Abstract
The proposal of analysis of the social-environmental perception will be developed from the discourse as a constitutive element of reality. The discourse practices and their concretion will be the source of meaning and social-cultural value. Thus, the chosen research method was the qualitative and quantitative case study. In the first part of the text we will recapture a theoretical input by Mary Douglas on risk and culture, as well as on the acceptance of the risks in society. In the second part, we cover a few data of the case of the risks resulting from the tanning industry and on how the society of the “Vale do Rio dos Sinos” relates to these risks. In this article we conclude that risk perception of the population is directly related with past experiences, thus, assigning a meaning to all new events. This meaning is the result of a sociocultural construction. It is worth noting that behind this history, there are basic issues related to population survival, i.e., both the industrialists and workers establish partnerships when the society creates a movement against the leather industry.

Keywords
Environmental risk, risk perception, river pollution, leather footwear industry.