

# The 'exotic' phenomenon of the American Bar in interwar Berlin and Prague: Re-reading the concept of place

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## ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the socio-spatial relations of changes in the concept of place. Since the 1970s, place has been one of the key terms of humanistic geography. Therefore, this paper reflects how the concept of place, its functions and meanings could be applied in the changing space-time and social contexts. The 'exotic' phenomenon of the *American Bar* which had penetrated into Europe in the first half of the 20th century can be regarded as a representative of place when it had emerged during Americanisation as a new cultural element. This article compares the interwar development of this phenomenon in two European capitals (Berlin, Prague) and analyses both differences and the common attributes of the process of forming place. Emphasis is placed not only on the localisation of the *American Bar*, but also on more complex historical and geographical analysis of its development and perception that were characteristic exclusively for the Central European region. Using the archive materials, the contemporary press, legislative measures and professional and memoir literature, the study confirms that the *American Bar* phenomenon had acquired different meanings within different contexts which had changed over time and which can be documented through the "spreading" of this phenomenon in space.

## KEYWORDS

place; American Bar; night-life geography; Americanization; Berlin; Prague

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## 1. Introduction

This comparative study deals with the concept of place, which is one of the crucial concepts of geographic thought (Cresswell 2004; Vávra 2010). Besides space, region and landscape, place constitutes a very urgent and frequented geographic topic, which had undergone numerous changes over the last half century, especially as geographers have increasingly engaged different theoretical traditions in the humanities and social sciences (Claval 2007; Entrikin 2018). One of the generally accepted definitions of place is as follows: 'places are "fusions" of human and natural order and are the significant centres of our immediate experiences of the world.... allowing us to experience authentic, original and meaningful life' (Relph 1976: 141). The *American Bar* represents place in this study, when the term 'exotic' refers to new and different kind of experience. This institution was a symbol of the newly established cultural element in the first half of the 20th century, especially between the wars, and we can observe it as a part of the wider process of Americanisation. From the perspective of social and humanistic geography, Americanisation may be perceived as a process of the spatial spread of innovative socio-cultural elements from one setting to another. Hence, it means not only the distribution of new cultural patterns or an urban way of life, but also of fashion trends and technical progress (Heřmanová 2012).

For a long time, Europe remained in the position of the main partner of the USA, for which it was a source of cultural traditions. On the other hand, the USA was the nation of 'unlimited' opportunities, the country whose breakthrough inventions and technological progress staggered the public at world expositions on every occasion (Tučková 2015). The growing American influence had been apparent in Europe since the beginning of the 20th century, but it had been limited rather only to cultural aspects at that time (Stead 1902). All the same, it took only forty years until the publisher of *Life*, Henry Luce, referred in February 1941 to an 'American' century when jazz, Hollywood films, modern machines and other patented products had been something known to each and every community in the world from Zanzibar to Hamburg. But the real Americanisation of Europe could be seen in the interwar period when the United States had been economically involved in the post-war restoration of Europe and in the implementation of Dawes' and Young's plans. However, the most distinctive manifestation of Americanisation could be seen through the cultural phenomena when 60–95% of films screened in the 1920s and 1930s in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany had come from the American production (Lundestad 2003).

The atmosphere following World War I was crucial for the success of Americanisation, and especially of

the *American Bar* concept. This is also characterised by a quotation of the German poet, Friedrich von Hardenberg: 'A comedy must be written after the unhappy war' (Bříza 2006: 296). However, at least when reading the statements of individual actors in the interwar period, we can see that it was a comedy with rather a bitter and sweet tone (Teige 1928). The war chaos had produced a generation which longed for anything which would help it celebrate survival of the previous years, which is why the love of the present moment had prevailed everywhere (Dorůžka 1988). The time had come for cheerful years of unflagging excitement and technical progress. The time when everything was possible and everything became experience. It was 'Experience' with a capital 'E' where the 'E' would mean absolutely everything – decay, decline, entertainment, breakthrough, profit or an absolutely principal change (Friedrich 1995). German journalist Sebastian Haffner (2002) even captured this time with the following memory:

There had suddenly been numerous bars and nightclubs. Young couples were whirling around along the streets of entertaining neighbourhoods just like in the films about the upper ten thousand. Wherever you looked, there was someone involved in love, yet in a hurry (Haffner 2002: 62).

However, love acquired a bit passing and inverted character. That time rooted for new stories because 'amid so much suffering, despair and beggarly misery, passionate youth, joie de vivre and the general carnival mood were thriving' (Haffner 2002: 62).

Only a few realize today how natural an element the institution of a bar is for the normal urban atmosphere, since it no longer is perceived as something exotic, as something new from far, far away, as something with bright colours of neon signs while the inside hides an unusual offer of unknown *cocktails* (Mozr 2013a). Nonetheless, it is important to realize that the *American Bar* in the interwar period was a symbol of the yet unknown type of a business and general service that it simply cannot be neglected or even compared with other types of hospitality businesses (Mozr 2015). Generally, the *American Bar* concept may be explained as an invasion of a foreign form of service in the well-established and traditionally working European gastronomic system (Carlin 2012). Numerous research questions arise in connection with this fairly loose definition, which may be divided into three areas: (1) defining questions connected with the classification of the *American Bar* concept; (2) time-space questions related to the specific information within this concept; (3) meaning-related questions with which we can follow and analyse the situated subjective experience of an individual or entire community.

As for the first area, our primary question is: What was this concept about? What did it look like? Who formulated it? Why was its offer so attractive? Who went there, etc.? The second area offers questions

connected with time and space: To which extent had the concept changed within the transfer? Where and when did the *American Bar* emerge for the first time in selected European metropolises? Was it a gradual invasion of a foreign form of service which may be divided into stages, or was it a sudden social element? Which were the common and different aspects from the perspective of localisation, existence and functioning of the *American Bar* in selected metropolises (Berlin, Prague), or – what was the spatial spread and where was this phenomenon most concentrated (downtown vs. suburbs)? Consequently, the third area is connected with the meaning of this concept where we can ask as follows: What was the extent of the *American Bar* from the perspective of social influence when it had represented a place for intermingling of cultures? What was the depiction of this concept like in the contemporary artistic representation or to which extent had this depiction corresponded to the real-life model?

To analyse and fully understand the *American Bar* phenomenon, it is, however, desirable to clarify what the modifier *American* actually meant and what it had stood for. Historian Joseph Carlin (2012) puts the term *American Bar* in the context of transatlantic

bonds. He believes it was a consequence of tourism enabled by higher standards of living and the technological progress in transport when Europe and America had become closer to each other than ever before and hence also more available to a more intensive cultural interchange. However, he wrongly regards the activities of the American units during World War I and the growing number of American students at European universities in the interwar period as the core force behind this form of service. Although Carlin's theory seems to be convincing, many documents from archives and libraries have shown that the history of the *American Bar* in Europe dates back at least deep into the 19th century (Mozt 2015; Soyer 1859). Therefore, the modifier's explanation is likely to have a much simpler geographical foundation because this term has until recently been almost unknown on the American continent. After all, the local bars can only be American. Therefore, this term was established due to the need to designate the penetration of a new and original form of service which had kicked in individual localities in Europe in different time sequences since the second half of the 19th century. The *American Bar* had gradually emerged throughout the continent, from the United Kingdom over France

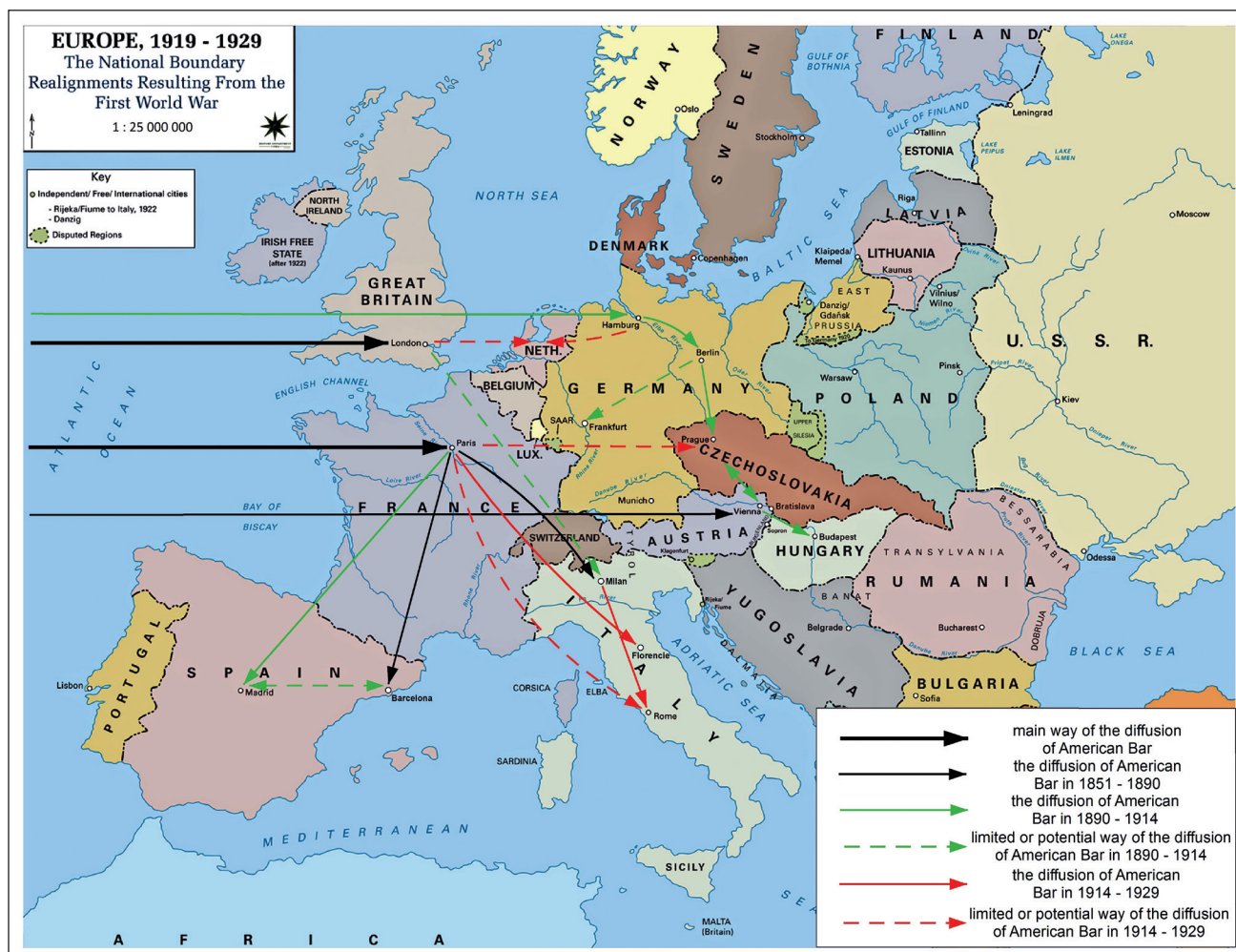


Fig. 1 American Bar.

to Germany and Austria, or even farther. Hence, the diffusion of American Bar could be divided into three stages according to the degree to which the phenomenon has been established in society (see Appendix 1). Its designation had penetrated as a specific form of service from its cradle in America in an effort to expand the offer and attract a higher number of customers. Some European hotels and cafes introducing cocktails even initially simply named their bars as the 'American Bar' (Carlin 2012). It is therefore apparent from this explanation that the first bars in Europe had apparently been all purely classic *American Bars* and their differentiation, or 'emancipation', had emerged through the gradual stabilisation of the given service (Mozr 2015).<sup>1</sup>

The primary objective of the study is to introduce the American Bar as an 'exotic' concept of place, which has many contradictions<sup>2</sup> and which still remains aside the intensive interest of experts, as well as to deepen the knowledge about the development of this concept as an important part of everyday life for the development of the group identity of the inhabitants of two selected European metropolises during the course of time.

## 2. Methodology

Just like countryside, town has been traditionally a very rich source of inspiration in geography. Among others, this is perhaps because a town can be understood as a place which makes part of a large and undifferentiated space, becoming a place at the moment individuals or communities give it a certain meaning. Understandingly, there are also such places which are perceived by individuals and entire communities more intensively than other. Just this stronger meaning of places is characteristic of towns as 'places par excellence' (Tuan 1977). This part of paper concentrates on the discussion why the American Bar phenomenon as an integral component of urban night-life was chosen as the object of historical geography research, which methods were used and to which extent is this approach new and less traditional.

As Entrikin (2018) points out: 'Place has gained greater attention in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as geographers moved from a rigid naturalist conception of their field' (Entrikin 2018: 47–48). However, what kind of places were studied? When speaking about public places, one can imagine museums, theatres, boutiques, hotels or restaurants, but also various cinemas, bars, dance halls and clubs. Their character substantially differs from common

day-time centres (Jayne 2006) because night means much more than just an absence of light. Night attracts roaming walkers and simply 'changes human activities when it comes to their arrangement and distribution in space' (Pixová 2011: 30). Day-time centres have a character differing from night-time centres because the latter are only concentrated in certain parts of a town (Pixová 2011; Mozr 2017). From this perspective, it is possible to find many works focused on geographies of the urban night (Bianchini 1995; Edensor 2015; Grazian 2009; Gwiadzinski 2015; Hadfield 2015; Howell 2000; McKewon 2003; Shaw 2014; Tadić 2015; Van Liempt et al. 2015). However, there is no article or book, which could evaluate the production of 'nightlife economy' in the same original way as this paper, because the American Bar represents a unique luxurious place of the night-life and plays a major role in this kind of economy in the interwar period (Mozr 2017). Only a few papers are concentrated on the concept of bar (Hadfield 2006; Ramsey, Everitt 2007), but these studies are limited mostly on the discussion of general issues about urban night or on the spatial analysis of the concept.

As indicated above in introduction, it is impossible to obtain the necessary information through direct observation due to the period subject to research. Intensive research of the *American Bar* is therefore based on the study of archive materials (Landesarchiv in Berlin; AHMP in Prague), where the main aim was to find further information about city council and public opinion in the collections; contemporary press (*Lidové noviny*, *Národní listy*), where the articles were found in databases through heuristic method of looking up the key words; professional and memoir literature, legislative measures and other iconographic sources. All these materials are used for the reconstruction of place and its meanings. The outcome of the analysis also includes cartographical visualisations providing a reconstructed view of the scope of this phenomenon's establishment in one of the selected localities (Prague) and a view of the real distribution of innovation in European society between 1851–1929. Besides many city-guides and other professional book in local libraries, the key source for a view of the American Bar diffusion was Vintage Cocktail Books Free Digital Library The E.U.V.S. that stands for Exposition Universelle des Vins et Spiritueux, which refers to a Museum in Bendor Island in south of France.

Selected metropolises – Berlin and Prague – are chosen for this analysis on purpose, instead of London or Paris, where the research of American Bar and its spatial and socio-cultural influence could be easier to detect as a cocktail historian Philip Green (2018) has

- 1 The degree of *American Bar* activities and its development also depended on the relationship of an individual to this facility. He could have been an employee, a visitor, someone living nearby; he could have performed his economic plan in the bar, i.e. being a supplier, or he could have assumed other subjective positions through his profession (a writer, a politician, a policeman, etc.).
- 2 The American Bar had an ambivalent character when the given subject of interest may be both welcomed and celebrated by society as well as rejected and condemned (May 1996).



shown in his latest book. Berlin and Prague are chosen, because these cities can provide a sufficient number of archive materials to analyse the development of the *American Bar* and are also relatively close to each other and also fell within a close socio-cultural framework of Central Europe during the period subject to research. However, they had undergone a different development despite these relations. In the post-war era, there was the subverted, defeated and broken Germany transforming into the Weimar Republic after several failed revolutionary attempts (Buffet 1999) opposite the newly established Czechoslovakia which was full of hope and ideals arising from the unexpectedly acquired freedom with constant problems of national minorities that could but did not have to find their fulfilment (Kárník 2008). And it is namely on this background where the *American Bar* phenomenon had emerged.

### 3. American Bar phenomenon in Berlin and Prague

The *American Bar* phenomenon can be viewed as a concept of place which had been both realistically and imaginarily reflected in everyday life of inhabitants and which can also be assessed as a 'network of varied actors developing a range of activities, influencing not only each other, but also forming the character of place and its image' (Kašková et al. 2016: 8). Both in Czechia and in Germany, the analysed phenomenon emerged as late as in the last quarter of the 19th century despite the interesting history of mixed drinks, later known as *cocktails*. In the united Germany<sup>3</sup>, the fifth edition of *Das Buch der Getränke* (The Book of Drinks) by Charlotte Wagner was published in 1882 (Mozt 2013b) and nine years later, in 1891, there was even an entire pavilion dedicated to the *American Bar* institution at the international exhibition of electrical engineering in Frankfurt am Main (Miller & Brown 2009). Prague became acquainted with the *American Bar* phenomenon in the same year as Frankfurt and it was also everybody who had visited the General Land Centennial Exhibition that had also displayed a stand of Mr Jan Procházka and Mr Jindřich Grass from Bremen. The stand was installed in Pavilion 5, not far from the main entrance to the site, and it was produced in the American style with an offer of ice drinks (Mozt 2015; Mikšovic 2012; Kafka 1891). We can view this enterprise as the 'imaginary beginnings of the bar catering in Bohemia, but Procházka & Grass had not offered only drinks, but an entire whirl of attractions and sales tricks, starting with black service and ending with live music and cocktails' (Mozt 2013c). Exoticism of the so-called American ice drinks, as they were presented, can also

be seen in the historically first photograph of a mixed drink in Bohemia in the second part of the monography entitled *Sto let práce* (One Hundred Years of Work) (Mikšovic 2012). However, on closer examination, we can see that this is not the only picture. We can actually see a view over a part of the bar, the interior, the stand staff and the performing band (Mozt 2015, 2013c). Other documents also show that ice drinks and their names *Bivoj*, *Palcát* (Mace) or *České kvítko* (Czech Blossom) clearly touched the national chord even though their price (25 Korunas per cocktail) did not seem to be too 'popular' (Mozt 2015a, 2013c; Kafka 1891).

The *American Bar* had therefore since 1891 apparently positioned itself as an essential element of major events. It had eventually established itself not only as something new at various social events, but it had also become an essential part of hotel complexes and other hospitality facilities that had placed great emphasis on modernity and first-class services. Adlon Hotel situated in the very centre of Berlin at the start of the boulevard *Unter den Linden* was an icon among hotels. Its construction was backed even by the king and it was opened on 23 October 1907 (Mozt 2015, 2013c; Auer 1997; Adlon 1909). Its American-style bar was quite unique and in addition to the new and extravagant atmosphere and special offer, it was extraordinary due to its location that was directly connected with the foyer, yet sufficiently set aside. It even had its own entrance from the street, which enabled its independent operations with respect to the hotel (Adlon 1909). But Adlon was not the only place offering the so-called American drinks. Its competitors included the first international hotel in Berlin, Kaiserhof, Queen bar, which was popular and well-known in the 1920s thanks to the artistic depiction of George Grosz, or the Café Bauer pointing to the theory that the *American Bar* had not worked only as a part of hotels but had also developed from the café settings (Mozt 2015; Wood 1997), which is also documented by the fragmentary information that 'each café had its *American bar* where American drinks were served' (Mikšovic 2009: 82). A certain degree of expansion and exclusiveness of the *American Bar* can also be observed through the fact that even the future German chancellor and the first German president, Friedrich Ebert, had worked behind the bar before the war (Mozt 2015; Friedrich 1995).

Compared to Berlin, a similarly aspiring bar in the American style was opened in Prague five years later. Its primary purpose was to become a supplementary part of a modern gastronomic complex. This American bar was located in the basement of the Municipal House of the City of Prague and even though it was not established by the king or emperor, it could undoubtedly equal Adlon with respect to its decorations

3 The political and administrative unification of Germany was officially proclaimed on 18 January 1871 in the Hall of Mirrors of the Palace of Versailles in France.

in which even Czech artist Mikoláš Aleš had been involved (Mozr 2015, 2012; *Hostimil* 1910).

The gradual socio-spatial transformation is also apparent from the growing number of records in Czech and German professional publications, in the daily press, as well as in the poster production. Compared to Berlin, we can also see a similar development of Prague cafes, when cafes and other businesses had been transformed and innovated into bars. As an example, we can use the opening of a new wine bar by the former café owner, Rudolf Löbl, in Templová Street, under the name *Bonbonnière-Bar* (Mozr 2015; *Hostimil* 1917). However, we can only argue to what extent the wine bar had been true to its name because according to the explanation of Czech actor and cabaret performer Josef Waltner (1931), some businesses had used the 'title of the bar although one could not get any drink there' (Waltner 1931: 50), i.e. the bar-café would apparently be a more appropriate term here.

Austrian prose, essay and poetry writer Stefan Zweig wrote that in the new 'big' Berlin of the 1920s, 'bars, entertainment parks and pubs are springing up like mushrooms' (Buffet 1999: 263). In the post-war period, the *American Bar* became an ideal place for loose morals of Berlin of the 1920s. In addition to the offer fitting in the excitement from the American culture, it had naturally offered an uninhibited environment without any rules determining when a guest should come and go, where he should sit, etc. The guest could come and go whenever he wanted to; he could sit wherever he wanted to and next to anyone (Mozr 2015; Metzger 2007; Bříza 2006). Also Prague in the post-war period was hit by a clear growth of new American bars, which is apparent from the cartographic visualisation of Prague bar facilities until the end of 1939 (see Fig. 2 and Table 1). The expansion of the *American Bar* was influenced not only by the breakthrough spatial arrangement in the form of a bar desk, but primarily by the unique offer of bar drinks, mostly cocktails, whose recipes had even appeared on the pages of the daily newspapers such as *Lidové noviny* or *Národní listy* (Mozr 2015; *Lidové noviny* 1929; *Národní listy* 1931). It may be deduced from the news of that time that in Prague, night life had been moving from the highly busy Old Town to the vicinity of Wenceslas Square, which had also corresponded to the Berlin transformation and its post-war migration wave of entertainment described as *Der Zug nach Westen*, i.e. 'The Train to the West'. That entailed the move of many businesses from the area around Friedrichstrasse and Unter den Linden to the west towards Kurfürstendamm and Postdammer Platz (Mozr 2015) where tourists could retire to night spots in the American style such as Mississippi, Peloponnes and Mikado (Buffet 1999).

Essay writer and historian Josef Kroutvor was also wondering about the *American Bar* phenomenon in the Czech environment when he wrongly wrote that

the first bar of this type had probably emerged in the Rokoko Palace in Prague in 1920 or in Konvikt in Bartolomějská Street which has been working, with minor breaks, until now (Kroutvor 2012). He was only right when he wrote about the occurrence of new small cabarets, with the most significant being Orient, Chapeau Rouge, Boston-Bar, Tank bar, Palais Rokoko, Montmartre and others which offered improvised entertainment enriched with alcohol consumption (Mozr 2015; Kroutvor 1988).

If we halt for a moment at the café named Boston-Bar, previously known as Mikado, we can see a few remarkable circumstances. This bar was situated near Wenceslas Square, in Na Můstku Street, which was compared by Waltner (1931) to a similar street connecting Unter den Linden and Friedrichstrasse in Berlin. But the sketchy information on a changed owner surprisingly points to a cultural parallel that could, but did not have to, reflect the mutual influence and cooperation of the Czech and German bar scene, because there also used to be a Mikado bar in Berlin (Mozr 2015; *Hostimil* 1927, 1929).

As time passed, the phenomenon no longer restricted itself to downtown Prague, but it had stretched out and moved towards the periphery, e.g. we could find a newly established bar in Radlická Street in Prague-Smíchov, named Special (*Hostimil* 1927); there was the Rejna-Bar in Poděbradova Street in Prague-Žižkov where liquors were 'mixed only in belly and one can get quite a big shot for CZK 1' (Waltner 1931), or, if we move even farther, we could read about the plan of Czech businessman Václav M. Havel regarding the construction of the Barrandov Terraces in 1929. The Trilobit bar became part of the Terraces in 1937, acting as a counterweight to a mass-scale restaurant and offering a free option to remain in Barrandov until early morning hours (Mozr 2015).

Although the interwar revelry may seem as ceaseless, the opposite is the truth. For instance, that is proved by an agreement of owners of several leading bars regarding the limited entertainment programme (Mikšovic 2009) or the onset of the Nazis in Germany whose aversion to 'Negroid' music and 'non-German' drinks resulted in a failure of many spots such as Excelsior Hotel. The thing was that its owner refused to accommodate Adolf Hitler during his pre-election campaign (Mozr 2015; Landesarchiv, Hotelbetriebs-AG, A.Rep.225-01, Nr. B3838). The immediate impact of economic crisis was another hit which had also been reflected in the transformation of the *American Bar* at the beginning of the 1930s. According to the period news published in *Číšnické rozhledy* (Waiters' Horizons), there were allegedly only thirteen bars in Prague; there was a single price for consumption which, compared to the price of the initially luxury goods such as mixed drinks, points to their higher availability for broader masses (Mozr 2015; Mikšovic 2009; Kafka 1891). So we can suddenly see an emerging trend of spots reminding of the pre-war





Fig. 1 American Bar.



dancing halls, but the popularity of the American culture developed further, as well. This was documented by French historian Cyril Buffet (1999) who remarked that Berlin intelligentsia 'is meeting only at certain places and enjoys gilded decorations at Adlon Hotel, the 'small luxurious restaurant Montmartre which is regularly visited by Christopher Isherwood, Schlichter's pub where writers have their own booked tables' (Buffet 1999: 262). This is again an apparent coincidence of names because Prague also had its Montmartre although the American dancing hall, locally simply named the U Macháčků local, had been more popular, especially with a significant part of the avant-garde. The 'Generation Local', as it was called by the chronicler of night life in Prague, Adolf Hoffmeister, was

a modern spot indeed. It was probably for its informality because it was situated in a baroquely restored building, or for its location in Karlova Street, aside from the normal urban bustle, why this spot was famous, as was later described by Czech architect, Karel Honzík, in his work *Ze života avantgardy* (Of Avant-Garde Life) (Mozr 2015; Štembera, Kreuzzigerová 2005).

#### 4. Perception of the American Bar

The term 'perception' is classified by Siwek (2011) as a 'process during which human mind creates the image of reality. Reality means the outside world, the setting surrounding the man and whose qualities are

**Tab. 1** The list of Prague bar facilities until 1939.

1.	Americký bar in Municipal House, Náměstí republiky 5
2.	Boccaccio Bar in Grandhotel Steiner, Královodvorská street 4
3.	American Hall at the Sect Pavillon, Rybná street 5
4.	Espirit Bar, Rybná street 8
5.	Cascade, Rybná street 10
6.	Little Bar, Jakubská street 5
7.	Bonbonnière Bar (later called City), Templová street
8.	Anglo-American Bar, Templová street 6
9.	Chapeau Rouge, Jakubská street 2
10.	Chat Noir, Celetná street
11.	Bar U Pavouka, Celetná street 17
12.	Orient Bar, Celetná street
13.	Pigall's Bar, Ovocný trh 13
14.	Dancing bar Astoria, Ovocný trh 9
15.	A-B-C, Rybná street 28
16.	Bar Felix, Soukenická street 24
17.	White Star Bar, Zlatnická street 4
18.	Macháček Dancing Hall, Karlova street 30
19.	Montmartre "American Bar", Řetězová street 7
20.	Pohádka, Jalovcová street 1
21.	Radio Bar, Jilská street 22
22.	Konvikt, Bartolomějská street 291
23.	Bar Moulin Rouge under Louvre Café, Národní třída 20
24.	Bar Turandot, Na Můstku street 3
25.	Boston-Bar (previously Mikado), Na Můstku street
26.	Embassy Bar in Alhambra, Wenceslas Square 11
27.	Zlatá Husa (known among foreigners as Golden Goose), Wenceslas Square 13
28.	Bar-Tabarin Zámečník (previously Akron or Casanova), Wenceslas Square 16
29.	Juliš, Wenceslas Square 22
30.	Lucerna Bar, Vodičkova street 42
31.	Grandhotel Šroubek, Wenceslas Square 37
32.	Luxor, Wenceslas Square 41
33.	Bar Gri-Gri in Palais Rokoko, Wenceslas Square 44
34.	Bar of Fénix Insurance Company, corner of Krakovská street and Wenceslas Square
35.	EST Bar in Esplanade Hotel, Washingtonova street 19
36.	Sanssouci Tabarin-Bar, Mariánská street 34
37.	Sport Bar, Komenského square, Žižkov
38.	Rejna-Bar, Poděbradova třída, Žižkov
39.	Bar Frou-Frou, Fochova třída 10, Královské Vinohrady
40.	Bajazzo, Římská street 45
41.	Nippon, Moravská street 14
42.	Tank-Bar (later Tabarin Tango), Mikovcova street 4, Královské Vinohrady
43.	Tabarin Sport Bar, Legerova street 53
44.	Dancing bar "De Paris", Ječná street 10
45.	Kavárna Metropol, Charles square 18
46.	Bar Kavárna Pod Věží, Vodičkova street 2/3
47.	Brabcův Zlatý Sklípek (previously Crystal Pavillon), Vodičkova street 7
48.	Grado Bar, Lazarská street
49.	Palais de Danse (also known as Bar U Myslíků), Myslíkova street 171/31
50.	Bonne Nuit, Pštrossova street 9
51.	Trocadero, Náplavní street 7
52.	Ateliér Bar in the 1st floor of Mánes, Masarykovo nábřeží 250/1
53.	Club-Bar, Bělehradská street 56
54.	Ferri Bar, Malostranské square 252
55.	Bar Ikar, Újezd (opposite the Arizona Bar)
56.	Arizona Bar, Újezd (next to Štefánik's Barracks)
57.	Bar in Švédská street, Švédská street 36
58.	Bar Special, Radlická třída 27
59.	Trilobit Bar at the Barrandov Terraces, Barrandovská street, Hlubočepy
60.	Bar Oasa, Letenské square
61.	Maxim Bar, Kamenická street 49
62.	Elyseé Restaurant Bar, Masarykovo nábřeží 20



recognised through senses' (Siwek 2011: 70). The perception of the *American Bar* phenomenon in life of inhabitants of Germany and Czechoslovakia between two world wars may be captured in two different ways, especially in printed documents in the media or normative measures and through an analysis of iconographic documents, whether of a purely artistic character or in the poster production reflecting the power of the moment and everydayness of that time.

The *American Bar's* ingression into the daily grind may be divided according to its influence on the man: (1) direct influence, i.e. the relationship between the man and the bar (staff, suppliers, performers, visitors, etc.); and (2) indirect influence including mediated experience (media image, legislative measures, recounting from friends, etc.). Bar guests are the most typical and often the most attractive directly influenced group for research.

The post-war 'merry-go-round' of political, economic and social changes brought forth a certain group of people who had experienced luxury thanks to the war and who had not hesitated to manifest this luxury and their excitement often until early morning hours. This naturally irritated people and provoked authorities, which was reflected in various bans of such 'naughty' behaviour in Prague. The political representation focused mainly on the hot topic of licencing of new bars. For instance, we can read about various town hall interventions and measures. The sources tell us about the scope of these regulations ranging from the innocent measures setting the amount of the lighting contribution according to the number of bulbs in luxury flats, bars and entertainment sites (AHMP, *Minutes of Meetings of the Top Administrative Commission* [18 October – December 1923], Inv. No. 487), to the consent of the Metropolitan Council with the mayor's statement on bars and their operation. The meeting resulted in the ban on opening additional bars in Prague stating that the current number of these facilities was sufficient and satisfied the demand (*Hostimil* 1928). This act was a success of those advocating for the regulation and control of bars. This group was led by Mayor Karel Baxa who had voiced his opinion during the meeting of the Central Council of the City of Prague on 5 November 1923. He reacted to the speech by Communist Dr. Hecht who had pointed to the consequences of sexually transmitted diseases and alcoholism and spoken out against the 'reproduction of bars that are a hotbed of sexual diseases' (AHMP, *Minutes of Meetings of the Central Council* [October–December 1923], Inv. No. 870). It is because compared to the banned houses of prostitution, bars were open almost to everyone. The presentation of Dr. Hecht can therefore indicate the high moral aspect where bars had been a thorn in their side not only due to the offer of alcoholic drinks and their occasional excessive consumption, but especially from the social

point of view focusing on the group of people staying in this environment. Although the mayor did not go to bars, he based his opinion on the mediated imagination of space, i.e. on the statements from his colleagues or policemen. The Berlin bars gave a similar impression. This is obvious in the work of German painter Jeanne Mammen who had captured, thanks to her sexual orientation, the free and unconventional love towards the present moment (Wells 2012). But the well-preserved poster production provides evidence that the actions against bars had not been very successful. It confirms that the *American Bar* and its offer and accompanying programme had played an important role in social life of the 1920s and 1930s (Mozt 2015; Mikšovic 2009).

The aforementioned moral and social aspects were an important guideline in the imagination about the *American Bar* because not everyone had been admitted to a bar. The *American Bar* represented a luxurious type of service, i.e. there used to be the corresponding 'dress code' requirements. The right clothing also manifested the visitor's property situation, but these requirements had been reduced in some time. We can see the depiction of the required 'dress code' in the poster production for the so-called Paris in Prague, i.e. the Pigall's dancing bar in Ovocný trh. The poster from 1925 shows a dandy in a traditional suit while the lady on his side fascinates with a short haircut and a modern evening dress (Kroutvor 1988). A different view of night pleasures can be seen in the picture *Metropolis* by German painter Otto Dix, showing very easy morals through naked legs of a woman. Even Czech poet of that time Vítězslav Nezval commented on this element (1928):

Let's not be afraid for the naked legs of women. We would fall into lies, Racin-like virtue of aristocrats. We are afraid for dignity and slavery that is a threat everywhere where it is possible to buy. That is why we forbid ourselves to go to cabarets, bars and theatres. They are the windows of the shops selling naked legs (Nezval 1928: 308).

Nonetheless, it was often not only about legs, which is evident from many outraged remarks complaining about the excessive nakedness of girls in bars and cabarets. German playwright Carl Zuckmayer even recalls a private party where girls employed to serve drinks were moving around almost naked, only in transparent silver knickers with a fig leaf pattern (Gill 1993). Morality had almost always been associated with the female element that had and has been an integral part of the bar environment (Mozt 2015; *Hostimil* 1928).

On the other hand, the *American Bar* may be perceived as a revolutionary setting which had become a common point for sexes and a place subject to the emancipation development since the turn of the century. Until then, the common functioning in an entertaining setting had been fairly clearly defined and separated, which may also be inferred from the fact that

cocktails had not been initially neutral as to differentiating sexes. It was mainly men who had consumed stronger drinks, including cocktails, while women had been destined to drink fortified wines or brandy in case of health problems (Carlin 2012).

The offer of American mixed drinks – or cocktails – was a significant element of the *American Bar*. Their popularity had gradually penetrated into all social structures. Anyone who could do it, tested cocktails, and who could not could at least read about them in the popular ‘bar’ literature that had been a target of complaint by Czech writer Karel Čapek to his publisher, Otakar Štorch-Marien. Those who were lucky could also attend an improvised lecture about *Bary – chrámy dvacátého století* (Bars – the Temples of the 20th Century) by Czech cubistic architect Josef Chochol (Marešová 2012).

In the first half of the 20th century, there also used to be a widely spread opinion regarding the curative effects of alcohol (Mozr 2015, 2012; Vošáhlíková 1999). It is therefore no surprise that the society was not discouraged even by the activities of various movements against the consumption of alcoholic beverages. A clear example of perception of alcohol as medicine can be seen in the opening scene of the film *Hej rup!* where the character of the extravagant manufacturer, Simonid (represented by Czech actor Jan Werich), is waking up after a long party. His first thought goes to a hangover relief, which is why he puts himself on the *Prairie Oyster* cocktail (*Hej rup* 1934). The popularity of the *Prairie Oyster* cocktail in the interwar period is also reflected by British writer Christopher Isherwood (2012) whose main character in the *Sally Bowles* story gives not only a recipe for this drink, but makes it straight that she ‘practically lives on this cocktail’ (Isherwood 2012: 29).

In 1937, Czech writer and journalist Karel Poláček was comparing the importance of the modern attraction, the *American Bar*, with the Czech pub. He emphasised both spatial aspects where ‘pubs are above the ground while bars are in the cellar’ (Marešová 2012), and the atmosphere created by the given community or the music arrangement. Last, but not least, he mentioned the contemporary role of these facilities, stating the pubs had rather been institutions while bars had been a fashionable issue (Marešová 2012). But it is also obvious from the aforementioned information how wrong Karel Poláček had been in this respect because bars had gradually been embedded in legislation (see Government Regulation No. 254, on Benefits for Administrative Acts dated 22 December 1926; Mozr 2015; Mikšovic 2009; *Hostimil* 1931). On the one hand, it also seems that he was right that the *American Bar* had been a fashionable phenomenon because it had reacted to new trends, to the post-war desire for entertainment and relaxation, which could be reflected both in the wild pace of dancing and in the flamboyant cocktail.

## 5. Conclusion

The concept of place is a ‘complicated system of objects, actors, processes and their mutual relations and ways of perception and interpretation’ (Kašková et al. 2016: 11). And this is twice as much true in the case of the selected ‘exotic’ phenomenon. American historian and geographer David Lowenthal (1961) pointed out that each image and idea in the world around us is based on personal experience, learning, projection and memory. Thanks to projections and fantasy, the places that we live in, visit and travel through, as well as the worlds that we read about and see in the work of artists contribute to our perception of individual settings and people in them.

The aim of the study was to point to the introduce the *American Bar* phenomenon as well as to deepen the knowledge regarding the development of this concept that had directly and indirectly been engaged in the formation of identity of social groups of inhabitants in the given metropolises during the course of time. Although this phenomenon had been in many aspects true to its original model, e.g. in the application of the serving of ice-cold American mixed drinks, it may be stated following an analysis of sources and comparison of the situation in Prague and Berlin that in the Central European space, the *American Bar* represented a clash of reality and imagination, which had formed an absolutely unique environment. On the one hand, the common elements of the original concept and the *American Bar* included the depiction of place as an immoral environment tempting to villainy, while on the other hand, it was a welcomed escape from reality, a curative setting designed for a selected part of the society where one could search for and find new adventures. All the same, the acceptance of the phenomenon in the different socio-cultural space, the transformation of values, its gradual anchoring and participation of the locals in the development of the *American Bar* not only as consumers, but also as direct creators of this concept (employee, owner) are among the aspects fuelling this innovation with such importance and meaning.

As a new and original form of service, the *American Bar* had gradually emerged across the continent since the second half of the 19th century, from the United Kingdom over France to Germany and Austria, and even farther. The establishment of this phenomenon may be divided into three stages. In the first stage, taking place in both metropolises (Berlin, Prague) in the last decade of the 19th century at the latest, it was about becoming familiar with this phenomenon. In the second stage, on the contrary, we can see a gradual emergence of the first bars whose number had slowly grown until World War I. This fact is also reflected in the existence of the first bars in the Central European space where we could see this concept through the *American Bar* in Vienna designed by architect Adolf



Loos since 1908 or since 1912 thanks to the American Bar in the basement of the Municipal House in Prague. The interwar period represented the third stage which also received major attention in research. It was namely in this period when the *American Bar* had enormously flourished; there was a growing number of bars in this style and this phenomenon had fully established itself in the society, which can be observed in the penetration of this innovation outside the historical centre of the city.

The research encountered many rigours, i.e. although it was comparing two capital cities, they are in fact hard to compare due to their actual size and economic potential. We might as well point to the transformation of the form of the concept which was based on the current historical and geographical perspective in individual metropolises. Hence, imagination mediated through local and foreign films could create an image of an absolutely different setting than had been in reality formed in the given locality. This even evokes thought to which extent the original concept of the bar in the United States had corresponded to the subsequent depiction in the Hollywood films. Some other thematic approaches may also come into consideration: e.g. the description of internal regulations, who worked at the *American Bar*, whether they were locals or strangers, what was typical of this profession and what the bar space had looked like. It is also possible to provide a deeper analysis of the political framework, e.g. actions by the Nazi regime in Germany or the national issue in Czechoslovakia, considering whether the bars had been differentiated as rather German or rather Czech. There are undoubtedly many options which could move the *American Bar* phenomenon even further. All the same, the focus of this contribution on the concept of place not only on the basis of spatial changes, but especially from the viewpoint of the social turnaround, or a turning point in the development, correlates to the projected objective, i.e. to submit the meaning and importance of the *American Bar* as a part of Americanisation, since this institution meant a new cultural element to which the locals and political authorities had to define their approach. They had to form a certain relationship, whether through personal experience or imagination.

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