

Source: [\[KBhHIST201FrenchRevolution\]](#)

# 1 | Acien Régime

## 1.1 | Societal Structure

Strict grid of social hierarchy resulted due to birthright => Great Chain of Being

**Great Chain of Being** The entire “world” was, according to GCB, organized structurally with god at the top, rocks at the bottom.

In the human world, King on the top — God’s divine representative (“L’état c’est moi” — the state is me), then the clergy, then aristocracy, and finally commoners.

In practice, this makes a...

## 1.2 | Estates: “Caste” System

- \* French societies organized into three castes - "estates"
  - \* First Estate => clergy; enjoyed high status
  - \* Second Estate => aristocracy; provided military and monetary support
    - \* \*Les Grands\*: largest landholders w/ large houses
    - \* \*Seigneurs\*: provincial nobles who simply owned estates in the countryside
  - \* Third Estate => 97% of the population
    - \* Production!
    - \* Reproduction!
    - \* Work!
    - \* Relatively prosperous, but <40% owned land
    - \* Most rented land from lords as tenant farmers/sharecroppers
- \* Economy generally rural + dominate by subsistence farming