

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Shopping centers have become part of the retail space in many post-communist countries due to globalization trends in the early 90s of the last century (Križan et al. 2016, Michalak 2001, Riley 1997, Spilková 2008, Szczyrba 2005a). The transformation of the retail space in Slovakia had several phases (Mitríková 2008, Trembošová 2012). As E. Nagy (2001, p. 346) states, taking Hungary as an example, "in capitals and the largest provincial cities, large-scale developments have transformed consumer habits and the spatial shopping trips of the urban population, who have adapted very rapidly to the new retail structure. In this way, the gravity center of shopping has changed: customers increasingly target the city center for its specialized shops, but its role is declining in daily and weekly shopping. The flow of shoppers is also shifting from the traditional main shopping streets to new shopping centers and the stores clustered around it". As one of the few Slovak cities, Bratislava shows signs of growing decentralization and not only in suburbanization activities. On the one hand, Bratislava is a prime example of retail concentration (cf. Szczyrba 2005b), and retail activity decentralization on the other (Šveda, Križan 2012).

Changes in urban retail go along with changes in consumer behavior (Spilková 2012) and consumer mobility for services (Halás, Zuskáčová 2013). In this respect, shopping centers became the favored retail format (Maryáš et al. 2014, Szczyrba 2010).

The aim of the paper is to evaluate consumer preferences in shopping centers in Bratislava from a spatial perspective. The authors identify the most preferred shopping centers in Bratislava based on consumer preferences and attractiveness index. The authors also attempt to identify consumer preference distribution while choosing shopping centers.

## 2. METHODS AND DATA

The methods used in the study can be divided into three groups. The first group consists of methods analyzing consumer perceptions and preferences. Therefore, primary data was collected via survey and interviews (Guimarães 2014, Kunc et al. 2012). The study is based on a survey of 11,389 respondents, consumers shopping in retail units across Bratislava (cf. Bilková et al. 2016, Križan et al. 2015, Kita, Grossmanová 2014). Quota sampling was employed (Bryman 2012) to consider place of residence, age, and other characteristics (table 1). The survey was conducted between February and May 2011. Respondents were asked directly in shopping centers and their vicinities in Bratislava.