In the first quantitatively oriented investigation of third-person plural concord variation in Rio de Janeiro in the late 70’s of the 20th century it was not obvious from synchronic patterns whether use of concord was declining or increasing or neither (Naro, 1981). The non-random sample of 17 semi-literate speakers showed complex interaction between a pattern of increased rate of concord in speakers, both younger and older, with a wider social perspective, and a pattern of decrease in speakers whose social outlook was limited to their own social level. At the time, this was interpreted as loss of concord as the general community trend, with a contravening trend in socially-motivated individuals.

Later research in the 80’s with a larger randomly selected group of speakers confirmed the trend in the same community of decreased rate of concord among younger speakers, but the effect was weak. About twenty years later, at the beginning of the 21st century, a new trend survey of the same community showed the same weak trend in the corresponding age groups of speakers, then about twenty years older, but the youngest speakers, not yet born in the 80’s, showed a clear reversal of pattern, with increased use of concord (Naro & Scherre, 2013). This was interpreted as a result of social change involving upward economic mobility and increased availability of education in Rio, and throughout Brasil, in the twenty year interval (Scherre & Naro, 2014). A panel study with 16 speakers from the first sample who could be located at the time of the second sample showed that none of them had decreased their rate of concord. In fact, all recontacted speakers who had increased their level of education between the two recordings actually increased their rate of plural concord (Naro & Scherre, 2015). New results from the city of Vitoria, capital of State Espírito Santo, Southeast region, also clearly show increased use of concord with both age and level of education (Benfica, 2016).

Results on first-person plural concord for two geographically distinct areas (the capital of the state of Espírito Santo, Vitória, in the Southeast region, and Goiás, in the Center-West region), also show more verbal concord in correlation with increased of schooling (Benfica, 2016; Mattos, 2013). This seems entirely natural, bearing in mind explicit stigma strongly associated with lack of concord in Brazilian Portuguese. Age, however, exhibits different results in these two areas: in the Vitória speech community our results show increased use of concord among younger speakers, suggesting community change in progress in the direction...
increased standard concord; results obtained by Mattos (2013) for the speech of Goiás exhibit the opposite direction, with younger speakers using concord less frequently. This situation is interpreted by Mattos (2013) as a consequence of local identity affirmation in Goiás. In this region, issues involving concord are often discussed in local media, which habitually affirms that the local urban population maintains strong connections with its rural origins, but, at the same time, welcomes external cultural trends. An example is the large scale use of the pronoun a gente 'we', regularly without the -mos desinence, as in the standard (Mattos, 2013; Mattos & Scherre, 2015), just as in Vitória (Mendonça, 2010).

Although our results tend to show increased concord in more recent samples, we also find that there are divergent shifts, especially for stigmatized phenomena such as concord (Naro 1981, cf. also Coelho, 2006; Oushiro, 2015). The model of flows and counter-flows of Naro and Scherre (2013) provides insightful understanding of the diverse social paths that speakers mold over time along well-defined linguistic dimensions.

References
