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# XI.5 On the purpose of the various states

- The Spirit of Law - Book XI. On the laws that constitute political freedom in their relation to the constitution -

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## XI.5 On the purpose of the various states

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Although all states have in general a single objective, which is to maintain themselves, each state nevertheless has one that is peculiar to itself. The objective of Rome was expansion ; that of Lacedæmon, war ; that of the Judaic laws was religion ; Marseille's was trade ; public tranquility that of the laws of China [1] ; navigation that of the Rhodians' laws ; natural freedom that of the government of savages ; in general, the delights of the prince that of despotic states ; his glory and the glory of the state that of monarchies ; the independence of each individual is the objective of the laws of Poland, and what results is the oppression of all. [2]

There is also one nation in the world which has political freedom as the direct objective of its constitution. We are going to examine the principles on which she bases it. If they are sound, freedom will appear as in a mirror.

It is not so difficult to discover political freedom in the constitution. If we can see it where it is, if we have found it, why look for it ?

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[1] The natural objective of a state that has no external enemies, or thinks it has stopped them with barriers.

[2] A drawback of the *liberum veto*.