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**Connecting Geographies from the Global South**

**Session**: Decolonial histories of geography

**Convenors**: Federico Ferretti (Università di Bologna) André Reyes Novaes (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro), on behalf of the IGU Commission History of Geography

**Title:** A broad abolitionist social movement in Brazil: black struggles for freedom and the pro-abolition scenario in 19th century Rio de Janeiro

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**Abstract**

Brazil was the last country of the Americas to abolish slavery, and the one that received the greater amount of people that were trafficked from Africa to the continent. On discussing slavery and freedom in Brazil, until the 1980s, the historiography treated the abolitionist movement in the country as a separated movement from black revolts: while the first received the status of an organized movement, predominantly associated with the literate elite and the parliament, the second boiled down to isolated acts of rebellion by the enslaved black population. From this decade onwards, a reformulation movement began to revisit analyzes and documentation, adopting new sources of research to rethink the relationship between dominant and dominated. Also, most recently, the urge to produce decolonized and antiracist narratives is leading to different approaches on the theme, including the interest of other disciplines, like Geography and Arts. Therefore, this paper intends to discuss the conception of abolitionist movement as a broad social movement that congregates different kinds of actions, actors, and places. To achieve this goal, *struggles for freedom* is used as a research analytical parameter, able to overcome the dichotomy between abolitionist movement and black revolts, as the 19th century Rio de Janeiro is taken as an example. The city can be seen as a scenario, where black struggles for freedom take place. It was a real black city, where black people, Africans and Afro-Brazilians were important characters of the socioeconomic structure and in the urban culture. Besides, Rio was capital of Brazil’s Empire, and home to the most important port of the Americas for the entry of enslaved Africans. As methodology for this paper, imagination (João José Reis e Saidiya Hartman) is applied, combined with digital humanities and art-activism. It is expected with this paper to contribute on building geographies from below.

**Keywords:** social movements; abolition; scenario; Rio de Janeiro; Brazil

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**Short Bio**

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