

NO, NOBODY ESCAPES FROM THE RIVER. THE PERCEPTION OF A NATURAL CATASTROPHE.

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The relations between man and his environment are increasingly influenced by the concept of risk, in the case of gradual changes, like the greenhouse effect, the ozone hole or the food contamination by pesticides, as well as in the case of natural or man-induced, almost instantaneous, catastrophes. Catastrophic floods and mud-flows are quite common when concentrated rain occurs, in the slopes from the Serra do Mar and the Serra Geral, along the Brazilian east coast. A typical example occurred in Southern Santa Catarina State, in 12/23/1995. Considering the lack of original data, the dialog with involved people from the Rio Pinheirinho Valley, in Jacinto Machado, SC, was quite useful to elucidate several questions about the mud flows that occurred in that occasion, as well as to put in evidence the fact that these environmental aspects need to be considered in relation with the bulk of the social question, in order to permit that the scientific studies and the community works effectively contribute for a better life quality of these inhabitants.