SOCIAL SCIENTISTS representing various disciplines have often emphasized the theoretical and practical importance of values. They are considered as one of the important focal points for the integration of human personalities, and hence the determinant of many specific attitudes and behavior patterns (see, for example, Kluckhohn, 1962; Kohn, 1969; Means, 1969: 19–74; Rokeach, 1968, 1973; Smith, 1969: 97–116). For instance, research has indicated that values are related to opinions on major social issues such as civil rights, foreign policy, and social protest (Jeffries and Tygart, 1974; Smith, 1947; Rokeach, 1973: 95–164) and to antagonism toward ethnic minorities in the United States (Evans, 1952; Gough, 1951; Jeffries, 1971; Martin and Westie, 1959; Silberstein and Seeman, 1959) and in Switzerland (Jeffries, Schweitzer, and Morris, 1973). Despite these and other indications of the central role of values in structuring social perceptions and behavior, there has been relatively little research pertaining to the general sociological sources of value orientations, or to the relationship between social class and values (Kohn, 1969: 17). Most of the rather limited research on the relation between class and values has dealt with some variation of success or achievement values (see, for example, Della Fave, 1974; Sewell and Shah, 1968).

This paper presents the results of a comparative study of the relationship between social class position and value orientation in samples gathered in cities in Switzerland and the United States. The values under examination in the study consist of four sets of contradictory pairs: extended loyalty-restricted...
loyalty, altruism-egoism, collective responsibility-self reliance, and cooperation-
competition. Social class is indexed, in both countries, by education, occupation
and income.

One of the comparative aims of the present paper is to examine the extent
to which relationships between positions in the class hierarchy and value
orientations are similar or different in two distinct sociocultural settings in
urban areas in the United States and Switzerland. A second aim of the paper is
to summarize the comparative findings of previous research in several Western
industrialized societies pertaining to the relationship between class position and
the values investigated in this study, and on this basis to offer possible expla-
nations as to why given positions in the social class hierarchy are conducive to
an emphasis upon certain value orientations, and a lack of emphasis upon
alternative orientations.

The frame of reference from which this problem is approached involves a
fundamental premise in the logic of social inquiry which suggests that the way
individuals act, think, or generally view the world, and – particularly in the case
of the present study – the values towards which they are generally oriented,
stem in some degree from their location in the social structure. Positions in the
social structure are regarded as sets of daily experiences, life situations, limi-
tations, and interests, out of which individuals construct particular orientations
toward themselves, others, and society at large. When individuals occupy
similar statuses in the social structure, their construction of reality is likely to be
somewhat similar, since the life circumstances which influence the formulation
of their social perceptions are somewhat similar. Conversely, when individuals
occupy different statuses in the social structure, their views on a variety of
topics and issues are likely to be somewhat different. Such is the most general
theoretical perspective which underlies an examination of why particular value
orientations may be associated with particular positions in the system of class
stratification.

Although empirical research pertaining to the relationship between social
class and values is relatively limited, there is abundant evidence supporting the
existence of distinct and dissimilar perceptions and life styles in different social
strata. Position in the hierarchy of classes has been found to be associated with
differences in such diverse aspects of human thought and behavior as types of
mental illness and variations in their treatment, family stability, child rearing
practices, reading habits, sexual behavior, organizational memberships, friend-
ship patterns, average lifetime travel, and political attitudes and participation
(for summaries of pertinent studies, see Broom and Selznick, 1968: 170–177;

Samples and Methodology

Data presented in this study are derived from two samples, one collected
in the United States, the other in Switzerland. The United States’ data derived
from a sample of 283 interviews with white male respondents aged 21 or older