

# Text 18

January 3, 2010

## Americans Doing More, Buying Less, a Poll Finds

By DAMIEN CAVE

MIAMI — Rosario and Igor Montoya used to buy, buy, buy for themselves and their two children without a second thought. Expensive sneakers, a new laptop, Legos — they all got what they wanted. But with the recession slashing the Montoyas' workload and income by more than half, their priorities have shifted from products to activities.

After school and on weekends, the family now hops into a pink canoe they bought secondhand. They paddle through Biscayne Bay to nearby islands, naming each, sometimes making boats out of sticks and leaves.

"I'm trying to teach the kids that you don't need to have expensive toys to have fun," said Mr. Montoya, 47, an artist and freelance art director in advertising. "You can make it fun, from anything."

Quietly but noticeably over the past year, Americans have rejiggered their lives to elevate experiences over things. Because of the Great Recession, a recent New York Times/CBS News poll has found, nearly half of Americans said they were spending less time buying nonessentials, and more than half are spending less money in stores and online.

But Americans are not just getting by with less. They are also doing more.

Some are working longer hours, but a larger proportion, the poll shows, are spending additional time with family and friends, gardening, cooking, reading, watching television and engaging in other hobbies.

Psychologists have been saying for years that shared experiences like vacations lead to more long-term happiness than the latest bauble. And perhaps the change was inevitable — to be expected when a shopping-spree nation trades a glut of credit for layoffs and furloughs.

There are, of course, potential problems as the United States drops old habits of consumption. On the macro level, economists worry that it could undermine a recovery.

Adapted from the **New York Times**

1. Present this document

- 
2. "Time is more valuable than money. You can get more money, but you cannot get more time." Comment