 [7] replaced the Town and Country Planning Act of 1996. The URP Act, 2015 regulates on the safety and health requirements for constructing houses.

The Act firmly links the granting of building permission to safety and health of the proposed construction. Under Part VI titled *Planning application and permission*, Section 52, No. 3 (c) states, *‘the suitability of the premises upon which the development is to be undertaken relating to the safety health and planning requirements in respect of accommodation and sanitary facilities’*. Equally, under Section 53 No. 4, the Act refers to the granting of a building permit premised on two conditions namely, *‘(a) require the applicant to effect alterations or improvements to the premises relating to the standard of accommodation, facilities or amenities, the sanitary or safety arrangements or any other aspect of public convenience or health or police supervision of the premises concerned; or (b) are necessary or desirable to protect public health and safety.’* Even in the event that a building permit had been granted, the Act provides for the revocation of the permit on conditions that include abrogation of safety standards as alluded to in Section 57 No. 1 (c) *‘the amendment or revocation of the planning permission is necessary in the interest of public safety, security, peace, welfare or good order.’* In spite of these clearly stipulated building regulations, there is an apparent abrogation of these safety and health tenets among selected housing developers in Lusaka.

3. Unauthorised Housing Developments

The rapid population expansion and a critical shortage of housing in Lusaka alluded to above,

has created a desperate sociological and psychological dynamic that overlooks governing principles and regulation in housing development among a section of the population. Abrogation of the cited regulations above can be observed in a number of selected Townships in the city.

3.1. Abrogation of Safety Regulations

Building regulation stipulates the necessity of access roads for the public and emergency vehicles such as ambulances. Examples include the Public Roads Act of 2002 and URP Act, 2015 Part VIII Section 69 No. 1 (c) (ii) and No. 1 (d) (v) and (vii). Tenet (v) stipulates *‘the location or design of any means of access to a highway or the materials to be used in the construction of the highway’*, while tenet (vi) stipulates *‘the provision of any roads, surface water drainage, water supply or sewerage treatment or discharge, including sewage disposal plants.’*

In Garden-Chilulu Township, a series of houses were constructed without access roads bordering a sewerage treatment plant illustrated in Figure 2 and Figure 3 below.

At the heart of the city in Libala Township, apartments were developed on an access road that town planners designed to prevent residents entering a busy highway as they navigated their residential precincts (Figure 3 and Figure 4, note the white shade across the red roofs indicating road access in the satellite picture).

3.2. Abrogation of Health Regulations

Stipulation on adherence to health standards also forms a cardinal requirement to the granting of building permits. The Public Health Act is a key legislation on national health and is cited numerous by the URP Act, 2015 mentioned above. In Misisi Township, observation was made of houses being constructed in a garbage dumps and non-existent sanitation facilities (Figure 6 and Figure 7).



Figure 2. Series of houses with road access Source: Google maps

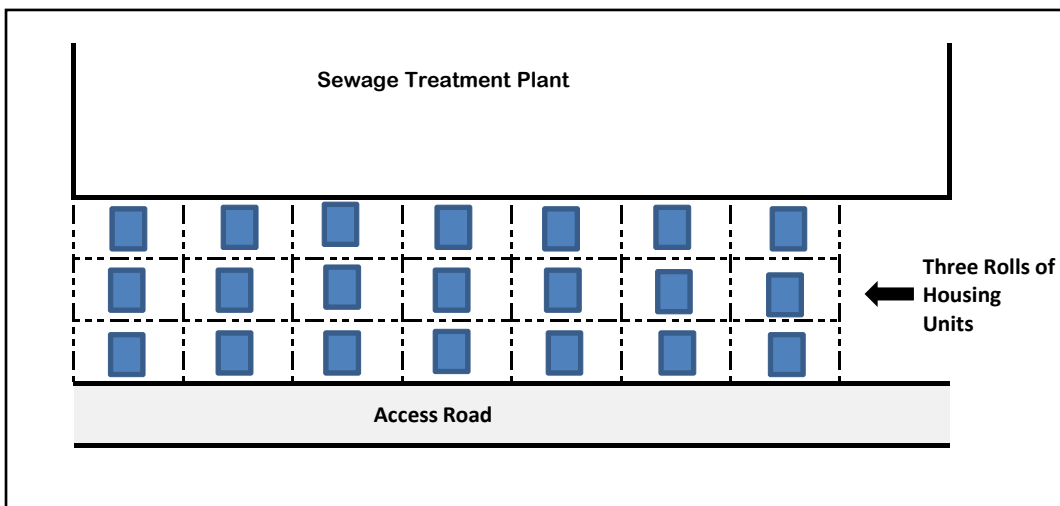


Figure 3. Sketch map portraying house arrangement in figure



Figure 4. Red-roofed apartments constructed on access road Google map



Figure 5. Apartments constructed on access road in Libala Township



Figure 6. A house being constructed in a garbage dump



Figure 7. A rudimentary latrine

4. Statement of the Problem

With a change in political regime in 1991 in Zambia, the liberalised environment included an upsurge in economic activities in Lusaka with an expanding

population. With the civic authority having been directed to sale their housing units, the housing industry begun experiencing a strong political influence. The majority of the population lacked the necessary funding to acquire plot units in regular procedures. These formed the

numbers that supported political leaders in their election periods. Thus regulation in acquisition of land became compromised on political patronage. In no time this became a cancer in the housing system and rapidly spread not only to land allocation but also the flouting of health and safety regulations in the construction of the houses themselves. The civic authority was basically overwhelmed with pressure in the demand of housing and the impunity of political influence in the housing enterprise. Water supply and sanitation dodges Lusaka residents causing perennial outbreaks of cholera each year. Accessibility of service vehicles such as fire tenders during emergencies compromises safety. Enquiry can therefore be made as to why building regulations stipulated for housing construction were not adhered to by selected housing developers?

One cardinal aspect for consideration is the procedure of legally constructing a house in Lusaka. The *Urban and Regional Planning Act of 2015* (URP Act, 2015) initiates this procedure at a level of a housing developer obtaining permission from town planners through a development (building) permit. Part VI of the URP Act termed *Planning Applications and Permissions*, under Section 52 No. (1), prescribes the imperative need for a development permit, '*planning permission for development shall be granted by way of development permits, subject to such terms, conditions and limitations as may be specified, for such period as may be specified and for any part of the site.*' Further No. (2) prescribes how one then obtains a development permit, '*an application for a development permit shall be made to the planning authority in the prescribed manner and form upon payment of the prescribed fee.*' It therefore follows that, with a development permit, the housing developer will adhere to safety and health regulations stipulated in the Act. It is apparent then that, with the observed abrogation of building regulations among selected housing developers in Lusaka, this process may have been circumvented by such developers.

5. Study on Development Permits

5.1. Objectives

The purpose of the study was to make an assessment of the communication dynamics that exist between Lusaka Town Planning authorities and unauthorised housing developers in selected townships of the city. This communication dynamics is thus between two entities: Town Planning authorities being custodians of building regulations that stipulates the safety and health requirements in housing construction and housing developers who are required to adhere to these regulations by acquisition of a building permit. As a starting point in assessing the communication dynamics between the two entities, the study sort to determine the extent to which housing developers in the selected townships endeavour to acquire building permits from Town Planning authorities before constructing their houses and thus uphold the stipulated safety and health standards. This extent on non-acquisition of building permit will *inform the nature of communication existing* between the two entities.

5.2. Literature Review

The phenomenon of illegal housing development with its implications has been recognised globally. Berrisford describes illegal construction as work done without a construction permit [8]. The implications on the health and safety of inhabitants have been cited by various scholars. The impact of such illegal construction include technical hazards and environmental violations [9]. Diverse combined factors are cited by scholars as fuelling this illegal construction drive.

5.2.1. Global Factors of Illegal Housing Development

Urbanization - Rapid urbanisation is seen as a major drive to populations being concentrated in particular land spaces [10].

Homelessness and poverty - have been cited as factors that fuel illegal construction. Desperate persons erect any illegal rudimental structures to abate the homelessness experienced. Poverty on the other hand draws people to urban settings to seek survival means where industries and businesses flourish [11].

Profitable speculation - Studies have revealed that a peculiar phenomenon is included in the factors that fuel illegal construction – profitable speculation. With the high costs involved in real estates and a high demand for building infrastructures, developers begin to build structures at a rapid rate, sometimes in unauthorised zones, to cash in on desperate people seeking housing or business infrastructures such as shops without obtaining building permission from local authorities [12]. Bribery is used at times to circumvent the process in order for constructions to be completed quickly and profits be realised from such buildings.

Building regulations - Daniel Phiri cites as a factor in fermenting illegal informal settlements the existing policies and legal corpus which have been ineffective in ensuring access to land, housing finance, and security of tenure [13]. South African National Building Standards (SANS) equally cites the challenge of adherence to building regulations as a cause of illegal construction [14].

Land use change -The UN-Habitat report of 2003 identifies a fundamental factor that creates illegal construction in originally legal situations. It highlights the change of planned land use that it protected by legal tenants to subdivisions that lack such legal provision. It states that unauthorised land developments or illegal subdivisions to settlements where the land has been subdivided, resold, rented or leased by its legal owner to people who build their houses upon the plots that they buy. The settlements are illegal owing to any combination of the following: low standard of services or infrastructure; breaches of land zoning; lack of planning and building permits; or the irregular nature of the land subdivision [14]. The report further points out that illegal subdivisions are very common in developing countries, but are not restricted to them or to occupation by people living in poverty. In Indonesia's Java, the government has identified illegal settlements as those on illegal lands such as along rail tracks, banks of rivers or steep slopes that are prone to disasters [15].

Inhabitants' culture - Another phenomenon that the UN-Habitat report of 2003 identifies as causing

abrogation of building regulations is the culture of people that include human dwellings. Civic authorities when drafting and enacting building regulations present a universal position and do not take into account cultural norms of habitation by the diverse population of towns and cities. The report states that adequacy is perceived very differently by different social groups and different cultures. A high rise flat would be regarded as an unacceptable place to bring up a family in Australia; but it is the usual thing in Lisbon, New York or Munich. Thus as populations migrate, they tend to carrying these cultural norms with them and inadvertently abrogate existing building regulations.

5.2.2. Zambian Factors of Illegal Housing Development

In Zambia, the national housing deficit stands at 2.8 million units and is projected to double by 2025, according to UN-Habitat [16]. In Lusaka, nearly 70 percent of all housing stock is substandard and informal and accommodates over two thirds of the city's population on 20 percent residential land. The high rate of population growth and urbanisation in Zambia requires that there are clear urban policy guidelines and strategies to guide housing and urban development [13].

Another challenge of housing in Lusaka cited by Habitat for Humanity is the level of incomes among the population stating that the 'higher' incomes and jobs in Zambia are concentrated in urban areas. This has led to an urbanisation rate that is almost twice the population growth rate [16]. In consequence, there is a higher demand for jobs which is slowing wage growth and increasing land and house prices beyond the reach of the average worker. Due to lack of affordable housing, about 70% of urban dwellers in the country live in slums with inadequate access to water, sanitation and extension facilities. The lack of decent housing exacerbates people's poverty.

Literature reviewed does not contain any reference to communication strategies of Town Planning authorities to sensitize housing developers on the legal requirements of obtaining building permits that would ensure safety and health standards are upheld in constructed houses. This becomes a critical departure point for this study. It begs the question of whether housing developers are aware of the requirement to obtain building permits which, if not, would be observed in the extent of the phenomenon. This precisely becomes the gap in the literature this study aimed at filling.

5.3. Methodology

The study utilised the Grounded Theory Method (GTM), a qualitative research design in which the enquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants [17]. This theory or an abstract analytical schema of process, is generated through an intensive inquiry of the experience of participants. The approach is termed 'grounded' since the theory-development does not come 'off the shelf,' but rather is generated or 'grounded' in data from participants who have experienced the process [17]. There are five procedural levels in this approach namely:

- Level 1: discovering the main concern (open coding)
- Level 2: identifying the core category (open coding)
- Level 3: identifying concepts (selective coding),
- Level 4: developing a theory (theoretical coding)
- Level 5: theoretical integration.

A preliminary enquiry is done to establish the basic sociological and psychological processes of the phenomenon under study in order to formulate enquiry for the first level.

The study selected eight townships in the city under four categories of high cost, medium cost, low cost and ungazetted housing. These were Meanwood Kwamwena, Silverest, Mtendere, Kanyama, Bauleni, Garden Chilulu, John Howard and Misisi.

The population of the study were Town Planning specialists at the Lusaka Civic Centre and residents of the selected 8 townships in the city. The sample size of the study varied at each level of enquiry with aggregates of 25 Town Planning experts and 154 housing developers as indicated in Figure 8 below. Semi-structured questionnaires and interviews were utilised in data collection as specified for each level.

The study begun with a preliminary enquiry that assessed the sociological and psychological issues regarding the phenomenon of unauthorised housing construction. Results from this preliminary enquiry informed the line of enquiry for discovering the *main concern* regarding communication between the two entities under study. At the first level of discovering the main concern, interviews were conducted and the process of open coding done. With the discovery of the main concern. Enquiry was then directed at identifying the *core category* through semi-structured interviews of selected respondents from the preceding enquiry. Findings were equally open coded and utilised to develop enquiry into saturating the core category and thus enabling the identification of *concepts* through the process of selective coding. From these concepts, articulation of the phenomenon which in this study is the extent of non-acquisition of building permits by unauthorised housing developers was done.

6. Study Findings

The levelled data collection in GTM is a deductive process that narrows down information to specific concepts that would form a general explanation on a phenomena under study. In this study, from preliminary enquiry to identification of concepts, there was a striving to understand the communication factor between Town Planning authorities and unauthorised housing developers that had a bearing on the extent of non-acquisition of building permit among the latter in selected Townships of Lusaka. The findings hinged on responding to the research question on why building regulations, in particular obtained of building permit, were not being adhered to by unauthorised housing developers which subsequently created a breach in the safety and health standards of constructed houses. The communication dynamics between the two entities was the focus in this research question.

A PRELIMINARY ENQUIRY (Establishing Basic Social & Psychological Processes)			
Lusaka Town Planning Authority		Housing Developers (General)	
Questionnaires (9)		Questionnaires (24)	
Town Planner (Head)	1	Meanwood	3
Town Planners	1	Silverest	3
Senior Land Surveyor	1	Mtendere East	3
Surveyors	1	Kanyama	3
Chief Building Inspector (Head)	1	Bauleni	3
Chief Health Inspector	1	Garden Chilulu	3
Senior Health Inspectors	1	John Howard	3
Health Inspectors	1	Misisi	3
Environmental Health Technologist	1		
	9		24
B Level 1: Discovering the MAIN CONCERN (Open Coding)			
Lusaka Town Planning Authority		Unauthorised Housing Developers	
Interview 9		Interview 80	
Town Planner (Head)	1	Meanwood	10
Town Planners	1	Silverest	10
Senior Land Surveyor	1	Mtendere East	10
Surveyors	1	Kanyama	10
Chief Building Inspector (Head)	1	Bauleni	10
Chief Health Inspector	1	Garden Chilulu	10
Senior Health Inspectors	1	John Howard	10
Health Inspectors	1	Misisi	10
Environmental Health Technologist	1		
	9		80
C Level 2: Identifying the CORE CATEGORY (open Coding)			
Lusaka Town Planning Authority		Unauthorised Housing Developers	
After discovering the <i>Main Concern</i> , five (5) civic officers interviewed above were selected based on their responses and in-depth interviews were conducted in order to identify the <i>Core Category</i> .	5	After discovering the <i>Main Concern</i> , forty (40) unauthorised housing developers interviewed above were selected based on their responses and in-depth interviews were conducted in order to identify the <i>Core Category</i> .	40
	5		40
D Level 3: Identifying CONCEPTS/VARIABLES (Selective Coding)			
Lusaka Town Planning Authority		Unauthorised Housing Developers	
With the <i>core category</i> identified, two (2) civic officers under core category only were selected based on their responses and conducted in-depth interviews to identify the <i>concepts/variables</i> on communication.	2	With the <i>core category</i> identified, ten (10) unauthorised housing developers under core category only were selected based on their responses and conducted in-depth interviews to identify <i>concepts/variables</i> on communication.	10
	2		10
Aggregate Totals	25		154

Figure 8. Study Sample & Study Tools Utilised

6.1. Preliminary Enquiry

In the preliminary findings, a dominant sociological process that was identified is the increasing need for

shelter by a rapidly expanding population in Lusaka. The nine (9) respondents from the Town planning authority indicated that, though the planning authority have put in place building regulations that would ensure safety and health standards are adhered to by housing developers, they experience abrogation as developers circumvent the process owing to the social pressure of survival. In responding to semi-structured questionnaires, Town Planners indicated that the choice of house construction in any area was influenced by psychological factors such as desperation, affordability, security of tenure and status symbol. They observed that such psychological pressures had a bearing on housing developers ignoring stipulated regulations (including the initial need of obtaining building permits) in spite of civic authorities' limited communication of these regulations to the public. Respondents further indicated that added factors to this abrogation included insecurity, escaping high rentals, permanency in homestead, etc. They further observed that insecurities on tenure of land is largely caused by the local authority (government) due to an overbearing political influence. This therefore causes residents to develop houses indiscriminately without obtaining building permits.

At this preliminary enquiry, all the 24 selected respondents from the eight (8) selected Townships indicated their oblivion to such stringent regulations in the desperate need for shelter to secure their livelihoods. Their responses indicated that the psychological process was a critical undelaying factor in housing development than aspects of adhering to building regulation messages which include acquisition of building permit to uphold safety and health standards.

With this oblivion of adherence to communicated building regulations by housing developers, 80% of Town planning authority respondents indicated a sense of hopelessness in enforcing regulations evidenced by their very limited level of inspection or involvement in housing development in the selected townships. On the part of housing developers, majority of respondents (78%) indicated that the entire process of engaging planning authorities is experienced as a cumbersome enterprise best ignored at most. For them, the psychological pre-occupation is securing a shelter in a city that has scarcity of land.

From the preliminary enquiry, it became apparent that a disconnect existed between unauthorised housing developers in the selected townships and the Lusaka Town Planning authority. The researcher therefore had a basis on which to enquire into the main concern that has created this communication disconnect between the two entities under study that occasions the non-acquisition of building permits by unauthorised housing developers. Subsequent enquiries were therefore aimed at ascertaining this main concern and further narrowed into identifying the core category. Ultimately, from the core category, concepts were derived that were at the root of this communication disconnect occasioning non-acquisition of building permits to uphold safety and health standards in housing development.

6.2. Main Concern

The first level of GTM is discovering the main concern of the phenomenon under study after having a basic

sociological and psychological perspective in the preliminary enquiry. Semi-structured interviews were administered to nine (9) Town Planning authorities. Open coding of data obtained from the respondents indicated the following: there was a 100% affirmation of the existence of a defined approval process for issuing building permits which is utilised by an average 500 housing developers per quarter of a year. Of these, 75% are from high cost residential settlements and 18.2% from medium cost settlements. The reasons advanced for this distribution were access to development funds (54.5%) and access to information (36.4%) for these developers. Finally, open coding revealed that housing developers from low cost and ungazetted settlements lacked sensitization (72.7%) on building permit acquisition while fear of bureaucratic red tape in the process (27.3%) was a factor equally advanced. The main concern therefore discovered for Town Planning authorities in the open coding of data is a *critical limitation of housing developers seeking building permits occasioned by a limitation in information.*

For unauthorised housing developers, a total of 80 respondents were administered with semi-structured interviews. Open coding of data obtained from the respondents indicated the following: there was very limited permission seeking through the established process with the majority not applying nor undergoing the process (98%). Figure 8 above indicates cardinal reasons for this failure which includes ignorance (43.2%), third party involvement (15.3%), the notion of the process being unimportant (12.5%), complex and costly process (11.1%) and lack of sensitization and communication (9.7%). Others include illiteracy, improper documentation, and fear of losing plot or demolition. The main concern therefore deduced from open coding of data for unauthorised housing developers is *non-application for authorization and undergoing the process to obtain building permits.*

6.3. Core Category

The second level of the GTM process aimed at identifying the core category that gives an explanation to the discovered main concern in the first level. A core category will be recognised as it will have a *real explanatory ground* for the main concern established. As established in the previous section, the main concern for Town planning authorities was the limitation of housing developers acquiring building permits due to limited information on the process. For unauthorised housing developers the main concern was the non-application and undergoing the process of obtaining building permits.

Semi-structured interviews were thus conducted with 5 Town Planning authorities from among the 9 selected in the first level and 40 unauthorised housing developers from among the 80 selected in the first level. Enquiry focused on the aspect of seeking building permission as stipulated in the Urban and Regional Planning Act Part VI Sections 49-61. In order to obtain a broad and diverse view on the enquiry, each respondent was given the liberty to present multiple reasons for each enquiry.

Open coding of data obtained from respondents indicated that lack of awareness that permission ought to be sought from Town Planning authorities before one commences constructing a house had the highest frequency at 40.3%. Third party involvement (15.3%) and the processes not being deemed important (12.5%) ranked second and third respectively. The least incidence was that of the fear of demolition (1.4%) should the Town Planning authorities be informed after a house is already constructed. Therefore, *ignorance or lack of awareness of permission seeking* was identified as a core category in this case. Open coding indicated that this lack of awareness was linked to very limited information obtained by unauthorised housing developers on the process of acquisition of building permits from Town Planning authorities.

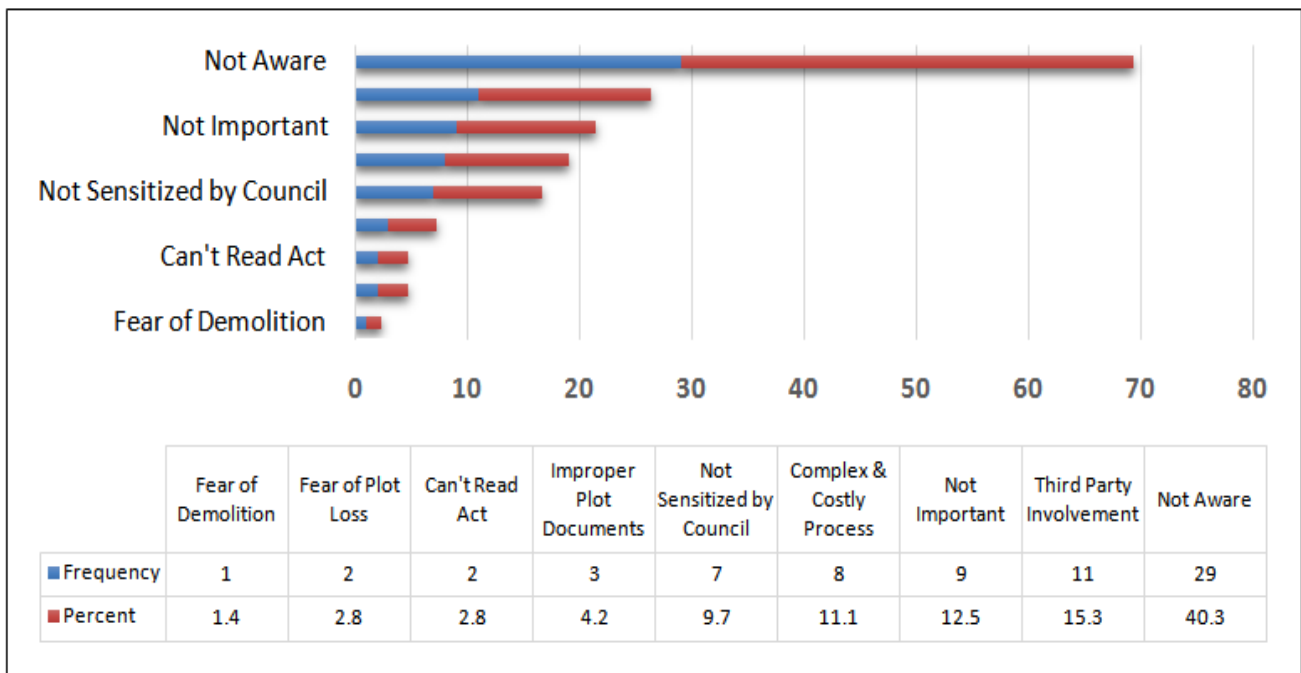


Figure 9. Factors causing non-acquisition of building permit by unauthorised housing developers

6.4. Concepts

The GTM level of identifying the concept from the identified core category was conducted by saturating the core category. The core category of ignorance or lack of awareness of permission seeking by unauthorised housing developers was saturated by selecting two (2) respondents from among the five (5) Town Planning authorities in the preceding level and 10 respondents from among the 40 unauthorised housing developers in the preceding level. In-depth interviews were conducted with them. Enquiry focused on whether respondents had read Part VI sections 49 and 52 of the URP Act, 2015 that alludes to planning application and permission. Selective coding of the obtained data indicated that a total of 60% had not read the said tenets of the Act, with 20% not sure and only 20% affirming. Further, on the respondents' awareness of Part VI, sec 49 No. 1 requiring planning permission, 50% indicated they were not aware while 30% were unsure. Finally, on the same article No. 2 regarding awareness of committing an offence if one builds without planning permission, 80% indicated they were not aware it was an offence with 10% not being sure.

Selective coding saturating the core category therefore affirmed that there was ignorance or a lack of awareness of permission seeking (acquisition of building permit) among selected unauthorised housing developers. The *concept* derived therefore on extent of unauthorised housing developers' non-acquisition of building permit is *a wide spread phenomenon occasioned by ignorance or lack of awareness on permission seeking from Lusaka Town planning authorities*. This situation leads to abrogation of stipulated building regulations that then compromises the safety and health of constructed houses.

7. Discussion

The apparent abrogation of building regulations observed among unauthorised housing developers in Lusaka which compromises safety and health standards was studied in the context of communication dynamics that exist between the same unauthorised housing developers and Lusaka Town Planning authorities. The enquiry focused on the extent of non-acquisition of building permits as a factor in abrogation of stipulated building regulations. The leveled GTM approach utilised in the study first established a preliminary enquiry into the phenomenon of the extent of non-acquisition of building permits by unauthorised housing developers that would inform the communication dynamics. From this preliminary enquiry, it was established that there was a sociological and psychological pressure on the part of housing developers to secure the basic need of shelter in a city with an expanded population and scarcity of land. Findings indicate that this is a compelling factor that drives unauthorised housing developers to circumvent procedures. With a 2.8 million housing deficit in the country [16], the sociological pressure on housing is real with Lusaka recording a 70% housing stock that is substandard [13]. Findings further revealed that even with availability of building regulations from Town Planning authorities that would prevent substandard housing, there

is an apparent disconnect between Town Planners and housing developers. This apparent disconnect raises concern on the communication dynamics between the two entities.

Literature reviewed had exposed a lack of communication strategies on the part of civic authorities on sensitizing housing developers on the need to undergo construction procedures which is initiated with acquisition of building permits. From the GTM first leveled findings, Town Planning authorities admitted that limited housing developers acquired building permits which they attributed to limited information transmitted to them. Unauthorised housing developers in their responses affirmed this situation by indicating their lack of application for building permits. This responds to the research question of why building regulations stipulated for housing construction were not adhered to by selected housing developers. There is limited transmission of building regulations to housing developers by Town Planning authorities that would enable housing developers to be aware of building permit acquisition and subsequently adherence to regulations that upholds safety and health standards of constructed houses. The non-acquisition of building permits therefore creates a ripple effect in the standard of housing that are constructed by unauthorised housing developers inevitably compromising safety and health standards.

A further analysis identified the core category of the study as ignorance or lack of awareness of acquisition of building permits by unauthorised housing developers. As alluded to above, the preoccupation of housing developers is the sociological and psychological need of securing shelter for their livelihood and therefore they indicated best to ignore the cumbersomeness of seeking after regulatory procedures which civic authorities themselves do not take keen interest in sensitizing them on. The last GTM level of identifying the concept for this study revealed that there was an extensive phenomenon of non-acquisition of building permits by unauthorised housing developers. This was attributed to ignorance or lack of awareness on the part of unauthorised housing developers on permission seeking process and limited information on the process. It therefore follows that the wide spread existence of this phenomenon does inform the nature of communication between the two entities as the objective of the study sort.

In summation, it can be stated that, non-acquisition of building permits by unauthorised housing developers in selected townships of Lusaka is wide spread and is attributed to ignorance or a lack of awareness of the process by the developers. This ignorance is occasioned by limited information that Town Planning authorities disseminate on the process of acquiring building permits as stipulated in the Urban and Regional Planning Act of 2015. In essence therefore, adequate communication between the two entities is lacking which results in the abrogation of building regulations occasioning a compromise in safety and health standards by unauthorised housing developers. There is therefore a pertinent need to enhance the communication process by Town Planning authorities which would include communication strategies relevant to selected communities taking into account diversities in the population. An example would include the translation of

building regulations into vernacular languages to address literacy aspects in the population.

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