

Atomic Culture and Cultural Industry: Their Spread and Acceptance in America During 1940s and 60s

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The invention and use of atomic weapons changed the world. After its usage in Japan in 1945, the newly invented atomic bombs gave birth to the so-called Atomic Culture. What made it possible, was the saturation of both information and imagery of such weapons to the general American public. As Scott Zeman and Michael Amundson discuss, the Atomic Culture is divided in three phases: early¹, high², and late³. Additionally, the overload of these concepts – done by the cultural industry – lead to an ignorant population over atom bombs’ real capabilities⁴. It is important to note that over the years this obliviousness was still noticeable as the “high” Atomic Culture emerged in 1949, only changing in 1964 with the emergence of the “late” Atomic Culture⁵. Many scholars, however, treat the cultural industry as not the central actor, not giving it the importance it deserves. The historian Daniel Wright, for instance, suggests that the

1. . Scott C. Zeman and Michael A. Amundson, *Atomic Culture: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2004), 2.

2. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 3.

3. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 4.

4. . Daniel Patrick Wright, “Duck and Cover: How Print Media, the U.S. Government, and Entertainment Culture Formed America’s Understanding of the Atom Bomb” (Masters Diss., Wright State University, 2015), 5.

5. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 4.

cultural industry shares its spotlight with, but not only, information published by the government⁶. This paper seeks to show that, above all, the cultural industry was the main source for the Atomic Culture to rise and spread over the U.S in mid-20th century due to its popularity, accessibility to the public, and the general mistrust of the information distributed by the government, which, in turn, lead to people's alienation.

As a social process, the Atomic Culture changed over time. As historians Zeman and Amundson write, the Atomic Culture was divided into three stages. The first sparked in 1945 with the use of atomic weapons in Japan, the first in human history⁷. This early stage was characterized by a “euphoric” feeling towards atom bombs, as well as Americans celebrating its use⁸. With the Soviets threatening American hegemony by testing their bomb in 1949, however, the next stage of the Atomic Culture rose, being known – unlike its previous version – by a sense of distress. This new phase, the “high” Atomic Culture, reflected the “concerns and fear” of Americans during this period⁹. One concept that successfully illustrates the High Atomic Culture is MAD, Mutually Assured Destruction, a well-known concept in international relations. As its name suggests, it rests in the assumption that, in a nuclear war, both parties (in this case, the USA and Soviet Union) would be able to inflict unacceptable damage to one another, which would lead to their own destruction. The term was coined by John von Neumann, a “game theorist” and “important figure in the development of U.S. nuclear devices”¹⁰, being mostly attributed to the period in which Robert McNamara was the Secretary of Defense, under Kennedy¹¹. With American's opinions towards nuclear power

6. . Wright, “Duck and Cover,” 46.

7. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 2.

8. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 3.

9. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 3.

10. . “Mutually Assured Destruction,” The Decision Lab, accessed May 18, 2021,

<https://thedecisionlab.com/reference-guide/management/mutually-assured-destruction/>.

11. . Tom de Castella, “How Did We Forget About Mutually Assured Destruction,” *BBC*, February 15, 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17026538>.

changing to a more critical note, in 1963 the “late” Atomic Culture emerged¹². Zeman and Amundson assert that antinuclear movements pushed this new line of thought, highlighting the impacts of nuclear weapons for both the population and the government¹³. Concluding, there was a turn of viewpoints throughout the Atomic Culture’ existence: from joyful to fearful, and then to critical and logical.

The cultural industry, specifically newspapers and magazines, helped to influence people’s mindsets over atomic weapons’ existence. In an age where the power of the internet was still unheard of, there was no better way to disseminate news than magazines, newspapers, radios, and television, which is exactly what this paper takes into consideration when thinking about cultural industry. In the United States, magazines such as *Times*, *Life*, and *Popular Science*, and newspapers like *The New York Times*, were the most influential, where information related to atom bombs were easily found¹⁴. *Life* magazine alone was able to reach, in the post-war period, a staggering 22.5 million Americans¹⁵. During the early stage of the Atomic Culture, one way the cultural industry was able to impact the majority of U.S citizens was to publish information glamorizing atom bombs. By way of example, after the first strike on Japan, the images that circulated in the front pages of news sources such as *Life* (see Figure 1) were only of the mushroom cloud itself, not of the destruction that the bomb caused¹⁶. As a consequence, the mushroom cloud became popular because of its power and beauty. As the historian Costandina Titus notes, “spectacular imagery, poetic references, and colorful hyperbole focused the public’s collective eye on the aesthetic of the mushroom cloud”¹⁷. Another example is shown in an article “So A-Bombs Aren’t

12. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 4.

13. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 5.

14. . Wright, “Duck and Cover,” 14.

15. . Scott C. Zeman, “To See...Things Dangerous to Come to: *Life* Magazine and the Atomic Age in the United States,” in *The Nuclear Age in Popular Media: a Transnational History, 1945-1965*, ed. Dick Van Lente (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 54.

16. . A. Costandina Titus, *Atomic Culture: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2004), 105.

So Bad?”, published by *Popular Science* magazine in 1949¹⁸. The article is comprised of an interview of two scientists, M.S Blackett, a Nobel Prize winner, and R.E. Lapp, who worked in the Manhattan Project, but also served as an assistant director of the Metallurgical Laboratory at the University of Chicago, at the time, one of the major wartime research centers for the atom bombs¹⁹. Both experts discuss,

to a vast extent, the power and death reach capabilities of atomic weapons. When reading the title of the article, however, the information that the reader absorbs is nothing more than the opposite. As historian Wright points out, even though both scientists discuss about the risks and dangers of atomic weapons (even giving certain details about their destructive capabilities) the title of



Figure 1: Mushroom cloud in Hiroshima. *Life Magazine* (20 August, 1945). <https://www.colinhemez.org/mushroom-cloud>

the article itself is able to change that whole notion²⁰, since it suggests that they are not “so bad.” Taking that into account, it becomes clear that media was influential, and part of, the shaping of people’s minds towards believing atomic weapons are for peaceful purposes.

17. . Titus, *Atomic Culture*, 107.

18. . Volta Torrey, “So A-Bombs Aren’t So bad?” *Popular Science*, May 1949, 124. Accessed 6 May, 2020, <https://books.google.com/books?id=ZiQDAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=pt-BR#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

19. . Matthew L. Wald, “R.E. Lapp, 87, Physicist in Cold-War Debate on Civil Defense, Dies,” *The New York Times*, September 10, 2004, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/10/us/re-lapp-87-physicist-in-cold-war-debate-on-civil-defense-dies.html>.

20. . Wright, “Duck and Cover,” 19.

If examined carefully, however, some media outlets – after some time – released images of Japan’s ruins, which denies the logic developed above. But, if considering the two first stages of the Atomic Culture already discussed, its reason becomes clear. For the first time in its history, *Life* magazine published, in 1952, an article called *When Atom Bombs Struck – Uncensored*, which showed, as its name suggest, graphic photographs of victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki²¹. In the beginning, pictures of injured children are used, which undoubtedly shocked many readers. This strategy, if compared to the other articles presented, is the opposite of what sources such as *Popular Science*, and even *Life* itself did when the attack in Japan was still recent. This shift in personality from media – between 1945 to 1963 – can be explained by analyzing Atomic Culture’s stages. As its early stage was marked by happiness, articles such as the “So A-Bombs Aren’t So Bad?” make sense, as they portrayed the bombs as weapons not to be feared. Instead, atomic weapons should be seen as a “safe and necessary part of the country’s postwar arsenal”²². Also, the drastic change in position from articles published close to 1945 to and after 1949 is, likewise, relevant, since now Americans have other opinions towards nuclear weapons. It is also important to note that, while *Life* magazine did publish some images of the bombings, and their effects, it took a while for the surveying teams to reach both cities. As the Atomic Heritage Foundation attests, Manhattan Project representatives, led by General Thomas Farrell, arrived in Tokyo on September 1st, 1945, on Hiroshima on September 8th, and on Nagasaki on September 17th²³. In addition, works such as John Hersey’s *Hiroshima* – which reflected the reality of the victims in the city – was not published until August of 1946²⁴. Taking into consideration the date of

21. . “When Atom Bombs Struck – Uncensored” *Life*, Sept 29th, 1952, 19. Accessed 15 May, 2020, <https://books.google.com/books?id=VVEEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA21&dq=Hiroshima&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewj3rzUmKzpAhVSoHIEHVuACBcQ6AEwAXoECAUQAq#v=onepage&q=Hiroshima&f=false>.

22. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 3.

23. . “Surveys of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” Atomic Heritage Foundation, accessed May 18, 2021, <https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/surveys-hiroshima-and-nagasaki>.

24. . “Hiroshima,” Book Summary, accessed May 18, 2021, <https://www.booksummary.net/hiroshima->

the bombings, we can infer that access to information and images was limited which, in turn, shaped public opinion in America. As seen, depending on which stage of the Atomic Culture the world was in, the information published by media sources changed their tone.

The atom was not only visualized as a source of destruction. It would be bold to assume that the developments made on atomic energy at the end of World War II only aimed at destruction. Paul Boyer dedicates an entire section of his book for this topic. As he claims, many news sources were spreading the notion that the atom could also make American's life more comfortable. For instance, Boyer tells that on August 7th, 1945, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch claimed that "imagination leaps forward to visualize the use of atomic power for man's comfort and enjoyment in generations to come"²⁵. In addition, the New York Herald Tribune states that atomic power could be "a blessing that will make it possible for the human race to create a close approach to an earthly paradise"²⁶. Not only that, but the author also references atomic airplanes²⁷, atomic cars²⁸, and even its "unlimited" power postpone death²⁹. Although many of this predictions did not come to life (in the case of atomic powered vehicles, thankfully), they were part of American life, and undoubtedly shaped public opinion. Therefore, Americans did not only envisioned the destruction provided by atomic energy, but also its life improving capabilities.

The Atomic Culture dominated American civilization. Las Vegas, for instance is a prime example of a city where the acceptance of atomic weapons was clearly noticed during the 1940s and 50s. Vegas,

john-hersey/#:~:text=Author%3A%20John%20Hersey%20%E2%80%9CHiroshima%E2%80%9D%20is%20a%20novel%20published,ended%20up%20dedicating%20on%20issue%20to%20it%20entirely.
25. . Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 109.

26. . Boyer, *By the Bomb's*, 109.

27. . Boyer, *By the Bomb's*, 118.

28. . Boyer, *By the Bomb's*, 119.

29. . Boyer, *By the Bomb's*, 119.

because of its various forms of leisure, earned many nicknames: Sin City, Entertainment Capital of the World, City of Lights, among others. However, during the middle of the 20th century, it became known as the Atomic City. One of its most famous attractions, in the height of the atomic phase, was that people could witness – from the city – a live detonation of atomic weapons, done in the nation’s continental testing ground for atomic weapons, the Nevada Test Site.³⁰ In 1951, President Truman approved the creation of a test site in lower Nevada, but it was decreed that there would be “no civilian population within thirty miles.”³¹ As Las Vegas stands at 65 miles³² northwest apart from the test site, the Atomic City was far enough not to suffer any side effects of the detonations, but close enough for the mushroom cloud to be visible. Due to the wind pattern, people in Las Vegas were safe from any side effects of the bomb testing happening in Nevada. The Atomic Heritage Foundation shows that many of the radioactive particles were thrown to Utah, even farther away from Las Vegas³³. Figure 2, taken after an atom bomb explosion, depicts the view that residents from the Sin City would have when observing the Northwestern portion of the sky. Therefore – as reports show – people would gather on the rooftops of bars (such as Atomic Liquors) and drink an Atomic Cocktail while watching the mushroom cloud³⁴. To conclude, Las Vegas became known not only for its already existing assets, but because visitors could also witness a nuclear test from a distance, which is one of the factors that demonstrate the extent in which atom bombs – specifically – shaped the America-life in the second half of the 20th century.

30. . “Atomic Culture,” Atomic Heritage Foundation, last modified Aug 9, 2017, <https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/atomic-culture>.

31. . C. Trussell, “Commission Says 5,000 Square Mile Area Will be Used to Speed Development of Weapons – Safety is Stressed.” *New York Times*, Jan 12, 1951, 1.

32. . “Nevada Test Site.” Atomic Heritage Foundation, accessed May 18, 2021, <https://www.atomicheritage.org/location/nevada-test-site>.

33. . Atomic Heritage Foundation, “Nevada.”

34. . “Nuclear Nevada,” *National Endowment for the Humanities*, July 31, 2011. <https://www.neh.gov/news/nuclear-nevada>.



Figure 2: Landscape of Las Vegas and a mushroom cloud at the distance. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/north-america/united-states/articles/Nuclear-tourism-travels-in-the-shadow-of-the-atomic-bomb/>

Lee A. Merlin, and Marilyn Maxwell are examples of sex symbols that used the image of the atom in their favor which, in turn, reflected the already existing acceptance of atomic weapons. “Miss Atom Bomb” was a new category of beauty contests that emerged the early 1950s in the United States, and its winner was present in the entertainment industry both to amuse and as a sex symbol^{35,36,37}. The most well-known was Lee A. Merlin, known to wear her renowned mushroom cloud outfit³⁸. (Figure 3). Merlin was, at the time, a showgirl at the Sands casino when she was crowned the Miss Atom Bomb, an event that coincided with Operation Plumbbob^{39,40}. In short, Op-

35. . “Prettiest Girls in Maryland,” *The Sun*, Sept 22, 1946, 119.

36. Anne Wheeler, “4 Atomic-Themed 1950s Beauty Queens,” *Mental Floss*, accessed May 18, 2021, <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/52631/4-atomic-themed-1950s-beauty-queens>.

37. . Masako Nakamura, “‘Miss Atom Bomb’ Contests in Nagasaki and Nevada: The Politics of Beauty, Memory, and the Cold War,” *University of Hawai’i Press*, no. 37 (2009): 136, <https://www.jstor-org.lib-proxy.temple.edu/stable/pdf/42772003.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Afab1f47620256756ae4094be3db44582>

38. . “Miss Atom Bomb,” *Nevada National Security Site*, August, 2013.

https://www.nnss.gov/docs/fact_sheets/DOENV_1024.pdf

39. . Zim, “Odd Contests: Miss Atom Bomb,” *History by Zim*, accessed May 19, 2021, <http://www.history-byzim.com/2013/03/miss-atomic-bomb/>.

40. . “Miss Atomic Bomb 1957,” *ATI*, accessed May 19, 2021, <https://allthatsinteresting.com/miss-atomic-bomb#:~:text=Miss%20Atomic%20Bomb%20Lee%20Merlin%2C%20a%20showgirl%20at,attached%20th>



Figure 3: Miss Atom Bomb, Lee A. Merlin. Las Vegas News Bureau
<https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/energy/a20536/who-are-you-miss-atomic-bomb/>

heavily ornamented outfit, which represented atoms colliding (Figure 4). While in character, she danced, and because of the rapid movement of her hips, a chain reaction would start⁴³. (process involved in the explosion of atomic weapons). Both Maxwell and Merlin were already known figures from their respective areas that became associated with the Atomic Culture, both relating it with carnal pleasures. Concluding, the Miss Atom Bomb and the Atom Dancer helped to spread the already existing acceptance of atomic weapons to American society.

The cultural industry should not be considered as only an auxiliary process to explain the alienation of U.S citizens, but as its key piece. Many dictionaries, such as Merriam-Webster, and Cambridge English Dictionary, form a consensus on the meaning of the term “alienation”: to be distant^{44,45}. This paper will consider such term to

eration Plumbbob were a series of 29 nuclear tests “conducted by the U.S. military between May 28 and October 7, 1957, at the Nevada Test Site”⁴¹. Marilyn Maxwell, in the movie “Key to the City,” portrayed Sheila, the Atom Dancer, a character known for her sensuality⁴². Maxwell’s most defining feature was her

e%20explosion-shaped%20cotton%20to%20Merlin%E2%80%99s%20bathing%20suit.

41. . “Operation Plumbbob” Atomic Heritage Foundation, accessed May 19, 2021, <https://www.atomic-heritage.org/history/operation-plumbbob-1957>.

42. . Bob Thomas, “Dancer ‘s Screen Bump Put Through Laundry.” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 30, 1949. <http://libproxy.temple.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.temple.edu/docview/1854417140?accountid=14270>, 4.

43. . Thomas, “Dancer’s,” 4.

be the distance that an individual creates from society's values, accepting the changes in their environment without questioning. To be clear, it seems that the general public accepted atomic weapons fairly easily, not only as a method of defense and deterrence, but as something to be proud and fantasized. So, such individual became alienated by distancing themselves from societies old values, and accepted this change (the atomic weapon, per se) without raising any alarms. Scholars, like Mick Broderick in his manuscript *Is This the Sum of Our Fears*, Ferenc Szasz in *Atomic Comics*, and Daniel Patrick in his dissertation (already discussed) present the Atomic Culture is the result of a sum of factors, be it cultural industry, governmental action, or the supremacy of one vehicle of communication (in Broderick's, movie industry, and in Szasz's, comic industry). The cultural industry as a whole, however, should be taken more seriously because it played a much important role in different spheres of the social masses. As written previously, information published involving nuclear bombs were easily found in an industry that reached over 22.5 million people. By way of example, the Early phase had comics such as *Dagwood Splits the Atom!*, where Dagwood, "one fo America's favorite characters" to explain the intricacies of the atom⁴⁶. When the High phase took its place, commercials such as "Duck and Cover"⁴⁷ and "Walt Builds a Family Fallout Shelter"⁴⁸ hit



Figure 3: Miss Atom Bomb, Lee A. Merlin. Las Vegas News Bureau <https://www.popular-mechanics.com/science/energy/a-20536/who-are-you-miss-atomic-bomb/>

44. . Merriam-Webster, s.v. "alienation," accessed May 19, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alienation>.

45. . Cambridge English Dictionary, s.v. "alienation," accessed May 19, 2021, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/alienation>.

46. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 3.

47. . *Duck and Cover*, Directed by Anthony Rizzo (Archer Productions, 1951).

48. . *Walt Builds a Family Fallout Shelter*, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, 1960.

the TV screens. The first illustrates Bert the turtle, that raised awareness of “proper” procedures to take in the case of a nuclear attack. The second taught people how to build their own fallout shelter. It should be said that the fact that *Walt Builds a Family Fallout Shelter* was released by the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (OCDM), and the National Concrete Masonry Association⁴⁹, might indicate a collaboration between the cultural industry and governmental forces. In the Late Atomic Culture, however, due to U.S “involvement in Vietnam, publication of the Pentagon Papers, and the Watergate scandal,” Americans were “increasingly distrustful of their government.”⁵⁰ This information is relevant because it shows that even if governmental information were accessible to the public, Americans would take it a grain of salt. Therefore, from this perspective, all these major information and data were published and found in media (part of cultural industry), which shows the importance, and relevance, of the cultural industry over any other industry to alienate the population.

This does not mean that the government was not active in informing the population. In 1953, President Eisenhower delivered the “Atoms for Peace” speech, where he reflected about the use of atomic power for war⁵¹. Not so long after, the US Postal Service released its “Atoms for Peace” stamps (Figure 5). Also, in December of 1961, the Department of Defense published the *Fallout Protection* booklet. In short, as McNamara wrote, “the purpose of this booklet is to help save lives if a nuclear attack would ever come to America”⁵². It starts by summarizing what it calls “words to know” – vocabulary such as megaton, kiloton, ground zero, and fireball⁵³. Then, it gives more detailed information on radiation and its long-term effects, a nuclear ex-

49. . David Grossman, “‘Walt Builds a Family Fallout Shelter’ Is All the Cold War Paranoia You Require,” *Popular Mechanics*, accessed May 18, 2021.

50. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 5.

51. . “Atoms for Peace,” National Archives, accessed May 18, 2021.

52. . Robert McNamara, *Fallout Protection* (Department of Defense, 1961), 5.

53. . McNamara, *Fallout*, 7.

plosion, fallout, different types of shelters, and first aid basics. We can see that, by this short description, it was a very informative work. These are just a fraction of the publications done by the U.S. government to inform its population about the atom, and the best way to deal with it.

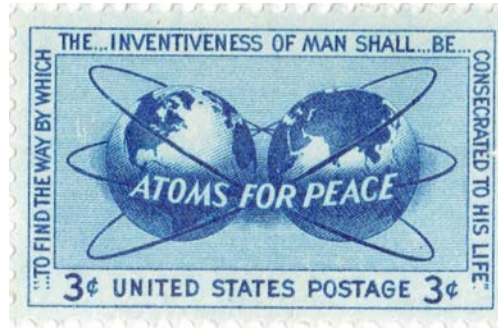


Figure 5: Atom's for Peace stamp.
<https://stampaday.wordpress.com/2017/12/08/atoms-for-peace/>

As history tends to be cyclical, the recent events in Brazil related to the Coronavirus are a perfect example to illustrate a contemporary case of a population mistrusting the information propagated by its own government. According to John Hopkins University, as of the writing of this paper, Brazil is in second place in the mortality rate of the virus, with a staggering 140,537 deaths⁵⁴. João Doria, governor of the state of São Paulo, is well-known by the Brazilian public for agreeing with the quarantine. Bolsonaro, on the other hand, is not. On social media, Bolsonaro once claimed that, if quarantine continued, “it will not be hard to know what awaits us,” followed by a magazine cover, stating, “in the country, 91 million people did not pay their bills in April.”⁵⁵ Here, Bolsonaro is obviously implying that the country is making a poor choice that impacts the economy drastically. Doria, however, takes a different approach. In a speech, the governor claimed that “people need to preserve themselves, use masks when leaving home, avoid agglomerations, and maintain hygiene.”⁵⁶ Bolso-

54. . “COVID-19 Dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University (JHU),” *Johns Hopkins University*, Accessed September 26, 2020, <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>.

55. . Hanrrikson de Andrade, “Bolsonaro ataca quarentena: ‘Não está difícil saber o que nos espera,’” *Noticias UOL*, April 19, 2020, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2020/04/19/bolsonaro-ataca-quarentena-nao-esta-dificil-saber-o-que-nos-espera.htm>.

56. . Lucas Rizzi, “Doria: Discurso Negacionista de Bolsonaro Dificulta Fazer Política de Saúde,” *Noticias*

naro and Doria, therefore, are on opposite sides of the spectrum. Even though defending social distancing, however, protests against Doria were being done in São Paulo⁵⁷. Taking into consideration that Doria is the authority in São Paulo, the share of the population against the governor's point of view are taking an information given by a governmental figure, and ignoring it, showing a mistrust towards the government. So, in this case, residents of São Paulo are an example of people that live under a government that approves of the quarantine, but due to mistrust, favors other ideas.

The saturation of atom bombs resulted in a population ignorant of their reality. As seen by the examples provided, the Atom Culture was prominent in the U.S during the middle of the 20th century. As a consequence, such culture – and the atom bombs, obviously – were heavily accepted and romanticized. “Americas largest population centers,” as Wright claims, “could seldom go twenty-four hours without coming face to face with some facet of the atomic culture”⁵⁸. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the Atomic Culture was present in the every-day life of Americans. A study conducted in 1946 by Leonard Cottrell and Sylvia Eberhart was able to show the extent in which this saturation impacted the population, especially in the way they saw atomic weapons. They revealed that “47 percent of Americans were not worried or worried very little about the atomic bomb.”⁵⁹ In addition, “people are aware of the destructive power of the atomic bomb,” but believe only the government should worry about it, not them⁶⁰. Considering that during this year the early phase of the Atomic Culture was in effect, and adding up the conclusions of this

UOL, September 10, 2020, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/ultimas-noticias/ansa/2020/09/10/e-dificil-conter-covid-com-negacionismo-de-bolsonaro-diz-doria.htm>.

57. . Aiuri Ribello, “Carreata pró-Bolsonaro e Anti-Doria Reúne Multidão e Fecha Paulista,” *Noticias UOL*, April 19, 2020, <https://noticias.uol.com.br/politica/ultimas-noticias/2020/04/19/pro-bolsonaro-e-contra-doria-sp-tem-2-protestos-contra-isolamento-em-24-h.htm>.

58. . Wright, “Duck and Cover,” 11.

59. . Zeman and Amundson, *Atomic Culture*, 58.

60. . Leonard Cottrell Jr. and Sylvia Eberhard, *American Opinion on World Affairs in the Atomic Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 108.

study, the alienation suffered by Americans due to the surplus of romanticized information regarding atomic weapons becomes evident. If, for example, the same research was conducted in 1950s – when the High Atomic Culture was in place – possibly the results obtained in this study would vary drastically. In conclusion, by saturating U.S citizens with information about atomic weapons, this resulted in an alienated population, which in the beginning, even commemorated its use in Japan.

Atom bombs and the cultural industry greatly influenced American society in the second half of the 20th century. As seen, in the early stage of the Atomic Culture, the information available to the general masses focused on the aesthetic aspects of atom bombs, which – in turn – made them popular and accepted by the public. However, after a period of time, these same sources, like *Life* magazine began to publish information that clearly showed the bad side of atom bombs, showing the destruction it caused in Japan. This argument, as demonstrated, can be explained by analyzing the phases of the Atomic Culture. Las Vegas became an important city, where elements of the Atomic Culture were clearly seen in – for example – the watching of mushroom clouds from the city. The Miss Atom Bomb and the Atom Dancer further helped to perpetuate the acceptance and romanticism of atom bombs, related to the happiness and joyfulness portrayed by the Atomic Culture during this period. As discussed, the cultural industry should not be considered simply another factor that explains the Atomic Culture's influence in the U.S, but the important actor, since people tend to mistrust information by the government. During the Coronavirus pandemic, the situation in countries like Brazil are a perfect example – in a modern scenario – to illustrate this mistrust. In return, the result was an ignorant population over atom bombs both as an instrument and its general role.

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