
Refereed Original Paper

Comparative Analysis between the Japanese American and the Japanese Canadian Internment Documentaries

Keywords:

documentary film, multicultural coexistence, cinema analysis, Japanese internment, cross-national study

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Abstract

During the Second World War, the internment of people of Japanese descent occurred in the U.S.A. and Canada simultaneously. Each country produced a documentary film about the internment. Although these documentaries were superficially similar, the two countries' political and cultural difference were reflected in them. In this study, a combined qualitative and quantitative analysis was conducted for the two films for a systematic comparative assessment. Consequently, substantial differences were observed in the two films on several respects. First, the number of "Frontal view of the internees" shots in the Canadian film exceeded those of Americans where people looked away from the camera and face the other direction. This phenomenon may be considered as a reflection of the cultural difference such as a family-like-co-existence and a symbolic assimilation. Second, when people of Japanese descent and Caucasian are in the same frame, they face opposite directions in the American film. However, the Japanese Canadians and Caucasians in the Canadian film face the same direction and are placed in an equivalent position on the screen. Third, based on the outliers, i.e., characteristic shots of the films, descriptions of Japanese and Western culture coexist in the Canadian film. In contrast, the U. S. documentary has only Western ones. In general, a reflection of the American way of assimilation and the Canadian co-existence in the content of the two war-time propaganda documentaries is observed. This study confirmed by combined qualitative and quantitative analysis the political and cultural differences of the two countries as reflected in their documentaries, which appeared similar on the surface. Although this study focused on documentaries produced during the Second World War, the method used here may be applied to the analysis of other video contents and contribute to future research in film-video media studies.

Received Jun 25 2022, Accepted Nov 29 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Topic

This comparative cross-national study examines two documentary films on Japanese internment in North America.

From the end of the nineteenth century, Japanese people immigrated to the U.S.A. and Canada primarily as railroad workers. Many of them settled mainly as agricultural workers or commercial fishers.

After a surprise attack at Pearl Harbor by the Japanese air force on December 7, 1941, people of Japanese descent were interned in the two North American countries almost simultaneously. In the U.S.A., on February 19, 1942, the relocation of Japanese Americans began. Five days later, on February 24, 1942, that of Japanese Canadians commenced (Daniels, 1981). In the U.S.A., “just over 125,000” people of Japanese descent were sent to relocation centers. In Canada, “fewer than 25,000” Japanese Canadians were evacuated and sent to internment camps and farms (Daniels, 1982).

Takeya Mizuno pointed out that Japanese radio broadcast insisted that the American policy of assimilation was hypocritical.

The May 1 broadcast, for example, noted that the race-specific policy conflicted with the nation’s long-cherished “melting pot” concept of diversity. (Mizuno, 2013, p. 97)

Although the internees were provided basic amenities, the camps are sometimes referred to as concentration camps.

As the war drew to a close, the governments needed to manage domestic and international anxieties around the potential symmetry between

North American internment and the Nazi concentration camps, which sparked the human rights question (Gittings, 2002; Pendakis & Wilson, 2018). The internment camps were gradually vacated, and attempts were made to assimilate the residents into the general population.

During the Second World War, governments around the world produced propaganda films to incite nationalistic fervor toward their ideologies, thus the politicizing of documentary was a world phenomenon (Barnouw, 1993). As Jowett and O’Donnell stated, “Propaganda itself, as a form of communication, is influenced by the technological devices for sending messages that are available in a given time” (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, p. 15), movies were the latest and most powerful tool for propaganda at the time.

Thus, documentary films about the internment were produced in both countries. In the U.S.A., *A Challenge to Democracy* was released in 1944 while in Canada, *Of Japanese Descent* was released in 1945. The U.S. and Canadian films are approximately 18 and 21 minutes long, respectively.

Their title shots are shown in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1: U.S. title Figure 2: Canadian title

Both films were produced to provide justification for the Japanese internment and promoting assimilation to their own citizens and to the rest of the world (Gittings, 2002; Hayashi, 2004).

Most of the films recording the internment of Japanese descent is fragmentary news footage, however these two documentaries are the official records put together by the authorities. Both can be said to be representative of the Japanese internment documentary films.

Both were created in almost the same way in two countries for the same event at the same time. In fact, these two films are quite similar. The purpose of production, theme, topics and objects of these films have close parallels. Both being genuine propaganda films, the sufferings of the internees are not shown.

They also have formative similarity. Neither film include interviews of the Japanese internees. Instead, they have narrations and background music. The narrations emphasize the legitimacy of the internment and portray that it was different from the Nazi treatment of the Jews.

With the above points considered, both films recording the internment in North America i.e. *A Challenge to Democracy* (hereinafter, referred to as *Challenge*) and *Of Japanese Descent* (hereinafter, referred to as *Descent*) were under the control of authorities and “the type of propaganda of public information as one of the most powerful forms of directive statesmanship” as Gittings points out regarding the latter (Gittings, 2002, p. 72). Therefore, the intention of the authorities was reflected strongly at the time of shooting and editing.

The cultural difference between the two countries should be reflected to some extent in these two films. If it is possible to clarify how the difference is expressed by image media, it will be meaningful to contribute to international comparative research through video content.

1.2 Literature Review

To the best of our knowledge, no studies have compared American footage with Canadian one. However, comparative studies on the immigration policies of the two countries and such studies on the Japanese internment in both countries have been conducted. There are also several methods for comparative research on visual content in general. This study refers to these three in order.

1.2.1 Comparative studies on the immigration policies between the U.S.A. with Canada

Thomas E. Kierans stated that Canadians have long used the language of metaphor to describe their society as a “mosaic” and the United States as a “melting pot” to distinguish the two North American countries. Furthermore, Canadians think of themselves as being more tolerant of racial minorities and more respectful of cultural differences than their southern neighbors (Kierans, 1994).

In other words, while American melting pot is a symbol of its national conformity or assimilation, Canadian mosaic is that of ethnic coexistence or plurality.

In 1994, Jeffrey G. Reitz and Raymond Breton reviewed the exhaustive amount of the available public opinion and concluded that there was an illusion of difference between the United States and Canada. According to them, there are certain important beliefs about Canada as follows.

One of these beliefs is that minority groups in Canada are encouraged to maintain their distinctive cultures, whereas minority groups in the United States are under pressure to abandon their traditional cultures and “melt” into the broader society. In short, Canadians show tolerance for diversity and even encourage it.

Consequently, minority groups in Canada more freely participate in traditional cultural practices, and maintain ethnic community institutions and activities, than do minority groups in the United States. (Reitz & Breton, 1994, p. 5)

Milton Gordon describes the term “melting pot” as follows.

“the melting pot theories had envisaged the disappearance of the immigrants’ group as a communal identity and the absorption of the later arrivals to America and their children, as individuals, into the existing ‘American’ social structure.” (Gordon, 1964, p. 132)

Regarding the term “cultural pluralisms,” Gordon describes it as “the acceptance of cultural differences both religiously and in terms of ethnic and cultural groups.” (Gordon, 1964, p. 17)

These above concepts, metaphors and beliefs may also be reflected in the two films, although their visual representation is not clear.

1.2.2 Comparative studies on the Japanese internment in the U.S.A and Canada

Regarding the internment itself, a few comparative studies between the internment of Japanese Americans and that of Japanese Canadians have been conducted.

Roger Daniels stated that although the experience of Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians was both quite similar, there were important differences and most of those depend much more on institutional differences between the two countries (Daniels 1981), and points out that “Despite basic similarities in the approaches of the two North American democracies there were policy differences in the ways that each

treated its Japanese. In one minor respect, at least, Canadian policy was less racist.” (p. 185)

Daniels specifically pointed out differences in the degree of involvement of Japanese descent on the battlefield.

The U.S. Army and its political leadership, [...] was providing in the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a public means by which Japanese Americans could demonstrate their loyalty. Only a handful of Japanese Canadians were allowed to perform military service in World War II. (Daniels, 1981, p. 193)

Blake Morgan Young also compared the treatment of Japanese descent in North American countries and illustrated some of the differences between the two.

The practice in the US camps of having all occupants of each block take their meals in a common mess hall had a weakening effect on family ties, but in the Canadian camps meals were prepared and eaten in the individual housing units. (Young, 2004, p. 92)

While the involvement of Japanese Canadians in the war effort was negligible, and almost totally unreported by the press, Japanese Americans made a contribution that offered unchallengeable proof of their loyalty and was a major factor in their postwar acceptance by American society at large. (Young, 2004, p. 95)

Greg Robinson stated that “a study of the similarities and differences across the border provides a greater and more balanced perspective on any number of overall questions relating to the Japanese Americans” (Robinson, 2009, p. 6)

and pointed out the differences as follows.

Despite various self-justifying assertions by Prime Minister King and political leaders in Ottawa that their arbitrary wartime treatment of Japanese Canadians was designed to coordinate with Washington's, the two countries' policies were quite distinct from the start. The WRA (War Relocation Authority of the U.S. government) provided housing and education for camp inmates, sponsored camp newspapers, and supported leisure activities and cooperatives. Japanese Canadians did not receive such assistance and had to rely on religious and nonprofit groups for aid or use their own funds. Furthermore, their large-scale official confiscation and forced sale of properties of Japanese Canadians had no parallel south of the border, while there were no battalions of Nisei soldiers in Canada to demonstrate their loyalty of the group. (Robinson, 2009, p. 286)

All three mentioned here pointed out the degree of participation in military service as a significant difference between the Japanese American and Japanese Canadian internees. Apparently, this point is reflected in the films, though it is not clear how it was expressed and what its significance is.

1.2.3 Comparative analysis methods for visual content.

Although no comparative studies have been conducted on the two films, several analysis methods to compare visual content can be applied to compare them.

In 2012, Jasmine Alinder compared photographs taken by Toyo Miyatake and Bill Manbo at Heartmountain internment camp. She

pointed out that while Miyatake 's object looked away from the camera, Manbo's object was looking straight at the camera. According to Alinder, Miyatake's image brings a symbolic impression and Manbo's image has a character as a portrait photograph.

Manbo takes a much more straightforward approach, setting up the shot to emphasize frontality through the position of the fence and his son. His son's expression and gaze straight back at the camera create an image that is more of a portrait than a metaphor. Miyatake's subjects look away from the lens as if they are unaware of the camera's presence and their gazes beyond the confines of camp function symbolically to communicate injustice. (Alinder, 2012, p. 97)

This kind of difference might be identified between the two internment documentaries as movie is composed from a series of still pictures.

There are several methods for comparative content analysis of movies,

Among them, one of the most authentic and basic method is the "Same frame" heuristic.

David Bordwell pointed out the presence of film critics' routine tactics, which he named the "Same frame" heuristic (Bordwell, 1989, p. 178). The heuristic is explained as "If two figures are shown in the same frame, a bond is established between them." This heuristic can be applied to analyze the relationship between the characters in the footage.

Recently, a new statistical method, named Cinematics, has been introduced to compare movies.

As early as in 1974, Barry Salt issued "Statistical Style Analysis of Motion Pictures" and advocated applying a quantitative approach. Although this

approach had been neglected for a long time, in the 21st century, as movies became available on the internet and able to be analyzed any time when necessary, the statistical analysis of visual media studies appeared one after another.

In 2001, Salt applied his statistical theory to television drama analysis. In 2005, Yuri Tsivian developed the Cinematics project and established its website. In 2012, Mike Baxter published "Film statistics: some observation" in which he summarized and described various features of Cinematics.

According to Baxter, "the main purpose of quantification is to aid (objective) *comparison*" (Baxter, 2012, p. 19). Actually, Cinematics as a tool of quantitative analysis is extremely useful to distinguish the difference between two or more films in an objective manner.

Examples of comparative research with Cinematics are provided as follows.

In 2006, Warren Buckland published a book about Steven Spielberg. He compared the style of *Poltergeist* to that of Spielberg's and Tobe Hooper's other films using statistics to determine who directed the film. In 2012, Nick Redfern examined the impact of sound technology by examining the shot lengths in Hollywood cinema to compare 1920s silent films with early sound films and identified significant differences between them. In 2014, Jeremy Butler analyzed the editing rhythm of a television program. Butler compared the cutting rates of single-camera recorded shows to multiple cameras shows and found a significant difference between the two. In 2019, Taylor Arnold, Lauren Tilton, and Annie Berke examined the visual style in two sitcoms with a statistical approach and illustrated how formal elements served to differentiate the role of characters within each series.

Various kinds of data to compare films are available with Cinematics.

Average shot length (ASL) is frequently used to compare the cutting pace of films and distinguish the creator's tendency. If ASL of a film is lower than the other film, then the cutting pace of it is high, and the phenomenon will indicate the feasibility of creator's aim of cramming more content into the work than the lower cutting pace case.

Cinematics is also useful to extract systematically the characteristic shots which determine the specialty of the film. It focuses on the shots which are indicated as outliers in shot lengths distribution.

There is no disagreement among scholars on the importance of outliers i.e. extra-long take shots as the characteristic shots.

These long take shots could reasonably be referred to as "outliers" in this particular case, but to disregard their existence in an investigation is to shut your eyes to the very thing that makes this film special. (Salt, 2011)

Uncontentious outliers may be among the more interesting aspects of a film's "style." (Baxter, 2012)

Outlying shot lengths may be a significant element of a film's style: removing the opening shot from *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958) or the tracking shot of the traffic scene from *Weekend* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967) from our analysis would be to take away the most distinctive (and certainly the most famous) aspects of these films' style. (Redfern, 2012)

Considering these assertions above, outliers

can be a clue to identifying distinctive shots that make the film special. Regardless of whether the cutting pace is higher or lower, the outliers can be equally distinguishable to the film because they are statistically abnormal to the other average shots. Thus, they can make a strong impression on the audience who can memorize them as the characteristic shots.

Extra-long take shots as outliers in shot length distribution exist above the third quartile and can be calculated by multiplying the interquartile range.

So far, Cinematics has been mainly used for fictional content such as dramas and feature films, though it can also be applied to documentaries.

Documentaries tend to be considered pure non-fiction, as opposed to dramas and feature films that represent fiction. However, despite their apparent representation of reality, documentaries tend to have hidden intention.

Daniel Arijon defines, in his established classic writing "Grammar of the film language," three types of film forms, namely newsreel, documentary, and fiction. He states that in documentary "manipulation is necessary" and "facts have to be arranged to be shown at their best and an event is often repeated to be filmed several times. Repetition means staging" (Arijon, 1976, p. 13) and "documentaries have profited from a dual approach that blends unadulterated reality with carefully recomposed fiction" (Arijon, 1976, p. 14).

According to Arijon, as documentaries have traits of recomposed fiction that reflect the intentions of the creator, Cinematics can be applied to them like in dramas and feature films.

1.3 Research Purpose

From what has been examined so far, previous studies regard the United States and Canada as having differences in both their immigration policies and the treatment of internment of people of Japanese descent. These differences are apparently reflected in the documentaries produced in both countries on the theme of the Japanese internment, though superficially the two films appear to be similar.

Nonetheless, no comparative studies have been conducted on these documentaries, although photographs of the camps have been examined. In addition, studies that compare multiple video contents include those based on traditional content analysis methods and those based on new statistical methods, both of which are considered effective for comparative study of documentaries.

As a hypothesis, the differences between two countries should reflect in their films in visual form. Thus, the purpose of this study is to objectively clarify the differences inherent in two similar documentaries made during the war through combined analysis.

Elucidating this issue is significant as a visual media approach to comparative research on the internment of Japanese descent. It is also supposed that this will contribute to international comparative research on video content.

This study is intended to examine how the differences between the two countries are reflected in the video content as images and does not aim to criticize the policies of the two countries or the actual conditions of the camps.

2. Methods

This study uses three approaches described

above in a combined way, as it is better to use the traditional qualitative method and newly quantitative method in tandem rather than treat them as competing techniques.

In this study, the two documentaries will be analyzed in the following three steps.

First, in accordance with Alinder's study, this study measures the number of "Frontal view of the internees" shots in which the internees were looking at the camera in each film to evaluate the symbolic or familiar nature in the footage. Although Alinder's method was intended for still pictures, it can be applied to each shot in movies as each movie is a conglomeration of still shots.

Second, based on the traditional way of analyzing, this study measures the number of the "Same frame" shots, that is, the number of shots recording the Japanese internees and Caucasian supervisors simultaneously in the same frame to evaluate the relationship between them.

As for indicators of "Same frame" shots and "Frontal view of the internees" shots, this study calculated their number per 500 shots following Salt (Salt, 1974, p. 15).

Third, this study adopts a quantitative approach i.e. Cinematics. After measuring fundamental descriptive statistics of the films such as length in seconds, the number of shots, this study calculates average shot length, range of shot lengths, standard deviation (S.D.) and interquartile range. A t-test compared the average shot lengths of the two films. Then, this study compares the formula of the films and extracts outliers as characteristic shots in each documentary.

The greater the length, the more impressive the shot. Therefore, this study extracts extreme outliers that lie more than 3.0 times the interquartile range above the third quartile.

The shots obtained as a result of the extraction may include subtitles and shots for simply introducing scenery. Since these shots are not deeply relevant to the content, they will not be treated as subjects in this study.

In addition, various previous studies and materials will be used supplementarily for consideration, when necessary.

3. Results

3.1 "Frontal view of the internees" shots

Table 1 shows the "Frontal view of the internees" shots appearing in the two films.

Table 1: "Frontal view of the internees" shots

	<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Descent</i>
Number of shots	2	93
Ditto / 500 shots	6	103

The number of "Frontal view of the internees" shots per 500 shots in *Descent* exceeded those of *Challenge* more than 17 times. The two films have shots in which people just glanced at the camera. The number of such shots is 2 in *Challenge* and 10 in *Descent*. Without those "just a glance" shots, there are no "Frontal view of the internees" shot in *Challenge*.

3.2 "Same frame" shots

Table 2 shows the "Same frame" shots appearing in the two films.

Table 2: "Same frame" shots

	<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Descent</i>
Number of Shots	18	7
Ditto / 500 shots	52	8

In contrast to the case of "Frontal view of the

internees” shots, the number of “Same frame” shots per 500 shots in *Challenge* scored 6.5 times higher than that in *Descent*.

3.3 Statistically characteristic shots

Table 3 shows fundamental descriptive statistics of the films.

Table 3: Fundamental descriptive statistics

	<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Descent</i>
Lengths	1064	1286
Number of shots	174	451
Average shot lengths	6.1	2.9
(<i>t</i> -Statistics 8.08 $p < .000000$)		
Minimum shot length	1	1
Maximum shot length	41	17
Range	40	16
Standard deviation (S.D.)	5.17	1.98
Lower (First) quartile	3.11	1.73
Higher (Third) quartile	7.26	3.05
Interquartile range	4.15	1.32

Time data are in seconds

Figures 3 and 4 show the box plots of the shot length dispersity of the two films.



Figure 3: Box Plot of the shot length dispersity of *Challenge*

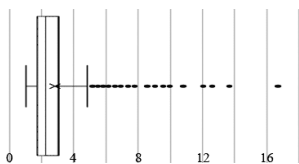


Figure 4: Box Plot of the shot length dispersity of *Descent*

The plots of the shot length dispersity indicate that some data further explode in the right direction in both figures. These data are outliers and represent characteristic shots of the films.

As shown in Table 3, the higher quartile of *Challenge* is 7.26, and the interquartile range is 4.15. Thus, the outliers as characteristic shots to be selected for *Challenge* are those that have a value of over 19.71 seconds of shot lengths approximately. Similarly, the data to be selected for *Descent* are those that have a value of over 7.01 seconds of shot lengths approximately. Tables 4 and 5 show these statistically singular and characteristic shots of the two films in descending order.

Table 4: Statistically characteristic shots (extreme outliers) in *Challenge*

Shot Description	Length (seconds)
Loyalty questionnaire document of internees	41
Caucasian supervisor paying wage to Japanese internees	32
Internment Camp barracks	23
Inside of a barrack	22

In Tables 4 and 5, both films have common explanatory shots such as the “pan of internment camp barracks” and the “image of globe” or ordinary landscape shots, such as a lake, pond, or tree. When these shots are excluded, the genuine characteristic shots of the films remain.

In *Challenge*, those are the “Loyalty questionnaire document of internees” (Figure 5) and “Caucasian supervisor paying a wage to Japanese internees” (Figure 6).

In *Descent*, those are the “Baseball game field with players” (Figure 7), “Two ladies performing Bon (Japanese summer festival) dance” (Figure

8), “Smiling faces of Japanese Canadian children” (Figure 9), and “Two ladies in kimonos performing Bon dance” (Figure 10).

Table 5: Statistically characteristic shots (extreme outliers) in *Descent*

Shot Description	Length (seconds)
Image of globe describing the spread of war to pacific	17
Baseball game field with players	14
Two ladies performing Bon (Japanese summer festival) dance	12
Landscape of a pond	11
Smiling faces of Japanese Canadian children	10
Landscape of a lake near the internment camp	10
Internment camp barracks	10
Interior of a sawmill	10
Bus arriving at the internment camp	9
Two ladies in kimonos performing Bon dance (up size)	9
A tall tree	9
Internees on the street of internment camp	8
Truck with log load in a log camp	8
A man welding a machine	8
Internment camp barracks	7
Internment camp barracks (different shot)	7
Two boys on the street of internment camp	7
Men relaxing under a tree	7
Men cutting a log	7



Figure 5: “Loyalty questionnaire document of internees” shot in *Challenge*



Figure 6: “Caucasian supervisor paying wage to Japanese internees” shot in *Challenge*



Figure 7: “Baseball game field with players” shot in *Descent*



Figure 8: “Two ladies performing Bon dance” shot in *Descent*



Figure 9: “Smiling faces of Japanese Canadian children” shot in *Descent*



Figure 10: “Two ladies in kimonos performing Bon dance” shot in *Descent*

4. Discussion

This study first considers the “Frontal view of the internees” shots in the films. As shown in Table 1, the abundance of “Frontal view of the internees” shots is a considerable feature of the

Canadian film. In the dialogue between two patients in the tuberculosis ward, despite editing with the shot/reverse shot combination, both are facing the front. It is out of the dialogue axis like a movie by Yasujiro Ozu. In contrast, in the U.S. film, people look away from the camera and face

the other direction.

Figures 11 and 12 illustrate a typical contrast of the look in the “Frontal view of the internees” shots of the two films.



Figure 11:
Typical “Frontal view
of the internees” shot
in *Challenge*



Figure 12:
Typical “Frontal view
of the internees” shot
in *Descent*

While the children in the *Challenge* shot look away from the camera, those in *Descent* directly look at the camera or cinematographer. Therefore, the *Descent* shot resembles a commemorative picture showing people gathering for a memorial day.

This fact seems to correspond with what Alinder stated in her previous study. Alinder considered that the shot in which the internee is looking out of the screen gives a symbolic impression, while the shot in which the internee is looking straight back at the camera resembles a portrait image. From this point of view, the frontal views in the American documentary represents the ideal assimilation as a symbol somewhere far away, and those in the Canadian documentary expresses its tendency of co-existence in the family-photo-like composition.

This study now discusses the second issue of the result: the “Same frame” shots in the films. As shown in Table 2, the number of “Same frame” shots in *Challenge* records is 6.5 times more than those of *Descent*. If, as Bordwell quoted as a widely used heuristic statement, the shots in

which characters appear simultaneously indicate their unity, the U.S. film depicts the people united visibly much more than the Canadian one. This suggests that the former reflects the ideal policy of assimilation in its visual description more than the latter.

Nonetheless, as Bordwell noted (Bordwell 1989, p. 251), even if characters are in the same shot, one can deliberately say that they are united (by being in the same shot) or separated (by the space between them). Therefore, an elaborate analysis is needed here. Figures 13 and 14 show the typical “Same frame” shot of each film.



Figure 13:
Typical “Same frame”
shot in *Challenge*



Figure 14:
Typical “Same frame”
shot in *Descent*

As shown in Figure 13, the shot of a guard and an interned mother holding a baby is a typical composition of the ruler and the ruled. In this shot, a giant image of a guard with a gun facing the right side occupies the foreground on the left side of the frame. In contrast, a small image of a mother and a baby walking slowly in the background is visible on the right side of the frame.

Also, in the American film, as in the payment scene shown in Figure 6 or the shopping scene at the Purchasing Department, the Caucasian and the Japanese are separated on either side of the counter. They are classified as rulers and ruled. In 13 shots among 18 “Same frame” shots (72%) in *Challenge*, the faces of Japanese Americans

and Caucasians face opposite directions. Even if they face the same direction, there is a strict differentiation between the Caucasian and the Japanese as the supervisor and the supervised, as in the scenes of classroom or workplace for example. These shots of *Challenge* can be regarded as corresponding to an internee's words as recorded by Mizuno in a temporary assembly center of Japanese descent in the U.S.A..

“a profound feeling is developing among the Japanese at Santa Anita that the Caucasians in camp suffered a definite superiority complex.” (Mizuno, 2003, p. 102)

Meanwhile, in the Canadian film, in the construction planning scene, as shown in Figure 14, or the scenes at the front of the clinic building, the Japanese and the Caucasian face the same direction. Both appear to be colleagues. In 6 shots among 7 of the “Same frame” shots (86%) in *Descent*, the faces of the Japanese and Caucasian face the same direction, and they are in equivalent positions on the screen.

In *Challenge*, the Japanese and the Caucasian face opposite directions. However, in *Descent*, Japanese descent and Caucasian face the same direction. Here, the two films contrast visually. This difference is considered to be a visual reflection of how the American footage represents a hierarchy in assimilation, whereas the Canadian footage represents a parallel coexistence.

This study finally considers the third issue of the result indicated by statistical data.

Fundamental descriptive statistics (Table 3) revealed that the U.S. and Canadian internment documentaries were significantly different in numbers and ratios. They made clear contrasts in

items.

The average shot length for *Descent* is almost twice of that in *Challenge*. Comparing the dispersion, the data of *Challenge* scatters more sparsely than those of *Descent*. In contrast, the data of the latter squeezes more densely than those of the former. This means that *Descent* is cut more quickly than *Challenge*. In other words, the Canadian editor tried to cram about twice as much content into the film as the American one.

Now, this study considers the characteristic shots extracted as outliers from the descriptive statistics.

For the American film, the loyalty questionnaire document shot of *Challenge* and for the Canadian film, ladies performing Bon dance shot of *Descent* can be considered as representative of each documentary. This study discusses these two shots in comparison.

In the American documentary, the loyalty questionnaire document shot in *Challenge* has the longest duration (41 seconds). It is a close-up of a hand leafing through documents entitled the “leave clearance docket.” During this shot, the narrator states that “only those evacuees whose statements and whose acts leave no question of their loyalty to the United States are permitted to leave.” The docket should record the result of the loyalty questionnaire that sought information allowing the authority to decide whether an internee was loyal enough to be trusted outside of the camp (Muller, 2007, p. 32; Robinson, 2009, pp. 185-188). This shot symbolizes the American way of assimilation of internees just as Alinder notes that “the categories of American and Japanese were then aligned with the categories of loyal and disloyal” (Alinder, 2012, p. 91). This can be seen as reflecting the U.S. policy “a sometimes coercive policy of ‘Americanization’, that is,

Japanese assimilation to white American values” (Robinson, 2009, p. 185).

This shot is regarded as a nodal point of the film. It begins at 12 minutes and 21 seconds in the film that spans a total duration of 17 minutes and 43 seconds. It begins after 69.3% of the total duration of the film has elapsed. Until this shot, the film mostly depicts the interior of the camp with a few exceptions showing seasonal work on a nearby farm. After this shot, the film depicts the camp’s outdoors, i.e. American society where ex-internees work in various places. The film then illustrates the training of the Japanese American soldiers with a voice-over: “The Americanism of the great majority of America’s Japanese finds its highest expression in the thousands who are in the United States Army, almost half of them are in a Japanese American combat team.... Hundreds of them volunteered while they were in relocation centers.... They know what they’re fighting against and they know what they’re fighting for – their country and for the American ideals that are part of their upbringing – democracy, freedom, equality of opportunity regardless of race, creed, or ancestry.” It functions as a gateway to the normal world, filtering out those who lack loyalty and accordingly cannot assimilate into American society. Military images exist only in the American film, which is consistent with what has been pointed out in previous research on Japanese internment.

In the Canadian documentary, the longest shot has two ladies in kimonos performing Bon dance, and in combination with the subsequent close-up shot of the ladies, spans for a duration of 21 seconds. It is the introductory shot for the Bon festival sequence lasting 82 seconds as a whole with the other 22 shots. It begins at 13 minutes

and 12 seconds in the film which has a total duration of 21 minutes and 26. It begins after 61.6 % of the total duration of the film has elapsed.

Along with this Japanese cultural shot, *Descent* has a shot of baseball game players that lasts 14 seconds and is the second-longest shot in the film. It is in the middle of a baseball game sequence with 54 seconds of duration with other 20 shots. This indicates that both the Bon dance and the baseball game are highlight shots of the scenes in the point of their length.

This phenomenon, such as the coexistence of Japanese and Western cultures is a vital feature of *Descent*. This Canadian documentary has other Japanese traditional culture scenes such as Shogi (Japanese chess) and Japanese bath, along with Western activities such as boy scouts and football. These shots reflect the point Pendakis and Wilson noted as follows.

This called for a re-visioning, quite literally, of the Canadian national imaginary, one no longer exclusively grounded in the project of a pure white British ideal. Though clearly steeped in many of the racist, nativist ideals which characterized the pre-war period in Canada, “*Of Japanese Descent*” is at the same instant one of the first attempts on the part of the state to openly transition the Canadian national imaginary towards a more diverse and tolerant multicultural ideal. (Pendakis & Wilson, 2018, p. 19)

In contrast, the U. S. documentary has only Western ones, such as boy scouts, football, and baseball. It has no Japanese cultural activity comparable to Bon dance; instead, it has a Westernized beauty contest winner parade scene. It is similar to what Mizuno noted for the newspaper in an assembly center of Japanese

American.

“news that could be associated with Japan or things Japanese, no matter how newsworthy it might be, was often ignored or played down. (...)”

On the other hand, patriotism to the United States was played up.” (Mizuno, 2003, p. 101)

Thus, Japanese and Western cultures coexist in the Canadian film, while Japanese culture is eliminated from the U.S. film. Here again, a contrasting difference which correspond to previous research on policies and camp lifestyles in the two documentaries is observed. The results of the fundamental descriptive statistics (Table 3) showed that *Descent* had a shorter ASL than *Challenge*, and that there were approximately twice as many shots per unit time in the former than the latter. This is considered to be a phenomenon that corresponds to the fact that while only Western culture is depicted in the American film, both Western and Japanese cultures are depicted in the Canadian film.

5. Conclusion

This study compared the documentaries about the internment of Japanese Canadians and Japanese Americans using combined analysis method and visually analyzed the differences between the two countries reflected in them.

Following the analysis, significant differences between the two films were observed.

First, the number of “Frontal view of the internees” shots in *Descent* exceeded those of *Challenge* more than 17 times. In the Canadian film, these shots of internees resemble family memorial pictures. In contrast, in the U.S. film, people look away from the camera and face the

other direction. These shots may be considered as symbolic of the American way of assimilation for internees.

Second, the number of “Same frame” shots in *Challenge* is 6.5 times higher than in *Descent*. This suggests that the former reflects the idealism of assimilation in its visual description more than the latter. Nevertheless, further analysis revealed that in *Challenge*, Japanese Americans and Caucasians face opposite directions while in *Descent*, Japanese Canadians and Caucasians face the same direction. These shots of *Challenge* place Japanese descent and Caucasian in the same frame but divide them as supervisor and supervised. In contrast, in *Descent*, the Japanese and the Caucasian face the same direction, and they co-exist in equivalent positions on the screen.

Third, characteristic shots of the two films indicate their difference clearly. While the Canadian film has shots depicting the Western and Japanese cultures evenly, the American film has only those of the Western one. Such coexistence of ethnic cultures is a vital feature of the Canadian film and it is similar in crucial shots such as “Japanese Canadians play baseball” and “Japanese Canadian ladies perform Bon dance.” These shots showing cultural plurality may be considered as metaphorical of Canadian society. On the other hand, a characteristic shot of the American film shows a questionnaire on loyalty to the United States, and this shot is followed by the process of assimilation into American society and participation in the military as its ultimate form.

In all cases, contrast between American idealism of assimilation and Canadian cultural diversity was observed in the two films. Both documentaries positively reframe the internment

of Japanese Americans and Canadians and re-integrate the Japanese into society, however the visual expressions of the two are different, reflecting the cultural differences between the two countries. Thus, the hypothesis that the differences exist in the films as a visual description was supported.

Through data analysis, this study verified that the statistical method like Cinemetrics was fairly efficient for analyzing documentaries when combined with traditional content analysis.

This study was intended to be exploratory only with American and Canadian internment documentary films. Therefore the footages from other countries were not covered. Despite these data limitations, the comparative method of this study may offer opportunities to examine the differential quality of other documentary films and contribute to assessing characteristics in numerous films and videos. Comparative research on documentaries and propaganda films made in countries other than the United States and Canada should be a future topic.

Acknowledgments

This study was supported by JSPS Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research Grant Number JP18K18327.

I would like to express my gratitude to Doctor Chieko Mizoue, Professor Emerita of the University of Tsukuba for her valuable information regarding Japanese Canadian internment film "Of Japanese Descent."

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