

# The Swiss Jura. Reflections on Marginality

Walter Leimgruber

The Swiss Jura is part of a larger region, the Jura, which stretches from Geneva to Germany, partly as a series of folds, partly as tablelands. The mountains were formed during the late phase of the Alpine folding during the Tertiary and are composed of Mesozoic rocks, mainly limestone and clay. The changing strata give way to a particular landscape, and the presence of limestone makes it a vast karst area with subsequent problems of livelihood.

The Swiss Jura, lying close to the Alps, was strongly marked by the folding, and it rises abruptly from the low-lying plateau to its southeast. The longitudinal folds are interrupted by transversal valleys that allow for transportation routes to penetrate and cross them, but access remains difficult and costly, hence the region has suffered from a certain degree of isolation. However, the economy has found ways out of this thanks to the watch industry since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and more recently high-precision machine tools and micro-technology. While the watch industry was subject to ups and downs in the past, the other sectors were more resistant, although the remoteness of the region does not invite investors and rather promotes outmigration.

The paper describes the particular situation of the Swiss Jura and seeks to understand its particular situation. It dwells on the role and potential of the three economic sectors, differentiating between the various natural regions and their position within the Swiss settlement system.

**Key words:** Jura, karst, watch industry, tourism, Switzerland

## O marginalnosti Švicarske Jure

Švicarska Jura dio je veće regije Jure koja se proteže od Ženeve pa sve do Njemačke, dijelom kao visoravan, a dijelom kao niz bora. Planine Jure stvorene su u kasnijoj fazi alpske orogeneze u tercijaru i građene su od stijena mezozojske starosti, većinom vapnenca i gline. Specifična izmjena geoloških slojeva oblikovala je karakteristični pejzaž, a prisutnost vapnenca daje Juri krški karakter, koji sa sobom nosi određene razvojne probleme.

Švicarska Jura, smještena u blizini Alpa, karakterizirana je snažnim procesima boranja i naglo se izdiže iz niskih visoravni smještenih na jugoistoku. Longitudinalne bore prekinute su transverzalnim dolinama, koje omogućuju izgradnju transportnih pravaca, ali pristup području i dalje je težak i skup, zbog čega je Švicarska Jura obilježena određenim stupnjem izolacije. No gospodarski razvoj uspio je premostiti te prepreke zahvaljujući industriji satova od 17. stoljeća, a u suvremenom razdoblju zahvaljujući proizvodnji visokopreciznih strojeva i mikrotehnologiji. I dok je industrija satova bila suočena s usponima i padovima u prošlosti, ostali sektori pokazali su veći stupanj otpornosti, iako udaljenost i izoliranost regije nisu komparativno privlačne investitorima te pridonose emigraciji.

U radu se daje prikaz specifične situacije Švicarske Jure i nastoje se objasniti neki uzroci i posljedice prikazanog stanja. Istražuju se uloga i potencijal triju ekonomskih sektora te se analiziraju razlike između prirodnih regija i njihove pozicije u sustavu naselja Švicarske.

**Ključne riječi:** Jura, krš, industrija satova, turizam, Švicarska

## INTRODUCTION

The name 'Jura' has multiple significances. Besides being a geological formation of the Mesozoic, it is an island of the Inner Hebrides in Scotland, a region that covers part of eastern France, north-western Switzerland, and southern Germany, and it is a Swiss canton (to say nothing of a firm that produces, among others, coffee-machines, and another that produces cement). Composed of mainly Mesozoic rocks (limestones, clays and marls), the Jura region in France, Switzerland and Germany is a typical karst region with all the challenges characterizing this particular geology.

With approximately 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> the Swiss Jura covers about one tenth of the surface of Switzerland and is home to 12% of the national population. It is composed of three distinct landscape types, each of which poses different problems for human occupancy. The most conspicuous one is the *folded Jura*, which borders the pre-alpine sedimentary basin of the Swiss Plateau. It rises abruptly from the lowlands and only occasional transversal valleys offer easy access to the synclines between the individual chains. It is largely inhospitable except for the longitudinal valleys where settlement and economic activities are possible. The steep slopes are mainly forested. To the northwest it develops into a plateau landscape (called *plateau Jura*), consisting of extremely shallow folds, which give the impression of undulating plateaus, partly forested, partly consisting of pastures with interspersed groups of trees. Settlement is scarce as there is a notorious lack of water and cattle and horse rearing are the characteristic activities. The *Jura tablelands* lie to the north of the folded Jura and are characterized by escarpments. The scarp slopes represent the hard limestone, whereas soft clays and marls underlie the dip slopes. Traditional settlements were often located close to the foot of the scarps where water was available. The relatively flat tablelands are well suited for agriculture.

This paper attempts to draw a picture of a region that has been facing a lot of economic problems, despite its importance for the Swiss watch industry. Marginality in this case is partly influenced by tectonic structure (with its bearing on accessibility) and geology and its consequences for the water cycle, but it is mainly due to the human factor. Nothing can be done to change the former, but the latter very much depends on political action. The focus here lies therefore on the Swiss Canton of Jura (which is a political entity), which will be used to illustrate the complexity of the marginality concept.

## MARGINAL REGIONS IN SWITZERLAND

A first paper on marginality identified four types: geometrical, ecological, economic, and social marginality (Leimgruber, 1994, 8). The conclusion referred to the breadth of meaning of the term marginal, to the importance of scale, to the ethical component, and to the political factor contained in it (Leimgruber, 1994, 15). Subsequent reflections saw marginality as an issue of scale and perspective (Leimgruber, 2004, 37; Gurung and Kollmair, 2005), and as characterized by a high variability (Schmidt, 2007). Because of the dynamic nature of human actions (see Leimgruber, 2004, 41), it is rare that a region will be permanently marginal. Every region has its strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats are always present. It is therefore imperative to balance these different points to come to a conclusion about the *degree of marginality* in which a region finds itself. Such a SWOT-analysis will be presented later.

We have therefore to choose a particular spatial level according to which we define marginal regions in a specific context, and to select one or more thematic fields. Natural regions are not *a priori* suitable for the definition of marginality because humans have always been able to cope with difficult physical conditions. If we applied this perspective to Switzerland, most of the country (certainly the Jura and the Alps) would have to be classed as marginal because of their difficult natural conditions. However, this would be too narrow an outlook. Marginality is a social concept and tied to humans. As said above, the Jura has been most important for the Swiss watch and clock industry, whereas the Alps play a key role in hydro energy production, transit transportation, and tourism. Marginality must therefore be considered from different angles. Elements to discuss marginal regions are, for example:

- Lying outside the mainstream
- Bypassed by development, transportation routes,
- Lying largely outside most people's minds
- Lack of indigenous development force
- Neglected by politics
- Uninteresting to investors (perceived as not sufficiently profitable)

Physical difficulties, such as accessibility or topography, can be included, but they have always to be considered from the social perspective: how people evaluate them, how they feel constrained by them, to what extent they are promoting or hindering human action.

It seems obvious that more criteria than listed above can be defined, and that probably no region will be marginal according to all of them. Their relevance varies with the spatial levels; the political criterion, for example, is not the same when working with municipalities or nation states, the physical difficulties are not the same everywhere; investors may be attracted through rational political measures or irrational love for the landscape, etc.

This contribution tries to sketch a number of points with reference to the Swiss canton of Jura. This spatial level has been chosen for two reasons: firstly, because the cantonal level is best to obtain statistical information. Cantons are autonomous regional states with their own government and administration, including fiscality, education and culture, health services, and police. Second, because the canton of Jura is a recent addition to the Swiss political landscape (see the historical overview below).

Inside the cantons the municipalities (or communes) also enjoy a certain degree of autonomy (which varies slightly from one canton to another). They are therefore also a spatial unit which, from a statistical and political point of view, can be used for our purpose. However, in the present context this would go beyond the scope of our intentions. Local development policies depend even more on individuals (politicians, entrepreneurs, and opinion leaders) than on the cantonal level where local differences are somehow compensated.

Judging by the cantons' demographic and economic situation, the canton of Jura can certainly be considered a marginal region. Its population has been stagnating over the past years, there is little economic dynamism, and unemployment lies above the Swiss average (Tab. 1). However, also cantons like Uri, Ticino, the Grisons, or the Valais (to choose but a

few examples) can be classed as marginal according to one or the other of the three criteria, and even neighbouring Neuchâtel has a higher unemployment rate.

Tab. 1 Key figures for some Swiss cantons

Tab. 1. Ključni ekonomski i demografski pokazatelji nekih švicarskih kantona

Region	Population 2010		Jobs 2008		Unemployment 2008 (% of jobs)
	total	growth (%) 2000-2010	total	%	
Canton of Jura	70'032	2.0	36'861	0.9	3.1
Canton of Neuchâtel	172'085	3.7	90'788	2.2	3.3
Canton of Uri	35,422	0.2	16,583	0.4	0.8
Canton of Ticino	333'753	9.6	181'042	4.3	4.1
Canton of Grisons	192,621	3.2	102,975	2.5	1.3
Canton of Valais	312,684	13.0	141,023	3.4	3.1
Canton of Zürich	1'373'068	13.0	811'586	19.4	2.4
<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>7'870'100</i>	<i>9.2</i>	<i>4'192'645</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2.6</i>

Source: Statistical Atlas of Switzerland

Izvor: Statistički atlas Švicarske

## THE CANTON OF JURA AS A MARGINAL REGION

### *Historical background*

The Jura is the latest canton of Switzerland (Fig. 1), created in 1979 and detached from the territory of the Canton of Berne. It is the north-western corner of the old Bishopric of Basle (the princely state of the Bishop of Basle) that disappeared with the French occupation in 1792 and was attached to the Canton of Berne by the Vienna Congress in 1815. This move compensated Berne for the loss of its former French-speaking colony (the Canton of Vaud, created by Napoleon in 1803). The Canton of Jura is French-speaking and Roman-Catholic, which largely marginalized it within the dominantly German-speaking and Protestant canton of Berne.

An independence movement started within the Jura population in the 1940s, demanding the creation of a canton of their own (HLS 2003, 300) and the separation from Berne. Discussions and referenda took place during the 1950s and 1960s but to little avail. Unfortunately, the Jura Liberation Front also resorted to violence including burning down farms, and several bomb attacks on electricity installations and a symbolic statue remembering World War I. However, discussions continued and a solution was finally found in the mid-1970s. The canton officially came into existence on January 1, 1979, after 82% of Swiss voters had approved of an amendment to the Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

The Jura question (as it came to be called) is not yet solved. In 2012, the governments of Berne and Jura resumed discussions about the future of the Bernese Jura. This is the French-speaking part of the canton of Berne, and its population is Protestant like the entire canton. However the road to a final solution is still far off, as the historical legacy cannot be wiped out easily. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, part of what is nowadays the Bernese Jura had concluded a defence agreement with Berne and subsequently converted to Protestantism.

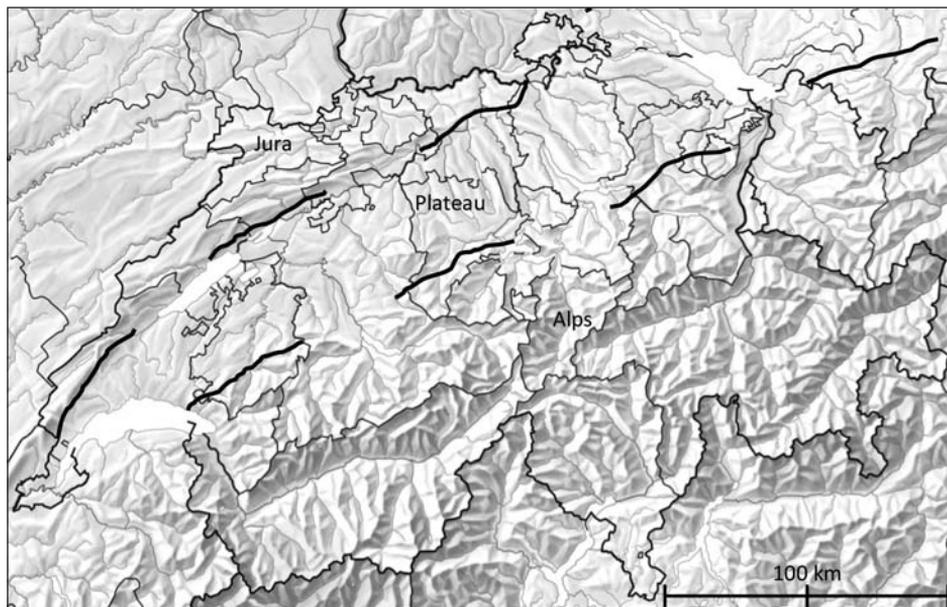


Fig. 1 The Jura (region and canton) in the Swiss context (The name has been inserted on the territory of the canton)

Sl. 1. Jura (regija i kanton) u kontekstu Švicarske (toponim je upisan u granicama kantona)

Map source: Interactive Swiss World Atlas

Izvor: Interaktivni švicarski atlas svijeta

The Bishop of Basle retained his worldly power, but the population did not return to the old faith. It is this confessional limit, which is still strongly anchored in people's minds. In the end it will be up to the populations concerned to decide whether the canton of Jura and the Bernese Jura will merge or whether at least those municipalities that want to shall be able to join the canton of Jura.

### ***Demography and politics***

As a dominantly rural canton, Jura is little urbanized. Most settlements are villages, some at around 1,000–3,000 inhabitants, many with less than 1,000. At the end of 2010, the capital, Delémont, had just 11,590 inhabitants, and the second town Porrentruy a mere 6,679.

From a *demographic* perspective, while the population is slightly growing (1.8% in the 2000-2010 decade, which can be interpreted as stagnation), the evolution varies regionally. The canton of Jura has three districts (Delémont, Les Franches Montagnes, Porrentruy). In the 2000-2010 decade only the district of the capital (Delémont) grew significantly (whatever this means) by 3.0%, and even the population of the plateau Jura region Les Franches Montagnes increased by 2.6%. The Ajoie (Porrentruy district, situated close to the French centres of Belfort and Montbéliard), on the other hand, declined by 0.2%. The figures are small if we consider the total population of 70,032 persons for the entire canton,

and the -0.2% of the Porrentruy represent just 43 people. Looking at the two components of population dynamics (natural and migratory movement) we recognize considerable fluctuations across time. For example, the canton lost population due to emigration in 2000 (- 1.3 ‰) but had a positive natural balance (+ 1.9 ‰), whereas in 2010 the situation was exactly the reverse (+ 2.5 ‰ and - 0.2 ‰ respectively).

*Politically*, a region can be called marginal whenever the ruling class does not take notice of it. In parliamentary systems it can be called marginal if its political weight in the national parliament is weak and has difficulties in being noticed when it comes to obtain solutions to its problems. Switzerland has a two-chamber parliamentary system. The Lower Chamber comprises 200 deputies who are elected proportionally in the different cantons, the number of deputies for each canton being calculated according to its population. Thus, with 70,000 inhabitants, the Jura has two deputies in the Lower House. The Upper Chamber, on the other hand, consists of two representatives per canton (elected by majority rule), irrespective of their demographic weight. This system was introduced with the founding of the modern State in 1848. It serves to balance the demographic inequality among the cantons and therefore partly demarginalizes the less densely populated ones. In the Lower Chamber, votes usually occur according to party affiliation, whereas in the Upper Chamber cantonal interests often dominate. From this perspective, the Jura is not less marginalized than, for example, the small cantons of central Switzerland.

### ***The cantonal economy***

The figures in Tab. 1 not only show the demographic marginality but also shed light on the job situation. With few inhabitants and no large centres, the Jura is not a particular magnet for commuters. It offers few jobs, but has a relatively high unemployment rate (although lower than neighbouring Neuchâtel)<sup>2</sup>.

Traditionally, the entire Jura was an agricultural region. Its western and humid part was particularly suited to animal husbandry, and cattle were exported mainly to Basle, the closest major urban centre. Horse breeding developed as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The regional specialty is the *Freiberger* race, a draft horse that was used in agriculture and in the military (Der Freiberger, 2007). Metalworking started in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and two blast furnaces were built around 1600 (Froidevaux, 2001, 751).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Protestant refugees from France (Huguenots) brought the watch industry to Switzerland, particularly Geneva (which was not a formal part of the Confederation until 1815), from where it began to spread into the Jura (late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries). The Neuchâtel Jura in particular became a key region, but it also established itself in what is now the canton of Jura and in the Jura part of the canton of Berne (Fallet and Veyrassat, 2012). Watch and clock making is a labour-intensive activity, and from early times, the entire process was segmented into different production steps<sup>3</sup>, which gave rise to professional specialization. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, it became common practice to have such components manufactured by home workers (Fallet and Veyrassat, 2012). This was a way for the farming population to gain additional income. The French speaking part of the Swiss Jura thus developed into a centre for a home-based industry, and farming gradually diminished in importance.

An increasingly important by-product of the watch and clock industry is micro-technology, which is concentrated in Neuchâtel and La Chaux-de-Fonds in the neighbouring Neuchâtel Jura, but also has ramification into the canton of Jura, while machine tools, too, can be seen as an offspring of this activity.

As can be seen from Tab. 2 the canton of Jura's economy is dominated by the industrial sector, in particular metalworking, machines and watch making and micro-technology: one third of all manufacturing enterprises belongs to these three groups, which together offer almost two thirds of all jobs in the Jura industry. The figures demonstrate that most enterprises are small to medium-sized (SME)<sup>4</sup>. Such enterprises are usually very flexible and innovative, but they may also be vulnerable. In particular, they often serve as specialized subcontractors and thus depend on orders from their customers, who depend, in turn, on the general economic situation. In a globalized economy, such specialization can be both an advantage and a handicap.

Unlike Switzerland, the primary sector is still very strong, but most farms are family farms offering few jobs. With 40 ha per unit the canton has the largest agricultural enterprises in Switzerland (Groupe de Travail NPR-Jura 2007, 14). Animal rearing dominates, with only 25% of the agricultural land being used as cropland<sup>5</sup> (Fistat, 2011, 14). Agriculture is not a domain that receives priority in the canton's new regional policy (which wants to strengthen regional competitiveness) but is seen as a complement to tourism (rural tourism; Fistat, 2011, 49). Agricultural policy aims at maintaining as many viable enterprises as possible, and the cantonal regulations have to follow those on the federal level.

The service sector is mainly oriented towards the regional needs. When the Jura became an independent canton, this produced a rise in clerical jobs because the new government had to build up its administration. (ibid. p.14), but very little has happened since.

Tab. 2 Economic structure of the canton of Jura, 2008  
(in parenthesis: Swiss average)

Tab. 2. *Ekonomska struktura kantona Jura 2008.*  
(u zagradama: švicarski prosjek)

Domain	Enterprises		Workforce	
	Total	%	Total	%
Agriculture	1,177	25.0 (16.6)	2,341	7.5 (3.5)
Industry	989	21.1 (19.5)	14,694	47.2 (23.4)
Services	2,531	53.9 (63.9)	14,089	45.3 (73.1)
Canton of Jura	4,697	100	31,124	100

Source: Fistat, 2011, 9; Federal Office of Statistics  
Izvor: Fistat, 2011, 9; Federalni ured za statistiku

The economic performance, as measured by the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP), shows the canton of Jura somewhere in the middle of all the cantons. In 2010, for example, its per capita GDP amounted to CHF 58,981, some 16% below the Swiss average of 69,981, and the Canton of Jura occupied rank 15 out of 26 cantons. In that same year the per capita GDP grew by 2.8%, slightly more than in the country as a whole (+ 2.7%).

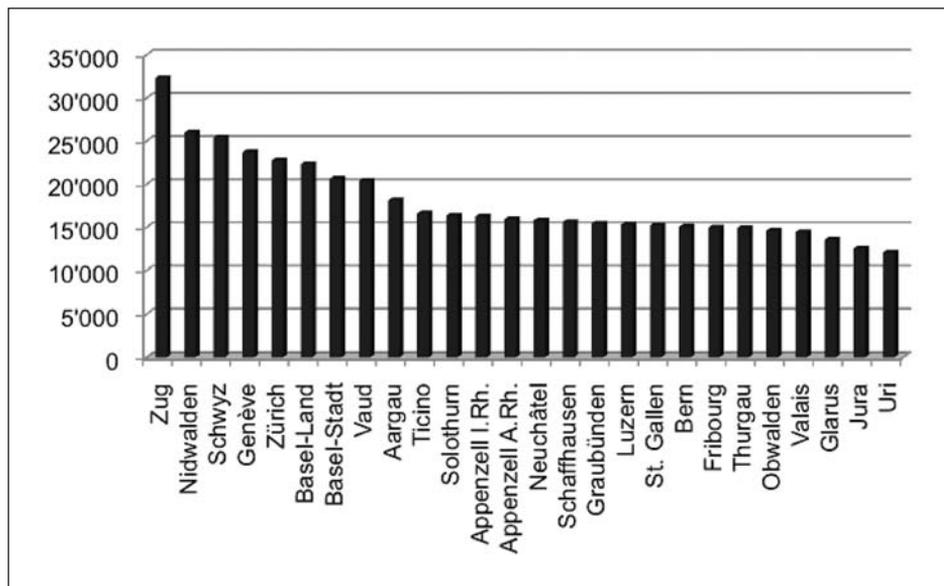


Fig. 2 Per capita income by canton, 2009

Sl. 2. Dohodak per capita po kantonima u CHF, 2009.

Source: EFV 2008, 6

Izvor: EFC, 2008, 6

From this perspective, the Jura cannot be considered as marginal but rather as mainstream. However, looking at the per capita revenue in that same year, the canton finds itself in the last but one position (25 out of 26), hence it is clearly marginal (Fig. 2). With CHF 12,560, its mean per capita revenue lies substantially below the Swiss mean of CHF 18,575 and is only 39% of that of the richest canton, Zug (CHF 32,309).

Although the Canton of Jura can be seen as economically marginal, it is not characterized by economic passivity. Looking at the new enterprises and jobs created during the past years, it is fairly strong in relative terms. The 83 new firms with 180 jobs created in 2010 are quantitatively unimportant, but the average 2.17 new jobs per new enterprise are significantly above the Swiss average of 1.86 new jobs per new firm. The Canton of Jura in fact ranks third (after Graubünden with 2.22 and Schaffhausen with 2.20) and well ahead of Zurich (1.96)<sup>6</sup>. This criterion does, of course, not propel the Jura out of marginality, but it shows that marginal does not mean hopeless (Fig. 3).

The chief problem of the Canton of Jura is that its industry is mainly based on subcontracting, and its services are of regional importance only. The new enterprises find themselves in an unfavourable economic environment, and it is unclear how many will eventually survive in the long term. The growth of the GDP in 2010 is therefore not the result of new firms but of the good performance of the existing industries (probably the watch sector mainly).

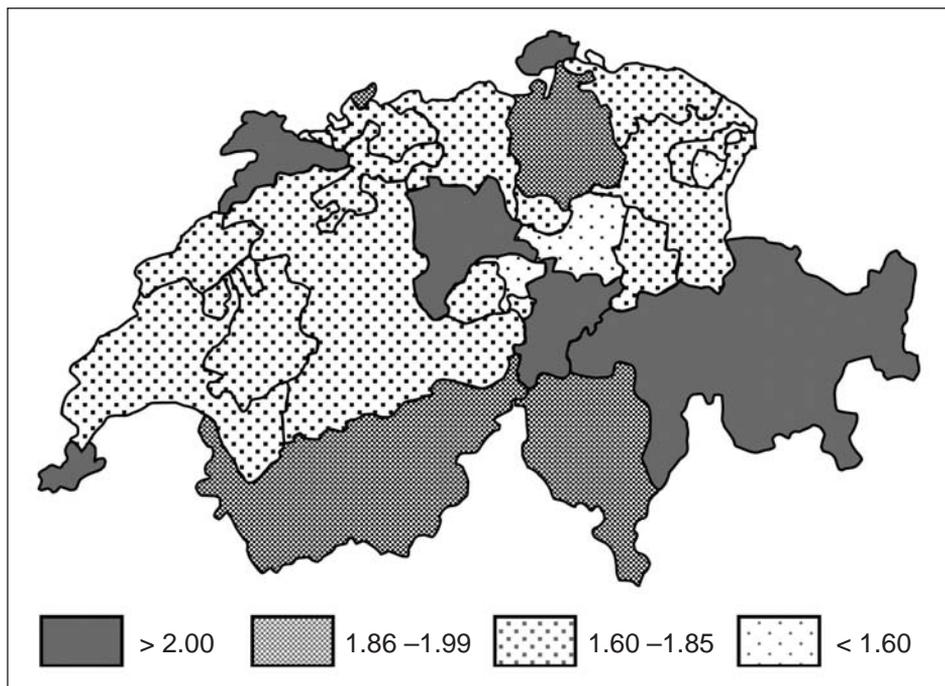


Fig. 3 New jobs per new enterprise, 2010  
 Sl. 3. Nova radna mjesta po novom poduzeću, 2010.

Source: Statistical Atlas of Switzerland  
 Izvor: *Statistički atlas Švicarske*

### ***The issue of transportation***

Another index for marginality is accessibility and transportation. Both railways and roads in the Jura have experienced little investment into maintenance and modernization. Although the canton is connected to the rest of Switzerland, these connections are far from optimal. Permanent political pressure is required to keep things moving.

In the 1870s three *railway* lines were constructed: from Basle to Delémont, from Bienne to Delémont, and from Delémont to Delle (in France, just across the border near Porrentruy). This last track connected Switzerland to Paris (via Belfort) and bypassed German occupied Alsatia (after the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War). They were built as single-track lines, and they have remained so until today. When France regained control over Alsatia in 1918, the line Delémont – Delle (and on to Belfort) lost its meaning. The line from Basle to Biel/Bienne – Geneva, however, remained important, but despite minor upgradings, it continues mainly as a single-track line, which renders timetable coordination difficult.

The line from Delémont to Belfort suffered from another handicap. It had been electrified only as far as the border (into the French border station of Delle). There the engines had to be changed to steam and later to diesel. In 1992, the French railway company stopped

exploiting the line altogether. The Swiss railways discontinued the service to the French station of Delle in 1995, and the French subsequently dismantled the rails of the station.

Less than 20 years after this, the railway situation changes again. The French high-speed network (TGV) is being completed by the TGV Rhine-Rhone, which connects Basle via Mulhouse – Dijon with Paris. It is a new track, and a new station, Belfort-Montbéliard, has been constructed not far from the border. This would be of interest for the canton of Jura. Currently, however, access to the new station is by car (on a motorway) or bus (from Delle station) only, and a direct railway (from Delle) line will not be built in the near future. The marginal situation with respect to transportation continues.

Another, regional railway line had been constructed between 1894 and 1904, connecting the Delémont valley with the Franches Montagnes and La Chaux-de-Fonds. As a narrow gauge railway it serves local and regional connections only, but is important from this perspective. In addition, old steam engines and rolling stock have been preserved and restored for tourist activities.

The story of *road* access is another example of the marginality of the canton. The Jura Mountains are a serious obstacle not only for railways but also for roads. Only few transversal valleys offer access to the longitudinal valleys with the major settlements. Roads through the valleys (and across the mountains) are winding and rarely allow travelling at the legal speed of 80 km/h for any length of time. For this reason the major national and international transit routes bypass the region. When Switzerland decided to build a national motorway network in 1960, the Jura was completely left out<sup>7</sup>. The motorways were planned to connect the major centres of the country, which lie outside the Jura. It was only in 1984 that the federal government included the A16 (*Transjurane*) in the national motorway network. However, right from the beginning it was not planned to build a full motorway (with two separate two-track lanes) but to opt for a mix of motorway and broad ordinary roads with entry junctions, which were to avoid villages (Bundesbeschluss über das Nationalstrassennetz 1960/202). A major reason for such a 'cheap' solution was doubtlessly the cost factor, as crossing the Jura requires the construction of expensive tunnels and bridges. It is highly probable that the Jura was also considered as of lesser importance for the country and therefore did not require a full motorway. On the other hand, the Canton of Jura had become independent in 1979; to build a fast road connection to the rest of Switzerland was therefore of political significance. Most of the A16 has been completed by now, but the final sections will only be opened to the public by 2016.

### ***The Jura in people's minds***

Perception and identity are important for a region's well-being. How do people see themselves, how are they perceived by outsiders? Switzerland is a country where local and cantonal identities are very strong. While we stress that we are Swiss when travelling abroad and talking to foreigners, our regional and local sense of place is much stronger and is always emphasized when talking to other Swiss. This is also manifest in our definition of citizenship and the process of neutralization. We are citizens of our place of origin, which is where our ancestors came from. This can be a city or a small village in the mountains. We may assume a second place of origin (the place where we live), but this does not replace the

original one. A Swiss can easily have two or even three places of origin. The place of birth, on the other hand, is of no interest (contrary to probably all other countries in the world). This complexity is mirrored in the naturalization process. One does not simply become a Swiss citizen. The basic unit for naturalization is the municipality, which confers the local citizenship, on the basis of which one becomes cantonal citizen – and by extension Swiss. The Swiss display a strong 'cantonal patriotism' (Seiler, 1984, 13), which illustrates the importance of the canton as a political and an identity unit. Thus, the independence of the canton of Jura also led to a new cantonal citizenship (before the people of the new canton were Bernese citizens, after 1979 they became Jura citizens).

The long struggle for independence has created a strong internal identity in the canton of Jura. It is true that there is an overarching Jura identity, covering both the canton of Jura and the Bernese Jura. Its first manifestation is the hymn *La Rauracienne*, composed in 1831 (!) and recalling in its name the original Celtic people of the Rauraceans. It now serves as the unofficial anthem of the Jura (Kreis, 1993, 90). The *Société jurassienne d'Emulation* goes back to 1847, the association *Pro Jura* to 1903 (Juillerat et al. 1986, 38). In the same year a regional journal (*Revue jurassienne*) was first published. The Jura coat-of-arms first appeared in 1913 and was made official in 1951, and Paul-Otto Bessire published his comprehensive work on the history of the Jura in 1935 (Kreis, 1993, 90).

However, the two populations (in the southern Bernese and in the northern Canton of Jura) differ in many points, even if French is their common language. A decisive cultural element is religion (see above). Even if it is losing its importance in daily life, it continues to shape people's attitudes, thinking and actions. Alain Pichard (1978, 251) has characterized the two groups as follows (transl. WL): "In the people's perception the typical Southerner is introvert, severe, quiet, reserved. He is industrious and materialist, he loves his job, gets up early and goes to bed early, and he earns money. He spends his weekends hiking in the mountains or collecting mushrooms, he loves nature and solitude. The Northerner, on the other hand, is considered extrovert, communicative, hospitable, enjoys life, and he loves to be in company. In Moutier [a small industrial town in the Bernese Jura; WL] there is one pub for every five hundred inhabitants, in Delémont every three hundred, in Porrentruy every two hundred." He continues by pointing out that the people in the southern Jura are more interested in science and technology, whereas the Northerners are on the whole more intellectual, interested in politics, law and administration.

The figures may not be valid nowadays, and the independence of the Canton of Jura has changed a lot, but they are a telling example of the differences in mentalities within an extremely small territory. They stand for a specific trait of Switzerland: the country is divided into micro regions with their own identity that have nothing to do with politics but with ways of living.

The struggle for independence was, of course, in the headlines throughout Switzerland, created conflicting opinions. In particular the violence applied by the separatist militants was not approved of, although it was obviously necessary to arouse the interest of the federal authorities. The Jura issue had only been seen until then as a minor internal affair in the Canton of Berne. Its wider ramifications had not been considered. When the Swiss agreed to the creation of the canton of Jura in 1979, they followed common sense

because of the diplomatic efforts between the various parties. They also recognized the rights of a minority that had demanded more attention. Creating this new canton had required an amendment to the Constitution, which was subject to a compulsory referendum. The new canton received 82% affirmative votes; in Ticino (a linguistic minority canton), even 95% were in favour, whereas the acceptance in the Canton of Berne (which lost part of its territory) was a mere 69.5%.

### **IS THE JURA REALLY MARGINAL?**

The few remarks above can be summed up in the statement that the Canton of Jura is a marginal region from many points of view. Marginal in this case must not be seen as being utterly deficient or in great need, rather it means that the canton lies off the beaten track, not only physically but also mentally, that its internal development capacities are limited.

I have pointed out above that marginality is not necessarily a dead end, that human dynamics always change situations, and that every region contains both positive and negative elements, that change is a normal part of life. Marginality has therefore to be considered by comparing all aspects, which will reveal its true nature.

The canton of Jura has strengths as well as weaknesses, a fact well known by the people in the cantonal administration. Charged with elaborating a new strategy for implementing the new Swiss regional policy legislation, a cantonal study group has applied a SWOT-analysis (Groupe de Travail NPR-Jura 2007, 11-13), covering the three factors of territory, population, and (economic) activities. It compared a number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Tab. 3, 4, 5). This analysis allows us to judge for ourselves to what extent the Jura is really a marginal region. Even if it is an internal judgement, the authors have tried to be as objective as possible.

Confronting the (perceived) strengths and weaknesses reveals (and this becomes obvious in the commentary) that, from the physical aspect (territory), the canton of Jura can be called a marginal region (Tab. 3). This statement is based on its location (at the periphery of major urban regions such as Basle, Bienne, Neuchâtel), the difficulty of access (both in physical and time distance), and the lack of attention paid by federal investors (state enterprises). On the other hand, the environment in the Jura is still in a very good shape, and the improvement of access (A16 motorway) and transport possibilities (TGV in neighbouring France) are assets for the future. Unfortunately, the Canton of Jura is not the only player when it comes to profiting from the strengths and opportunities. Considerable efforts are necessary to convince outside actors to take advantage of them.

However, space or territory is only one aspect. More important is what people make out of it, how they valorise it, how they cope with the difficulties, which strategies they use etc. – and yet, they are to some extent also dependent on it. From the demographic perspective, which is depicted as somewhat contradictory (Tab. 4), the situation in the Canton of Jura looks less promising. Its population is stagnating and gradually ageing (although the analysis evokes a favourable age structure by putting young people at the top). It is precisely this age group, which, once well trained, is most likely to leave the canton and look for better jobs elsewhere in Switzerland. Trans-border commuters can compensate

Tab. 3 SWOT-analysis: Territory

Tab. 3. SWOT-analiza teritorija

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Close to Basle metropolitan area. Pleasant living environment, well-preserved nature, high landscape quality, no traffic congestions. Good communications equipment (optical fibres, ADSL, ...). Relatively low land and housing prices. Feeling of security. Public transport network. Free spaces available.</p>	<p>Eccentric situation respective to the Jurassic region, to French-speaking Switzerland, to Switzerland; no urban centre. Weak accessibility. Unfavourable topography for rapid transportation; A16 is only an internal connection. Weak trans-border relations. Municipalities too small, too individualistic, and too numerous.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Linked to the Basle metropolitan area. Belfort-Montbéliard conurbation Perspective for a solid structure of the Jurassic region Mergers of municipalities, development of intermunicipal co-operation and creation of a conurbation. Opening of the Transjurane (A16), improvement of the H18, rapid accessibility to the TGV Rhine-Rhone with an easier integration in to the European railway networks</p>	<p>Insufficient offer of the Basle metropolis. Federal investments privilege the metropolitan regions and the inter-metropolitan axes instead of the peripheries and the axes between metropolis and peripheries</p>

Source: Groupe de Travail NPR-Jura 2007, 11

Izvor: Radna skupina NPR-Jura, 2007, 11

Tab. 4 SWOT-analysis: Population

Tab. 4. SWOT-analiza stanovništva

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Young population structure. Good basic training Ability to work precisely. Trans-border commuters available. Labour peace. Competitive salaries. Few problems related to immigrants. High-quality training on secondary and tertiary level, adapted to the region's needs.</p>	<p>Demographic stagnation, even decrease Emigration of well-trained young people. Progressive ageing of the population. Few higher education establishments. Little interest in other languages. Disparity between municipalities as concerns demographic evolution.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Free labour mobility as a remedy to lacking competence. Steady lowering of fiscal pressure.</p>	<p>Negative demographic perspectives Social and financial problems caused by an ageing population. Risk of wage dumping and deterioration of relations between social partners</p>

Source: Groupe de Travail NPR-Jura 2007, 12

Izvor: Radna skupina NPR-Jura, 2007, 12

for the lack of manpower, although this may not always be the optimal solution. The Jura has witnessed a steady increase in this category of workers during the first decade of this century: from 3,259 in 2000 to 5,394 in 2010, i.e. a growth of 65.5% (Fistat, 2011). They occupy around 18% of all jobs, a sign that Switzerland is an attractive workplace, even if the salary level in the Jura is below the Swiss average (the mean annual income is CHF 12,560 as against CHF 18,575 for Switzerland; see Fig. 2). The increase mirrors the difficult job situation and the lower wages in the neighbouring French region.

Demographically, therefore, the canton of Jura has a strong marginal trend as well, because (young) people view its remote location and the lack of higher education and job challenges (see below) as negative. The risk of wage dumping, listed as a threat, is real because of trans-border commuters who live in a country with a low salary level. Although advantages and drawbacks seem to balance each other, the task of the cantonal economic policy to valorise the chances and counter the negative trends is not easy. The instrument of fiscal policy could be used to limit emigration; the promotion of language learning could help to attract new firms, which would profit from a multi-lingual society.

As concerns activities, the SWOT-analysis demonstrates that the canton of Jura is somewhat unilaterally oriented towards the secondary sector (Tab. 5).

True enough, the industry has traditionally been very strong and displays a high quality, but the cantonal welfare depends very much on a healthy and balanced economy, which is currently not the case. The fact that subcontracting dominates the industrial sector is an additional drawback because this means high dependency on external factors. Besides, innovations are only possible to a limited degree.

Agriculture and tourism are not sufficient to redress the balance. Especially the tourist sector is not well developed, mainly because of the difficulties of access. Assets are the low

Tab. 5 SWOT-analysis: Activities

Tab. 5. SWOT-analiza aktivnosti

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>The industry as the hard core of the Jura economy. Flexible industrial structures thanks to the presence of SMEs.</p> <p>Agriculture as a source for alimentation. Nature well-suited for recreation activities. Swiss label as an attraction.</p>	<p>Delay in the evolution of the economic sectors. Tertiary sector not well represented in dynamic fields.</p> <p>Economic performance below Swiss mean. Few research centres. Sensitive to the economic situation. Little contact to the end-market (subcontracting)</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Globalization Reduction of fiscal pressure on enterprises by 1% p.a. until 2020. New regional policy Proximity of Basle as a source for new activities.</p>	<p>Globalization. Competition of emerging countries.</p>

Source: Groupe de Travail NPR-Jura 2007, 13

Izvor: Radna skupina NPR-Jura, 2007, 13

settlement density and beautiful landscapes which, thanks to the low number of tourists, have not been spoilt. However, these assets could be better valorised.

The authors also draw an ambiguous picture of globalization. The Jura cannot stay apart from the rest of the world; its industry is *volens volens* part of the global economy – just think of the watch industry, which thrives thanks to a high demand from Asia. While this is the positive side, Asia (in particular) is also a competitor. The watch industry had experienced that in the 1970s when the Swiss industry 'overslept' and missed the digital (quartz) revolution. All of a sudden, Japanese watches flooded the market, much simpler and more varied than the mechanical Swiss watches. The Swiss watch industry almost collapsed when it ignored the importance of the quartz watch revolution<sup>8</sup>, although it is true that this occurred parallel to the general economic crisis of 1974, which followed the first oil shock. The economic downturn lasted until the industry was restructured in 1983 (merger of the two major producer groups to become the SMH, the *Société de Microélectronique et d'Horlogerie SA*), and the label 'Swatch' put the Swiss watch back on the map.

## CONCLUSION

Is the Jura a marginal region? The discussions above have shown that this depends entirely on the perspective adopted, and the SWOT-analysis confirms this. However, the overall answer is affirmative. The Jura as a whole (in particular its western part) and the Swiss Canton of Jura lie off the major transportation routes, and the entire region is still dominantly rural, despite the importance and dominant position of the watch industry and micro-technology. Dependence on a single domain (comparable to monoculture) is always risky and can prove disastrous. Even if the watch industry (particularly in the luxury segment) now fares extremely well (thanks to the rising demand from Asia), external events may always lead to a new downfall. This became evident after the 2008 crisis (Tab. 6).

Tab. 6 Swiss watch exports by value, 2005-2011

Tab. 6. Švicarski izvoz satova prema vrijednosti, 2005. – 2011.

Year	Exports (billion CHF)	Growth in %
2005	12.3	+ 10.9
2006	13.7	+ 10.9
2007	16.0	+ 16.2
2008	17.0	+ 6.7
2009	13.2	- 22.3
2010	16.2	+ 22.1
2011	19.3	+19.2

Source: Fédération de l'industrie horlogère suisse, 2005-11

Izvor: Fédération de l'industrie horlogère suisse, 2005-11

Reflections since 1994 have led me to modify my initial and rash statement of that time: "Marginal areas, on the other hand, face a bleak future in society, being isolated from the system and essentially centred on themselves." (Leimgruber 1994, 6). Marginal

means to lie at the edge of a system, but it does not mean to be outside the system. Nor does it mean an end state. Life is dynamic, and in the long term we have seen many regions become economically important and then experienced a massive decline (e.g. the old industrial regions of Britain). It is therefore important to underline the role of politics as a key player. The entire region of the Jura, in France, Switzerland and Germany, lies within the political system of the respective countries. The French Jura might be somewhat more marginal in the political sense because of the highly centralized French system, which hinders local initiatives. The decentralized federalist German and Swiss systems, on the other hand, offer more independence and flexibility on both regional and local levels. The creation of the canton of Jura is an excellent example of how the marginality of a region could at least be partly offset.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This referendum was necessary because all cantons are listed in the Constitution. A new canton is a change in the Constitution.
- <sup>2</sup> Unemployment varies from one year to another. In 2010, for example, the Swiss average was 3.9%, while the canton of Jura had 5.4% unemployment.
- <sup>3</sup> This division of the production process anticipated the principles of scientific management developed by Frederick W. Taylor in the 19th century.
- <sup>4</sup> In Swiss terminology an SME employs a maximum of 249 employees; <http://www.kmu.admin.ch/politik/00100/index.html?lang=de>, accessed 15.04.2012
- <sup>5</sup> This includes maize for silage, i.e. cropland serving animal husbandry.
- <sup>6</sup> Zürich ranks first in absolute terms with 2,491 new enterprises and 4,887 jobs created by them.
- <sup>7</sup> The A3 to Zurich and the A2 to Lucerne (the major Germany – Italy motorway) cross the eastern part of the Jura tablelands.
- <sup>8</sup> The principle of the quartz watch had been developed in 1967 in Neuchâtel, but the industry was too strongly focused on the traditional mechanical watch and missed the turnaround. The crisis of the 1970s resulted in the closure of more than half of all firms, and more than 90,000 workers lost their jobs (<http://www.glist.ch/web/index.php/diverse/26-die-grosse-uhrenkrise>).

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SAŽETAK

## O marginalnosti Švicarske Jure

Walter Leimgruber

Kanton Jura služi kao primjer marginalizacije u Švicarskoj. Taj se kanton nalazi u planinama Jure, krškoj regiji obilježenoj poljoprivredom (posebice konjogojstvom), šumarstvom i proizvodnjom satova. Proizvodnja satova u početku je bila tradicionalno dopunsko zanimanje poljoprivrednika, ali se razvila u snažnu industrijsku granu s mnogim decentraliziranim manjim tvornicama.

S tek oko 70.000 stanovnika Švicarska Jura maleni je kanton sa slabom političkom moći na nacionalnoj razini. To dijelom objašnjava zašto je prometna infrastruktura koju financira država i dalje nedovoljno razvijena. Autocesta A16, jedina brza cestovna prometnica koja taj kanton povezuje s ostatkom Švicarske, u izgradnji je od 1984. i još nije dovršena, a jedina važna željeznička pruga koja prolazi kroz kanton (od Basela do Ženeve) većim je dijelom jednokolosiječna, što priječi jači promet.

Marginalnost je stanje uma definirano rasponom i odabirom faktora te važnošću koja se pridaje svakom faktoru. U slučaju Kantona Jura valja istaknuti njegov položaj unutar Švicarske, teškoće u prometnoj dostupnosti te činjenicu da na području Kantona ne postoje savezne agencije (državne tvrtke). SWOT-analiza omogućuje diferenciranu sliku jer su snage, slabosti, prilike i prijetnje prisutne svugdje. Iako decentralizirani švicarski politički sustav omogućuje fleksibilnost i samostalnost na svim razinama, stvarajući prilike političarima, poduzetnicima i običnim građanima, neupitna je činjenica da je Kanton Jura marginalna regija.

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**Walter Leimgruber**, Emeritus Professor  
University of Fribourg/CH  
Department of Geosciences, Geography  
4, chemin du Musée  
CH-1700 Fribourg, Switzerland  
walter.leimgruber@unifr.ch