

The decay starts at the top: king louis xiv and nobility's decline

[History](#)



“ It is legal because I wish it.” This was certainly a true statement spoken by King Louis XIV because as the ruling monarch he was able to do whatever he wanted politically. An absolute monarch has absolute authority politically, economically, and culturally over a state. This large amount of power usually caused absolute monarchs to become vain and egotistical. While Louis XIV possessed these traits, he was still a very effective absolute monarch because he was able to rule psychologically and geographically.

Psychologically, Louis XIV was an effective absolute monarch because he was able to manipulate and control the nobles. Every morning at 8: 30, Louis XIV would wake up to an audience of nobles, invited by him, who watched him wake up, wash, cloth himself, and even tie the bow on his shoe. This may seem ridiculous, however the levée, the described ceremony, was an effective way for Louis XIV to manipulate the nobles. The noble class were powerful people who posed a threat to France and Louis XIV took every opportunity to control these noble threats. Seeing how each audience member was invited by Louis XIV himself, the nobles fought over who was invited to this very honorable show. This ultimately led every noble to be as loyal as possible to Louis XIV. In addition to the Levée, Louis XIV would also invite people for other honors such as to dine at his table and play with him in a game. However, Louis XIV didn't just use an invitational honor to manipulate the nobles, he also gave himself a nickname. Louis XIV took up the nickname of the Sun King as a reminder that everything revolved around him, such as the sun, and everything happened because he willed it to happen.

While Louis XIV ruled using psychological tactics effectively, he also ruled geographically as well. Louis XIV wanted to conquer as much as he could and even said that, " One must have his eyes open to the whole earth." In order for Louis XIV to disband the threat of the nobility, he broke down their town reinforced castles. This enabled Louis XIV to strip nobles of their local ruling powers in order to unify the country under his reign. King Louis XIV wanted to create one set of national laws, furthering his unity of the state under his reign.

While King Louis XIV was able to manipulate the nobles with his invitations and actions, he weakened the nobility as a whole. Louis XIV forced the noble class to provide proof of their noble birth. If the noble people didn't have proof, they were allowed to buy back into the nobility. He also opened the noble name up to anyone who could pay the price. This allowed the wealthy classes to buy into the noble bloodline, thus weakening nobility as a whole because nobility was no longer a birth right. While Louis' XIV actions caused some weakening of the nobility, it is outweighed by his strategy to create a more unified country under one state of law.

From manipulating and controlling nobles, to breaking down noble castle's and abolishing local laws, King Louis XIV can be seen as an effective absolute monarch. This shows that Louis XIV did benefit the people of France even if he might have made a couple mistakes such as weakening the nobility. Overall, with the evidence given, we can conclude that Louis XIV was in fact, an effective absolute monarch.