What inspired you to do your research?
During my Master degree in Brazil, I was invited to be a member of two Research Groups funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) – Media, Art and Culture and Humanitarian Journalism and Media Interventions – which guided the construction of my master’s thesis, which examined how, through memory, activist art, and aesthetic experience, it is possible to represent the Israel-Palestine conflict from the (re)construction of the exiled Palestinian identity. In addition, also during my MA program, I worked as a research assistant and editor at the UNESCO Communication Chair and I had an opportunity to create a social project to work directly with Venezuelan refugees who had just arrived in São Paulo. The possibility of helping them has solidified my passion for exploring the humanitarian potential of media, into which I aim to go deeper in my doctoral studies. However, this time I seek new challenges to explore new theories beyond my physical and cultural boundaries.

What is your research about?
When visually analyzing humanitarian crises, it is necessary to humanize the statistical data and value the characters of narratives as protagonists. One way of thinking beyond scenes of violence is focusing the study on amateur photographic practices that show the reality of refugees through their own eyes. However, this approach has not been deeply explored in critical media studies. Following this idea, my research aims to distance the analysis from the mainstream media and focuses on alternative photography practices which frame refugees as the narrators of their own stories. My work explores the potential of amateur photography and its intersections with activism as a way of building the memory and exiled identity of refugee women through self-representation. I focus on refugee women from a specific community in Calgary, Canada and São Paulo, Brazil to analyze how these women’s visual narratives can differ in the Global North and South countries. In short, the main objective of this research is to propose new approaches for humanitarian photography scholarship through amateur photography by framing refugees’ memories beyond the problematic side of the conflict and valuing all of their life experiences ethically and humanely.
How do you do your research?
My research still under construction. I am now preparing my candidacy process. However, I intend to conduct the research in the field to study refugee women as active participants in the process of knowledge production concerning the phenomenon of self-representation, rather than a mere text of study. For this reason, I shape my foundation in the light of the phenomenology paradigm. This approach help me to establish trajectories for a participatory method called photovoice, which I divided into 4 phases: (1) Listening to them: I will immerse myself in the field to listen to oral histories of refugee women from a specific community in Calgary and São Paulo; (2) Framing the world: I will propose that refugee women photograph their daily lives; (3) Expressing themselves: I will ask them to write small notes about their photographs; (4) Empowering refugee’s memories: I will extend this work beyond the dissertation by developing a digital platform to post photographs created by and for refugee women.

What is the implication of your research?
As a critical media researcher, I do not want to talk for them, but give them a space to talk, so their voices, through visual narration, can be heard. Thus, the main implication of my research will be that it will not be restricted to the dissertation itself. I will create a space for amateur photographic narratives to empower and promote these women’s voices. Furthermore, my goal is to contribute to research around visual culture, photography, and memory within and beyond academia. Secondly, I aim to construct a knowledge bridge between Brazil and Canada and to contribute to the collaboration between North and South American communication scholarship.