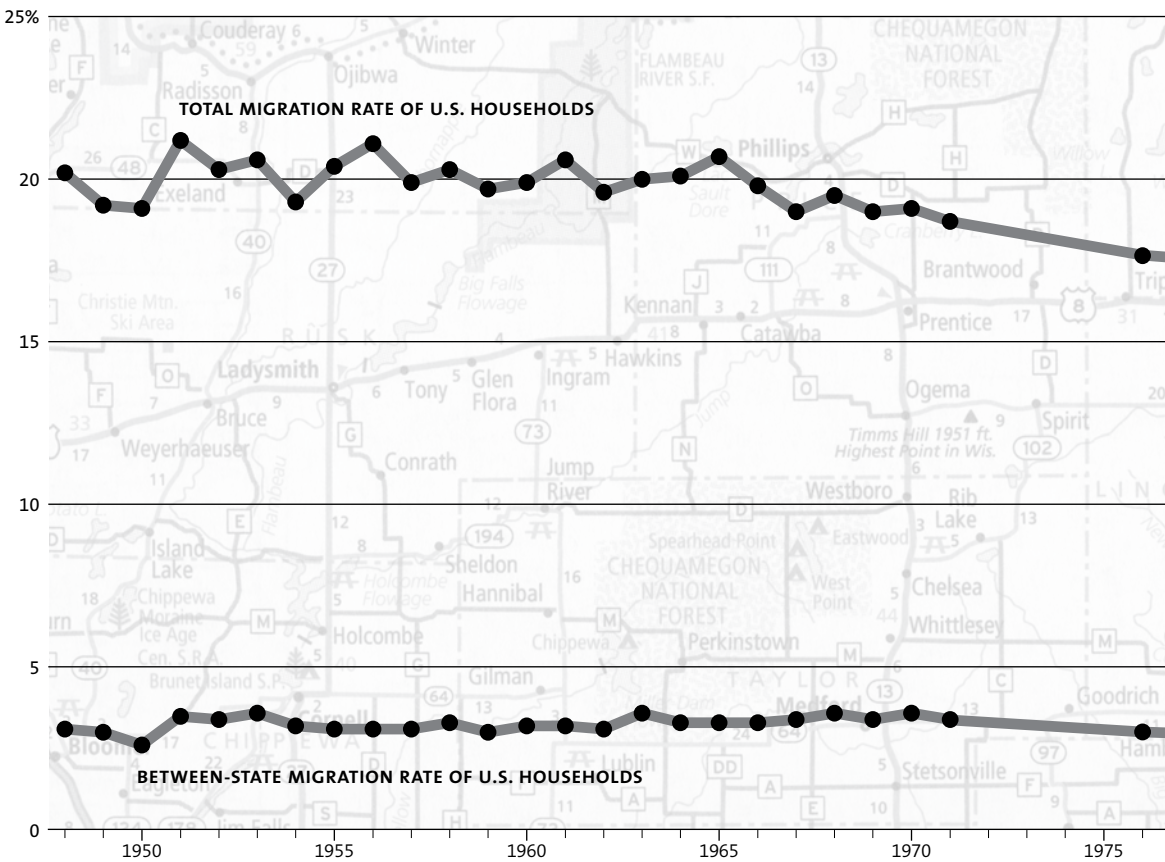


BY WILLIAM H. FREY

Along with plunging stock values and home prices, the nation's economic doldrums are reflected in another decline: geographic mobility. In the past year, domestic migration both short distances (new houses) and long (new jobs) have registered the lowest rates since 1947-48, when the Census started collecting annual data.

MIGRATION FREEFALL CONTINUES



SOURCE: Author's analysis of U.S. Census.
NOTE: Data are missing between 1971-1975 and 1976-1980 because annual rates were not collected.

The decline is especially dramatic for interstate moves, where the figure is just half the average rate of the past six decades. Indeed, fewer Americans moved across state lines last year than in any since 1949-50, when the total population was smaller by half.

All regions and almost all demographic groups have been affected. But African-Americans, Hispanics, people who did not graduate from college and families with children have been hit disproportionately – most likely

because they are more sensitive to declining employment opportunities and tougher mortgage standards. By contrast, the rise in home foreclosures, only tangentially reflected in the data used here, is likely to spur an unwelcome gain in local (as opposed to interstate) mobility. **M**

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