

Source: [KBhHIST201FrenchRevolution](#)

# 1 | Acien Régime

## 1.1 | Societal Structure

- Strict grid of social hierarchy resulted due to birthright
- Societal organization explained by Great Chain of Being
  - Entire world organized structurally
  - God at the top, rocks at the bottom
    - In which, King on the top — God's divine representative ("L'état c'est moi" — the state is me)
  - 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

## 1.2 | "Caste" Syste