What is “consumerism”?  
Key idea = systematic bias towards consumption over leisure 

Sources of pressure towards consumerism in the United States:

1. Easy Credit: living above one’s means → pressure to work more to pay off debts
2. Under-pricing of consumer goods because of “consumption negative externalities”
3. Consumption bias in capitalist profit maximization strategies
4. Market failures in availability of “leisure”
   - Employers prefer long hours because it is cheaper than hiring more workers for fewer hours (because of fixed fringe benefits, training costs, etc.)
   - Weak unions and weak labor market regulations prevent more collective regulation of the work/leisure balance
   - European workers work 300-400 fewer hours/year that US workers
   - How much leisure would we have if productivity increases were used mainly to expand leisure rather than consumption?
5. Change in reference group for consumption from people more or less like oneself to the relatively rich.
   - results = “consumption gap” between what people can afford and what they feel they should consume → People go much more into debt in order to live more like these ideals.
6. Increasing inequality ratchets up consumption demands
7. Increasing “competitive consumption” (status consumption)
8. Decline in public goods (and abandonment of public consumption by rich)
9. Increasingly sophisticated marketeering
10. BUT there are some counter-tendencies