

# What Is a “No-Man’s Land”?

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*In general*, no-man’s lands are areas left unpopulated because of conflict between groups on either side, but they can also represent resource buffer zones between groups. Such buffer zones might help balance a population’s resource base—in other words, they represent areas that will not be depleted of food sources, timber, or other needs in the near future, because populations adjacent to the zones will not be relying upon them.

Archaeologist Linda Cordell (1943–2013) suggested that violence in the Gallina region might have occurred because the Gallina occupied another group’s buffer zone—maybe even Chaco Canyon’s, although we now know that the timing between people living in the Gallina region and in Chaco Canyon proper would make that unlikely. Deanna Grimstead’s recent analysis of processed animal remains found in Chaco Canyon does not support this idea, either.

Although there are many possible reasons why, such as existing trade and procurement ties elsewhere, it does appear that Chacoans did not often enter the buffer zone. It is probable, then, that the vacant area between Gallina and Chaco Canyon was a true no-man’s land, a product of societal tension between residents of Chaco Canyon and those of the Gallina region during the limited period of their contemporaneity (A.D. 1100 to the mid to late 1100s).

