

Content Analysis Comparing Canada's Two Earliest Town Planning Journals

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commission of Conservation was created in 1906 to optimally utilize and conserve Canadian natural resources. Dr. Charles Hodgetts was appointed in 1910 to lead the Commission of Conservation's Health Branch and became a medical advisor and key author in its journal, the *Conservation of Life (CoL)*, which addressed public health issues. He advocated appointing a town planning expert for preventive planning measures and to address the land speculation in towns. Thomas Adams was appointed as the town planning advisor in 1914 and quickly began writing articles in the *CoL* journal. When the *CoL* ceased publication in 1921, Adams shifted his writing to the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute of Canada (JTPIC)*, which was the journal of the professional institute founded by Adams in July 1919. The *JTPIC* was published from 1920 to 1931, ending when membership funds from the Town Planning Institute of Canada were depleted due to the Great Depression.

This report provides tools for future researchers including indices, graphs, a spreadsheet, grouped subjects, titles lists, and a chronological timeline. A content analysis formulated from these research tools enabled a comparison of two early Canadian town planning journals to answer the main research question of this report: What are the key differences and similarities, journal topics and themes, and organizations' focus between the *Conservation of Life* journals and the *Town Planning Institute of Canada* journals?

The introduction of Adams as town planning advisor to the *CoL* was pivotal to shaping the content of its articles. Adams gradually shifted away from public health topics that had been under the guidance of Hodgetts to a more town and rural planning perspective, clearly conspicuous by the forefront changes in the cover pages and titles of the *CoL* (Image 3.1).

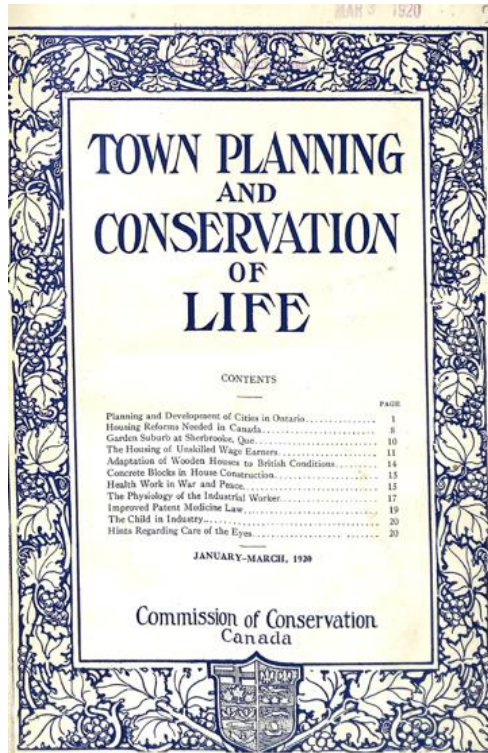
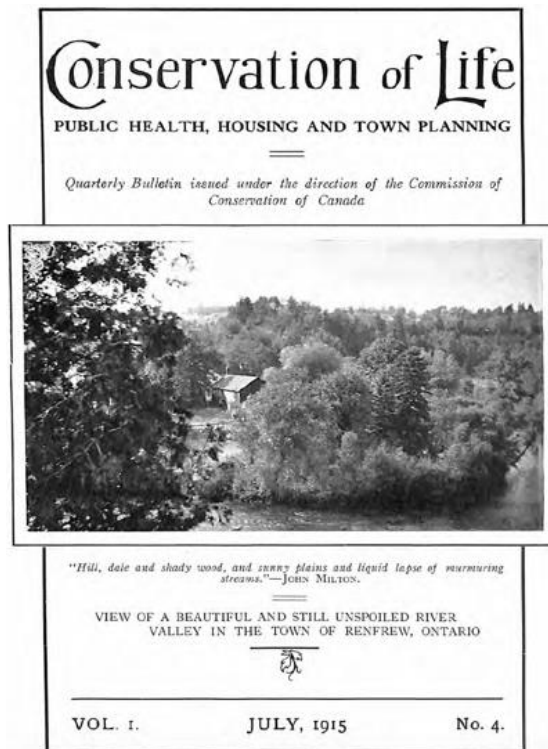
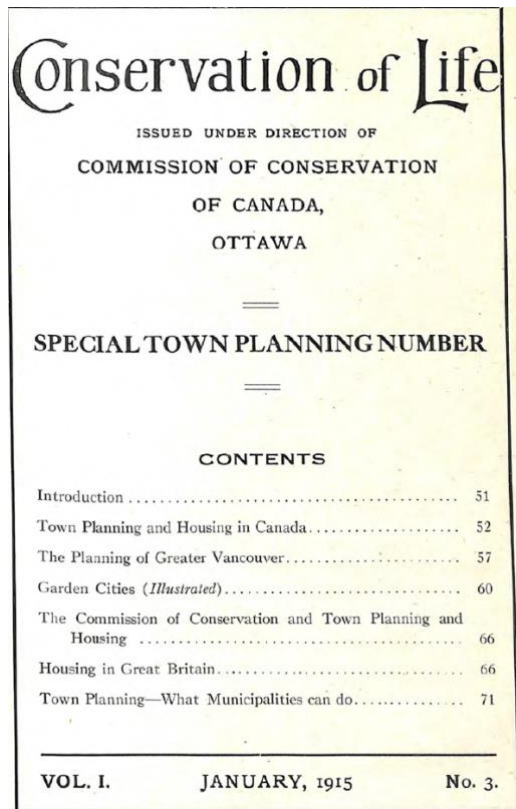
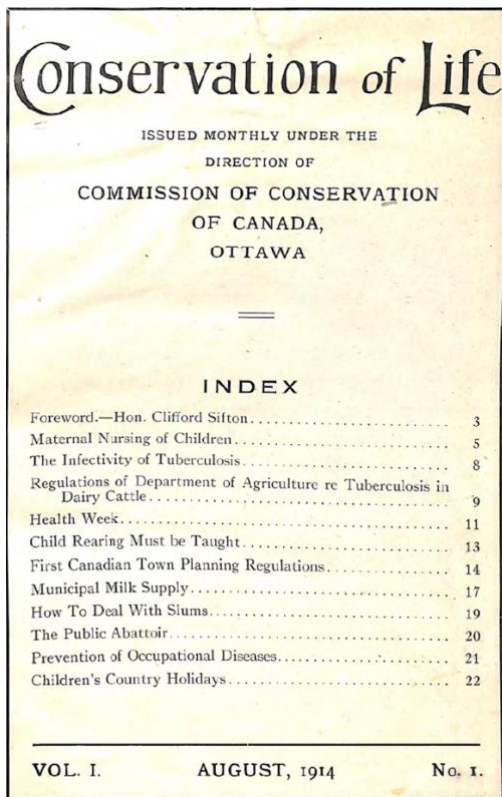


Image 3.1: Changing of titles and shifting article topics in the *Conservation of Life*, 1914-1920.

This report’s comparative analysis of Canada’s two earliest town planning journals reveals the evolution of planning during the nation’s rapid urban expansion from 1910-1930. Six grouped topics were analyzed – aesthetics, economics, environmental, health, social, and planning. As Figure 3.1 shows, there was a marked difference in the frequency of topics mentioned by each journal. With Hodgetts as the medical advisor, the *CoL*’s primary concern was public health, with an emphasis on social, health, economic, and environmental topics. In contrast, with Adams as the town planning advisor, *JTPIC* articles focused predominantly on town and rural planning regulations, zoning, and building codes.

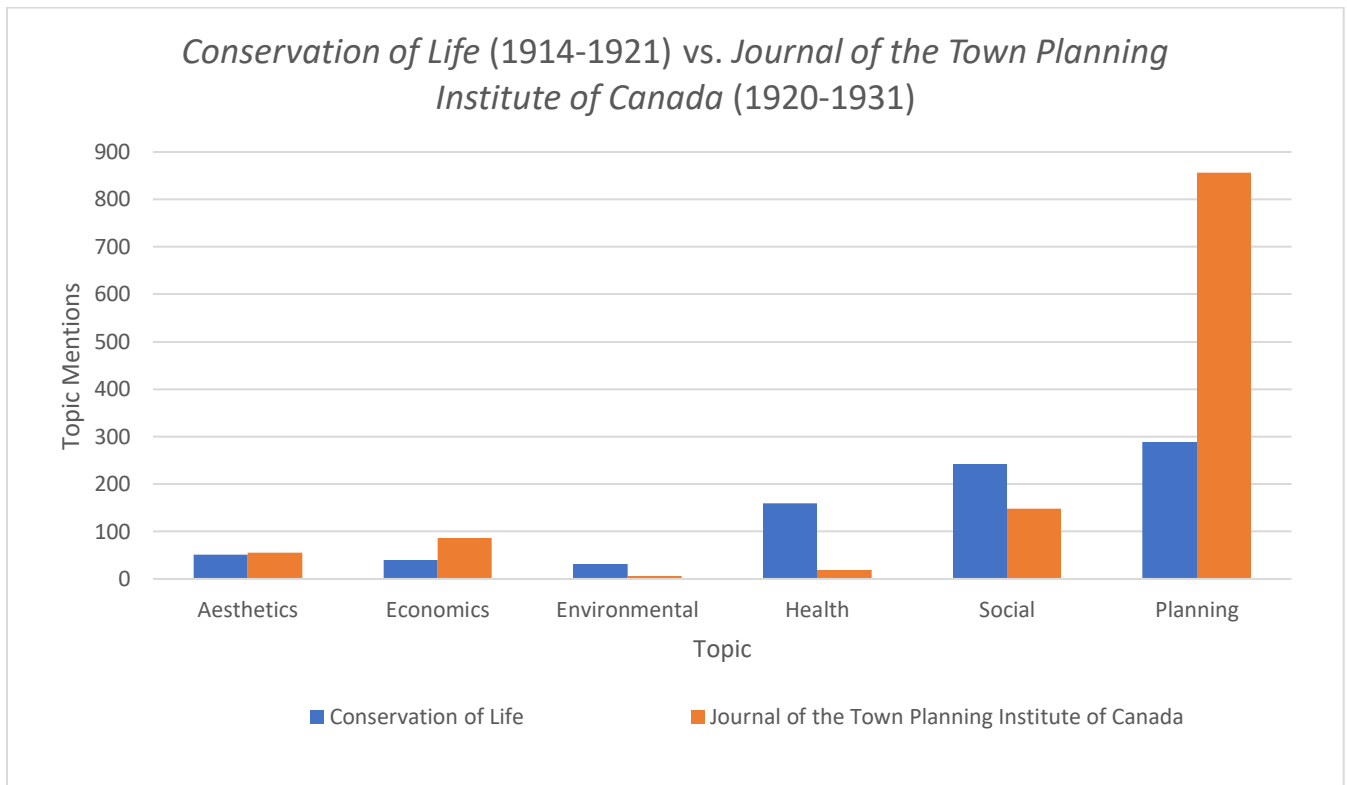


Figure 3.1: Topic comparison between the *Conservation of Life* (1914-1921) and *Journal of the Town Planning Institute of Canada* (1920-1931).

Still, the different professional focus of Hodgetts and Adams influenced an overlap in public health and town planning topics. To meet their respective goals, both professions collaboratively addressed how incorporating urban planning can help solve the underlying urban

problems from a rapidly expanding industrial society. Accordingly, earlier articles in the *JTPIC* indicate that planning was closely linked with public health. By 1920, however, with a vision of modern planning through the City Scientific/Practical concept, later articles in the *JTPIC* signify how the planning profession gradually separated from the public health profession. This shift coincided with town planning in Canada becoming established as a profession working under legislations of various provincial Town Planning and Development Acts. At the same time, the *CoL* continued with its tradition to address conservation and environmental concerns, having successfully leveraged town planning to tackle public health issues. Thus, outcomes of the key differences and similarities between the two journals highlight how the planning and public health professions initially merged and then diverged in early Canadian town planning. Overall, this report's historical content analysis of the earliest planning journal archives provides an intriguing glimpse in the evolution of the planning profession in Canada.



Four storey tenement house in a Canadian city occupied by eight families.

Image 3.3: Crowded unsanitary conditions in an urban slum, both a public health and town planning concern (Adams, "Housing Conditions in Canada," 1916).