Work remained the principal socializing experience for the common people throughout the nineteenth century. It was central in establishing their self-image, their ambitions, and their patterns of sociability. Yet the late nineteenth century was a period of innovation in life off the job. Wage-earners' forms of recreation and of familial organization were more like those of the propertied classes by 1914 than they had been on the eve of the Commune. Such transformations raise intriguing and potentially far-reaching questions about working-class culture: Was it becoming more privatized and domesticated? To what extent was work becoming more instrumental in the laborer's constellation of values? Do these changes mark an evolution toward embourgeoisement? This chapter documents the palpable but highly uneven changes in private life. Our findings suggest that off-the-job comportment of manual workers, though altering in detail, remained an arena of tension and unfulfilled expectations, not one around which people could build their lives. Modest white-collar employees, on the other hand, were all too eager to build their lives around their leisurely pastimes.

THE LEISURE OF WAGE-EARNERS

Among the reassuring images of the belle époque are the lively boulevards, crowded theaters, and noisy concert halls. But were these forms of commercialized entertainment not reserved for the “new” middle classes, young, unattached men from solidly bourgeois house-
holds, and the more daring members of the propertied classes? Historians have frequently portrayed the decades before World War I as a period of cultural impoverishment for workers. They argue that artisanal traditions, collective festivities, and local celebrations declined in vitality by the late nineteenth century, whereas the newer forms of commercialized leisure did not become part of working-class life until the interwar years. “What seems to be characteristic of the period before the First World War,” writes Michael Marrus, “is the impoverishment of leisure, the sheer lack of things for ordinary people to do with the time they were not working.” He ties this loss to the increased volume of drinking. Peter Stearns finds that wage-earners were slow to formulate new tastes in leisure even as they derived less meaning from their work.¹ We shall see that trends in working-class recreation were less bleak, at least in greater Paris. Indeed, for certain sorts of laborers, recreational activities assumed considerable intensity. For all workers, they were a revealing indication of outlook and aspirations.

Before the quality of off-the-job life can be discussed, we need to know more about the amount and distribution of free time. There was, of course, an unprecedented reduction in the official workday between the Commune and the First World War. Until the 1890s most industries or crafts had days of eleven or twelve hours. By the turn of the century the ten-hour day became by far the most common schedule.² Certain privileged craftsmen, like typographers, attained a nine-hour day by the war.³ Curtailed workdays, did not, however, translate directly into increased leisure time. For one thing, the trajectory between home and work had been lengthening since the mid-nineteenth century in Paris. Any factory could expect to draw workers from several communes by the twentieth century, and it is far from clear that workers were able to benefit from innovations in urban transportation. More significantly, only a minority of laborers worked the “regular” day of official statistics. Fully trained craftsmen were the ones most likely to do so—though not in the dead season. The specialized craft and domestic workers were unlikely to have standard days and weeks of labor. Makers of billfolds told a parliamentary commission that only in the luxury workshops were there regular workdays; being employed by jobbers, as most were, meant “a constant state of layoffs and overwork.” Engravers and makers of metal ornaments worked their help with intensity from Thursday to Saturday and gave them little to do for the rest of the week.⁴ Handicraftsmen contributed to this irregularity by intermingling labor with socializing. Thus, porcelain painters vaunted their freedom: “We may return to work at half past one, two o’clock, or three o’clock; we sing; take a smoke.” Metal polishers did not begin work
before eight o’clock and passed a part of the day at the café.\textsuperscript{5} Domestic labor in the garment trades was notorious for its seasonal instability. Charles Benoist found that in 1890–1891 one seamstress worked three days of four hours, two days of five hours, eight days of six hours, five days of eight hours, seven days of nine hours, twenty-four days of nine and a half hours, ninety-six days of ten hours, three days of ten and a half hours, ten days of eleven hours, thirty days of twelve hours, fifty-nine days of thirteen hours, seven days of fourteen hours, and two days of nineteen hours.\textsuperscript{6} Women in this trade did housework or found other remunerative chores during the slow season. At least these wage-earners could determine from experience what their work schedules would be and set their own pace accordingly. This cannot be said for factory workers. Until the end of the nineteenth century, they had the most unpredictable patterns of work and free time.

Historians are quite familiar with the distinction between “preindustrial” and “industrial” work patterns, but the models are difficult to apply to the realities of factory life in greater Paris in the 1870s and 1880s.\textsuperscript{7} The tempo of labor imposed by the industrial system was characterized by the same successive bouts of overwork and idleness as in cottage industry. This was true for workers at Cail, Farcot, and Gouin, which were among the largest and best-organized plants in the region, all in the most technologically advanced industry, machine-building.\textsuperscript{8} Such factories worked from one order to the next, so that the terms of employment were necessarily irregular. Exacerbating the irregularity was the common managerial practice of prolonging the workday and canceling rest days to fill an order. Once the work was completed at all due speed, massive layoffs and curtailed hours soon followed. Companies apparently competed for contracts on the basis of the ability to fill orders quickly. They entered challenging (and sometimes unrealistic) bids and worked under the threat of heavy fines for lateness.\textsuperscript{9} The police noted the consequence of such practices at the Farcot Machine Company: “In nearly all workrooms, laborers are fired, and the ones who remained are worked day and night.”\textsuperscript{10} Cail furloughed 200 wage-earners in May 1874 but worked the remaining 1,800 overtime and half-day on Sunday. A large order from the Egyptian government in 1873 animated that plant all Saturday night and all day Sunday with no new hands hired. In December 1876, laborers at Cail complained of having had to work four days without sleep.\textsuperscript{11} Ironically, not only a pressing order, but also the absence of new orders impelled managers to work their personnel overtime, so that pending jobs could be finished and shops closed. Thus, in November 1877, Farcot laid off eighty workers and had the rest of his mechanics labor “a part of the night.”\textsuperscript{12} Directors
did try to distribute work more evenly for the most skilled and valuable portion of their personnel, but similar efforts were lacking as far as the mass of laborers were concerned. In all probability, some factory workers accepted such work patterns as natural and inevitable without actively desiring any other. The Parisian police did note, however, that some (perhaps many) workers were troubled by the strains of this tempo but dared not protest or refuse overtime. The need to earn while there was a chance to do so made laborers upset about a temporary reduction of their day from fourteen to twelve hours in the 1870s.13 By the twentieth century, though, factory workers clearly manifested a desire for a more predictable schedule.

Irregularity of work was not at all unique to the machine-building industry. This situation obtained, as well, in the factories that bleached, dyed, and printed fabrics in Puteaux. When orders arrived, laborers worked until late at night and soon found themselves out of jobs.14 This practice explains the seemingly contradictory concerns of the newly formed finishers’ union. It wanted to negotiate longer workdays during the slow season and, at the same time, limit their daily toil to thirteen hours (6:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.) with only half-days on Sundays and holidays.15 Dyers had no more expectation of a routine work week than did mechanics.

A closely related issue was the day of rest. Work on Sunday, often for a full day, was commonplace. The only reservation that the mayor of Puteaux, a factory owner, had with Sunday labor was that his workers might not be able to vote for him.16 In many industries, especially metalworking, Sunday labor was readily accepted because workers took Monday off when they could. “Saint Monday” was a deeply ingrained habit among mechanics, preferred to Sunday rest because it required fewer ceremonies and bourgeois pretenses.17 Machine builders often married on Monday, and efforts by employers to bring workers to the factory by making it a pay day could provoke a strike.18 Saint-Monday was not a tradition for all workers, though, and many labored without a rest all week when there was work or took days off out of sheer exhaustion. Employers made Sunday a pay day, too, to compel attendance.19 In short, breaks in the work week were irregular and often nonexistent.

Monday through Saturday, 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.—this was supposedly the deadening routine of factory life. Some workers would have welcomed such a routine in the 1870s and 1880s. Yet a regime of overwork succeeded by unemployment was more the rule than was an unvarying schedule. There are, however, a few indications—fragmentary, it is true—of a significant reorientation of work routines by the dawn of the twentieth century. Doctor Dubousquet of Saint-Ouen noted in 1889 that working forty-eight or seventy-two
Table IV-1. Patterns of Requests to Hold Weekend Entertainment in Saint-Denis, 1884–1914

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1884–1898</th>
<th>% of Sunday Evening</th>
<th>1900–1914</th>
<th>% of Sunday Evening</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Evening</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Afternoon</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Evening</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Afternoon</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Evening</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


hours without stop, common only a while ago, was no longer so prevalent.20 The agitation for a ten-hour day on the eve of the Exposition of 1900, and the still more massive display of enthusiasm for eight hours in 1906, would have made no sense if the work tempo of the 1870s persisted into the twentieth century. Moreover, the prominence of Monday as a holiday declined. The requests for authorization to hold dances, soirées, and concerts in Saint-Denis show that Monday was still a significant day of leisure in the twentieth century, but not so much as it had been (see table IV-1). Similarly, the programs of the music hall in Puteaux by 1906 were scheduled largely for Saturday and Sunday, with only occasional performances for Monday.21

Several forces seem responsible for the regularization and normalization of work time. New industries, especially automobile and bicycle manufacturing, did not work from one order to the next, but depended on steady consumer demand. A significant number of laborers pressed for a new tempo of work in order to increase earnings and reduce physical strains. Moreover, management became more mindful of productivity and the pace of work. One consequence of this growing concern was a tendency to push workers harder, but a more benign strategy was to moderate fluctuations in work schedule. Employers at a number of plants were happy to capitalize on their workers' desire for an "English week," with a half day on Saturday, as an inducement for them to be present all day Monday.22 Thus, an "industrial" pattern of factory labor took root in greater Paris and won a wide acceptance from workers at the end of the nineteenth century.

Ultimately, statements about the amount of free time in the late nineteenth century need to be highly qualified. The labor patterns of specialized craft workers were not susceptible to reductions in a uniform manner; moreover, the spread of sweated conditions probably lengthened (or at least intensified) their toil. Changes were more dramatic in the industrial suburbs, where shorter days had a greater
impact on leisurely patterns because time off the job became more predictable. In any case, laborers were quite capable of "finding" free time: by engaging in a pleasurable activity most of the night, even after a grueling day at work.

By all accounts, the industrial suburbs comprised the ideal environment to confirm the claims of cultural impoverishment. "When in the evening, working-class trams disgorge their flood of laborers from Paris," proclaimed a priest in the interwar years, "these men have only one resort: the bistro. Neither theater nor cinema." This observer echoed what many others had to say. Few Parisians would have thought of going to Saint-Ouen, Pantin, or Saint-Denis for a good time. The last was a notorious eyesore by the 1880s. The banlieue had the largest families, the poorest ones, the immigrants who were least prepared for urban life. For all this, the poverty of leisure activities in the industrial suburbs before the Great War has been greatly exaggerated. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the residents of the banlieue were as fully accustomed to mass, commercialized recreational activities as people chronically short of cash could be.

Working-class life in the suburbs was drab and often enervating, but it did not exclude an enthusiasm for dancing and opportunities to do so. Numerous were the halls that lasted well into the morning; when musicians put down their instruments at 2 A.M., the revelers often raised the cash for a few more hours' entertainment. In the 1880s the twenty thousand or so adults of Saint-Denis, 70 percent of them wage-earners, did not have to go to Paris to satisfy this passion. Their somber town had twenty dance halls and four cabarets. At least five of the halls catered to single workers. They were dank, narrow rooms; their proximity to boardinghouses or brothels suggested ties to prostitution. The police had suspicions about their owners, who were often foreigners. Most other dance halls, however, were large and perfectly suitable for family attendance, as was the practice among Parisian craftsmen. A sign of the vitality of this recreation was that a former director of the famed Moulin de la Galette in Montmartre opened an elaborate hall on the rue Saint-Rémy in 1886. During the last decade of the century, café owners added Sunday afternoon concerts in order to attract families. A domestication of the dance hall was in progress, for the morally dubious ones disappeared, and open-air dance halls in bucolic settings appeared. With the normalization of Sunday holidays in factory work, they served more than ever as a setting for family recreation.

Though factory laborers lacked the reputation for taste and flair that luxury craftsmen had, they were by no means ignorant of the
From the 1890s, municipal councils strove to save residents the trouble and expense of traveling to Paris to satisfy their need for diversion by bringing theater to their towns.\textsuperscript{28} The alderman of Boulogne-sur-Seine began constructing a 925-seat theater in 1894.\textsuperscript{29} The municipal council of Puteaux bought a 427-seat theater in 1896 and leased it to an impresario for nearly 2,700 francs a year at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{30} The government of Levallois-Perret built a commodious meeting hall intended for mass meetings and commercial spectacles.\textsuperscript{31} The most ambitious public project of this nature was the Theater of Saint-Denis. Ready for use in 1900, it had 1,284 seats and a stage of 266 meters. Following the vicissitudes of this facility is an instructive endeavor. It demonstrates not only the undeniable enthusiasm of the industrial population for commercial spectacle, but also its changing tastes.

The councilmen who voted funds for the theater were accused of being out of touch with the electors and unrealistically intent on moral uplift. In fact, these officials did not have to worry about building a theater for an audience that did not exist. Their project began as a success. In 1900 they leased their building to an impresario who contracted to bring the riches of the Parisian stage to this suburb. He intended to present not only the current successes like \textit{Le Voyage de Suzette}, \textit{L'Arlésienne}, and \textit{Cyrano de Bergerac}, but also comic opera, and even grand opera. Upon the classical repertory the director decided to draw with restraint, given the unschooled tastes of his potential audience. The final contract (signed in April 1901) called for a full, seven-month season. There were to be performances on Saturday and Sunday of every week, one on holidays, and occasional Thursday matinees, to which schoolchildren would be admitted free. The price of tickets was roughly between a fifth and an eighth of daily wages: 2 francs and 1.5 francs for reserved seats, and less desirable places for 75 and 50 centimes.\textsuperscript{32}

The councilors' claims that there was a demand for theater proved justified. For nearly three years, it ran much to their satisfaction and that of the impresario. Audiences were large enough to cover the cost of the lease and ensure a profit. However, in 1904, a “Casino-Music Hall” opened on the rue de Paris, and soon the municipal theater was in financial trouble. The aldermen saw that “the more the vogue of the Casino-Music Hall takes shape, the more our theater declines.” One director after another took a chance on reviving dramatic productions in Saint-Denis only to beg to be released from the contract. The problem was not that demand was insufficient for two commercial operations; it was, rather, that the workers preferred lively music hall programs.\textsuperscript{33}
The Casino quickly became a dynamic success. Tickets sold at the same price as those of the theater, and the auditorium, which had at least seven hundred seats, was often filled. In favoring Casino over theater the populace of Saint-Denis was satisfying a desire for excitement, variety, and fast-paced distraction. A play had appeal, but following the plot took much concentration, and workers may have found it hard to relate to the story line or to the dominant sentimentality. The typical performance at the Casino—a succession of singers, performing animals, acrobats, and dancers—had the variety and glamour they preferred.

Historians have often associated music halls with the middle classes of great metropolises; the entertainment supposedly mirrored the pace of life in a great city. Yet it is no less the case that the Casino struck a responsive chord amid an industrial population in a somber factory town. The kinds of spectacle that the Casino presented, in fact, had roots in traditions of street entertainment. The acts were not new, but the setting and presentation were.

Ultimately, one music hall did not satisfy the demand for this sort of pastime. The municipal theater returned to solvency only after it adopted a variety program accompanied by cinematic presentations. Moreover, a new “Cinema-Casino” opened in 1910. Thus, the population of Saint-Denis and neighboring communes came to support enough variety entertainment for workers to have a genuine choice.

The audience streamed to the showcases in their holiday outfits. Though their clothes may frequently have borne marks of wear and mending, the spectators still sought stately surroundings that transported them into a fictive world of excitement. The Casino used some of its profits to refurbish in a more elegant manner. The new Cinema-Casino pleased its clientele with its glowing electrical marquee. Customers came to shows with families, so if performances touched on the risqué, there were loud complaints. The director of the Casino had to adopt a policy of making programs suitable for mothers and children.

The populace of Saint-Denis (Dionysiens) obviously expected to see singers, acrobats, and dancers in order to escape the dreariness of everyday life in a setting that removed them momentarily from their factory world. Perhaps, in this sense, the flourishing of commercial leisure did represent a step toward what Joffre Dumazedier calls the “leisure-centered society,” in which people identify themselves more in terms of their leisure than of their work. However, it was a small and ambiguous step. Their money and applause did not only go for a pure and mindless escapism. Performances that
included doses of "realism" and specifically working-class commentary enjoyed considerable success—enough to make profit-oriented theater owners cater to this interest.

A taste for the artistic presentation of social issues roughly followed the ebb and flow of class confrontation in greater Paris. In 1903, in the midst of an important strike wave in the machine-building industries, the municipal theater at Saint-Denis interrupted its routine of fashionable melodramas with a play based on Zola's *Germinal*.\(^{41}\) The apogee of popularity for social commentary also accompanied the culmination of industrial protest, 1906–1908. During the massive general strike for the eight-hour day in May 1906 the theater once again presented *Germinal*, and the Casino offered its series of "artistic propagandists." Appearing in November was Maurice Lecoeur, whose program proclaimed that "misery, prostitution, crime, alcoholism, madness, and tuberculosis were nothing but the consequences of faulty social organization."\(^{42}\) His performance attracted enough attention to justify an extended run. Sensing the public's support for such material, the directors of the Casino saw fit to include "realistic" songs and monologues along with the usual jugglers and dog acts. The effort to give audiences what they wanted was making the Casino into what the Socialist press called "a school for propaganda for the development of generous and humane ideas."\(^{43}\)

The Socialist singer Gaston Montéhus was the headliner for this sort of performance. His highly sentimental pieces were based on the dichotomy between the wealthy few and the miserable masses. Though they lacked a specific call to insurrection, "all belongs to the worker" was a frequent refrain.\(^{44}\) Montéhus interrupted his act with a collection for strikers or a drawing to raise money for victims of work accidents. The Socialist press continually reported on the warm receptions Montéhus received from the audiences. What lends veracity to these reports is his numerous return engagements at the Casino. He appeared in March 1906 for the first time; again, in January and April 1907, and in January the next year. Then, not again until 1910, a year of considerable labor unrest, did Montéhus grace the Casino.\(^{45}\) Clearly, workers of Saint-Denis were prepared to be moved, thrilled, and entertained in a number of ways, and this included poignant presentations of a world with which they were all too familiar. At moments of heightened antagonism, such spectacle was a useful emotional release.

Even three theaters for live performance did not fully satisfy the Dionysiens' passion for commercial spectacle. Cinema became popular, though not quite so much as vaudeville. The first request to hold a cinematic presentation in Saint-Denis came in 1896, and within four years, such showings were commonplace.\(^{46}\) The municipal
theater began to present films to fill its large hall in 1907, and the Casino-Cinema increased the richness of choice. Despite lower prices for films than for music hall—the most expensive ticket was 1.25 francs, and children paid only 20 centimes for a matinee—cinema remained secondary to variety. Cinema did not have its own showcase in Saint-Denis until 1910, and films were presented less often (usually Thursday afternoon and evening). It may have been that adults preferred the live entertainment, and youths craved films. One working-class boy recorded that, when he finished school, took a job, and first had pocket money, his greatest pleasure was to attend the cinema.47 Whereas the novelty and glitter of singers and acrobats may have delighted parents, the film attracted youths through its semblance of reality and through action.

A noteworthy comment on the breadth of enthusiasm for commercialized leisure was that the first facility devoted exclusively to film opened in the quarter of La Plaine, one of the poorest sections of Saint-Denis.48 This district was a refuge for large families and for laborers with few skills. Its acutely high rate of communicable diseases revealed the hygienic inadequacies and squalor. Yet an entrepreneur thought it worthwhile to open a “stylish” hall and show films Saturday through Monday. Thus La Plaine, not yet endowed with a proper supply of safe water, now had a worldly night life.

The music halls and cinemas did not exhaust the recreational choices available to the residents of Saint-Denis in the first decade of the new century. Outdoor concerts were a regular Sunday afternoon feature by 1900. A circus put on several performances every year, and there were some boxing matches.49 A particularly successful addition to the recreational options was a nearby amusement park, the Butte Pinson, which opened in 1908. Containing “all sort of distractions and games,” it became a diverting variation on the traditional Sunday outing.50 Thus even this activity was being transformed into commercialized recreation.

Explaining the laborers’ tastes for these diversions is easier than accounting for the money they were able to devote to support theaters, music halls, cinemas, and amusement parks. Of course, it is no accident that these leisure institutions appeared as the suburbs began to grow more rapidly than the capital; a large mass of potential consumers was a prerequisite for such entrepreneurial activity. Nor was it coincidental that commercial leisure expanded with the high-paying machine-building industry, especially automobiles. This trade brought to suburban towns a substantial number of laborers who earned craftsmen’s wages, eighty centimes an hour and even a franc. Mechanics who were single or had small families undoubtedly comprised the core of audiences. The aged or unskilled laborers with
large families may never have been inside the Casino. As for the bulk of the population between these two extremes, we must imagine that their budgets rarely permitted expenditures on diversion. Nonetheless, it is wholly likely that these workers and their families "found" discretionary income in the same way that they "made" leisure time—through sacrifice. The turner who made seven francs a day ate if he earned only five; a working mother added still more hours of stitching to her impossible schedule. The richness of recreational life in an industrial town like Saint-Denis demonstrates that workers gave such diversion some priority.

When workers spent their limited funds on spectacle, they did not neglect youngsters. The commercial leisure was meant to be a family activity. As such, cinema, variety, and even the dance hall helped to mold the family into a unit of recreation and leisure. No wonder, then, that charity administrators in Ivry found that children were using the new clothes they were given for wear at school as their Sunday outfits. Youngsters took advantage of the new recreational institutions to elaborate their play-world. The Thursday school break quickly became a time for movie matinees. So much of an acquired right had it become that youngsters in Saint-Denis reportedly staged a sizable protest against parents who refused to give their children the twenty centimes for the film. The protesters' cries of "Film! Film! Film!" marked a new obligation that parents were to assume—perhaps even if they could not truly afford it. The recreational luxuries of one generation quickly became necessities for the next.

Physical activity and competitive gamesmanship took their places beside show-business spectacles as leisurely forms that the working population sought. The taste for sport was quite clear in Puteaux, the "nursery of the automobile industry." Up to the 1890s, the annual communal festivals were celebrated with fireworks, musical concerts, and games of chance. By the new century, planned activities centered around physical competition: footracing, cycling, marksmanship, and gymnastics. The town council of Ivry subsidized at least seven athletic clubs by 1903. Some youths in this working-class ghetto sought to capture the sports-minded glamour of the English aristocracy by joining the "Athletic Club." Despite the prohibitive cost of acquiring a bicycle, the practice of cycling had somehow reached the mass of working people. The proportion of twenty-year-old recruits who could ride attained 25 percent in Pantin and 58 percent in Puteaux. Ball games were, perhaps, less popular because playing fields were few, and parents, fearing injuries, discouraged participation. A local championship match in soccer attracted only two hundred people in 1910, a poor crowd by the standards of the Casino.
factory youths had sports as recreational alternatives to film and stage presentations.

The new commercialized and physical pastimes were not only exceedingly popular; they also had the approval of the leading social critics of the industrial towns, the militant Socialists. These public figures did not call for an autonomous working-class culture. Far from regarding these leisure activities as possible opiates of the masses, Socialist spokesmen vociferously championed them, even the profit-making ventures. They praised the recreational choices as useful and richly deserved rewards for the laboring people. Thus, the editors of *Emancipation*, in Saint-Denis, did not see the Butte Pinson amusement park as a wasteful way to separate a worker from his earnings; rather, they regarded it as a delightful opportunity for the poor to find some of the pleasures that their exploiters derived from holidays by the sea. They publicized the Casino as if it were a Socialist institution, and not only when performers like Lecoeur or Montéhus appeared.58 The Socialist journalists greeted the normal fare of jugglers, acrobats, and animal acts warmly too.

Sports shared in the Socialists' wholehearted approval of mass leisure. By 1910, all the larger communes of the industrial suburbs had soccer associations, which were intertwined with the political youth groups. *L'Emancipation* instructed mothers on how to make uniforms for the communal team: black jerseys with red stars.59 During the first decade of the twentieth century, the editors of the *Courrier socialiste* of Saint-Ouen tacitly (and probably unconsciously) modified their conception of appropriate pastimes for Socialists. When the journal first appeared in 1903, study groups and lectures received much attention and support in its columns. Six years later, “Sports” became a regular feature, and the educational endeavors went all but unmentioned.60

The militants would have been naive in their support of the new recreation if sports and spectacle were serving as effective channels for integrating the laboring population in the bourgeois social order. However, class distinctions quickly penetrated into leisure institutions. Merchants and employers minimized interclass contacts by attending the Casino on Friday night, whereas workers attended on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays.61 Youths generally developed sporting groups based on class.62 Moreover, the Socialists seemed to have understood that workers could be just as sensitive to inequities in leisure as to those at work or in the home. The subtle ways in which commercialized leisure validated the social order seemed minor in comparison.

The rise of the new institutions of leisure would simply have been a matter of enhanced local color if they did not reflect deeply
rooted social and cultural trends. Music halls, cinemas, and theaters appeared because the population of the industrial suburbs was growing rapidly, industries that paid relatively well flourished, and because the free time of factory workers was more regular and predictable. Workers could organize their leisure and, to some extent, mold it to their needs. The gymnasts, animal trainers, and singers who filled some of this free time had long been familiar spectacles, but in informal settings. Entertainment was being privatized: marketplaces and fairs were replaced by glamorous showcases; crowds became audiences. With this shift, the family, not the community, was the principal unit comprising the audience. Finally, it is evident that the expansion of leisure activities compares favorably with the growth of other consumer markets in the suburban towns. Spending on recreation obviously had some priority among workers. Their visits to the Casino, the Cino-Pathé, or the Butte Pinson surely expressed powerful aspirations for a fuller life.

The history of Carnival celebration in nineteenth-century Paris gives some credence to the argument of cultural impoverishment for the craft workers of the capital. The exuberance and bawdiness of the popular festivities disappeared in the second half of the nineteenth century, replaced by a carefully regulated event, orchestrated from above. Is this change symbolic of a more general collapse of artisanal and communal recreation? The limited evidence available cautions against exaggerating the decline of trade sociability. Parisian craftsmen proved to be remarkably successful in preserving traditional forms of diversion, even as they were slow to adopt new ones. Craft sociability and collective play were possibly more resistant to change than were production processes and occupational inheritance patterns. The drinking ceremonials whereby workers received newly hired comrades, the “quand-est-ce,” long remained an important source of solidarity. The new worker had to buy a round of drinks for his comrades and thereby won the right to be called “Mon Vieux.” This rite survived quite well, at least up to the war, and claims for its deterioration may have been based largely on nostalgia. Some observers thought that the poorest-paid wage-earners, like nail makers, could not afford the custom, but the “quand-est-ce” managed to survive in seemingly unlikely circumstances. When one Parisian youth entered the assembly shop of a shoe factory in the Thirteenth Arrondissement during World War I, he found that the specialized cobbler “retained the spirit and playfulness of yesterday.” The “quand-est-ce” was very much alive and so, unfortunately for the youth, were other ordeals to which craftsmen subjected newcomers. One such ceremony was the “passage of the glue,”
in which workers wrestled the initiate to the ground, opened his pants, and poured glue into his rectum. The youth in question was several times the victim of this prank. Another amusement entailed pulling the stool out from under a worker who was about to be seated. All this transpired within a factory, among workers who rarely inherited crafts, and in a trade supposedly under the immediate threat of mechanization. These rituals nonetheless preserved the bawdiness and vulgarity of traditional Carnival.68

The most cherished of family recreations, the outing to the countryside for a drink, a picnic, or a meal, remained a source of relaxation and renewal. It has been suggested that the growth and annexation of the villages surrounding the capital and the industrialization of the banlieue severely curtailed such excursions, but this contention is exaggerated.69 The carpenter who found enough greenery in Ivry, amid the machine-building and chemical plants, to enjoy a Sunday picnic with his family was surely typical.70 Even the most developed industrial town of the suburbs, Saint-Denis, still had stretches of verdure in the twentieth century.71 To many residents of Belleville before the war, Sunday continued to have only one meaning, to take their families to the banlieue.72

The leisure of working-class women was, likewise, more a matter of stability than of deterioration; and arguably, even a matter of enrichment. Most wives integrated socializing with daily chores. As such, the market and the laundry were privileged centers of feminine gregariousness.73 Women who may have left their neighborhood shops and ventured into the commercial districts of the central city would have found their pleasure enhanced by the unaccustomed variety and quality of goods. Window-shopping was an activity that was accessible. It is, likewise, difficult to see why the traditional recreation of working women should have deteriorated more than that of shoemakers. Jeanne Bouvier, a seamstress, described the talk that took place in workshops about sensational events and about serial novels.74 The dissemination and cheapening of the mass press would only have complemented such interests.

Theater had deep roots in popular entertainment, and many Parisian workers had special affection for this activity. In 1872 the police commissioner of Belleville noted that "the taste for theater could not be more widespread among the workers, who do not deprive themselves of it at any time, not even in difficult moments."75 Another police agent made a more qualified assessment, attributing a passion for the stage to the craftsmen in the artistic trades, whose work demanded refinement and a display of elegance.76 Both were correct; it was a matter of degree. Crafts seemed to have been decisive channels for communicating an interest in the theater, and
artisans often explained its appeal as a matter of corporate heritage. The laborers in luxury trades which had high levels of literacy as well as artistic pretensions made theater a frequent activity. Porcelain painters, for example, pointed to their love for stage performances as a sign of their respectability. Mechanics considered their partiality for theater as an accompaniment to their technical learning. Tailors had a reputation for voracious reading and for attending performances frequently. Luckily for them, cheap and even free tickets were widely available. At the same time, less refined workers would attend the theater on special occasions. When the seamstress Jeanne Bouvier was hired by a leading fashion house and earned five francs a day, she treated herself to an occasional visit to the Opéra-Comique. That was thought to be a special pleasure for wives and daughters.

Perhaps no aspect of workers’ traditional off-the-job life was the subject of so much public discussion and hand-wringing at the end of the nineteenth century as drinking. The source of anxiety was the increased consumption of distilled liquor, especially absinthe. On a per capita basis, the use of such liquors nearly tripled between 1860 and 1900. Apprehension was not simply a matter of class antipathy; militant Socialists were concerned about the level of intoxication among fellow wage-earners. The New Year’s wishes for one Socialist editor in 1905 were for workers to unionize, join the Free-Thinkers’ Circle, and keep away from aperitifs. Employers were joined by friends of working people in claiming that the best-paid laborers were most inclined toward overindulgence. On the surface, links might seem to exist between drinking and a deteriorating artisanal culture, but other interpretations are more plausible. Henri Leyret, a journalist who posed as a publican to study working-class culture in Belleville during the 1890s, reported that the vast majority of wage-earners drank because they came to the pub, and they came more for sociability than for drink. It was the one place they felt comfortable; indeed, workers chose their cafés with care so that they were at their ease. Moreover, the workshop economy of the capital and the culture of craftsmen endowed cafés with a multiplicity of functions beside drinking. They were places for being paid and seeking work, among other activities. Pub culture, which remained rich by all reports, was an enhancement of workers’ leisure life, not a sign of its deterioration.

What characterized the free time of Parisian craftsmen in the late nineteenth century was not so much its impoverishment as its stability in the face of widening options. Crafts remained an important conduit of sociable traditions even though they weakened as communities and fewer people inherited their occupations from their
parents. Artisans held tenaciously to their recreational forms and seemed hesitant to adopt new leisurely activities. Our impression—and in view of the paucity of testimony, it must be a speculative one—is that the Parisian hand workers did not display the same intensity of enthusiasm for commercialized entertainment as did their peers in the factories. Their budgets showed little more than de- 
soratory sums spent on commercial spectacle. One worker who in-
stalled shutters, a well-paying job, devoted his free time to visiting 
friends, reading newspapers, and taking walks. Even a foreman 
locksmith never seemed to have the money for film or music hall. 
Nor were the elite craftsmen notably active in reshaping patterns of 
work and free time. It was the laborers in the automobile and large 
machine-assembly plants who wished for an English week, with a 
half-day on Saturday, whereas the mechanics in the smaller shops 
remained faithful to their craft tradition of Saint-Monday. The sec-
retary of the Mechanics' Union on the eve of the war contrasted the 
attitudes of machinists in the smaller shops, who were only moder-
ately enthusiastic about the issue of expanded leisure, with the as-
pirations of workers in the large plants, who went so far as to accept 
lower earnings in exchange for more free time. The handicrafts 
workers of Paris remained intent upon building their lives around 
their work and its associated pleasures.

WAGE-EARNERS' FAMILY LIFE

When a Parisian shawl weaver and his wife were in painful financial 
straits, they sent their young son to live with his maternal grand-
father. Soon the parents ceased to have more than superficial con-
tacts with the boy, and the grandfather became the permanent guard-
ian. Such shifting of working-class children from one household to 
another was a common phenomenon and raises important questions 
about the quality of domestic relations. The Prefecture of the Seine 
found just how common the practice was by creating a Service for 
Morally Abandoned Children in 1880. The original purpose of this 
new welfare institution was to assume the guardianship of young 
vagrants and delinquents if parents proved too corrupt or ineffectual 
to serve in that capacity. The service soon came to fulfill an entirely 
different purpose, however; poor parents began to turn their children 
over to the service, tainted though it was by an aura of criminality. 
By 1886, nearly half of the youngsters under the care of the service 
had been given up by their parents. With seven to nine hundred 
arriving in this manner each year, the service was virtually a sort of
foundling home for legitimate children beyond infancy. These examples seem to support Lawrence Stone's contention that the working-class family was "often indifferent, cruel, erratic, and unpredictable." Yet the examples do have an ambiguous quality that prevents us from distinguishing measures of callousness from reactions to hardship. The history of the service also provides a useful illustration of that ambiguity. In 1887 a scandal over the mistreatment of some youngsters in one of the homes received wide press coverage. The number of children remitted to the service immediately plummeted by half and parents reclaimed about a fifth of the youngsters. This incident not only places parents' intentions in a more benevolent light but points to a central problem of all such evidence: It stops short of clarifying how family members understood their domestic relations.

Guidance through the ambiguous history of the nineteenth-century working-class family—a field in which finding evidence, interpreting it, and generalizing from it all pose particularly delicate problems—comes from two influential models. According to one perspective, the working-class household "familialized" at the end of the century. Proponents of this view believe that there was a growth and deepening of affective relationships and that dependents' needs and individuality received more recognition. Thus relationships that had triumphed among the propertied classes by the end of the eighteenth century presumably reached the urban masses a century or so later. For Alain Corbin, the growing apathy of Parisian workers for mercenary sex at the bordello signified a new taste for domesticity. In the opinion of Peter Stearns, a greater home-centeredness was the consequence of a work life that was becoming ever less meaningful. Whether consciously or not, some historians apply this model in a banal form, asserting that rising living standards and more security removed the sharp edges from family life. The general thrust of the "familialization" argument is to suggest that workers were becoming more integrated into the existing social order. Easily as influential as this perspective is the functional viewpoint, which insists on more continuity than change down to the Great War. This alternative vision emphasizes the strict family discipline, rooted in tight material conditions, which generally overruled affective behavior. Ultimately, this latter model bears the weight of evidence better, but "familialization" proves more suitable for posing questions about family life and points toward potential areas of structural change.

The necessary starting point for all studies of the working-class family in the nineteenth century, and an aspect that both models slight, is the emotional vitality that characterized most households.
Octave Gréard, the superintendent of education in the 1870s, observed among his pupils a powerful "love of family," and abundant evidence shows that members thought of the family primarily as a unit of affection.98 René Michaud, the son of an impoverished widow of the Thirteenth Arrondissement at the turn of the century, easily perceived behind his mother's gruff gestures the deep wellspring of concern for him.99 Amédée Domat's mother, a charwoman with eight children (surviving from fifteen births), imparted to her offspring the certainty of being loved and even found time to supervise their homework.100 The parental obligation to sacrifice for children was accepted and went beyond providing the bare necessities. When doctors asked one poor couple why they did not have more children, since charities would supply food and clothing, the parents objected that it would not be possible to provide five or six children with basics and with "a few pleasures" beyond them.101 These doctors discovered in one needy household that parents and older children slept on the floor while the youngest members had use of the single bed in their dwelling.102

Advocates of the "familialization" model see such emotional vitality as appearing or solidifying at the end of the nineteenth century, but there is excellent evidence that it existed decades earlier. Exceptionally rich documents on Parisian working-class domestic life from the middle of the century, the records of the Orphanage of the Prince Imperial, assure us that powerful affection was central to the wage-earning family before the Commune. The orphanage placed young sons of deceased workers in foster homes headed by close relatives and periodically investigated how they were treated.103 Emerging from the notes and reports of the inspectors were households with deep emotional bases, in which children were far more than resources for the family purse. Foster mothers worked furiously to maintain an aura of respectability in the household and usually succeeded despite the stench of poverty. The children's schooling and medical care provided numerous occasions for parents to sacrifice their own meager resources, and this was done. Parents were sensitive to youngsters' favorite foods and games and were happy to offer them these simple pleasures. The child's sense of well-being at home was such that employers had to complain about apprentices returning home at the slightest application of discipline.

If we seek to understand how this emotional vitality manifested itself, all the evidence draws us to the focal role of the mother in the working-class household. She guaranteed a critical minimum of nurturing and often a good deal more.104 As the center of a tightly bonded group, she inspired closeness among siblings so that the family had a chance to survive in the case of her death.105 The moth-
er's ascendency was based not on the father's degradation, but rather on his distance from the everyday concerns of the household. The son of one day laborer did not think his father cruel or aloof, but his long hours of work and a pub-centered sociability kept him out of touch. The bronze assembler who left home at 5:30 each morning and finished work at 8 P.M. was in similar circumstances. The work schedule of males and the culturally ascribed roles for women resulted in sharp specialization in activities, and mothers assumed most responsibilities for managing the family. The records concerning the Municipal Apprentices, adolescents who won cash awards from the city to support vocational training, testify to the shallow involvement of father in family concerns. Even when boys had problems at work, it was the mother who addressed the difficulty. Only when mothers suffered physical and verbal abuse from the son's boss did the husband intervene, and sometimes not even then. There is evidence that children were hurt or disappointed by their fathers' distance even if they understood it as inevitable.

For none of these features of working-class domesticity is it necessary to draw major distinctions among skilled and unskilled laborers, craftsmen, service laborers, and factory workers. The sources point to a fairly uniform culture of the family that transcended these divisions in greater Paris. The general features of family relations in the household of Amédée Domat, son of a day laborer, differed little from that of Gaston Lucas, a foreman locksmith. About a third of the stepparents of Imperial Orphans was unskilled laborers, and it is impossible to find significant differences between these parents and the skilled ones. The industrial suburbs were home to many refugees from regions with strong traditions of child labor. Yet their acceptance of new modes of childrearing and adjustment to them must have been quite rapid. As unskilled laborers spilled into the suburbs before the Ferry laws on education, the result was not a surge of laboring youngsters but rather a drastic shortage of places in public school; nearly 3,500 fewer places than children requesting enrollment in the Arrondissement of Sceaux (southern banlieue) by 1877. Saint-Denis had 4,062 pupils in 1876 but only 91 school-age children (69 boys and 22 girls) working in the industries of the town. Moreover, parents and children took school attendance seriously. During the first year of compulsory education (1882), the scholastic commission of Saint-Denis had to investigate only 11 cases of prolonged absence at one primary school which had an enrollment of 460. Whether or not the immigrant workers came to the banlieue with a commitment to keeping children in school, they soon conformed to prevailing practices in the capital.

Given the longstanding role of the mother as the emotional focus
of working-class households, the "familialization" thesis means nothing if it does not bear on the domestication of husbands. In this regard, it is desirable to examine the observation of Henri Leyret, a student of working-class life in Belleville of the 1890s. Leyret believed that "the workingman's love for his children borders on being an obsession," for which he was willing to make endless sacrifices. Was this simply a matter of the father being a distant but faithful provider, or was Leyret commenting on men who had become more engrossed than ever before in the daily functioning of their families? Literary sources fail to shed sufficient light on the question, but demographic analysis offers the possibility of gauging the changing emotional foundations of the working-class family. Patterns of births and deaths altered dramatically during the four decades before the war—because parents took deliberate action. The mechanics of this change provide insights into the dynamics of family life.

For twenty-five years after the Commune, infant mortality in greater Paris was among the highest in France, especially if the children sent out to nurse are counted. On the other hand, births were only marginally controlled once stable households were formed. During the 1870s and 1880s, crude birth rates were in the range of 35 to 40 per thousand in the working-class quarters and for the industrial suburbs. These were similar to rates in the textile towns of the Nord at the same time or of France on the eve of the Great Revolution. If the average household was, nonetheless, small, the size was the result of the large number of young couples, the sterility induced by medical problems, the transfer of children to smaller families, and, of course, mortality. In 1906, well after infant mortality had begun its dramatic decline, a third of all married couples had buried at least one child. This is not to say that parents lacked a material incentive to control births. The majority of married men aged forty-five to forty-nine had at least three children at home (see table IV-2). Need was the inevitable price of high fertility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>17.7 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>41.7 24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>64.0 49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>81.1 71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>91.5 86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>96.6 95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>99.0 98.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+</td>
<td>100.0 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A.M. Saint-Denis, F, 3/50/1.

* All married couples.

b Married couples with husband 45–49 years old.
Figure IV-1. Fertility Levels (Births per 1,000 Females ages 15–44) in Various Quarters of Paris and Suburban Towns, 1880–1912
Sources: Préfecture de la Seine, Annuaire statistique de la ville de Paris for 1880–1912; A.D.S., D 1 M6 no. 2.

If “familialization” were more than just a theory, one would expect a gradually declining fertility rate as parents increasingly recognized the individuality of each child and sought to devote resources to their offspring—or at least to keep them alive. In fact, the demographic transition in greater Paris occurred in a quite different manner among wage-earning families (see figure IV-1). Irreversible declines in the fertility rate in the overwhelmingly working-class quarters like Père-Lachaise (Twentieth Arrondissement), La Villette (Nineteenth), Javel (Fifteenth), and industrial towns like Saint-Ouen occurred suddenly and only just before the turn of the century. The contrast is clear with quarters that experienced an influx of white-collar and petty-bourgeois couples, like Sainte-Marguerite (Elev-
enth) and Clignancourt (Eighteenth). There, fertility dropped with the building of commodious housing in prime locations. Once the descent began in the working-class ghettos, it proceeded rapidly: 30 percent between 1901 and 1912 in the quintessential residence of craftsmen, Père-Lachaise; 33 percent in Javel, a quarter with many construction workers and metalworkers; 25 percent in Pantin, the home of many day laborers. The result of this family limitation was a distinct narrowing of the reproductive differences among white-collar, petty-bourgeois, and working-class families by the time of the Great War. There was not a gradual infusion of the will to plan families with care; control of births among workers arrived with the suddenness of a command.

The timing of the decline of working-class fertility leaves little doubt about its cause or about the parent most responsible for it. Workers had significantly fewer children after infant mortality commenced its dramatic fall. Control of births constituted an adjustment
to a new family situation, which was the accomplishment of the working-class mother. Medical elites may have provided the institutional support for the women's lifesaving concerns; but ultimately mothers had to seek out and act upon scientific advances—and they did. Infant mortality rates dropped about 20 percent between 1896 and 1900 in ghettos like Père-Lachaise and Saint-Ouen. It seems highly probable that before the drop in infant deaths husbands had been more resistant than wives to contraceptive practices. As a result of their spouses' efforts to save their children, fathers had to adapt. Ultimately, they may have done more than adapt; once planning was employed in earnest, parents may possibly have revised and lowered their target family size.

The dynamics of the working-class family were substantially transformed at the dawn of the twentieth century. Parents came to expect individual children to live, had fewer of them, and conserved their emotional and financial resources for these few. It is not the classic case of working-class parents gradually coming to assume new obligations toward their offspring as middle-class models of domesticity filtered downward. Instead, mothers were finally able to act upon traditional attachments to their children, and, in doing so, they imposed new modes of behavior on their husbands. The fall in fertility did not necessarily signify an entirely new emotional basis for the father in the working-class household. Arguably, though, it prepared the way for a new closeness that had not characterized the father's position before the end of the century.

Just as the new demographic realities were altering the situation of young children, parents had to countenance the changing social position of their adolescents. The traditional role of youth, participating in the family economy, was becoming more problematical. This situation offers another test of the familialization perspective, which postulates a growing acceptance of youth's individuality within the family. Once again, the model fails to convince, for rising tensions, even despair, seemed to characterize relations between parents and their maturing children in the decade or two before the Great War.

Parisian mothers traditionally used their emotional ascendency over children to socialize them to dependence and submissiveness. These working-class mothers of Paris did not instill patterns of highly self-reliant and aggressive behavior which poor parents in other parts of the world sought to impart. Parisian parents wished their children to form their identities as entirely as possible within the family. Thus, when a cobbler and his wife learned that ruffians at public school were taking their son's lunch, they did not encourage con-
frontation, but rather placed the child in a parochial school.\textsuperscript{124} Mothers catered to a child’s delicate health or temperamental weakness. They viewed the city of Paris not as an arena with which their children would have to learn to cope but rather as a harsh and threatening environment that might easily overwhelm them. Gone entirely by the mid-nineteenth century was the familiarity with street life that had been so much a part of popular culture in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{125} A child’s inevitable play on the street was a source of anxiety for parents; to raise them outside Paris was considered an action of incalculable moral benefit. The mothers of the Imperial Orphans were fearful even of night schools, which they blamed for generating all sorts of dangerous contacts.\textsuperscript{126} Such anxieties explain the favor that Catholic children’s clubs (\textit{patronages}) held for nonpracticing parents.\textsuperscript{127} Fending for oneself was not a way of life these working-class parents wished to inculcate.

In a similar manner, working-class parents were reluctant to envision their children as independent individuals with an existence outside the family. Parents of the Municipal Apprentices, working-class youths who won several hundred francs for their exemplary behavior in school and for their vocational promise, found that their notions of family obligations put them in conflict with public officials. The administrators of the award regarded the prize money as the personal possession of the youths; it was to be saved for their majorities. The parents of the apprentices, however, could not help thinking of the sum as a safety net for family emergencies. Almost inevitably, administrators received requests for advances on the prize money. Such requests were not made for trivial reasons; they followed periods of unemployment or illness of family members. Yet these emergencies did not concern the interests of the young apprentices directly. As one administrator complained, “These parents refuse to acknowledge that the money is meant for the prize winners.”\textsuperscript{128}

If maintaining their adolescents’ identity within the family was a moral good and a financial necessity to working-class parents, doing so became more problematical in the decade before the Great War. There are compelling signs—indirect, it is true, but an abundance of them—of a crisis of sorts surrounding the raising of adolescents. Though there was not a generalized revolt against parental authority and against family obligations, parents did exhibit anxiety over the relations between generations. A simultaneous increase in youths’ financial dependence and their demands for more personal autonomy were at the roots of parental discomfort. As a result of compulsory schooling, laws intended to discourage child labor, the dearth of apprenticeships, and machine production, youths spent a longer time
outside of the labor force. In Ivry in 1911, 57.5 percent of the fourteen- and fifteen-year-old boys and 32.8 percent of the girls were without jobs. Thirty-five years earlier, the corresponding figure had been 30.7 percent and 20.4 percent. The vision of an adolescent on the streets, without a job and without supervision, must have been particularly upsetting to laboring parents. Moreover, working-class children were at least as susceptible as were their parents—and probably a good deal more so—to the quest for a richer life through enticing leisure activities and mass consumerism. After acquiring his first job, René Michaud was eager to live “la belle vie,” which meant cinema, above all. Michaud later claimed to have limited his expenses to the pocket money his mother allotted, cheating only occasionally; but other adolescents may have been more rebellious. Similarly, the production of inexpensive gloves, perfumes, cosmetics, and other adornments provided a strong temptation to working daughters. Observers noted the eagerness of young seamstresses to find room in their narrow budgets for such items, so that daughters missed the money handed over to their parents all the more. The traditional role of urban youths, to participate in the family wage economy, was becoming less realizable and less appropriate, yet another role was, as yet, out of the question.

Family conflict between generations began to trouble public opinion and to inform public discourse on the “youth problem” at the turn of the century. The suicide of a twenty-year-old worker after a confrontation with his father caused the Socialist press in Argenteuil to lament the frequency of generational conflicts and declare that “obedience should be based on love, not authority.” The editors returned to this theme in several issues. Working-class spokesmen also began to project parental concerns upon the issue of juvenile delinquency in a new manner. Before the end of the century, youthful violence and criminality had not yet produced a sense of family breakdown. Saint-Denis in 1885, for example, experienced a rash of muggings by a gang of youths, but no generalized sense of crisis resulted from these incidents. Large groups of youngsters battled on the fortifications of Saint-Ouen in the 1880s, but officials worried about the damage to property, not the permanent threats of uncontrolled youths. After 1900, such delinquency was taken as evidence of an underlying youth problem that threatened family life.

Parisian and working-class opinion was very much stirred by concern over the “Apaches” in the first decade of the twentieth century. These were supposedly gangs of young thugs who exhibited a conscious defiance of the law, a cult of toughness, and absolute scorn for established authority. Such gangs may well have had some basis in fact, but they certainly did not have the overwhelming prom-
inence that the working-class press attributed to them.\textsuperscript{135} A mugging that occurred in Ivry, a murder of a youngster in Belleville, or public disorder by adolescents in Saint-Denis were proclaimed the work of the Apaches.\textsuperscript{136} Working-class opinion projected upon the Apaches the problems of family life. The Socialist newspapers assumed that Apaches were recruited among wage-earning households. A series of articles in \textit{L'Humanité} described how youngsters were dutiful sons one day and Apaches the next. The implications were clear: Any child could rebel against convention—or fall victim to the Apaches.\textsuperscript{137} Explanations for the genesis of such gang delinquency comprised a litany of the changes, real or imagined, that were modifying the place of youths in the family and in society: the progress of machine production, restrictive labor legislation, compulsory schooling, the deterioration of apprenticeship, and, especially, the absence of the working mother from the home.\textsuperscript{138} The link between private problems and social problems could not have been more direct. Moreover, the press portrayed the gangs enacting what must have been the fantasies of working-class adolescents: liberation from adult control, freedom from the obligation to work, and easy access to sensual pleasures and brassy entertainment. A Socialist editor warned parents that their children had to choose between being workers or Apaches.\textsuperscript{139}

The concern about youths impelled public officials in the working-class communes to do more than express discouragement and wring their hands. The newly elected Socialist councilors of Puteaux feared that youngsters were too exposed to the temptations of alcohol and ordered the closing of all pubs within 350 meters of school buildings.\textsuperscript{140} Several years earlier, the aldermen of Saint-Ouen had lamented that youths were no longer getting jobs until the age of fifteen or sixteen, “to the endless anxiety of their parents.” They passed a resolution in favor of creating pre-apprenticeship programs in public schools.\textsuperscript{141} To discuss working-class youths after 1900 was to confront a social problem, and there can be little doubt that an aspect of this problem was tension within the family. Parents had yet to come to terms with the new work conditions of their children and with their expectations for fuller lives.\textsuperscript{142}

Thus, the working-class family of greater Paris in 1914 was, as in 1871, a haven from the cruel world and a focus for the ultimate loyalties of its members. With contraception, shorter work hours (for some), and privatized leisure, the potential existed for subtle but basic changes in family roles. However, this promise could not be realized in the absence of dramatic improvements in material conditions. It is little wonder that youths bore the pressures of this incomplete change.
FAMILY LIFE AND LEISURE OF WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS

The limited source material on working-class families appears copious beside the documentation on white-collar domesticity. Employers did not produce memoirs of their youths, nor did social commentators direct much attention to this milieu, undoubtedly because white-collar employees were traditionally better integrated into the social order. Challenging this assumption does not seem necessary, but how were they integrated: as imitators of the Parisian bourgeoisie, or did they have their distinctive modes of family life? The paucity of evidence is unfortunate because, beyond compiling a few statistical profiles, we must resort to speculation.

Modest employees clearly took a more calculated approach to family life than did manual workers. They married about a year and a half later than did wage earners (29.4 in the Eighteenth Arrondissement); their brides were on the average about a year and a half older (25.7 years) than were those of wage-earners. They also had smaller families, presumably through more careful planning. The census of 1891 showed that 873 railroad employees living in the quarter of La Villette had 430 dependents under the age of twenty; 799 such clerks in the quarter of Goutte d’Or had 584 dependents. According to a survey of nearly 600 households in 1906, wage-earners were nearly twice as likely as clerks to have four or more members in the households they headed. Evidently, the one-child ideal already had a hold on white-collar workers.

Were these families small because parents chose to invest heavily in the futures of their offspring? Even if employees had no aspirations to send their children to the university, expenses entailed in preparing for a superior clerical position could be significant. Youths might spend an additional year in public school and then enroll in a commercial course for training in accounting and foreign languages. Such a background could prove advantageous, especially in an era of narrowing opportunities for clerical workers. A daughter’s marriage to a purchasing agent, and still more to an engineer, required a dowry.

These potential expenditures did not seem to worry the majority of white-collar employees. A study of the career paths of their sons suggests little investment in the children’s futures. Out of 168 sons of employees living in the Thirteenth and Eighteenth arrondissements at the end of the Second Empire, only three were in a liberal profession or preparing for one. Furthermore, 31 percent of the sons had not even remained in clerical work but had taken jobs as manual laborers. Generally, these young men were in the more skilled and lucrative trades, like printing and jewelry making, but there were also cobblers, tailors, and waiters among them.
Clerks may well have been as eager for their children to participate in the "family-salary economy" as workers were for their adolescents to contribute to the common purse. At the request of hundreds of their clerks, the Western Railroad Company agreed to hire their fourteen-year-old sons as office boys at six hundred francs a year in 1884. Thereafter, the youths would be competitively selected for promotion into the ranks of employees. The Christofle Silversmith Company graciously accepted the sons of its clerks as office boys as soon as they finished primary school. Indeed, whenever employees made assertive demands for better pay, management could remind them of their dependence upon the company for jobs their children needed.

Though employees did not make extraordinary sacrifices for their children, they still went into debt, and they were no more likely to leave property to their heirs than were craftsmen. Was this because employees were quicker and far more thoroughgoing in their formulation of new material needs than were wage-earners? There is evidence that employees made leisure and consumerism central to their family lives. The hypothetical family budget presented by the largest union of department-store clerks in 1880 offers guidance to the kind of expenditures that they recognized as being most satisfying and desirable. Outlays on clothing covered 17.5 percent (375 of 2,200 francs), and spending on recreation attained 26.4 percent (580 francs). Clerks would surely have had a difficult time realizing such a spending pattern, but the budget does, at least, point to the psychological prominence of these items.

White-collar workers were eager patrons of commercialized leisure. They sometimes dabbled in higher forms of culture too. A fifth (21.1 percent) of the young clerks called to military service from the Thirteenth and Eighteenth arrondissements claimed some accomplishment on musical instruments, especially the violin and flute. The newspaper of a sizable Catholic union stressed the employees' enjoyment of polite parlor games. There may have been some truth to this claim, and some element of image-building as well. White-collar employees were also to be found in pubs. Twelve percent of their marriage contracts had publicans as witnesses. The dossiers of employees who worked for the Prefecture of Paris showed that inebriation was not an insignificant problem. The most distinctive expenses of clerks were those for the annual vacation. The budget proposed by the salesclerks' union allocated 18 percent of yearly income to this activity. The lengthy workdays of department-store clerks compelled them to concentrate much of their leisure into this brief period. They undoubtedly took advantage of the special excursions to their pays which railroad companies were offering at
the end of the century. The great psychological impact of an annual retreat is suggested by the demands for vacations made by wage-earners who worked beside the employees enjoying this benefit.

White-collar families were also eager consumers. As we have seen, some credit stores attempted to appeal specifically to this group. It seems likely that they succumbed a bit too often to this temptation. Clerks composed 29 percent of the population of the First Arrondissement and 42 percent of the debtors brought before the juge de paix for defaulting on their consumer debts. Clothing was an especially enticing purchase and sometimes led to dangerous levels of indebtedness. More than one in ten employees of the prefecture had a lien on his salary, to the benefit of haberdashers in most instances.

The impression that modest white-collar clerks were open to the emerging imperatives of urban life—to dress well, have a rich life off the job, relax, and enjoy themselves—is reinforced by the requests for salary advances made by the clerks of the Parisian Gas Company. In 1896 alone, 73 of 465 employees of the Accounts Receivable Department took steps to acquire some extra cash from their employer. Their letters of request collectively portray the employees' milieu as one in which both stark necessity and self-indulgence had prominent places. Just over a third (25) of the requests were motivated by basic needs for shelter or medical care. On the other hand, clerks were quite candid about the importance of expenditures on nonessentials. Employees claimed a need for "distinguished" clothing for themselves or "comely" wardrobes for their wives and children. (One employee assured his boss that he would take advantage of the sale prices.) They purchased new suites of furniture for an attractive household. Vacations motivated a sizable number of requests for advances. A typical letter began, "Knowing the great importance of a pleasant vacation to the employee, Monsieur Director. . . ." Leisure and consumer expenditures were already an assured part of white-collar culture.

The few glimpses we can catch of the white-collar employees' family life suggest that they were the segment of the laboring population most willing—even eager—to substitute off-the-job compensations for rewards at work. Factory laborers may have shared their enthusiasm for a rich, commercialized leisure but had much less access to it. One ought not be surprised that employees' protests were shaped very much by the desire for more leisure and by fears of losing the compensations they had already acquired. Laborers, by contrast, had to struggle to enhance both their work lives and their time off the job.