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From Words to Actions: an investigation into the extent to which the perpetrators of the California Genocide were motivated by economic reasons through content analysis of newspapers published between 1846 and 1851

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Abstract

The Californian genocide was perhaps the largest and most violent attack on the Indigenous population by non-Indigenous settlers in North American history. Between 1846 and 1873, around 80 per cent of all Indigenous Californians died. Even though most of them passed away due to malnutrition and disease, thousands were murdered as settlers looked for gold. This paper conducts a content analysis of 1004 articles to establish the extent to which the massacres were motivated by economic reasons, especially competition for resources. The increased number of articles discussing land ownership, the expulsion of the Indigenous Californians and the stealing of horses and buffalo suggest that competition for resources could have been an important motivator behind the massacres. To test the results of the analysis, this paper looks for an overlap between the location of 211 massacre sites and 3951 placer gold mines. As the relationship between the two variables might have been confounded by the Indigenous and aggregate populations distribution, it compares the results to the census data from 1850, 1860 and 1870 to show that many of the massacres happened in regions with high mine density but low population density. These findings support the claim that economic reasons were possibly the driving factor behind the genocide.

Illustrative Map of California in 1856

Notes: Map showing counties, major cities and rivers in California prepared by cartographer Joseph Hutchins Colton in 1855. The map is not an integral part of an argument and should be used only as a reference to some of the locations mentioned in this paper.

Source: Map Geeks.

1. Introduction

> The fact is our occupation of the country has driven them to the utmost straits. Their fisheries, one of their previously chief sources of supply, have been broken up or occupied by our people. The game, their other great resource, has been driven off or destroyed by the white man's greater skill and more efficient means of death. They have thus been driven to the brink of starvation, besides all the lawless and outrageous acts of personal oppression and abuse which they have received from a set of accursed villains who infest our State, and who, totally regardless of their own countrymen's rights and property and lives, cannot be expected to be conservators of those of the Indians. Oppression, abuse, and hunger have driven these miserable beings to acts of robbery and murder, we doubt not, but it does not necessarily follow that they are alone to blame.[1]

This extract is from a newspaper article which appeared around three weeks before Peter Burnett, governor of California, declared on January 7, 1851, that "a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the races, until the Indian race becomes extinct", setting in motion a new, state-sponsored phase of the Californian genocide.[2]

In the next two years, the state legislature authorised payment of over $1,100,100 "for suppression of Indian hostilities," which was later reimbursed by Congress.[3] The state financing of violent expeditions led many men to take up arms and join "Indian hunts," murdering at least 9,400 Californian Indians.

However, the genocide was set in motion three years prior to the extermination order when on January 24, 1848, James Marshall, a sawmill operator, noticed tiny pieces of gold on the bottom of the American River in Coloma.[4] Following this discovery, the Sierra Nevada mountains were flooded by white settlers looking to

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[1] "The Indians," Daily Alta California, December 15, 1850. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18501215.2.4&e=-------en--20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-humanitas-------1 (accessed 28 April 2023).
[2] Benjamin Madley, An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 186.
[3] Edward D. Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration and Settlement," in Handbook of North American Indians, ed. Robert F. Heizer, vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 108.
[4] Madley, An American Genocide, 67.

enrich themselves at any cost. Soon the gold hidden in the Californian valleys would be stained with Indigenous blood.

The annihilation of the Native population continued up until 1873.[5] Even though most Californian Indians died during this period due to starvation and disease, many were murdered by the settlers. By analysing 702 articles concerning Indian-American relations, published between August 15, 1846, and January 7, 1851, this paper tries to investigate to what extent were the massacres of Indigenous Californians motivated by economic reasons, especially competition for resources, rather than racial hatred. The decision to focus on this timeframe was guided by the fact that following the extermination order of 1851, the massacres took a larger scale and the perpetrators had additional monetary incentives as they were reimbursed for the violent military campaigns. The analysis of the articles allows us to identify the motivations behind the massacres and emotions associated with the Indigenous population. If the massacres were motivated by the competition for resources rather than racial hatred, we should observe an increased number of narratives discussing Indigenous land ownership, the expulsion of Californian Indians from the gold regions and the stealing of horses and buffalo upon which Native Californians' caloric intake dependent when white settlers destroyed their traditional sources of food.

To further test the hypothesis, this paper takes the location of 211 massacre sites and 3951 placer gold mines to establish whether there is a geographic correlation between the two. However, if the overlap exists, it could be explained by the concentration of aggregate or Indigenous population in the gold mining regions. To establish whether the location of massacres depended on the location of mines rather than population distribution, the results are compared to census data from 1850, 1860 and 1870.

[5] Id. 68.

2. Historical Context

California was first seen by Europeans when the Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo expedition of 1542-43 reached its' southern coast.[6] The pre-contact population usually lived in political units of 50 to 500 people, which tended to be democracies.[7] Sherburne F. Cook, utilising the location of villages and other sites, information collected by ethnographers from living informants, reports and letters, documents relating to the missions and the carrying capacity of land surfaces, stream courses, and sea coasts estimated pre-Hispanic population to be around 310,000.[8] This means that the region had the highest preconquest population density per square mile in North America.[9] Interestingly, Californian population was also one of the most diverse ones: sources suggest that over 300 dialects were spoken by the aboriginal Californians.[10]

By 1846 the Indigenous population was halved to about 150,000.[11] From the late 18th century onwards, Franciscan Order started establishing the first settlements in Alta California.[12] As a result, 21 missions were founded between 1760 and 1823 along the coast. The "Mission Strip" stretched from San Diego to Sonoma.[13] Similarly as in other Spanish colonies, missions, and *presidios* (military forts) utilised the *encomienda* system allowing them to appropriate Indigenous labour. Contrary to romanticised depictions in popular culture, missions were coercive authoritarian institutions.[14] Due to violence and crowded conditions, lots of Californian Indians died because of malnutrition and disease. The same factors decreased fertility, which was further diminished by passive resistance, namely, abortions and infanticide.[15] Life in the settlements led to a breakdown of tribal

[6] Robert F. Heizer, "History of Research," in Handbook of North American Indians, ed. William C. Sturtevant and Robert F. Heizer, vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 6.
[7] Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration," 99.
[8] Sherburne F. Cook, "Historical Demography," in Handbook of North American Indians, ed. William C. Sturtevant and Robert F. Heizer, vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 91.
[9] Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration," 99.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Cook, "Historical Demography," 93.
[12] Heizer, "History of Research," 6.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration," 101/2.
[15] Id. 104.

organisation and traditional family and exposed the Indigenous population to new pathogens. Cook estimates that in mission communities, disease was responsible for "crude death rates reaching nearly 100 per 1,000 adults and 150 per 1,000 children".[16] Franciscan missions, through the creation of unbearable living conditions, led to deaths of thousands of Indigenous Californians.

In 1821 Mexico, including Alta California, gained independence from Spain. Even though after 1834 missions were secularised and replaced by the rancheria system,[17] "the Mexican attitude towards the Indians was essentially the same as that of the Spanish".[18] Between 1834 and 1846, mission Indians went "into the civilian pueblo areas to seek work, others became labourers on the private ranchos, and many returned to the mountains to seek refuge in their aboriginal homeland".[19] Those who lived in white settlements were often ruthlessly exploited, whereas those who escaped risked being caught by the military campaigns into the interior, organised by both Spanish and Mexican governments to fill missions with new labour or to procure workers for rancherias.[20] It shows that the main difference between Spanish-Mexican regimes and the American regime was that post-1846 invaders looked to appropriate land for new settlements and mines, which ultimately led to the genocide, whereas decades earlier, missionaries and Mexican rancheros looked to appropriate free labour, which eventually led to slavery: both phenomena turned to be equally atrocious, but one in a much shorter time frame.

Between 1543 and 1846, around 160,000 Indigenous Californians died due to disease, malnutrition, slavery, and overcrowding. However, the much more drastic population loss happened in 20 years between 1850 and 1870 under American rule, leaving only 16,624 Californian Indians, according to census data in 1890.

[16] Id. 92.
[17] Robert L. Schuyler, "Indian-Euro-American Interaction: Archeological Evidence from Non-Indian Sites," in Handbook of North American Indians, ed. Robert F. Heizer, vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 75.
[18] Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration," 104.
[19] Id. 105.
[20] Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration," 105.

Russel Thornton wrote that "the largest, most blatant, deliberate killings of North American Indians by non-Indians surely occurred in California, particularly in northern California during the mid-1800s".[21] In the spring of 1846, American army captain John C. Fremont marched his men into California, preparing the ground for the slaughter of the aboriginal population.[22] As "new land" slowly drew an influx of migrants, settlements were established further inland, encroaching on Indigenous territories. Following the discovery of gold on the January 24, 1848, by James Marshall on Johann Sutter's land, the Californian published an article on the March 15, 1848, releasing the news to the public. What started as an internal population movement from coastal towns to the Sierra Nevada mountains became an enormous wave of immigration from all around the world. In 1850 the non-Indian population of California counted 92,597 and by 1870 it was 560,247.[23]

Benjamin Madley argues that one of the factors explaining why the genocide intensified after 1848 was precisely this population increase, bringing new violent settlers and making Indigenous labour disposable.[24] His argument suggests that white Americans were willing to exterminate Californian Indians even before the gold discovery, but did not have sufficient manpower to do so. This essay argues that the scale of the genocide was not only dependent on the population size but also on gold itself. Massacres would be less likely to intensify in number and scale without the lust for economic enrichment.

[21] Russell Thornton, American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History since 1492 (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 201.
[22] Madley, An American Genocide, 42-4.
[23] U.S. Census Office, The seventh census of the United States: 1850, Statistics of California, Table 1, 969. https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1850/1850a/1850a-47.pdf (accessed 25 April 2023).
U.S. Census Office, The ninth census of the United States: 1870, The statistics of the population of the United States, Table 2, 15 and 16.
https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1870/population/1870a-05.pdf (accessed 25 April 2023).
[24] Madley, An American Genocide, 50-51.

3. Conceptual Context

Madley's *An American Genocide* was a significant contribution to the study of the causes of the genocide. However, his work, similarly as those of other scholars researching the mass murder, overwhelmingly focused on racial hatred as the primary motivation behind the massacres. Yet, some theoretical literature suggests that looking at economic motivators behind the genocide may be worthwhile. Only three extensive publications addressing the Californian Genocide appeared in the 21st century: William Secrest's *When the Great Spirit Died*, Brendan Lindsay's *Murder State*, and *An American Genocide*. The first book looked only at the period between 1850 and 1860, omitting the early years, which are crucial to the understanding of the origins of the genocide. Lindsay's work, analysed the whole period but assumed that perpetrators were mainly motivated by pre-existing racism.[25] Finally, *An American Genocide* is the first "comprehensive, year-by-year history of the California Indian genocide under U.S. rule, […] supplying evidence of more than 9,400 violent killings".[26] Moreover, Madley prepared an extensive list of all the mass killings documented, listing their date, location, and number of victims, which this paper utilises to visualise the geographic overlap between mines and massacre sites.[27]

The first person to use the term "genocide" to explain what was previously called an "extermination" of California Indians was James Rawls in 1984.[28] The term genocide was coined by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish lawyer, from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing), mirroring words like homicide or tyrannicide.[29] It appeared for the first time in his magnus opus, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (1944).[30] He defined this crime as a "coordinated plan of different actions

[25] Id. 8.
[26] Madley, An American Genocide, 13.
[27] Id. Appendix 3.
[28] Id. 6.
[29] Lech M Nijakowski, Ludobójstwo. Historia i Socjologia Ludzkiej Destrukcyjności (Warsaw, PL: Iskry, 2018), 9 and
Konstanty Gebert, Ostateczne Rozwiązania. Ludobójcy i Ich Dzieło (Warsaw, PL: Agora, 2022), 26.
[30] Nijakowski, Ludobójstwo, 26 and

aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves".[31] Indeed, two years later the General Assembly of the United Nations affirmed the genocide as a crime under international law that can be committed on "racial, religious, political and other groups".[32] On the December 9, 1948, the final Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted, which narrowed down the definition to "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such".[33] The official argument against including social, political, or economic groups was that belonging to such groups is determined by choice, whereas belonging to national, ethnic, or racial groups in the eyes of the perpetrator is determined by "nature" and hence unconvertable.[34] The only exception are religious groups: in fact, some may argue that it is easier to change religious affiliation than move between economic classes. It is also important to note that the key element of the legal definition is genocidal intent: massacres cannot be tried for genocide unless the "intent to destroy" can be proven.[35] Due to the number of issues with the legal definition of the crime, scholars often consider it defective and introduce their own interpretations.[36]

However, only a few argue for the inclusion of economic groups: most focus on political ones. Nevertheless, even Lemkin himself, when writing about Acts of

James Waller, Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33.

[31] Raphael Lemkin, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.

[32] UN General Assembly, Resolution 96 (I), The Crime of Genocide, A_RES_96(I)-EN (11 December 1946).

[33] UN General Assembly, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,9 December 1948, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 78, 277. https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf (accessed 20 April 2023).

[34] Nijakowski, Ludobójstwo, 45-47 and
Gebert, Ostateczne Rozwiązania, 27-28.

[35] Nijakowski, Ludobójstwo, 27 and 35-36 and
Gebert, Ostateczne Rozwiązania, 37.

[36] Nijakowski, Ludobójstwo, 11/12 and 41.

Barbarity, a concept laying the foundation for the crime of genocide presented in Madrid in 1933, included "social collectivities".[37]

In fact, there is some scholarship supporting the idea of the inclusion of economic groups. Using the principles of evolutionary psychology, James Waller argues that we are endowed with psychological mechanisms that transform us into perpetrators of mass killing "when activated by appropriate cultural, psychological, or social cues".[38] Our ancestors faced many adaptive problems to which they developed universal reasoning circuits through natural selection: one of them was competition for scarce resources, to which the most effective solution was hurting individuals from competing groups.[39] Groups more aggressive were more likely to survive having access to necessary resources, leaving us "evolutionarily primed with the capacity for evil".[40] It means that economic rivalry shaped our destructive capacities: this provides solid grounds for an investigation into the relationship between the distribution of economic resources and mass atrocities. Charles Anderton gives a sound theoretical framework for such empirical analysis. He asserts that genocides and mass atrocities can be modes of wealth appropriation, including the accumulation of territories that contain valuable natural resources, such as gold.[41]

Yet, there is no comprehensive analysis looking at the genocide of California Indians as occurring directly due to the discovery of gold. The only connection so far identified is that the gold rush drew to California an increased number of immigrants who were responsible for the massacres. Identifying the direct dependence of the genocide on the passion for gold would contribute to the debate

[37]Nijakowski, Ludobójstwo, 24/25 and
Gebert, Ostateczne Rozwiązania, 23.
[38] Waller, Becoming Evil, 159.
[39] Id. 149-50 and 155.
[40] Id. 155-159.
[41] Charles H. Anderton, "A Research Agenda for the Economic Study of Genocide: Signposts from the Field of Conflict Economics," Journal of Genocide Research 16, no. 1 (February 2014): Figure 3 and 118 and
Jurgen Brauer and Raul Caruso, "For Being Aboriginal: Economic Perspectives on Pre-Holocaust Genocides," in Economic Aspects of Genocides, Other Mass Atrocities, and Their Prevention, ed. Charles H. Anderton and Jurgen Brauer (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 250.

on the economic causes of genocides. Moreover, studying the massacres themselves might be a significant academic contribution to the literature on the depopulation of the Americas. Many 20th century historians overwhelmingly focused on the role of European pathogens when discussing the depopulation of North America. Following William McNeil's and Alfred W. Crosby's works in the 1970s, a theoretical framework emerged arguing that "the depopulation of the Americas was the inevitable result of contact between disease-experienced Old-World populations and the "virgin" populations of the Americas".[42] The "no immunity" argument's powerful appeal can be best represented by Jared Diamond's book *Guns, Germs and Steel*. The author won Pulitzer Prize in 1998 and sold over two million copies, even though the book is based on a "racial theory of disease susceptibility".[43] The Virgin Soils theory and other narratives of immunological determinism "deflect the attention away from moral and political questions".[44] They present depopulation as an inescapable product of historical, or even natural, forces and lift the burden off the European shoulders. Therefore, apart from contributing to the debate on the causes of genocides, this work brings attention back to the violence and atrocious crimes upon which European fortunes were built.

4. Primary Sources and Methodology

4.1 How sources were selected

To systematically study change over time in the attitudes of a given population, there is probably no better method than looking at surveys. However, as in mid-19th century California no one even imagined conducting a cross-population survey, we have to rely on other sources providing a glimpse into historical public opinion. Newspapers, as they not only include news articles but as well opinion pieces and letters and are published consistently every day or every week over a long period of time, might offer a good substitute for surveys.

[42] David S. Jones, "Virgin Soils Revisited," William and Mary Quarterly 60, no. 4 (2003): 703.
[43] Id. 710.
[44] Id. 712.

Due to the limited online availability of photocopies of media outlets from that period and to ensure maximum coverage, I've studied all the media outlets available for the years 1846-1850 in the California Digital Newspaper Collection: that is, California Star, The Californian, California Star & Californian, Weekly Alta California, Daily Alta California, Sacramento Transcript, Daily Placer Times and Transcript and Marysville Daily Herald. Out of 16,963 articles published between August 15, 1846, and January 7, 1851, 1,004 articles including the words "Indian" or "Indians" were sampled and analysed.

To be included in the following stages of the analysis the article had to be directly relevant to Indian-American relations in California. I've excluded any articles relating to Indian corn or the Indian Ocean and reports from other regions but included descriptions of people travelling from other states to California if the exact location of an event described was not given. Foreign newspapers discussing California explicitly were also incorporated into the analysis. Even though they presented foreign narratives, they could describe some important events or attitudes. Moreover, the decision of the local editors to include such articles in the publications might mean that foreign narratives aligned with local opinions.

The process of elimination decreased the number of articles to 702, all relevant to Indian- American relations in California. It's also important to mention that articles published multiple times were coded as separate pieces, as they show the prevalence of particular attitudes. Following the initial analysis and elimination of non-relevant articles, I conducted quantitative content analysis to determine the presence of themes suggesting possible motives behind massacres and the linguistic context in which the words "Indian" or "Indians" was used. Linguistic context should be understood as words surrounding the phrases, giving a sentence or a paragraph a particular meaning. This can show us emotions associated with Indigenous Californians and the historical context of the massacres. I did a close reading of each article and coded it according to the classification developed alongside the analysis. Whenever a new category was introduced, I went back to articles that could possibly be reclassified and revaluated them.

5. Discussion of primary sources

Newspapers offer a glimpse into the life of historical societies like no other source. As they are published regularly over long periods of time, it is possible to track the effects of particular events and see how narratives changed over the years. Moreover, as the newspapers contain not only articles written by journalists from bigger cities but also many letters, reports, public announcements, and minutes from government meetings, they represent a wide range of perspectives. Additionally, as the population living in California in the 1840s was relatively little, a turnover in the publishing houses was likely small and editorial teams remained the same over the years. Hence, it is unlikely that the change in the narratives following the discovery of gold was due to changing authors or editors. However, as none of the newspapers covers the whole period of 1846-1850, the changes might have resulted from different media outlets publishing at a different time.

The information in the magazines was selected by a small group of people, hence might systematically omit certain aspects of the 1840s Californian society. Fortunately, the opinions contained within the articles might be representative of broader societal attitudes as there is a high chance that editors included narratives which would increase their sales: that is, the ones overlapping with public opinion. Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Jingbo Meng empirically proved that people prefer and spend more time reading articles aligning with their views. After collecting responses of 156 participants to a questionnaire regarding 17 political issues, they tracked the browsing patterns of the participants on an online magazine platform with articles featuring opposing perspectives.[45] They found that participants spent 36 per cent more reading time on "attitude-consistent messages than on counter-attitudinal content".[46] This suggests that profit-oriented newspaper editors very likely opted to include narratives that aligned with public opinion. Moreover, the information in the articles might have shaped

[45] Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Jingbo Meng, "Looking the Other Way: Selective Exposure to Attitude-Consistent and Counterattitudinal Political Information," Communication Research 36, no. 3 (June 2009): 431.
[46] Id. 443.

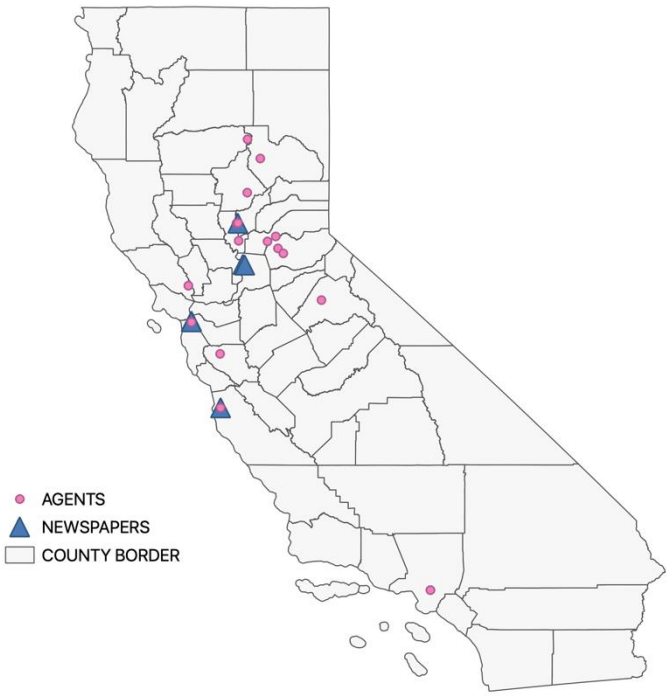
the readers' attitudes. This two-directional relationship between consumers and publishers increases the probability that the narratives presented in the articles aligned with popular beliefs.

Another possible limitation of using newspapers to infer information about the genocide is that they do not include Indigenous voices. Finding Californian Indians' narratives from that period is generally a daunting task, given that around 80 per cent of all Indigenous Californians died between 1846 and 1873 and those who survived often hid their Indian identities. It is even harder when working with newspapers as their publishing, as well as preservation, inclusion in the archives, and digitalisation, depended on existing power structures favouring white man. Papers whose main audience was a minority group were less likely to be archived. The history of the Californian Genocide prioritising Indigenous perspectives is important and remains to be written. Fortunately, when looking into the motivations behind the genocide, the perpetrators' voices are the most informative. Yet, as the genocide was state-sponsored, due to the societal power structures accounts portraying murderers in a negative light might have been published only in small numbers.

Regarding selective preservation of historical accounts, it is crucial to consider the stages the newspaper article had to go through to end up in a California Digital Newspaper Collection search result. It had to not only survive in the archive it was kept at but also be scanned and accurately transcribed by a computer to appear in the digital database.[47] Even "the level of printing quality or the type of font used" determined the extent to which content was accurately machine read, allowing it to appear in the search.[48] Therefore, many voices and perspectives that were published and archived will remain missing from the analysis as they did not survive one of the subsequent stages of the process.

[47] Brian Beach and W. Walker Hanlon, "Historical Newspaper Data: A Researcher's Guide and Toolkit," Working Paper 30135, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2022, 36.
[48] Id. 38.

Figure 1. Map showing the location of newspapers analysed and their agents.



The selection bias coming from the archiving process also affects the geographical representativeness of my analysis. As visible in Figure 1, the newspapers included in the database come from only four cities: San Francisco, Sacramento, Monterey, and Marysville.[49] Therefore, there is a risk of relatively less coverage of the attitudes of inhabitants of, e.g., Lower California. Fortunately, Sacramento Transcript, the Californian, California Star and Marysville Daily Herald included in their publications list of agents spread across the state who would frequently communicate with the editors and pass on the news. From this, we know that, apart from letters sent to the newspapers' offices from readers across the country, the newspapers regularly published reports from distant locations. This shows that the geographical coverage of the newspapers was not limited only to the cities where offices were situated.

The final limitation of using this source and method comes from limited objectivity as reading and coding the articles depended on my personal interpretation. The

[49] For map with counties and bigger cities see Illustrative Map on page 4.

more articles I've read, the more categories of causes and linguistic contexts I have identified. Whenever a new category was introduced, I had a second look at articles already analysed and revaluated their classification. Nevertheless, my personal biases very likely left a mark on the codification process. Perhaps more objective and reliable results could be achieved if different researchers independently conducted a content analysis of the same articles, and the most common categorisation would be chosen.

6. Coding motivations

Articles coded as naming a possible motivation behind the massacres included both direct and indirect mentions of the motivation of the perpetrators participating in a specific mass killing (an example of an indirect mention could be a description of an "Indian hunt" following accusations of stealing horses, without specifying that the massacre was retaliatory), incitements to genocide, as well as plans to attack. On the other hand, descriptions of prosecutions of Indigenous Americans by due process were excluded from the analysis. Even though the punishment for Native inhabitants might have been harsher than for white settlers, and the jury might have been biased against the Indigenous population, in such cases, they were not administratively discriminated against. Finally, accounts of homicides, that is, murders of individual Californian Indians, were not included in the analysis, as it is harder to establish genocidal intent in such cases.

Throughout the analysis, seven categories of potential motivations were identified:

1. Defence: articles mentioning a direct attack by the Indigenous Californians right before the massacre.
2. Retaliation for stealing or killing animals: articles discussing revenge for stealing or killing animals or mentioning the theft happening sometime before the massacre.
3. Retaliation for attacking white settlers: articles alluding to an attack (occurring considerable time before the massacre) to which the

perpetrators responded and articles mentioning Indigenous Californians committing "depredations". At first glance, "depredations" could mean plundering or pillaging, and hence such articles should be included in the "retaliation for stealing animals" category. The decision to classify them as "retaliation for attacking white settlers" instead was guided by an article from the California Star published on April 17, 1847, which differentiated between "thefts and depredations".

4. Intimidation: articles describing attacks committed to compel Indigenous inhabitants to return stolen animals or to "make an example".
5. Racial hatred: articles identifying no cause other than the perpetrator's personal unjustified feelings or prejudices.
6. Suppression of an uprising: articles describing an attack conducted to keep Native inhabitants in subjection or to disperse a revolt.
7. Expulsion: articles calling for total extermination or removal from the state all Californian Indians rather than a particular group.

I hypothesise that following the discovery of gold in Sonoma on January 27, 1848, the proportion of articles coded as "defence" and "retaliation" (both for attacking settlers and stealing animals) started falling and were supplanted by the "expulsion" category.

7. Coding linguistic contexts

A close reading of the articles allowed to identify eleven categories of linguistic context:

1. Source of cheap labour: articles describing Indigenous Californians employed by white settlers and/or being paid small wages.
2. Helping in gold digging: articles describing Native Americans as engaging in gold panning, being present in the mines or being employed by white miners.

3. Trying to stop gold digging: reports of the Indigenous population trying to stop gold mining by threatening or spreading myths about a creature protecting "golden sands"[50] and articles mentioning direct attacks on gold miners.
4. Wise: descriptions of Californian Indians as being wise and "possessing generous and redeeming traits"[51] or being aware of the value of gold.
5. Unaware: articles presenting Californian Indians as having no awareness of the value of gold or being unaware of its presence before the "discovery" in 1848.
6. Derogatory language: articles describing the aboriginal population as "degenerate", "lazy", "unclean", etc.
7. Stealing: articles identifying Indigenous Americans as thieving possessions of white settlers and raiding ranchos. The vast majority of pieces belonging to this category described the stealing of horses or buffalo.
8. Hostile: articles describing the Californian Indians as aggressive, "wild", or "to be protected against" or simply describing unprovoked attacks (meaning the confrontations in which Indigenous people were not defending themselves).
9. Co-existence: articles mentioning Indigenous inhabitants living in villages together with the non-Indian population, being employed by white Americans in other sectors than gold mining and helping in rescue missions.
10. Scared: descriptions of Californian Indians running away from the settlers, hiding in the mountains, or being scared of settlers attacking them.
11. Discussing land ownership: pieces describing Indigenous Americans as an obstacle to settlement or those discussing Indian land titles.

[50] "The Root Diggers," Weekly Alta California, November 15, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=WAC18491115.2.23.22&e=-------en--20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-humanitas------1 (accessed 28 April 2023).
[51] Pacific, "Cal. Star's Sonoma Correspondence," California Star, March 11, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480311.2.6&e=-------en--20--1-byDA-txt-txIN-humanitas-------1 (accessed 26 April 2023).

I hypothesise that the proportion of articles describing co-existence started decreasing after January 1848, whereas texts discussing land ownership increased.

It is important to mention that all the linguistic context categories and motivation categories could overlap with each other. There could be an article coded as belonging to both "retaliation for stealing animals" and "intimidation". Similarly, a piece could be coded as describing the Indigenous population in "derogatory language" and as "hostile".

8. Constructing maps

To test the results of the newspaper analysis and fit them in a broader picture, I compared the location of Californian gold mines with massacre sites using QGIS mapping software. The location of 3951 gold mines comes from the United States Geological Survey's Mineral Resource Data System database. I have decided to include in my analysis only placer gold mines as that were the only form of mining described in the newspaper articles and secondary literature on 19th-century California. In fact, the word "placer" started being widely used in American English during the 1848 gold rush. Placer mining is a "practice of separating heavily eroded minerals like gold from sand or gravel".[52] Traditionally the miners would find a creek having gold in its' sediments. They would later dig down until they hit a bedrock and create a horizontal ditch where gold would deposit. Judging from the fact that the Indigenous miners were commonly called "Digger Indians", this activity probably employed most Californian Indians helping in the mines. Later, the miners would swirl a pan with water and gravel or sand, "allowing the lighter, rocky material to spill out," and gold fall to the bottom of the vessel.[53]

[52] "What Is Placer Gold Mining?" National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior), accessed April 26, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/yuch/learn/historyculture/placer-mining.htm.
[53] Ibid.

The Mineral Resource Data System database data was processed and published by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). For most of the 20th century the data on placer mines was collected directly by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, but from 1994 onwards, the USGS depended entirely on voluntary reports from private companies engaging in mineral production.[54] Unfortunately, there is no clear information on how the data on the location of historic gold mines was collected, but most likely, the USGS used historical maps.[55] Because of the unavailability of information about how the data was collected, there is a risk that the map showing the overlap between the massacres and the gold mines does not include some of the historic mines which existence got lost in the passages of history. Similarly, many of the mines presented were most likely created after the 19th century. Nevertheless, the Mineral Resource Data System is the only comprehensive database of gold mines, so we have to depend on it.

To locate 211 massacre sites between 1846 and 1860, I have utilised the list of massacres of five or more California Indians prepared by Benjamin Madley.[56] As the list only names the locations as they appeared in primary sources, I had to find coordinates for each site using an internet search. However, as many locations are functioning under a different name than they did in the mid-19th century, and cities expanded to encompass hundreds of square kilometres, the locations might not be fully accurate. Nevertheless, they should still show us in which counties massacres happened.

If the genocide was directly dependent on the discovery of gold rather than on indirect channels such as increased immigration, we should observe massacres happening primarily in the gold mining regions of the Sierra Nevada and Far

[54] J John M Lucas, "Gold," in Mineral Commodity Summaries (U.S. Bureau of Mines, 1995), 1. https://d9-wret.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets/palladium/production/mineral-pubs/gold/300494.pdf (accessed April 26, 2023), and
"Minerals Data Collection," National Minerals Information Center (U.S. Geological Survey). https://www.usgs.gov/centers/national-minerals-information-center/minerals-data-collection (accessed April 26, 2023)
[55] U.S. Geological Survey, "The United States Geological Survey Science Data Lifecycle Model," (U.S. Department of Interior, Virginia: 2013). https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2013/1265/pdf/of2013-1265.pdf (accessed April 26, 2023).
[56] Madley, An American Genocide, Appendix 3.

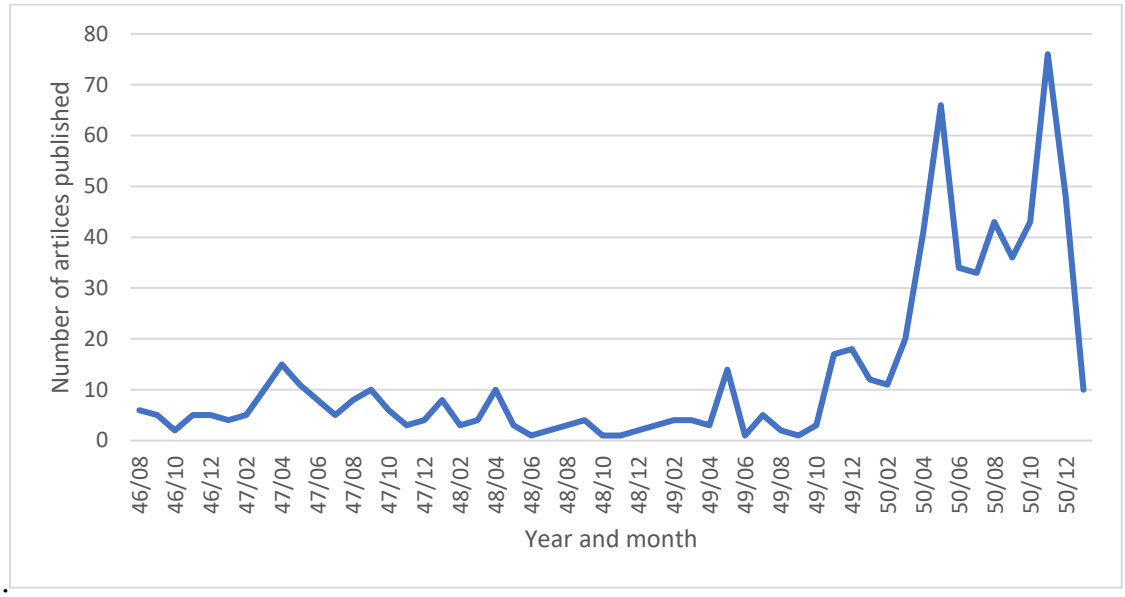
North. On the other hand, there is a possibility that the settler population clustered close to the mines, and that's why most of the killings happened there. Results might also be confounded if the Indigenous population was concentrated in the mining regions. This scenario is highly possible based on the accounts from the Spanish and Mexican periods revealing that many individuals migrated to the mountains to escape the missionisation of the coast. Yet, it is possible that following the discovery of gold in 1848 and the influx of often aggressive immigrants into the Sierra Nevada, the Indigenous population moved deeper into the mountains or emigrated into Southern and Northern California to escape the violence of white settlements. To control for these variables, the overlap between the mines and massacre sites is compared with the population distributions based on census data. For mapping the distribution of aggregated population, I used census data from 1850, 1860 and 1870. For mapping the distribution of the Indigenous population, I was forced to rely on data from 1860 and 1870, as the 1850 census did not enumerate Californian Indians. Because of that, my analysis omits the effect of migration resulting from the gold rush, which probably had a considerable impact on population distribution. This aspect has to be analysed by further research in the future. Nevertheless, the maps created are the first visualisations of population distribution in 1850, 1860, and 1870 California ever created.

9. Results of the analysis

9.1 Distribution of articles over time

Figure 2 presents the number of articles including the words "Indian" or "Indians", published per month between August 15, 1846, and January 7, 1851. The highest number of articles was published in November 1850 (76 articles) and the lowest in June, October and November 1848 and June and September 1849 (only one piece each month). The overall trend seems to be an increasing number of articles over time, probably due to the appearance of the first daily newspaper in April 1849 (Daily Placer Times and Transcript) and two more following December 1849 (Daily Alta California and Marysville Daily Herald)

Figure 2. Distribution of the number of articles including words "Indian" or "Indians" over time.



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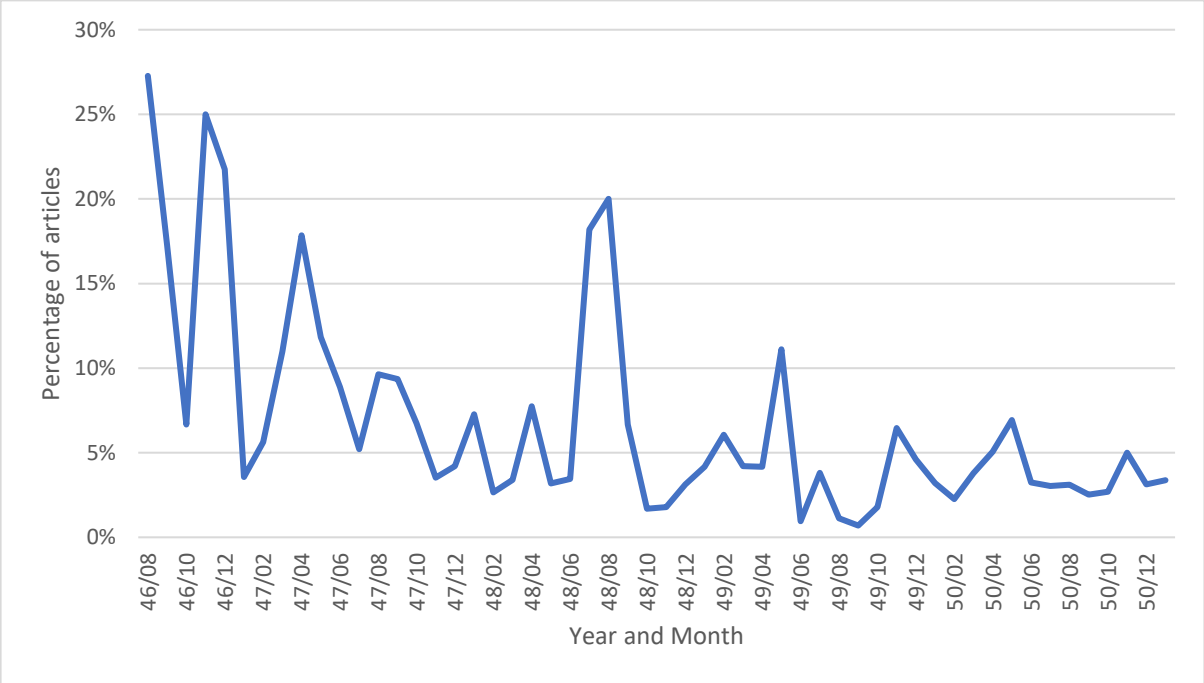
Indeed, when we look at Figure 3, showing the number of articles including the words "Indian" or "Indians" as a percentage of all articles published in a given month, we see that the trend is decreasing over time. The negative trend can be explained by the attention of the journalists and editors shifting toward the emerging issues following the January 27, 1848, such as gold mines and increased immigration. The sudden spike in August and September 1848 can be explained by the extremely low number of articles published in these months (eleven and fifteen, respectively). The low publishing output was probably a result of the staff following the steps of many others and deserting the city of San Francisco for the mines of El Dorado. On the other hand, the spike of May 1849 might be explained by a series of massacres of Indigenous Californians in the preceding month. [57] The overall decrease in the proportion of articles describing Native Americans can suggest growing alienation and estrangement of the Indigenous population as the immigrants started replacing their role as labourers in the Californian economy.

[57] Madley, An American Genocide, Appendix 3 and 428-429.

Figure 3. Distribution of the number of articles including words "Indian" or "Indians" as a percentage of all articles published in a given month over time.



10. Motivation behind massacres

In accordance with the hypothesis, there was a reduction in the proportion of the articles suggesting the cause behind the massacres to be defence. It is important to note that the number of articles coded as "defence" declined in both relative and absolute terms. The average number of pieces published per month diminished from 0.751 to 0.650 following the discovery of gold.

However, contrary to the hypothesis, the number of articles emphasising retaliation for stealing or killing animals increased: the proportion of articles belonging to this category increased by six percentage points, whereas the average number of articles published per month more than quadrupled, increasing from 0.520 to 2.175.

The increase in the number of articles accusing Indigenous inhabitants of horse stealing can be explained by white settlements depleting native sources of food. The Californian population was caught in a vicious circle: growing settlements

pushed Indigenous inhabitants away from their sources of food, leading them to steal and eat horses and buffalo, whereas disappearing animals infuriated settlers encroaching on Indian territories. The action of stealing, particularly horses, was so common that the phrase "horse thief Indians" appeared numerous times throughout the period analysed. As Agricola has written in his letter to California Star:

> I have taken some pains to esquire among some of the most intelligent and respectable of the native inhabitants, as to the probable number of horses that have been stolen between Monterey and San Francisco within the last twenty years and the result has been that more than one hundred thousand can be distinctly enumerated, and that the total would probably be double that number. Nearly all these horses have been eaten! […They] have become so habituated to living on horse flesh that it is now with them the principle means of subsistence.[58]

As Madley points out, gold-seeking immigrants "shot or drove off game and grazed cattle, horses, pigs, which ate the grasses, nuts, seeds, and tubers crucial to the diets of California Indians".[59] Moreover, mining significantly affected salmon fishing and destroyed fish dams.[60]

On the other hand, the proportion of articles describing the main motivation behind the massacres to be retaliation for attacking white settlers remained the same throughout the period analysed (31 per cent as shown in Figure 4). Moreover, similarly as in the "retaliation for stealing or killing animals" category, the average number of articles published per month increased from 0.636 to 2.119. The growing number of massacres motivated by vengeance was probably a function of more frequent attacks of Indigenous inhabitants driven to the acts of robbery and murder by oppression and abuse received from some of the settlers. Indeed, Daily Alta California, in the weeks preceding the extermination order of

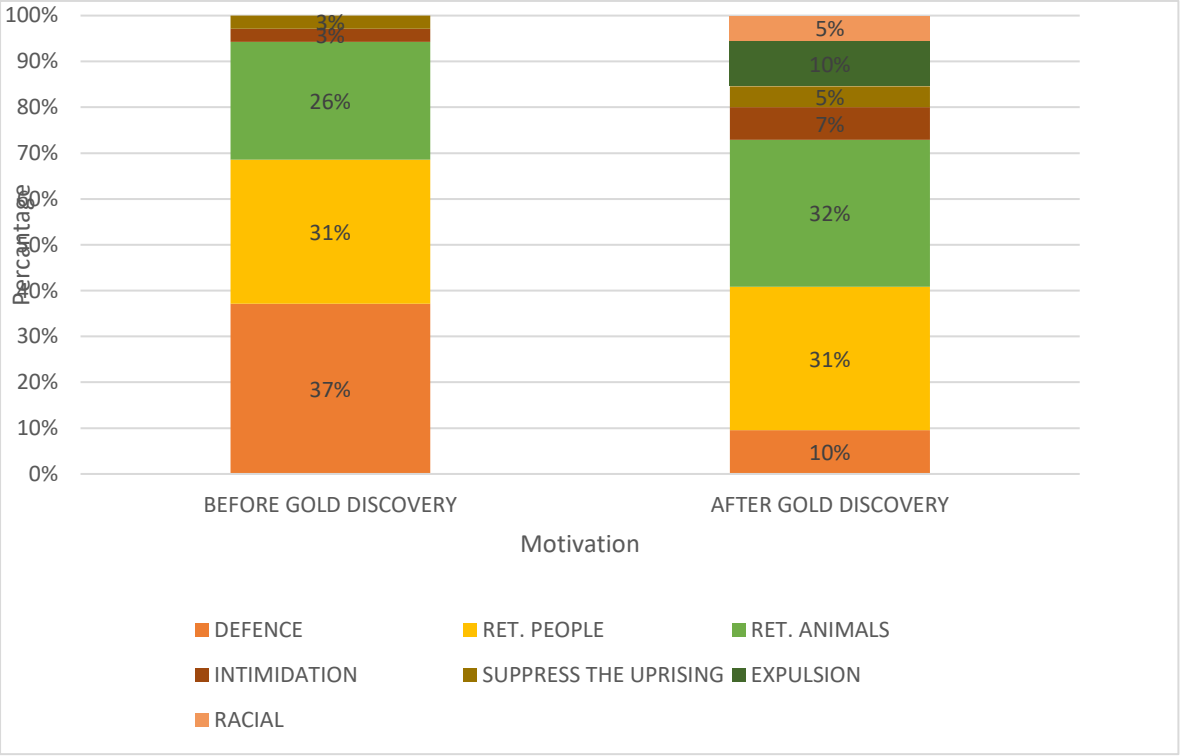
[58] Agricola, "For the California Star," California Star, April 10, 1847. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18470410.2.13&srpos=6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed 27 April 2023)
[59] Madley, An American Genocide, 71.
[60] Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration," 108.

the January 7, 1851, reported on numerous occasions that Indigenous Californians were not alone to blame for their acts of hostility:

> As it is, a few low unprincipled villains outrage all the feelings of humanity and decency in their intercourse with the Indians until they can endure it no longer, and then the innocent are generally the sufferers. Nearly all the difficulties with the Indians in this country have originated in outrages upon them by the unhung rascals who disgrace our nation and our race.[61]

These articles in the Daily Alta California emerged as a response to the "Indian War" in El Dorado county happening throughout November 1850, or what was really a mission under the leadership of Col. Rogers to expel all the Indians from the region as well as to track and kill those who committed any "depredations".

Figure 4. The number of articles grouped by causes before and after gold discovery.



[61] "Indian Difficulties," Daily Alta California, January 1, 1851. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18510101.2.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed 28 April, 2023)

As shown in Figure 4, the gap resulting from the drastic fall in the proportion of articles coded as "defence" was filled in by the narratives emphasising the importance of calls for the expulsion of all Indigenous Americans from California and to a lesser extent, those stressing intimidation, racial discrimination and suppression of the uprising. The significance of the emergence of the expulsion category cannot be stressed enough. It suggests that following the discovery of gold, the motives moved from killing tribes in nearby regions as a response to real or imaginary crimes, to expelling all Californian Indians from the whole state and that massacres attained true genocidal intent. The first article suggesting "expulsion" as a possible cause appeared in The Californian on March 15, 1848:

> We desire only a white population in California; even the Indians amongst us, as far as we have seen, are more of a nuisance than a benefit to the country; we would like to get rid of them.[62]

Perhaps coincidentally, this article appeared in the same issue of The Californian that released to the world the news of the discovery of gold. It might suggest that some inhabitants of California started perceiving Indigenous labour as redundant as soon as the possibility of other forms of profit appeared. However, the article epitomising the thirst for blood fuelled by the hunger for gold appeared over a year later, in April 1849:

> It is now that the cry of extermination is raised —a thirst for indiscriminate slaughter rages, and men, women and children, old and young, vicious and well-disposed, of the Indian race, wherever met with, are to be straightway shot down or knocked on the head, their villages plundered and burned, and the frightened fugitives forced deeper in to the mountains, to starve — or to steal and plunder as shall henceforth appear. […] Thus shall a degraded and worthless people vanish from the face of the land; it is in vain to attempt their extermination by other means—let us not think of it.[63]

[62] "Slavery in California," the Californian, March 15, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=C18480315.2.3&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed 28 April 2023)

[63] "The Indian difficulties," Daily Placer Times and Transcript, April 28, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DPTT18490428.2.3&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed 28, April 2023).

This article was published in the very first issue of Daily Placer Times and Transcript and was one of the most radical pieces analysed, clearly inciting genocide. It is hardly a coincidence that the most extremist newspaper came from the gold region. Indeed, we can observe that newspapers located in the mining counties (Sacramento Transcript, Marysville Daily Herald and Daily Placer Times and Transcript) had the highest proportion of articles villainizing the Indigenous population, i.e. describing them as "hostile" (44, 36 and 35 per cent respectively).

Similarly, newspapers from the gold region spread the lie of thousands of Indians gathering in the Sierra Nevada mountains and conspiring to murder all the white settlers in the last months of 1850.[64] Indeed, eight out of thirteen articles which described the massacres as an attempt to suppress the uprising were published by the Sacramento Transcript. The genocidal propaganda spread by the Sacramento newspapers was so blatant that Daily Alta California from San Francisco, on numerous occasions, advised its readers not to believe in rumours about "Indian barbarities" and "unprovoked murders".[65] The fact that the newspapers closer to the Sierra Nevada mountains tended to villainize the Indigenous Californians supports the hypothesis that settlers in the mining regions, such as Placer, Sacramento and El Dorado counties, were more likely to exhibit violence.

11. Linguistic contexts of the words "Indian" and "Indians":

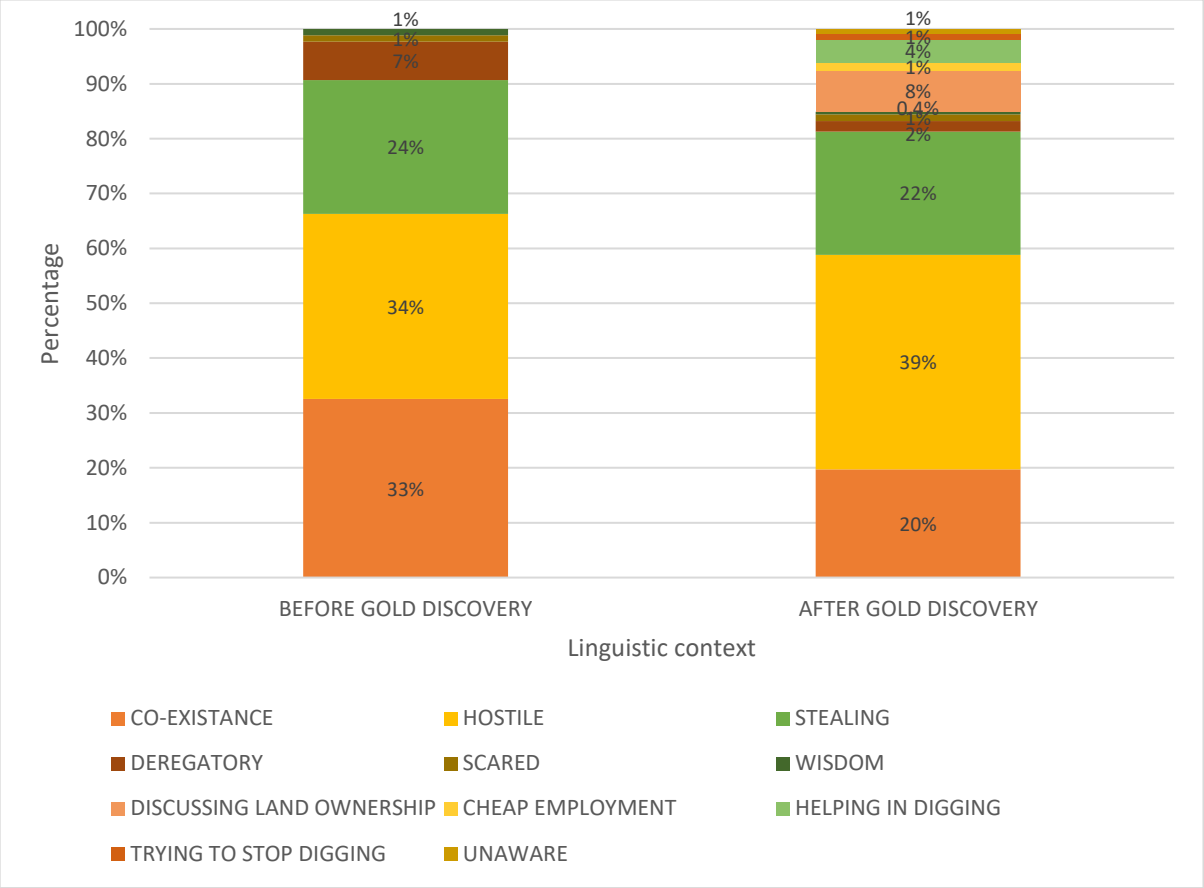
Contrary to the narratives surrounding the causes of the massacres, the changes in the linguistic context of the words "Indian" or "Indians" were more in line with

[64] "Condition of Affairs in the Indian Country," Sacramento Transcript, November 20, 1850. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=ST18501120.2.3&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed 28, April 2023), and
"Indian Difficulties," Daily Alta California, January 1, 1851. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18510101.2.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed 28 April, 2023), and
"The Indians," Sacramento Transcript, January 7, 1851. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=ST18510107.2.8.1&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed 28, April 2023)

[65] "The Indian Difficulties," Daily Alta California, January 6, 1851. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18510106.2.5&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed 28 April, 2023),

the hypothesis. As shown in Figure 5, the number of articles describing Indigenous Californians as co-existing with white settlers fell by 13 percentage points giving space to pieces discussing land ownership or the role of the aboriginal population in mining. In contrast, proportion of articles belonging to the categories "stealing" and "hostile" did not observe much variation over time.

Figure 5. The number of articles grouped by linguistic context before and after gold discovery.



It is worthwhile to stop and have a closer look at articles describing co-existence, as they can tell us a lot about Californian society before the gold rush. They show that California Indians were employed in a variety of industries. They hunted and

sold fish and seals[66] and traded horses and mules.[67] They were employed as servants and porters in the cities[68] and as all-year or seasonal workers on rancherias.[69] They worked as guards, guides and baqueros during mountain rescue missions.[70] The Californian wrote that several hundred were employed by Captain Sutter in New Helvetia as blacksmiths, tinners, carpenters and weavers.[71]

Unfortunately, many Indigenous workers were mistreated and underpaid in clothing and alcohol.[72] Indeed, many ended up fighting alcohol addiction, and some even died. The prevalence of alcohol use among Indigenous populations was so high that from January 1, 1848, any person found to "sell, exchange, or give, barter or dispose of, or in any way connive at selling, exchanging, bartering or disposing

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[66] "Loss of the American Whale Ship Baltic," the Californian, December 5, 1846. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=C18461205.2.4&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023), and
"Sacramento and Placer Intelligence," Daily Alta California, March 13, 1850. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18500313.2.4&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

[67] Untitled, California Star, April 8, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480408.2.8&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

[68] "Statistics of San Francisco," California Star, August 28, 1847. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18470828.2.2&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

[69] "Cal. Star's Sacramento Correspondent," California Star, July 24, 1847. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18470724.2.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

[70] "Distressing News," California Star, February 13, 1847. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18470213.2.13&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023), and
"Later from the California Mountains," California Star, March 13, 1847. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18470313.2.7&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023), and
"Copy of a Journal kept by a suffering Emigrant on the California Mountains," California Star, May 22, 1843. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18470522.2.4&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

[71] "Correspondence of the Californian," the Californian, July 15, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=C18480715.2.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

[72] "Cal. Star's Sacramento Correspondence," California Star, October 23, 1847. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18471023.2.7&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023), and
"Placer Intelligence," Weekly Alta California, October 1, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=WAC18491001.2.4.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

of, any spirituous liquor or wine, to an Indian" had to pay 50 to 100 dollars fine and be imprisoned for three to six months.

Given the relatively small population of white Americans in the 1840s, the Californian economy was literally built on the backs of Indigenous Californians. Indeed, following 1848 some authors claimed that successful gold digging could not be carried on without the aid of the Californian Indians.[73] Correspondingly, one can observe that around 4 per cent of all articles published following the discovery of gold discussed the Indigenous population helping in collecting the precious metal. Some of them worked independently alongside white miners,[74] others were employed and paid a share of findings,[75] whereas some suffered a terrible fate of being shot "as soon as they'd got enough to make it worthwhile".

Yet, some Indigenous Californians directly opposed mining activities. Indians from Coloma "circulated a story of a wonderful animal, infesting their country, which was solely and faithfully guardian of the golden sands," to prevent further search for gold, reported Weekly Alta California in November 1849.[76] A month later, Daily Alta California published an article describing Indian and Mexican attacks on miners.[77] However, these two pieces were one of only five articles describing attempts at bringing gold extraction to an end, hence it could not have a significant impact on miners' willingness to kill. The attacks were most likely a response to the ruthless killing of Indigenous Californians by the miners.

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[73] "The Placer," Daily Placer Times and Transcript, May 12, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DPTT18490512.2.3&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[74] "California Gold," Weekly Alta California, March 8, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=WAC18490308.2.2&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[75] "The Placer," Daily Placer Times and Transcript, May 5, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DPTT18490505.2.5&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[76] "The Root Diggers," Weekly Alta California, November 15, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=WAC18491115.2.23.22&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[77] "State Matters," Daily Alta California, December 10, 1850. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18491210.2.19&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

Not all of the California Indians experienced assimilation into the white economy. Throughout the period, there appears a general trend of separating "friendly Indians" from "wild Indians". "Friendly Indians" were said to be living in the settlements, helping in agriculture or working as servants. "Wild Indians" were described as "horse thieves and marauders," living in the mountains and attacking settlers.[78] The division and fear of "wild Indians" plundering villages was so strong that in September 1847 State Department of the Territory of California released a circular stating that

> […] all persons hiring Indians or having them in their employment, shall give every such Indian a certificate to that effect; and any Indian found beyond the limits of the town or rancho in which he may be employed, without such certificate or pass, will be liable to arrest as a horse thief. […] Wild Indians, and other Indians not employed as above, wishing to visit settlements or towns for the purpose of trade, must have a passport from the Sub-Indian Agent of their district.[79]

Perhaps the most crucial change observed in the analysis of the linguistic context of the words "Indian" and "Indians" was the appearance of articles discussing land ownership. As Mr Benton from Missouri spoke in the Senate sitting in January 1849, the difference between Spanish and American rule was that the former did not recognise "Indian titles". Americans, on the other hand, in true libertarian spirit, were aware that Indigenous Californians have "lived [there] time immemorial," and therefore "all these gold mines, according to [their] ideas, are on Indian lands, and [Amerians] are trespassers".[80] Given the recognition of the Indigenous right to soil, creating new settlements required the extinguishment of Indian titles. Mr Benton postulated for withholding the distribution of land on which "pueblo or rancheria Indians" lived. However, his perspective on the Indians of Sierra Nevada was quite different. He argued that:

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[78] "Circular," California Star, September 18, 1847. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18470724.2.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-----1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[79] Ibid.
[80] "Speech of Mr. Benton of Missouri," Weekly Alta California, September 6, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=WAC18490906.2.2&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-----1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

> […] the Government […] can do nothing of all this until they have treated with these hippo-phagi […] who never heard of a treaty, and will be bewildered and confounded at any proposition to treat them as owners of the country.[81]

His speech highlights both the cleavage between the social positions of "friendly" and "wild Indians" and the fact that Indigenous Californians living in the gold regions were a subject of much harsher treatment. Indeed, Senator William M. Gwin, almost two years later, presented a bill to the Senate which required all landowners, including "civilised Indians", who claimed titles under Mexican rule to file their claim to a special commission.[82] One can deduce that it would be considerably harder for Indigenous Californians to file their claims, given that many of them probably couldn't write or read English and were located a considerable distance from the commission. The Indigenous land titles were further weakened after California Supreme Court ruled that "a transfer of land by an Indian […] is insufficient to give even a colorable claim of title" in the Lunt vs Hepburn case on the December 6, 1850.[83]

Indeed, the vast majority of articles advocated for full extinguishment of Indian titles, compared to only a few pieces recommending negotiations of treaties. One article named Indigenous communities inhabiting region surrounding Fork Lake the "only obstacle to […] immediate settlement".[84] The emergence of narratives advocating for the full extinguishment of Indigenous titles supports the hypothesis that following the discovery of gold, motives behind the massacres shifted from retaliation to expulsion and clearing the land for new settlements and mines.

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[81] Ibid.
[82] "Fisheries," Daily Alta California, November 18, 1850. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18501118.2.7&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023), and
"Our Trinidad Correspondence," Daily Alta California, November 23, 1850. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18501123.2.7&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023),
[83] "Law Courts," Daily Alta California, December 8, 1850. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18501208.2.5&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023),
[84] "Fork or King's Lake," California Star, April 1, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480401.2.11&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

Yet, the decreasing use of derogatory language used to describe Californian Indians contradicts the results observed up to this point. We should expect that with a growing number of articles inciting genocide, the amount of dehumanising narratives constructing identities of "us" against "them" to facilitate violence should grow as well.[85] Therefore, the descriptions of particular tribes should be replaced by grim generalisations describing all Native Californians as "naturally filthy and careless"[86], "treacherous"[87], living "drunken, roving, vagabond life",[88] or "miserable, degraded, lazy and imbecile".[89] It is even more interesting that the gap resulting from the falling number of articles using derogatory language was filled in by narratives describing the Native population as wise. Descriptions of wisdom could concern both heroism, oratory skills and other "generous and redeeming skills"[90] as well as knowledge about and familiarity with gold.[91] It is unclear why the articles using derogatory language decreased in absolute terms following the discovery of gold.

[85] Patricia Justino, "The Microeconomic Causes and Consequences of Genocides and Mass Atrocities," in Economic Aspects of Genocides, Other Mass Atrocities, and Their Prevention, ed. Charles H. Anderton and Jurgen Brauer (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 218.
[86] "Description of Upper California," the Californian, November 14, 1846. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=C18461114.2.2&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[87] Pacific, "Cal. Star's Sonoma Correspondence," California Star, February 26, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480226.2.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[88] Pacific, "Cal. Star's Sonoma Correspondence," California Star, January 15, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480115.2.9&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[89] "The Governor's Message," Daily Alta California, December 31, 1849. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=DAC18491231.2.6&srpos=5&e=-------en--20-DAC-1-byDA-txt-txIN-miserable-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[90] Humanitas, "For the California Star," California Star, January 29, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480129.2.8&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023), and
Pacific, "Cal. Star's Sonoma Correspondence," California Star, March 11, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480226.2.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[91] Untitled," California Star & Californian, December 23, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CSC18481223&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

12. Heterogeneity of Californian society

All of the different categories observed in both the motivation behind the massacres and linguistic context of the words "Indian" or "Indians" bring attention to another important aspect of the Californian society: namely, that it was not uniform in its treatment of the Indigenous population. I make this observation not to relieve white Euroamericans, descendants of colonisers, and those still profiting from the genocide from guilt. Instead, I make this observation to show that the Californian genocide, and all mass atrocity crimes, are way more complex than they often appear to be. Perhaps the best example of the heterogeneity of the Californian society was an exchange of four letters between two anonymous authors writing under cryptonyms "Pacific" and "Humanitas", published on pages of California Star and stretching between the January 15 and March 11, 1848. The correspondence started with Pacific writing:

> Indians, and particularly those in California, are, as we all know, mentally, and morally, an inferior order of our race; are unfit and incapable of being associated with whites on any terms of equality, or of being governed by the same laws; and if retained among us, must necessarily have a code and treatment applicable to their peculiar character and condition. Were it possible to have all masters just, mild, and good, I would --- I say it for the benefit of the Indians themselves --- make slaves of them.[92]

Humanitas took a different point of view and answered on the January 29:

> But of the Indian race in general. Cannot every American among us adduce instances innumerable, of heroism, and particularly to the North Americas Indian, reflecting lustre on the very name. They are by nature heroes and orators, as history proves; and what race of human beings are more susceptible?[93]

[92] Pacific, "Cal. Star's Sonoma Correspondence," California Star, January 15, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480115.2.9&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).
[93] Humanitas, "For the California Star," California Star, January 29, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480129.2.8&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

Humanitas' last answer was published in March, and Pacific never answered it. In this truly revolutionary for that period letter, he wrote:

> The wild roving and independent Cheyennes and Sioux of the Rocky Mountains and Missouri plains are the finest race of Indians I have ever met with, possessing more generous and redeeming traits, and fewer vices then any others of the kind, simply from having had less knowledge and intercourse with the whites.[94]

Moreover, in the same letter, he advocated for buying out land from the Californian Indians rather than extinguishing their titles.

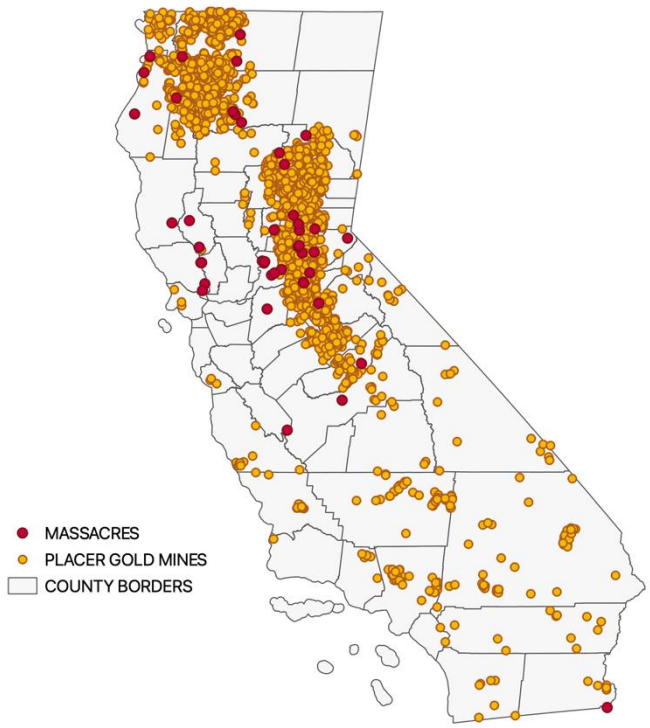
The exchange between Humanitas and Pacific took place at the time when gold in California was just being discovered. Nevertheless, Californian society remained heterogeneous throughout the 1849 and 1850. The already mentioned difference of opinions between the editorial staff of the Daily Alta California and those of newspapers from the gold region is perhaps the best testimony to regional variation in public opinion.

13. Location of massacres and gold mines

Figure 6 shows the overlap of the location of all the California mines and massacres sites between April 1846 and January 1851. The vast majority of killings happened either in the Sierra Nevada mountains or in the historical Klamath, Humboldt and Trinity counties (modern Del Norte, Siskiyou, Shasta, Trinity and Humboldt – see Illustrative Map on page 2).

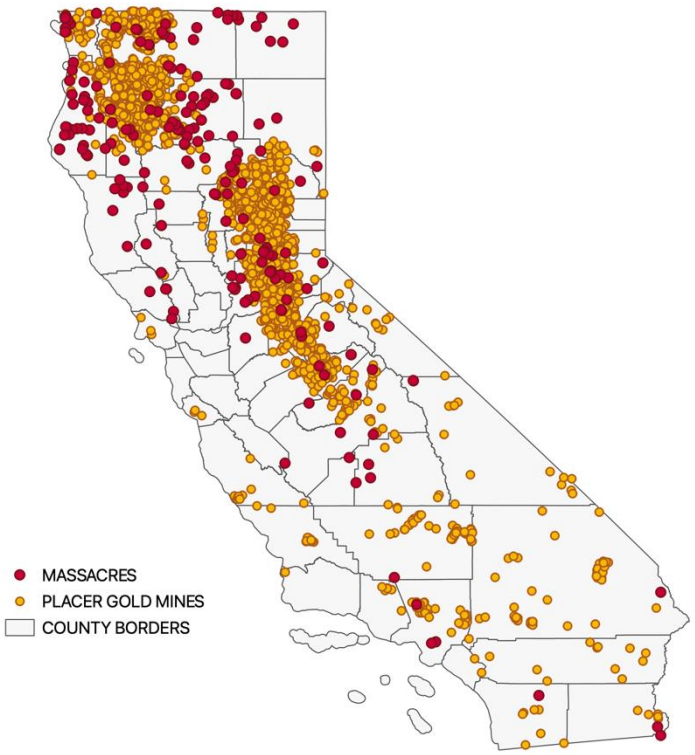
[94] Humanitas, "For the California Star," California Star, March 11, 1848. https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=CS18480311.2.6&e=-------en--20-CS-1-byDA-txt-txIN-intelligent-------1 (accessed April 28, 2023).

Figure 6. Map showing locations of massacres occurring between 1846 and 1851 and gold mines.



These regions have as well the highest density of gold mines. Hence, apart from the six outliers north of San Francisco, one in San Benito and another one on the Southern border, massacres happened in close proximity to the mines. We can observe that this pattern extended further into the 1850s. Figure 7 shows the location of all massacres that took place up until 1860. We can see that massacres are still concentrated in the gold country and Klamath, Humboldt and Trinity historical counties.

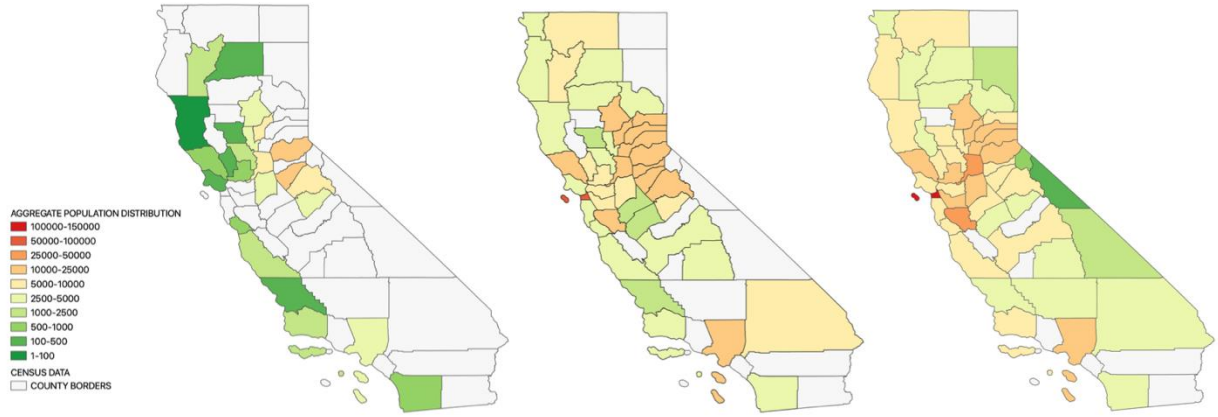
Figure 7. Map showing locations of massacres occurring between 1846 and 1860 and gold mines.



Yet, it might have been the case that massacres tended to occur in the gold regions only because they had the highest density of settlers. If that was the case, gold mining would only indirectly affect the massacres. Hence, the highest aggregate population density in the gold mining regions would support Madley's hypothesis that the leading cause of the genocide was an influx of immigrants, not necessarily the discovery of gold itself.

As Figure 8 shows, population density in 1850 was indeed the highest in the Sierra Nevada gold mining region, which could explain over 20 massacres that happened there.

Figure 8. Maps showing the distribution of aggregate population in 1850, 1860 and 1870.[95]

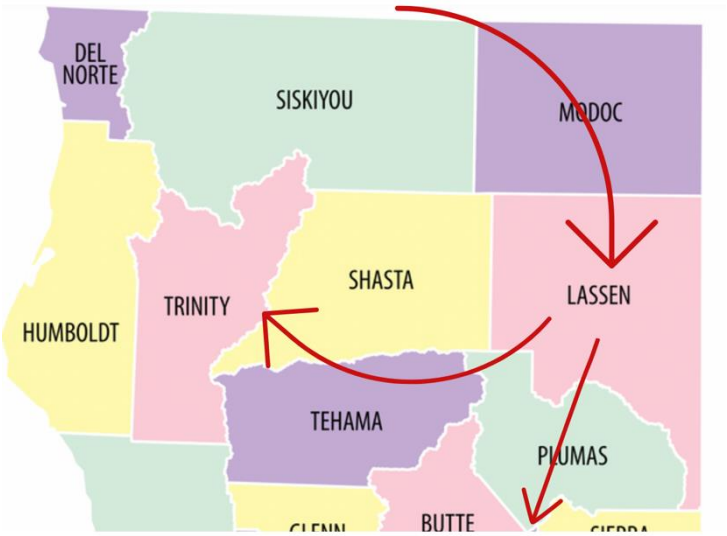


However, the population in five Far North counties where the remaining mass killings occurred counted only 2,013 residents according to the 1850 census (for a comparison, the two most populated counties, El Dorado and Calaveras, had a population of 20,057 and 16,884, respectively). Yet, we know from the newspapers' articles that the first ships in Trinidad and Humboldt bays appeared around April 1850, precisely with an aim to access mines on the Trinity River. In other words, white settlers appeared in the Far North to access the mines. Within nine months of their arrival, they committed at least eight massacres (two massacres in that region presented on the map happened before 1850), killing between 129 and 145 Indigenous Californians.[96] The fact that almost 1 in 5 massacres occurred in the region of high mine density but low population density should support the hypothesis that massacres were dependent on gold mines rather than immigrant population.

[95] For 1860 and 1870 I added Klamath population to the population of Del Norte.
[96] Madley, An American Genocide, 42-4.

However, one confounder could have caused the high number of massacres in the Far North. Many of the 1849 immigrants were Oregonians travelling from the north. Madley writes that Oregonians were particularly violent and aggressive towards the Indigenous population, hence if the trail passed through the Klamath, Humboldt or Trinity historical counties, immigrants could attack Karok, Chimiriko, Shasta, Wintu and coastal tribes and not be recorded by the census. Yet, sources suggest that most immigrants entered the Far North mining region through the North-Eastern corner of the state rather than travelled along the coastline, as shown in Figure 9.[97] Having discredited the possibility of trail going through the Klamath, Humboldt and Trinity historical counties, the distribution of mines, massacres, and population still supports our hypothesis that massacres were dependent directly on gold mining rather than on immigration.

Figure 9. Main immigration routes from Oregon.[98]

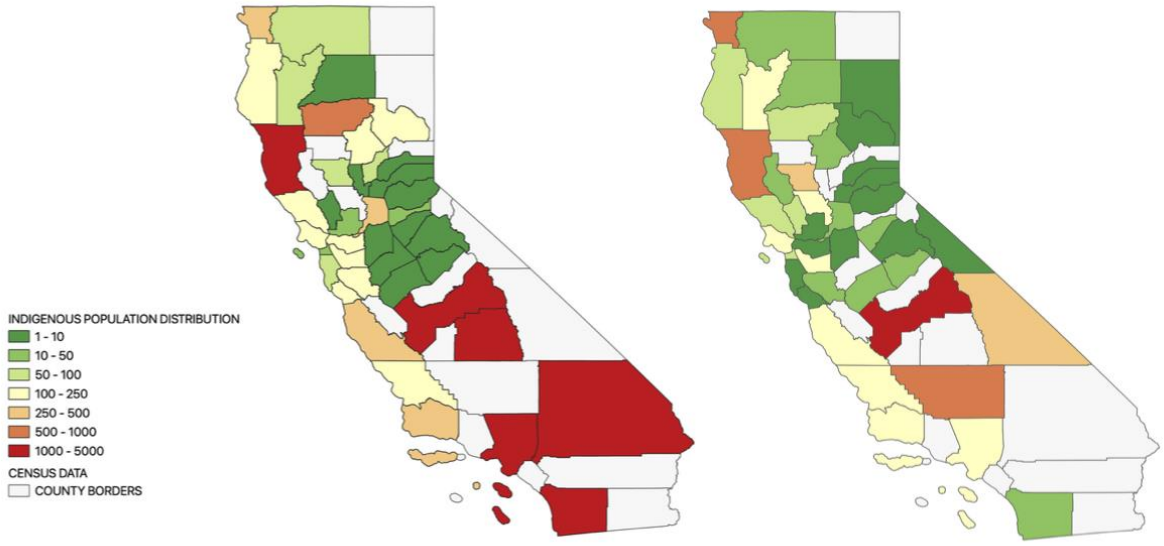


Still, same as aggregate population distribution could affect the site of massacres, so could the distribution of the Indigenous population. Maybe massacres happened predominantly in the gold mining regions because that's where Californian Indians were concentrated. Indeed, evidence from the Spanish and Mexican periods suggests that many Californian Indians sought refuge in the mountains

[97] "National Trails System," National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior), https://www.nps.gov/cali/learn/national-trails-system.htm (accessed May 1, 2023).
[98] Based on National Parks Service, "National Trails System."

during the mission period and following their secularisation.[99] However, even if we assume the Indigenous population to be not disturbed by the gold rush and still highly concentrated in the mountains by 1850, as the census from that year did not enumerate Californian Indians, it still does not explain massacres in the Far North and coastal counties North of San Francisco. Moreover, the probability of the geographic distribution of the Indigenous population being unaffected by the discovery of gold in 1848 is really low. Figure 10 shows that by 1860, none of the gold mining counties had a higher Native population than 50. The highest concentrations were in Fresno, San Diego, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Tulare and Mendocino counties. Taking all of this into consideration, massacres were dependent on concentration neither of settlers nor Indians, but only on the distribution of mines.

Figure 10. Maps showing the distribution of the Indigenous population in 1860 and 1870.[100]



Yet, there is a significant problem with using census data to account for changes in the Indigenous population, namely that many Native Americans were not enumerated. Article 1 Section 2 of the U.S. constitution requires the federal

[99] Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration," 104 and 105.
[100] I added Klamath population to the population of Del Norte.

government to count the country's population by adding "to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons".[101] This means that until 1890, only "taxed" Californian Indians were included in the census.[102] But two important questions further complicate the data: 1. Who was considered Indian, and 2. Which Indians were taxed. Given that the Europeans were permanently present on the Western coast for at least a century before the 1860 census, there is a high chance that some Californian Indians intermarried with local Spaniards, Mexicans or Euro-Americans. As race is a social construct, of which boundaries are fluid, who was considered an "Indian"? Was a child of an interracial couple enumerated as "White" or "Indian"? What about a grandchild? The marshals conducting the 1860 census in California distinguished between "Indian" and "half-breed [sic]," but in 1870 the Superintendent of the Census advised to assign race by "the habits, tastes, and associations of the half-breed [sic]".[103]

When it comes to who was considered a "taxed Indian", it was entirely dependent on the judgement of the marshals collecting the data. If the enumerator judged that "the person had renounced tribal rule and exercised the rights of a citizen, then that individual should be included in the total population with a notation of 'Ind.' opposite the name".[104] Accordingly, mixed race individuals living in the tribal organisations were not considered "taxed Indians". Taking all of this into consideration, only Californian Indians renouncing the tribal rule (the majority of whom probably lived in white settlements) were enumerated in the 1860 and 1870 censuses, considerably misrepresenting the distribution of the Indigenous population. Yet, there is a high probability that once the genocide started, Indigenous Californians started moving further away from white settlements. Hence, it is unlikely that the Native population concentrated in the mining

[101] Margaret M. Jobe, "Native Americans and the U.S. Census: A Brief Historical Survey," Journal of Government Information 30 (2004): 67.
[102] Id. 73.
[103] Id. 70 and 71
[104] Id. 70

regions, once again proving that massacres were dependent on the concentration neither of settlers nor Indians, but only on the distribution of mines.

14. Conclusion:

The Californian genocide was perhaps the biggest attack on the Indigenous population by the non-Indigenous people in North American history. What was one of the most diverse and densely populated regions reaching a population of 150,000 in 1846, turned into a graveyard which grounds were soaked with Indigenous blood. Even though most of the victims died due to malnourishment and disease, thousands were murdered by white settlers blinded by gold fever. This paper contributes to the understanding of the massacres between 1846 and January 1851 and brings attention back to Euro-American violence. Through the analysis of 1004 newspaper articles and the identification of 211 massacre sites, it demonstrates that the genocide in its early stages was motivated by economic reasons rather than racial hatred. One of the primary motivators behind the massacres was retaliation for stealing or killing animals, which resulted from the destruction of Indigenous food supplies by Euro-Americans. The Indigenous population was forced to raid white settlements in order to survive. This is why one of the most common descriptions of Californian Indians was "thief". Another crucial motivation behind the massacres was the expulsion of the Indigenous population from the gold mining regions or the whole of California. Alongside these narratives, one could observe the emergence of a debate concerning the extinguishment of Indigenous land titles. All of that shows that, the competition for resources is an important but often overlooked aspect of genocides. In the case of 19th century California, these resources were horses, buffalo, and land, which for Indians constituted a source of survival and for white settlers a source of profit.

This paper finds as well that contrary to Benjamin Madley's thesis, the genocide was dependent on gold mining itself rather than on immigration. The maps constructed show that massacre sites concentrated in the gold mining regions, even if they had a relatively small white population, as in the case of Fan North

in 1850. As the data on the distribution of the Native population before 1890 omits many Indigenous inhabitants, it is unclear whether massacres happened in the areas where Californian Indians concentrated. However, as it is highly unlikely that Native Americans stayed in the regions where the white population was concentrated, i.e., the gold mining regions, the massacre sites were not dependent on the distribution of the Indigenous population. Moreover, as shown by the different narratives presented by newspapers located in the gold country and those in San Francisco, it seems that the white population living closer to the mines was more likely to antagonise and exhibit violent behaviour towards the Indigenous population.

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