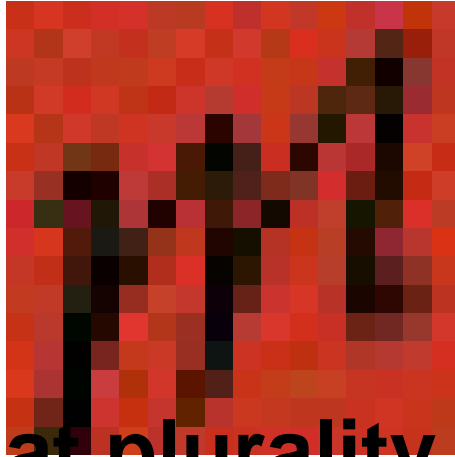


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# XVI.3 That plurality of wives depends greatly on their maintenance

- The Spirit of Law - Book XVI. How the laws of domestic slavery relate to the nature of the climate -

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### XVI.3 That plurality of wives depends greatly on their maintenance

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Although in countries where polygamy is once established, the number of wives is largely dependent on the husband's wealth, nevertheless one cannot say that it is because of wealth that polygamy becomes established in a state : poverty can have the same effect, as I shall affirm when I discuss savages.

Polygamy is less a luxury than the occasion of great luxury among powerful nations. In warm climates one has fewer needs [\[1\]](#) ; thus it costs less to maintain a wife and children. Therefore a man can have more wives.

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[\[1\]](#) In Ceylan a man lives for ten sous per month ; they eat nothing but rice and fish (*Recueil des voyages qui ont servi à l'établissement de la Compagnie des Indes*, vol. II, Part I).