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Mountain dwellers versus eco-freaks

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Mathieu Petite

EDITOR'S NOTE

Translation: Brian Keogh

- 1 On March 11 2012, Switzerland's initiative populaire¹ "To put a stop to the invasive spread of second homes" was accepted by 50.6% of the Swiss population. This initiative was launched in 2006 by the Franz Weber Foundation to limit the number of second homes to 20% of the total housing stock in each of the Swiss communes.
- 2 Acceptance of the initiative was a surprise in that it had met with considerable opposition: apart from the Parliament – the National Council and the Council of the States – which was mostly against the initiative, the federal Council also advised the people of Switzerland to vote "No". Numerous other actors were also opposed to it: the cantons (Grisons and Valais), the Governmental Conference of Alpine Cantons (GCAC), the Association of mountain populations (Groupement pour les populations de montagne) as well as various professional associations and lobbies, such as the Swiss Hotel Association, Gastrosuisse, Economiesuisse and the Swiss Employers' Association. The only groups in favour of the initiative were the Ecologist and Socialist parties along with some environmental defence associations, such as the WWF and Pro Natura.
- 3 The aim of this article is to analyse the arguments voiced in the media during the political campaign conducted before the vote as well as those expressed in the reactions following acceptance of the initiative. In the discussions and debates that took place, we will examine the interests defended by certain personalities, and the groups they represent, the ideologies underlying their arguments, and the manner in which they categorize those who are opposed to their ideas. Given the substance of the proposal contained in the initiative – to limit the construction of second homes –, one

could say that the issue drew battle lines between those defined as “eco-freaks” and those who referred to themselves as “mountain dwellers”. Each camp claimed to be the legitimate voice of a cause: on one side, preservation of the landscape, relevant at the national scale (the homeland), and on the other, preservation of a local population, the “mountain dwellers”, at the scale of the Alps. The story is not new, for conflict and disagreement along this social fault line are no doubt as old as the “invention” of the Alps themselves in the 18th century. What this campaign reveals to us is therefore no more than a reminder of the claim by mountain dwellers to be the legitimate voice in decision-making concerning the area in which they live and, the corollary of this, to disqualify any other discourse as being exogenous.

- 4 The campaign of the Franz Weber Foundation was launched at the beginning of January 2012. In early February, a survey among a sample of 1200 people found that 61% were in favour of the initiative. At the end of February, a new survey revealed that those intending to vote in favour had dropped to no more than 52%. Which way the vote would go was therefore not clear, but the result, announced on the evening of March 11, showed that the majority of both the cantons and the Swiss voters had in fact accepted the Weber initiative. The citizens of the alpine cantons, however, rejected the text by a greater or lesser margin (from 73.8% for the Valais to 57% for the Grisons). On the day after the vote, there were contrasting headlines in the country’s different newspapers. In its editorial of March 12, *Le Quotidien Jurassien*, the paper of a canton with leftist tendencies, ventured to analyse the result of the vote as the “expression of a certain class struggle. Grass-roots Switzerland has said “No” to the arrogance of the rich and the property developers of the upper classes who make their money from rich Swiss and foreign property owners looking to invest (translation)”². In the *Tribune de Genève*, the editorial writer broadly took up the ideas of those who put forward the initiative (the initiators): “Nothing could seemingly stop this headlong rush to build second homes, providing juicy short-term gains, but with devastating long-term effects (translation)”³. The main Valais newspaper, *Le Nouvelliste*, however, was most critical of the result. The front page on March 12 refers to the massive rejection by Valais voters: “Franz Weber has won: 73.8% of Valais voters have lost!”. In the seven pages devoted to the result of the vote, the rhetoric was meant to be alarmist: one by one, the paper examined the negative impacts on employment, the attack on federalism, the lack of solidarity among French-speaking cantons, and the divorce between mountain and lowland areas. The headline on page 2 was unequivocal: “The Valais prepares for a nightmare”⁴. In the article, the reactions of Valais politicians evoked the risks of bankruptcy for ski-lift companies and the depopulation of peripheral regions.
- 5 The present article focuses on the media activity of certain personalities in French-speaking Switzerland, particularly in the Valais. Indeed, it was in this canton that the debate was the most heated and where voters rejected the initiative by the greatest margin. The study is based on newspaper articles and television and radio broadcasts, and aims to put recurrent arguments into some sort of perspective. The arguments reveal two opposing ideologies, expressed in representations deemed beyond question by those who make them (Petite, 2011), but which are of course challenged by others.

Landscape and speculators

- 6 The first ideology is that which forms the basis for the campaign of the initiators: the preservation of the landscape. Much of Franz Weber's life has been marked by struggles to protect the landscape in the face of threats from "property speculators" and "short-term gain"⁵. Franz Weber grew up near Basel, and studied philosophy and literature at the Sorbonne in Paris (Langel, 2004). He began work as a journalist, a job that brought him into contact with several major personalities of the period. In 1965, fascinated by the beauty of the Engadine valley, where he was spending his holidays, he began a struggle to prevent the development of a resort in Haute-Engadine. Having succeeded in this endeavour, he then championed a number of other causes, blocking a project to exploit bauxite in the Alpilles in Provence, fighting against an autoroute by-pass to the south of Lausanne at the beginning of the 1980s, and saving Delphi in Greece at the end of the 1970s from the threat of projects to build industrial complexes nearby. He is also famous for his action to safeguard the terraced vineyards of Lavaux overlooking the shores of Lake Geneva (Langel, 2004)⁶. Franz Weber has also been active in animal rights campaigns. Thus he worked alongside Brigitte Bardot against the slaughter of baby seals in Labrador. In most cases, the involvement of Franz Weber in different causes has been "commissioned": groups opposed to a building project, for example, inform him of what is happening and invite him to join their struggle (Langel, 2004). During his campaigns, Franz Weber has often been at odds with the "indigenous population" or those who claimed they represented the local population. In Valais, where he denounced the abuses of property developers in Crans-Montana, and in Val d'Anniviers in the 1970s, he was often harassed or insulted (Langel, 2004). However, Franz Weber is often also seen as a "visionary" ecologist: "his campaigns have regularly helped to open people's eyes, often even decades later(translation)"⁷.
- 7 The representation of a Swiss landscape threatened by excessive urbanisation and tourism dates back to the 1970s (Krippendorf, 1977; Walter, 1990). The initiative's brochure is undoubtedly representative of this way of seeing the landscape as a common good (of the Swiss) under threat: "Our children have the right to enjoy the beauty of our mountain landscapes as created by Nature and culture [...] We have to strike a blow against the spread of second homes and save our Swiss homeland(translation)"⁸. The landscape ideology is resolutely anti-urban: "we have launched our campaign in part to save tourism. We don't want a city stretching from Lake Constance to Lake Geneva. We don't want cities in mountain areas (translation)"⁹, declared Franz Weber. Partisans of this ideology set themselves up as spokespersons for the Swiss; their area of reference is clearly Switzerland, the homeland that must be saved. "The Swiss are fed up with seeing their country nibbled away on every side (translation)"¹⁰, asserted Philippe Roch at the beginning of January 2012. This ideology also underpins the arguments of environmental associations, such as Pro Natura, the WWF or the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Protection, which claim to be fighting against the excessive consumption of land. The famous statistic of a square metre of Swiss soil being concreted over every second¹¹ has often been used to demonstrate this trend that needs to be halted (Salomon, Cavin, Pavillon 2009). It is in this context that the Franz Weber initiative was launched. It was initially combined with another initiative aimed at controlling excessive construction and the two were grouped together under the slogan "*Sauvez le sol suisse ! (Save Swiss soil!)*"¹². The Weber initiative

is largely based on this observation of land and landscapes threatened by urbanisation¹³: “We have had enough of this headlong rush to build second homes, constructions that are invading our tourist regions, eating up our available land, and destroying our landscapes! [...] and the cherished and familiar face of our mountain hamlets and traditional villages - and so many other pearls that we are ready to throw at property speculation and the highest bidder among developers for short-term profit (translation)”¹⁴. The category of actors evoked to explain this unwanted development is quite precise: the “property developer” attracted by “profit”. During the campaign, the initiators made good use of this target figure: “Speculation, property developers, and the giants of the construction industry are concreting over our landscapes and concreting our future. The result is simply closed shutters, ghost towns, ghost villages and, in the long term, that’s what’s going to kill our economy (translation)”¹⁵, asserted Vera Weber, the daughter of Franz, during a televised debate. And then again, in a newspaper: “There are [...] a great number of developers and property sharks who are in danger of losing money with our initiative (translation)”¹⁶. Moreover, this figure, which lumps together “speculators” and “concreters”, is not new. Maurice Chappaz, a writer and poet from the Valais, caused a scandal in the Valais in 1976 when he published “The pimps of the white summits”, a collection of poems castigating tourism development and its instigators: property developers and their politician accomplices. “In our area, the auctioning of the mountains and snowfields by our political representatives continues unabated (translation)” (Chappaz, 1976, p. 28). It would seem that the metaphor of prostitution has also inspired the initiators: “Because of decades of shameless development in tourist regions, it is finally time to tighten up the controls to the limit the proliferation of second homes (translation)”¹⁷.

- 8 Another prominent activist in the campaign, motivated by this same ideology, was Philippe Roch. A doctor in biochemistry from Geneva, and committed environmental activist, Roch was director of the Swiss WWF from 1977. In 1992, he was appointed Secretary of State for the Environment, an appointment that was strongly contested, namely by certain federal parliamentarians and the Valais State Council, which at that time reproached the federal government for having “let the wolf in the sheep pen”¹⁸. He left his post in 2005 to devote his time to personal activities. He remains active in the public debate, however, campaigning in recent years against the generalised installation of wind turbines in Switzerland. In 2012, as a committee member of the Weber initiative, he was particularly active in the media, espousing the following discourse on the protection of the landscape and its link with the “homeland”: “Economic and demographic pressures demands greater discipline in the field of building, planning and development if we are to preserve the magnificent garden that Nature has endowed us with. To vote in favour of the initiative “To put an end to the unbridled construction of second homes” is an act of love for our beautiful country (translation)”¹⁹.
- 9 Opponents of the initiative were of course obliged to take a position on this theme: one of the arguments put forward against the initiative was the fact that the figure of 20% might result in urban sprawl in those communes that have not yet reached this threshold. In addition, opponents obviously do not share the opinion that the landscape is becoming concreted over. But clearly their reference area is not Switzerland: opponents speak of the Valais, or the alpine cantons, areas for which they put themselves forward as representatives. Christophe Darbellay is one of these. A National Councillor (parliamentarian) and President of the Swiss Christian Democrat

party, Darbellay is a gifted politician from the Valais and very at ease with the media. He has spoken out against the Weber initiative on numerous occasions. In response to the argument about the impact on the landscape, during a televised debate on Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS) with Philippe Roch and the daughter of Franz Weber, he declared that buildings only occupied “1% of the Valais territory. Nature is everywhere. Over the past 10 years, the Valais has seen its forest area increase by 5000 hectares, thus providing additional land for Nature, for chamois, deer and ibex (translation)”²⁰.

Development by mountain dwellers

- 10 While the argument of those in favour of the initiative is based on the landscape ideology, opponents to the initiative subscribe to a second ideology, which I call “localist” (Petite, 2011). This ideology is put forward as being endogenous, its aim being to promote the self-focused or self-reliant development of those we refer to as “mountain dwellers”. It results in a coalition of the alpine cantons or peripheral regions, which are always opposed to the lowland or urban cantons.
- 11 In the campaign on second homes, this “localist” ideology was expressed in two main ways: first, limiting second homes is equivalent to limiting the development of mountain regions, and second, this development must be left to the decision of the inhabitants of these regions. Thus, the discourse on jobs was combined with a discourse on the split between urban and mountain areas. A prominent figure in the Valais, Jean-Marie Fournier, is leading proponent of this ideology. On the death of his father, who “founded” the resort of Veysonnaz, he inherited Veissonne Immo Promotion, a company which manages “400 apartments and chalets” and owns hotels, restaurants and bars in the resort²¹. According to the company’s director, it manages 3500 of the 5000 beds available in Veysonnaz²². Jean-Marie Fournier is also director of Télé-Veysonnaz, the ski-lift company, and the majority shareholder of Télé-Nendaz, the ski-lift operator in the neighbouring resort of Nendaz. Finally, he is also chairman of the editorial committee of the *Nouvelliste*, the flagship newspaper of the French-speaking part of the Valais, enabling him to control the most influential medium of the French-speaking part of the canton²³. He is thus a major economic player, a business leader with some 500 employees. One of his passions is also raising cows of the local Hérens breed²⁴.
- 12 At the national scale, opposition was structured within a cross-party committee “NO to the initiative on second homes!” consisting of more than 80 federal parliamentarians from so-called bourgeois parties (right). The argument of job losses in the event of the initiative being accepted figures prominently in their rhetoric. Other opposition lobbies, such as the Swiss Association for Mountain Populations (Groupement suisse pour les populations de montagne) or the Governmental Conference of Alpine Cantons (GCAC), also emphasize the fact that measures to limit second homes have already been taken or that the initiative does not solve the problem but at best simply shifts it. It is probably in the Valais that the discourse on jobs has been the most developed. On 12 January 2012, the front-page headlines of the *Nouvelliste* read: “Swiss called to block development of Valais”. The Chairman of the Valais Chamber of Commerce, Vincent Riesen, stated: “We must prevent employment being killed off in our mountain regions”²⁵. In Grisons, the same argument was put forward in the newspaper, *Südschweiz*: “Die Initiative wird zum eigentlichen Hemmschuh für die weitere

Entwicklung des Berggebietes [...] Die Folge dieser unguten volkswirtschaftlichen Entwicklung wäre wohl eine weitere Abwanderung aus dem Berggebiet. Ob eine alpine Brache erstrebenswert ist, sei einmal dahingestellt”²⁶. In this part of Switzerland also, the fear of the depopulation of mountain regions was used as an argument, albeit less vigorously than in the Valais.

- 13 Indeed, several locally elected officials in the Valais referred to the risk of a “rural exodus” in the event of the initiative being accepted. Questioned during the campaign, Simon Epiney, chairman of the commune of Anniviers, where more than 80% of houses are second homes, feared a chain reaction: “Each time we’ve had a declining economy, there has been a rural exodus. You have one third of people working in the building trade, so these people will become unemployed [...]. If all construction were to stop tomorrow because of the initiative, what would happen ... we’d lose two or three classes and, after a certain point, it would become difficult to keep a school open (translation)”²⁷. A few weeks after the vote, he confirmed his fears when speaking before the cameras on Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS): “I have never felt such doom and gloom. [...] There are already a number of firms that have had to lay off several employees (translation)”²⁸. In the neighbouring valley, the chairman of Evolène, Damien Métrailler, expressed similar fears, raising the same spectre of a new rural exodus. “If everything has to be prohibited, we should be worried about job losses, a loss of part of community life, which contributes so much to the cultural wealth of this region, and, indeed, a form of rural emigration and thus the death of this region (translation)”²⁹.
- 14 The editor-in-chief of the *Nouvelliste*, Jean-François Fournier, sums up the confrontation between the landscape ideology, considered “dangerous”, and that advocated by the opponents of the initiative. “Under these conditions, in the middle of a world crisis, Weber’s romanticism appears not only useless, but downright dangerous (translation)”³⁰. One can well understand that this localist ideology is based on economic reasoning and on the idea of autonomy, as reflected in these words from Jean-Marie Fournier: “the aim of tourism, from its very beginnings, is to provide economic activity that allows mountain dwellers to remain in the mountains (translation)”³¹.
- 15 It is not only opponents of the initiative, however, who consider themselves spokespersons for the “mountain dwellers”. The initiators, and in particular Franz Weber, claimed to be defending the “indigenous population” by limiting the spread of second homes. “The indigenous people are expelled from their villages because of property speculation and sky-high prices, or they are pushed into noisy locations, with no sun, while at the same time, rich outsiders from Switzerland and elsewhere invest in second homes in the most beautiful locations of our beloved mountains (translation)”³². On 16 February, Franz Weber, accompanied by his daughter Vera, visited the Valais. Followed by the cameras of RTS, he first went to Verbier, where a local resident, an electrician, questioned him: “You made this initiative, but you didn’t come to speak with the people who are concerned by it”. Weber replied: “It’s people from everywhere who called me, not only Verbier”³³. He then went to Crans-Montana to participate in a debate for the RTS broadcast, *Forum*. While being questioned by journalists in the streets of the resort, passing cars sounded their horns in protest and he was openly insulted. He responded: “It’s not serious, I am used to it. I am fighting for the Valais and its indigenous people, so that they can continue living here (translation)”³⁴. This

argument was swept aside, however, by the opponents, particularly Christophe Darbellay: “With the exception of Verbier and Crans-Montana, you can find housing in any commune in the lowland and mountain areas of the Valais, under conditions that are far more reasonable [than those found in other cantons] (translation)”³⁵.

Mountain areas versus towns

- 16 The ideology of self-development is also relevant to the town-mountain split. Most of the commentaries on the vote play on this opposition between the lowland cantons, which accepted the initiative, and the mountain cantons, which refused it. On March 12, *Le Temps*, a general-interest daily newspaper covering French-speaking Switzerland, led with: “A vote that reveals a lowlands-mountains split”, an idea supported by the geographer Martin Schuler who spoke of a “dramatic lack of understanding”³⁶. The following day, in *La Liberté*, a Fribourg daily, another intellectual, the historian François Walter, added: “This vote is a new episode in a two-hundred-year-old colonisation process of the mountains”³⁷. In Valais, the very popular sociologist and ethnologist, Bernard Crettaz, was invited to the RTS television news programme the day following the vote. Confronted with Franz Weber, he was unable to hide his exasperation: “[Franz Weber] is a coloniser of the mountains. [...] I’d like to crown him like the little prince of Swiss alpine Disneyland (translation)”³⁸. When Weber began his discourse, Crettaz interrupted him, visibly upset: “You reproduce 150 years of city-dweller stereotypes. You are a coloniser (translation)”³⁹.
- 17 Several months later, Bernard Crettaz admitted that he had got carried away and had been “bad”. But for him the substance of the analysis remained unchanged: the figure of the developer brandished by Weber is based on the image of the “nasty mountain dweller, somewhat archaic and profiteering”, as fabricated by the urban elite as early as the 18th century. For him, “fortunately there were property developers to bring us out of under-development”⁴⁰. When the results of the vote were announced, it was the federal councillor, Doris Leuthard herself, who employed the term “Alpengraben”⁴¹ in the media, borrowing from the term “Röstigraben”, usually employed to comment on differences in electoral behaviour between French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland. As for Christophe Darbellay, he deplored the control of the lowland cantons over the mountain areas: “It is not very healthy to have Switzerland divided into two, with the lowland regions, which are little concerned by the initiative, imposing their solution on the mountain regions, which will have to suffer the consequences (translation)”⁴². The editor-in-chief of the *Nouvelliste* who signed the editorial on 12 March 2012 takes up this idea: “Urban Switzerland, alpine Switzerland: the divorce!”. For Philippe Bender, Valais historian and politician, acceptance of the Weber initiative even upsets the political balance in Switzerland, placing the Alps under the yoke of the cities. “Look at this map of the vote. [...] It’s the alpine world, a world that has just as much right as the city world to be Swiss. [...] Is the destiny of its two million inhabitants today to be dictated by the Plateau area and the five major urban centres of Switzerland? If that’s the case, Switzerland is no longer a federal State. Something has been broken with the Weber initiative (translation)”⁴³.
- 18 Philippe Roch, however, was strongly opposed to this interpretation of the results: “There is no rural-urban division. Cantons like Thurgovie [voted yes], but there are no towns in Thurgovie, or only very small towns. The Swiss plateau area against the Alps?

Not at all, the canton of Vaud, which is the most balanced of all the cantons, with both mountain and plateau areas, voted in favour. In Grisons, a canton that is very similar to the Valais in this respect, there was nevertheless 45% of the population who voted for the initiative. This does not at all reflect a rural-urban split (translation)”⁴⁴.

- 19 In this regard, the figure of the city-dweller pitted against that of the mountain-dweller is frequently brought into debates. Thus, Jean-Luc Addor, a UDC⁴⁵ (Central Democratic Union party) municipal councillor in Savièse (central Valais), is inclined to use this figure: “We have already mentioned on numerous occasions that this Weber initiative is nothing other than an attempt by bourgeois, bohemian eco-freaks to transform cantons like the Valais into Indian reserves”⁴⁶. The city-dweller is one who has an “idealised” vision (the editor-in-chief of the *Nouvelliste* called it “romantic”): “city-dwellers, especially the German-speakers, like to take their fantasies of wild mountain areas where wolves and bears roam freely for reality”⁴⁷, asserts Christophe Darbellay. The city-dweller is also the one who, being cultivated, claims to know: “It’s not doctors like Philippe Roch who are going to explain to us how we must do things better”⁴⁸. In this context, the personalities who supported the initiative in Valais now find themselves labelled with this exogenous identity: “[...] Those who campaigned for the “yes” vote in Valais were a minority. They represent a new left group, city-based, educated, well-paid and ready to give lessons [...] This ‘bourgeois-bohemian’ group on the left of the Valais political spectrum is very far from the factory workers and employees of joineries and ski-lift operators. It is much closer to the leftist groups of Lausanne and Geneva (translation)”⁴⁹. These are “traitors to the homeland”, an expression used by Christophe Darbellay in referring to Stéphane Rossini, Valais socialist National Councillor, who had publicly expressed his intention to vote in favour of the initiative. Explaining his decision, he declared “I am not at all the flag-bearer of this initiative, which I consider to be bad. [...] Here, I am acting as the spokesman for a whole range of Valais residents who need to be reoriented [tourism], and for this issue clear answers are needed (translation)”⁵⁰.
- 20 The campaign and the debates that have followed the vote thus show us that all the arguments can be reduced to these two ideologies, which are always presented as being opposed to one another: landscape preservation and self-focused development of the mountain areas. They do not belong to the same “world” (Boltanski, Thévenot 1991): one champions a form of nostalgia for a rural Switzerland to be preserved from increasing urban development; the other speaks of the struggle of peripheral regions to create economic activity. These discourses have been espoused and expressed in an almost caricatural manner by personalities ready to assume identities that make them visible on the public stage.

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NOTES

1. The “popular initiative” is an instrument of direct democracy that allows a group of citizens, as long as they are able to collect 100,000 signatures, to submit to popular vote a change in the Swiss federal constitution. It is particularly rare in Switzerland that popular initiatives are actually accepted on a vote: since 1849, only 19 initiatives have been accepted out of a total of 161 submitted to the Swiss people (Source: Federal Statistics Office). It is generally agreed in Switzerland that popular initiatives often identify important issues, but that the answers they provide are often inadequate, being seen as too radical. Parliament often puts forward a counter-project, which is more moderate, in the hope that the people will accept it instead of the initiative. In the case of the so-called Weber initiative, the federal Parliament had recommended rejecting the initiative, arguing that measures were already envisaged to control second homes, mainly through a revision of the law on planning and development adopted in December 2010. No direct counter-project was therefore formulated, despite a recommendation in this regard from members of the ecologist party and some socialists.
2. Chételat R., « La grande peur dans la montagne », *Le Quotidien Jurassien*, 12 March 2012.
3. Ruetschi P., « Le Valais paie pour ses abus », *La Tribune de Genève*, 12 March 2012.
4. Gabbud J.-Y., « Le Valais se prépare à vivre un cauchemar », *Le Nouvelliste*, 12 March 2012.
5. Fondation Weber et Helvetia Nostra, 2012., *Halte aux constructions envahissantes de résidences secondaires. Oui le 11 mars*, Argumentarium, p. 3
6. In 1972, the Save Lavaux initiative, which Franz Weber launched, was accepted by the people of the Vaud who made this landscape of terraced vineyards a protected site in the constitution of the canton of Vaud. Il doit avoir été appelé de/ Weber was called from?/ Paris to fight for the Lavaux cause and to block a project to build houses in the heart of the vineyard. In 2005, a new initiative aimed at writing the protection of Lavaux into the new constitution of the canton was accepted. And in 2007, the Lavaux vineyard was listed as a world heritage site by UNESCO.
7. Mombelli A., « Franz Weber, écologiste romantique et solitaire », *Swissinfo.ch*, 13 March 2012
8. Fondation Weber et Helvetia Nostra, 2012. – *Halte aux constructions envahissantes de résidences secondaires. Oui le 11 mars*, Argumentarium, p. 3
9. « Résidences secondaires : le grand débat de Forum », *Forum*, RTS, 16 février 2012.
10. Roulet Y., « Les Suisses en ont marre de voir leur pays grignoté de toute part », *Le Temps*, 11 January 2012.
11. This figure comes from the Federal Statistics Office which measured the evolution of land use between 1979/1985 and 1992/1997 in Switzerland. It was calculated that the area of housing and infrastructures increased by 0.86 m² per second during this period (Office fédéral de la statistique). This statistic has been taken up again, particularly by Nature protection associations like Pro Natura and by the instigators of the landscape Initiative (Cf. note 12).

12. Roth H. P., « Sauver le sol suisse. Une usure sans bornes », *Journal Franz Weber*, oct.-nov.-déc. 2010, p. 6.
13. One year later, another initiative was filed by a committee composed of members of the Ecologist Party and different environmental defence associations: the landscape Initiative, which is founded on this observation of excessive land consumption, proposed putting a freeze on zones that could be built on in Switzerland (<http://www.initiative-pour-le-paysage.ch>). A counter-project was then prepared by the Parliament, which was considered sufficient by the initiators so that they then withdrew the initiative. The second initiative of Franz Weber was abandoned in favour of the Landscape Initiative. The initiative designed to limit the construction of second homes was kept.
14. Weber F., « Où est ma Suisse ? », *Journal Franz Weber*, January, February, March 2012, p. 12.
15. « Spéciale votation : Halte aux résidences secondaires », *Infrarouge*, RTS, 22 février 2012.
16. Gummy S., « L'initiative Weber est en perte de vitesse », *Le Courrier*, 1^{er} mars 2012.
17. Schaller R., « Les aspects juridiques de l'initiative », *Journal Franz Weber*, janv.-févr.-mars 2012, p. 7.
18. BUWAL-OFEFP, 2005 – Au revoir Philippe Roch Directeur de l'OFEFP 1992-2005, p. 3.
19. Fondation Weber et Helvetia Nostra, 2012., Halte aux constructions envahissantes de résidences secondaires. Oui le 11 mars, Argumentarium, p. 11.
20. « Spéciale votation : Halte aux résidences secondaires », *Infrarouge*, RTS, 22 February 2012.
21. According to his web site.
22. « Les riches achètent les Alpes », *Infrarouge*, TSR, 3 April 2007.
23. « Jean-Marie Fournier, nouveau gardien de la ligne éditoriale du Nouvelliste ? », *Forum*, RSR, 30 June 2010.
24. « À Suivre...le promoteur valaisan Jean-Marie Fournier », *À Suivre*, TSR, 27 January 2007.
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