“Between Borders: a comparative study of traditional and fronterizo migrants” & Fondren’s Library Resources

“Between Borders” paints a picture of a multi-dimensional migration experience by accounting for local specificities of two types of migration: a traditional movement from Guadalajara, Jalisco to Dallas, Texas and a borderland movement from Matamoros, Tamaulipas to Brownsville, Texas and by exploring how proximity alters and impacts gendered labor roles. For the purpose of this study a traditional migration entails Mexican migrants moving from central Mexico to urban hubs in the United States whereas borderland migration encompasses a more fluid and constant flow of people between the international boundary of the United States and Mexico. The international borderland is a hotbed for the study of gender because cultural norms from country to country clash along the border. Mexico’s close proximity to the United States makes it a crucial research interest for American institutions. Migration studies are of particular importance because immigration has been, and will continue to be, a hot-button social and political issue for both countries. Gender must be considered as a component of migration because the twentieth-century saw a shift in female migration incentives, in gendered assumptions about labor and an increase in female migration as a whole.1 Migration has transformed the demographic composition of the United States and Mexico both on the border and beyond.

The Fondren Library Collection has provided me with the historiographical foundation necessary to complete my dissertation. I have consulted over 75 books on themes of gender, migration, and borderland living in order to understand how scholars have explored these issues and interwoven the three subjects. In many cases I found that only two of the three themes were analyzed. I also noticed a few trends: when gender was assessed alongside migration or borderland living it predominately revolved around men; when migration was the central focus it typically highlighted long distance, semi-permanent to permanent migration, and did not consider how borderland migrants might experience migration differently based on the frequency of their border crossing. These trends led me to formulate a dissertation topic that addresses the gaps in current gender, migration, and borderland scholarship. Although my dissertation is still a work in progress—field research will be conducted in spring and summer of 2017—I have used Fondren’s resources in preparing various fellowship applications for dissertation funding. Fondren’s resources have been integral in jumpstarting my dissertation and will continue to be a salient part of my research as I work towards completing “Between Borders.”