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February 16, 2014: Not Joining a Union/Not Marrying

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Title: Not Joining a Union/Not Marrying

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2/16/2014—In July, 2013, researchers reported that the US marriage rate had continued its long-term slide. Among all American women over 15, 47% were married, down from a high of 65% in 1950. Part of this change is women waiting longer to marry and part from a decline in remarriage among women who are divorced. But, of course, the main reason is just that people no longer feel the need to marry. "Marriage is no longer compulsory," study researcher Susan Brown, co-director of the National Center for Family and Marriage Research (NCFMR) at Bowling Green State University, said in a statement. "It's just one of an array of options. Increasingly, many couples choose to cohabit and still others prefer to remain single." [This is from the website, livescience]. Conservatives hate this trend while liberals by and large don't care. I am reminded on this trend because of the news that workers at the VW plant in Chattanooga rejected joining the United Auto Workers union 712 to 626. A majority vote among the 1500 workers was needed. Liberals hate the result while conservatives are delighted. Why did the UAW lose when the company itself appeared to want the union to win in order to set up worker councils? The union claimed that the result was caused by interference by Republican government officials. A story in the Wall Street Journal quoted workers saying that unionization would divide the plant's cohesion and that politically conservative workers did not want to join a liberal organization like the UAW. But I believe that deeper anti-union feelings are at least part of the story. And those deeper feelings, versus the strong union movement in other developed countries, like Germany, have to do with the same individualism that affects marriage. America is a nation of individuals who make our own way. We do not merge our separate identities into a larger whole. We do not practice solidarity. This is the ethos of capitalism. And the ethos of individual choice. But it is also the ethos of not marrying, not joining a union and not joining a church. All of these rates are related and they are all going down. I am inclined to say to America, to all of us, good luck with that.