Marriage Bars and Teacher Pay

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Marriage Bars: Summary of Descriptive Evidence

- Change in % female teachers who are single from 1900 - 1940: shifts from close to 100% in most places to much lower levels (70%) nationally.
- De-trending using % female secretaries who are single preserves trend.
- Comparison of histograms between Southern states that introduced legislation lifting marriage bans for teachers in 1938 (KY, NC, DC) vs. those that did not (all others) suggests that legislation had some bite.

Identification Strategy

Event study DiD framework:

$$y_{ct} = \alpha_t + \beta_{s(c)} + \sum_{k \in \{00,10,20,40\}} \gamma_k \times \text{Treat}_c \times \text{Year}_{k=t} + \varepsilon_{ct} \quad (1)$$

where y_{ct} is the share of female teachers who are unmarried in county c in year t, α_t captures year fixed effects, $\beta_{s(c)}$ captures state fixed effects, and T_c is an indicator for whether the county's state lifted the marriage ban through legislation between 1930 and 1940 (i.e. KY, NC, DC).

Event Study Plot