

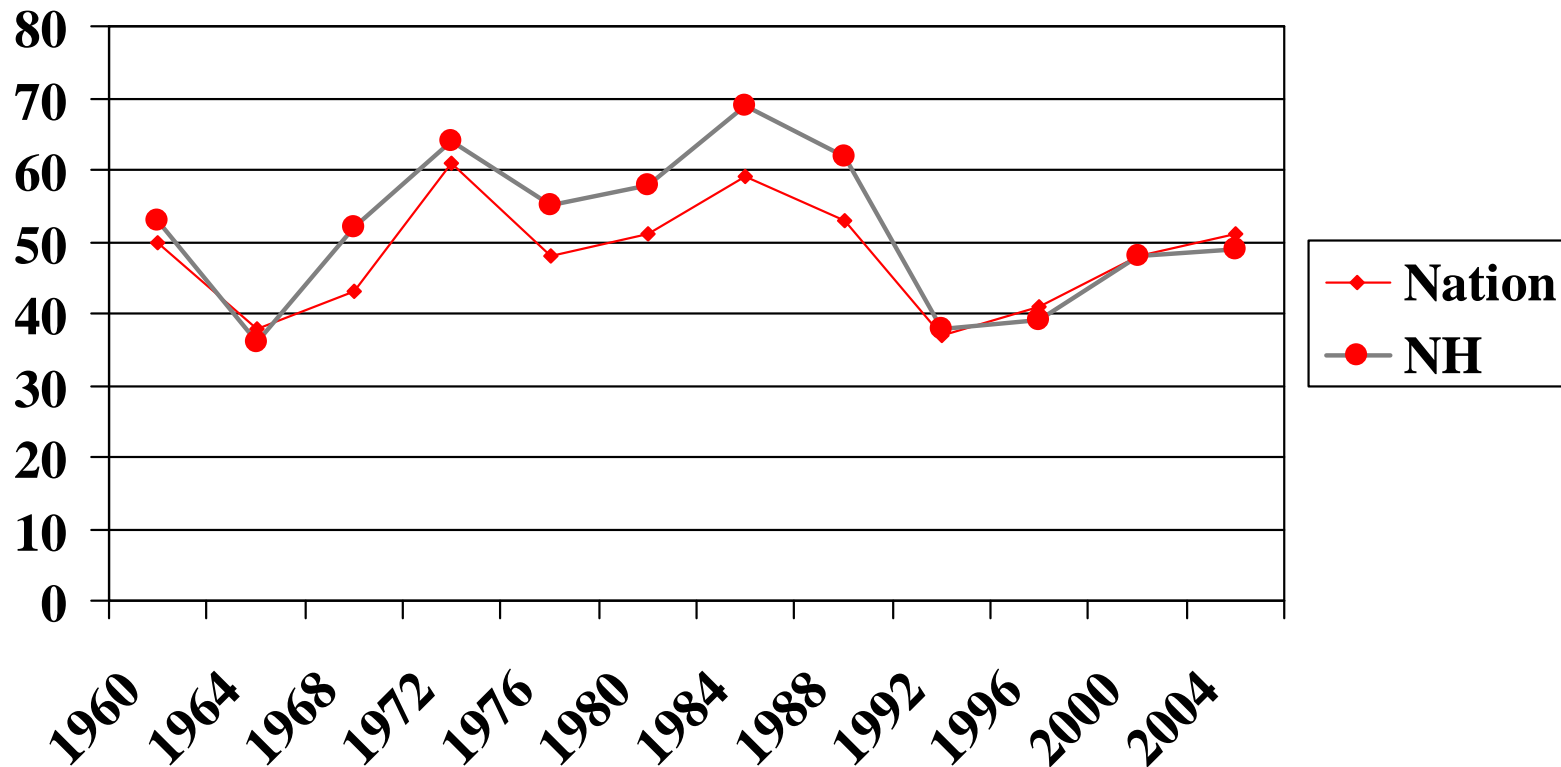
# Are We Blue?

The Shrinking Republican Footprint  
in the Granite State

*Dante J. Scala*

# Is New Hampshire realigning?

*(And if so, where are we in the process?)*



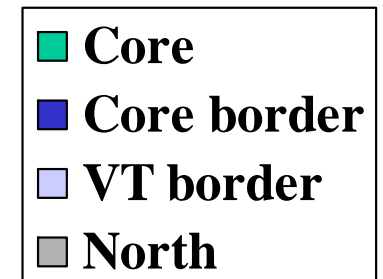
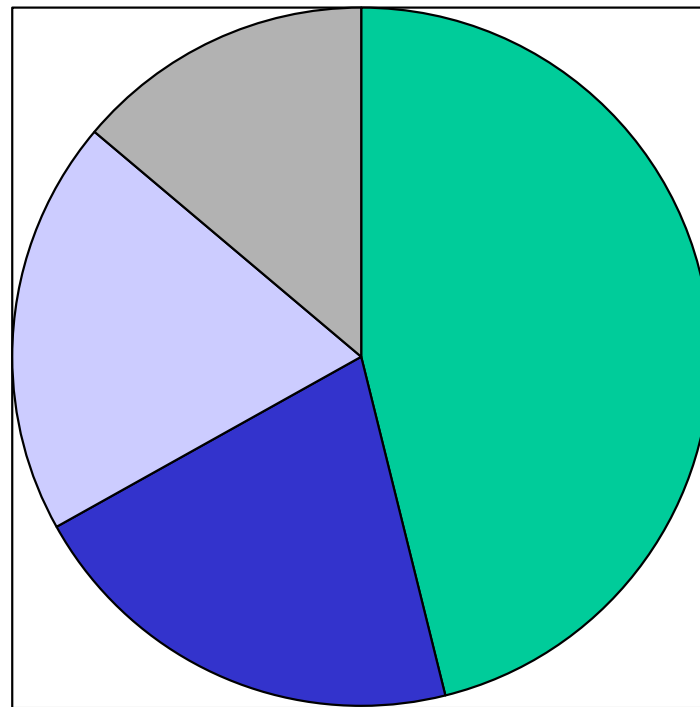
## *Outlining the Republican “footprint”*

- Unit of analysis: the 10 counties of N. H.
- What counties are clearly marked with the Republican imprint?
- Time span: 1960-2004 presidential elections
- GOP footprint: those counties where GOP candidate outperformed statewide vote share of two-party vote by at least 5 percentage points

*The counties of New Hampshire:  
core and periphery*

- Core: Hillsborough and Rockingham
- Bordering the core: Merrimack, Strafford
- Vermont border: Grafton, Sullivan, Cheshire
- North: Coos, Belknap, Carroll

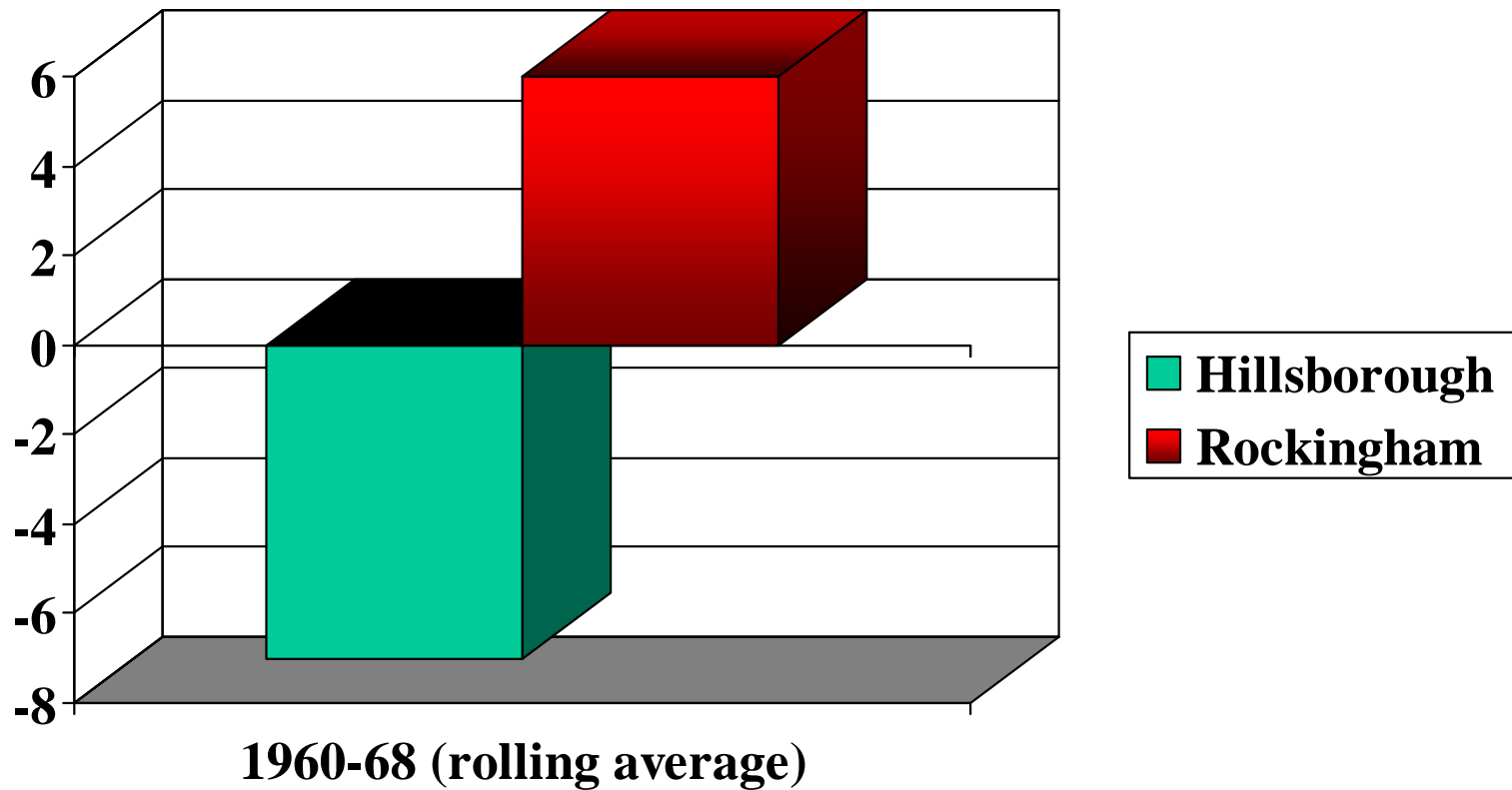
# 1960 presidential vote



## 1960-68 GOP footprint: five counties

- CORE
  - Rockingham (+ 6)
  - PERIPHERY
  - Belknap (+ 8)
  - Carroll (+ 22)
  - Grafton (+ 8)
  - Merrimack (+ 5)
- CORE
  - Hillsborough (- 7)
  - PERIPHERY
  - Coos (- 9)
  - Strafford (-5)

# Core counties, 1960-68

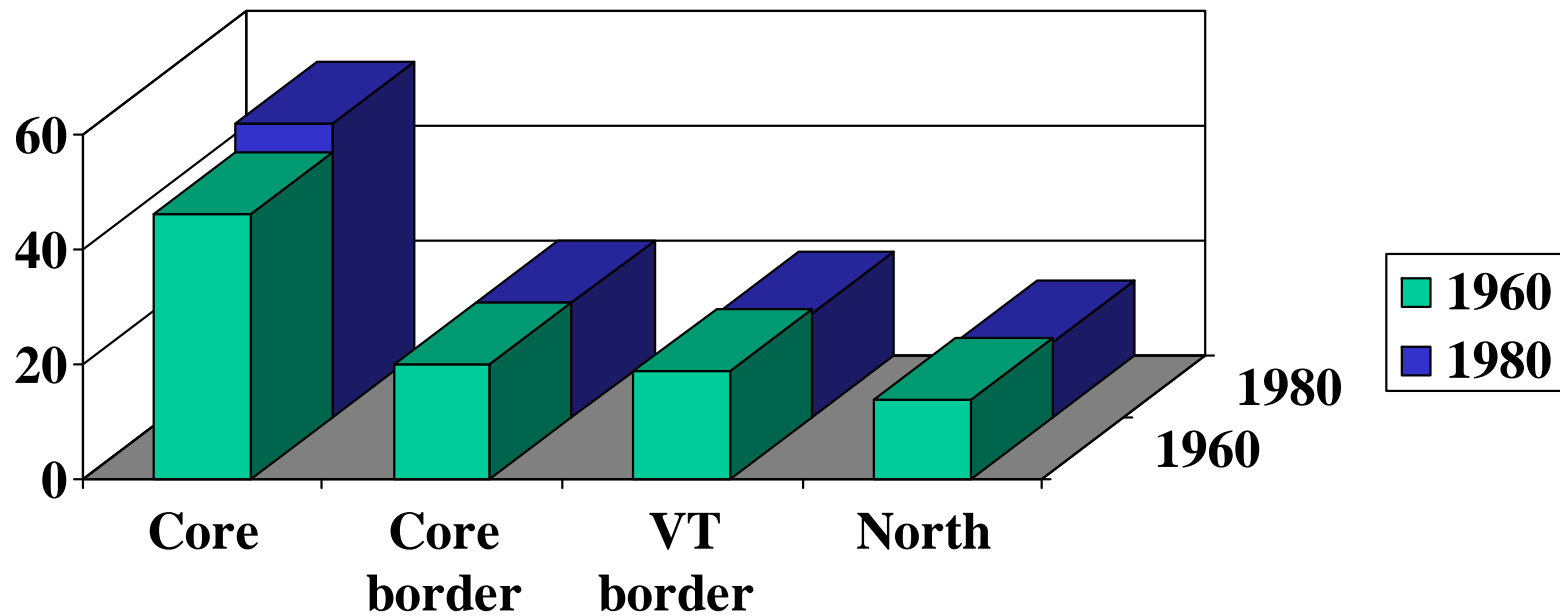


# 1960-80: The hidden realignment?

- *High-growth counties*
- Rockingham, 76 %  
(increase in votes cast)
- Carroll, 58 %
- NH's growth, 30 %
- *Slow-growth counties*
- Grafton, 22 %
- Strafford, 17 %
- Sullivan, 4 %
- Coos, - 20 %

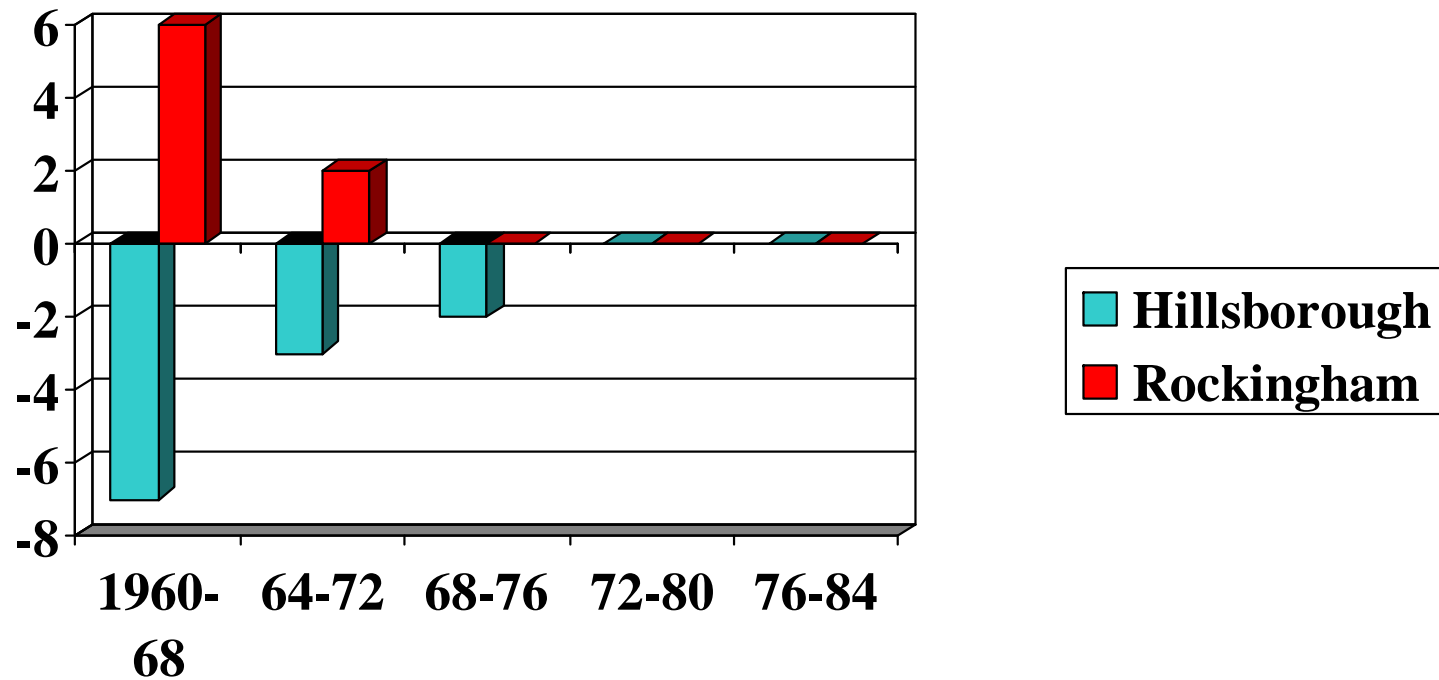
# Core counties > half the vote

Percentage of votes cast, 1960 vs. 1980



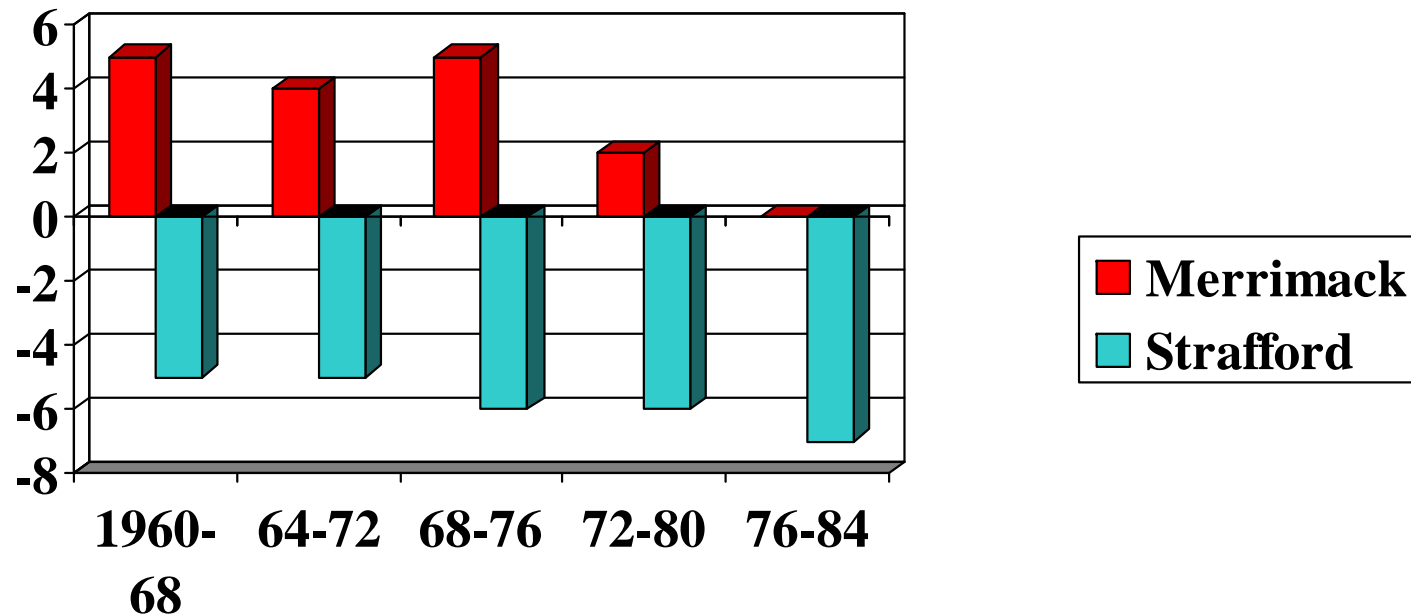
# The core becomes the bellwether

**GOP share of vote, compared to statewide**



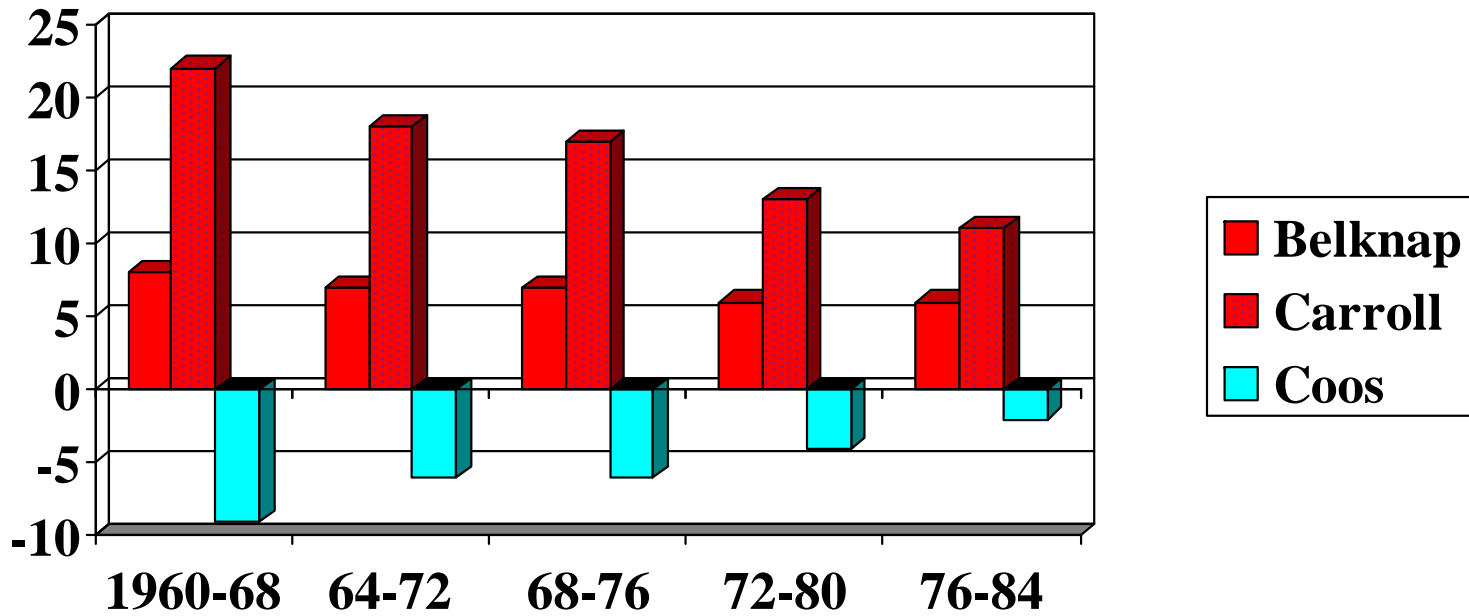
# Core border trends D

**GOP share of vote, compared to statewide**

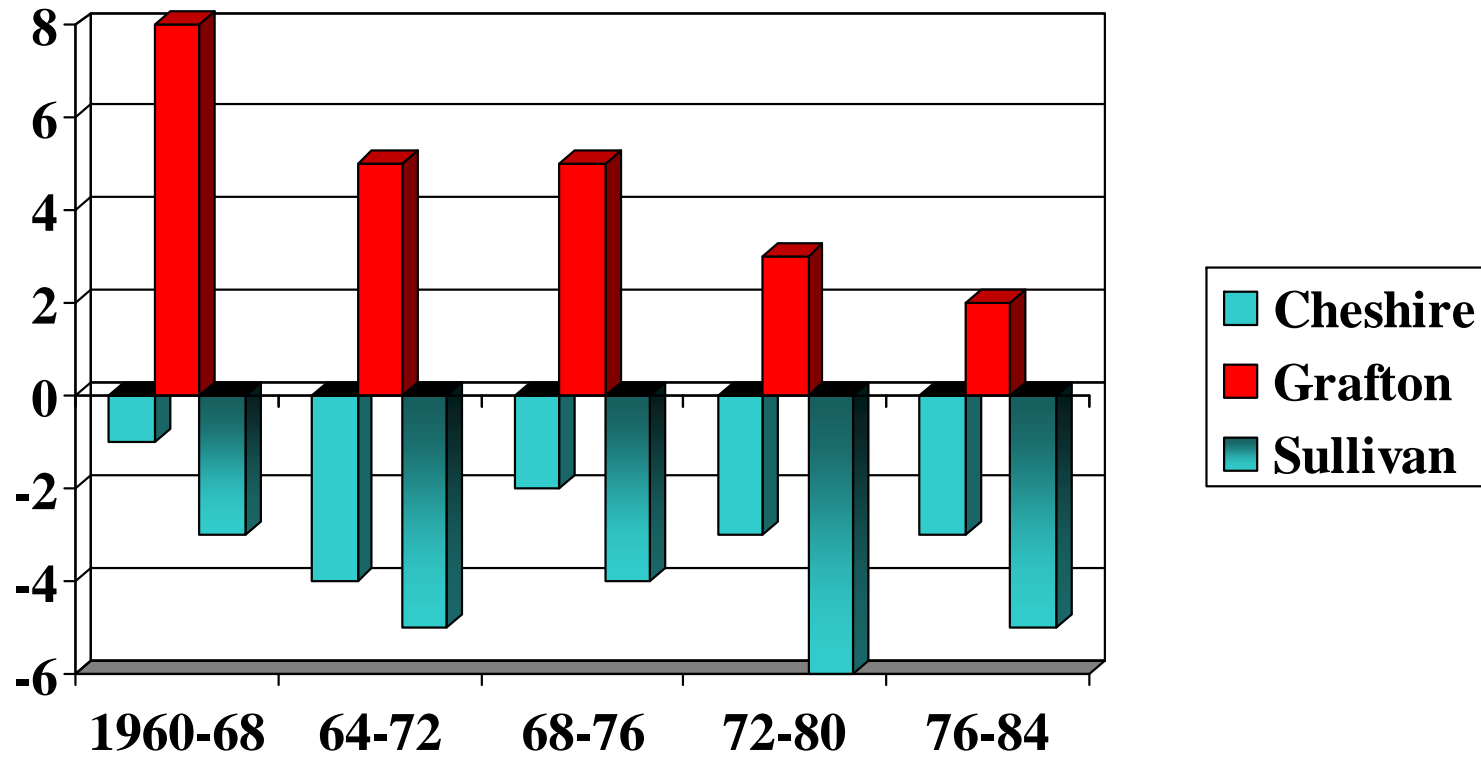


# Northern counties converge

**GOP share of vote, compared to statewide**



# Vermont infiltration?



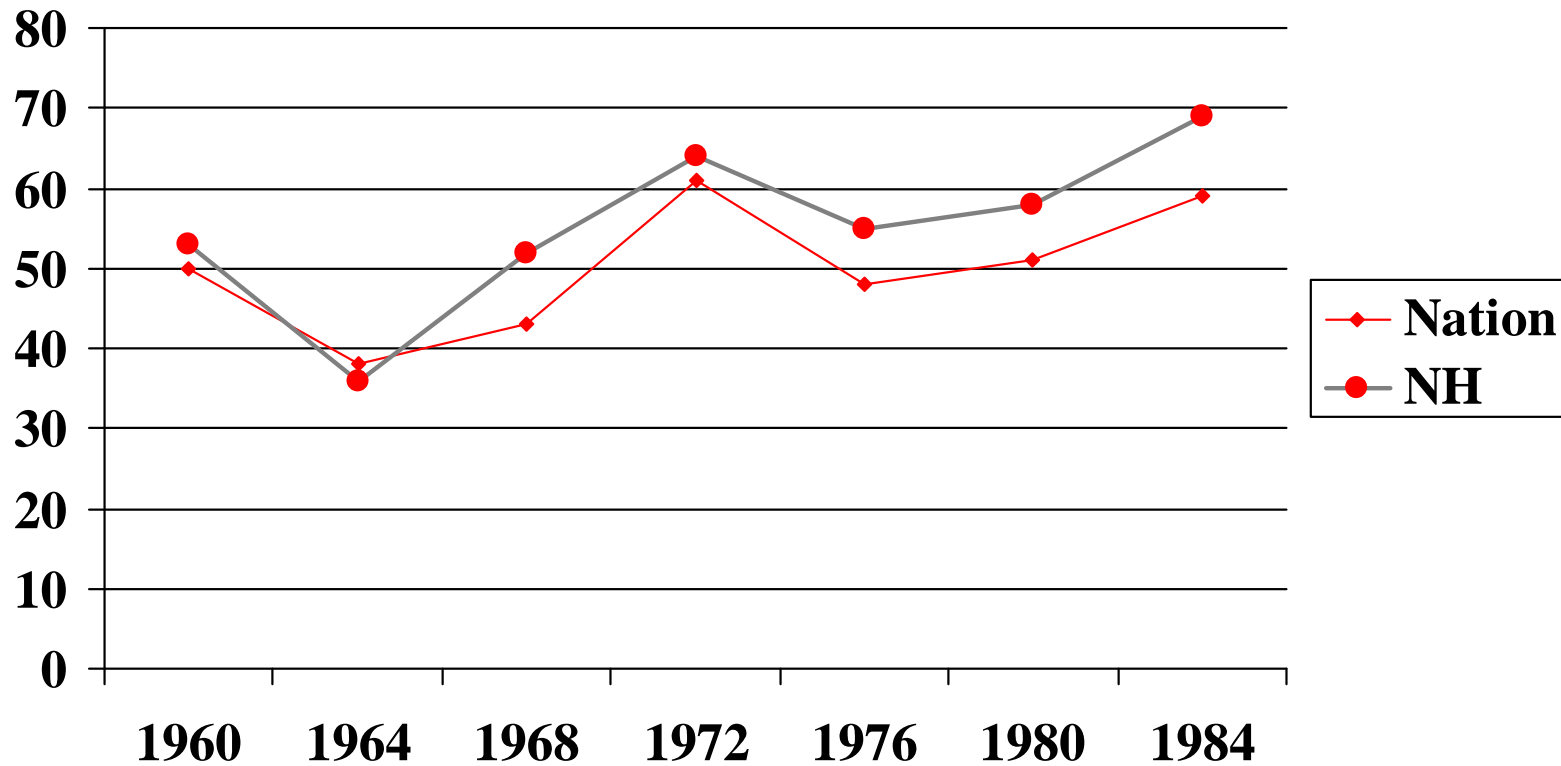
## *1960-80: Realignment well underway*

- **Republican footprint:** Only two counties where GOP presidential candidate outperforms by + 5
- Belknap (+ 6) and Carroll (+9)
- Growth the culprit? Mixed results
- Or, more conservative Republican Party?

# The big trade-off

- Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority*
- More conservative GOP attracts Hillsborough votes
- but begins to repel Yankee moderates

# The upside: NH solidly GOP

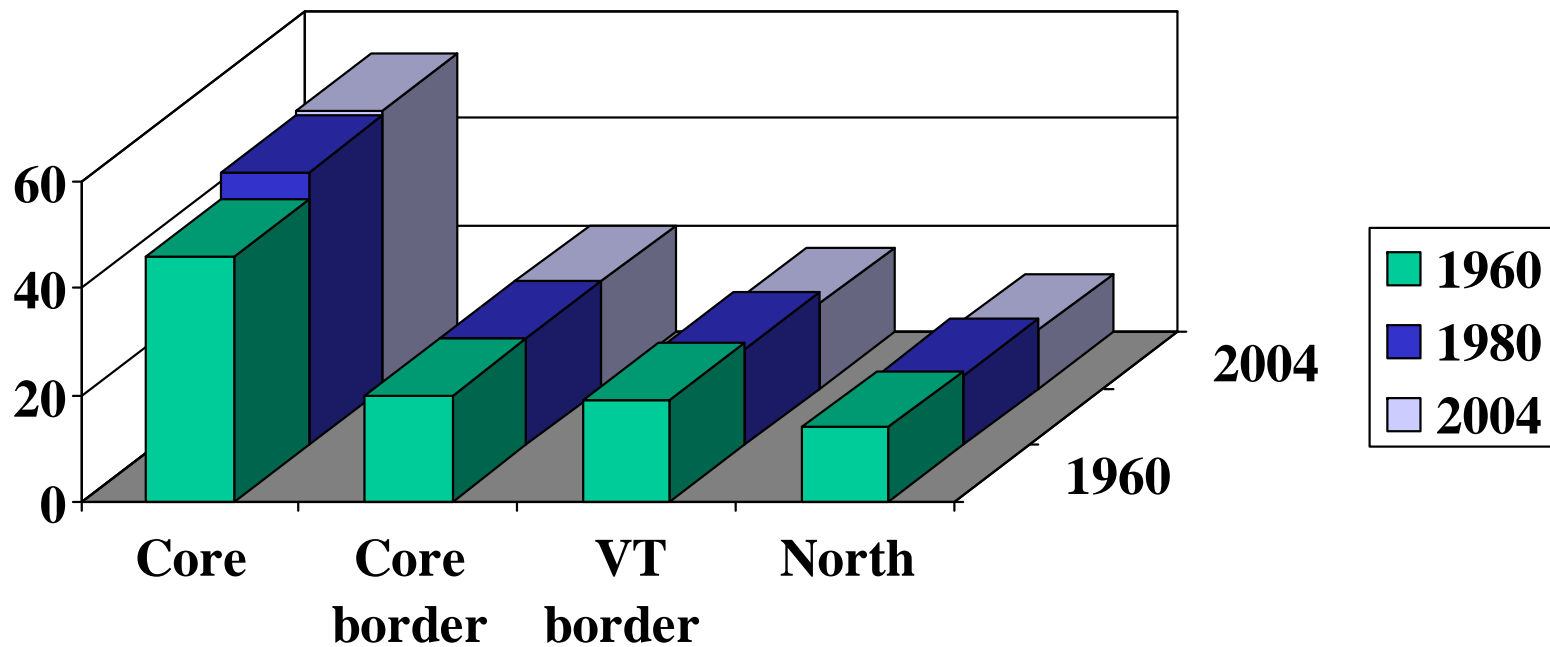


# 1980-2000: Growth accelerates

- **High-growth counties**
- Rockingham: 69 %  
increase in votes cast
- Carroll: 61 %
- Strafford: 52 %
- Merrimack: 52 %
- NH: 48 % increase
- **Low-growth counties**
- Sullivan: 32 %
- Cheshire: 31 %
- Coos: 1 %

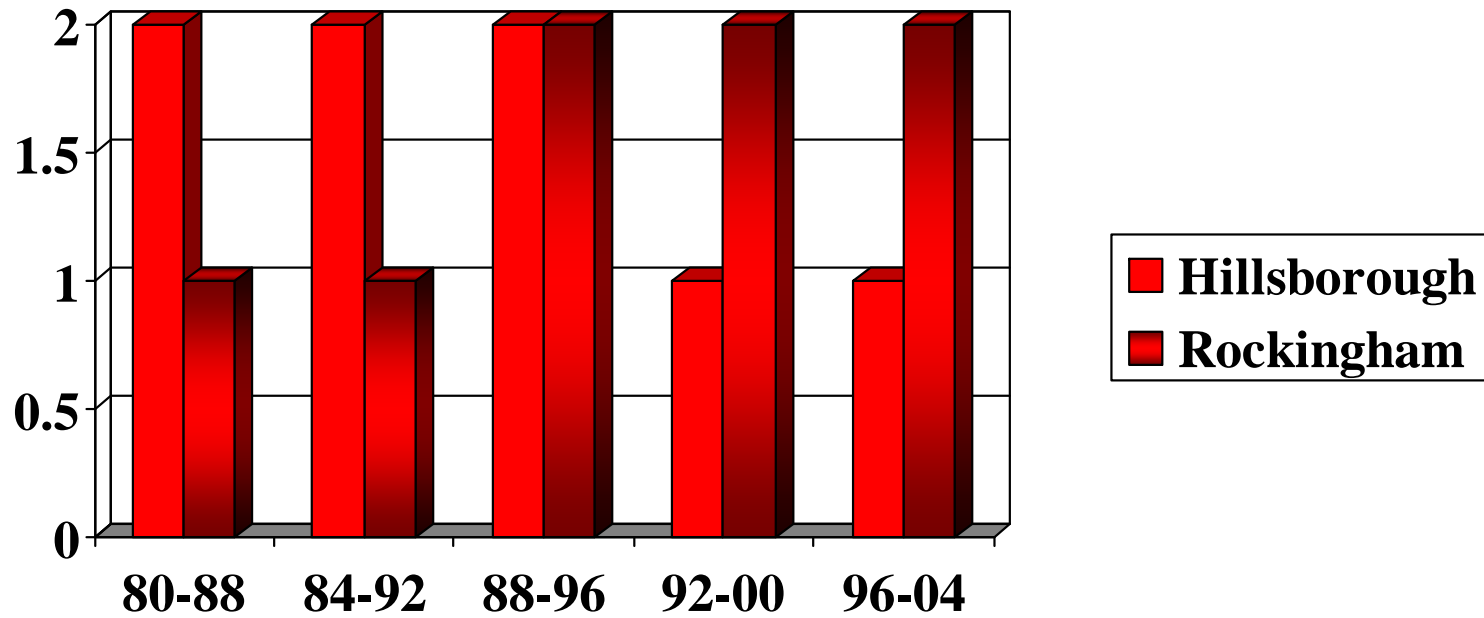
# Four counties = 72 percent of vote

Percentage of votes cast, 1960 vs. 1980



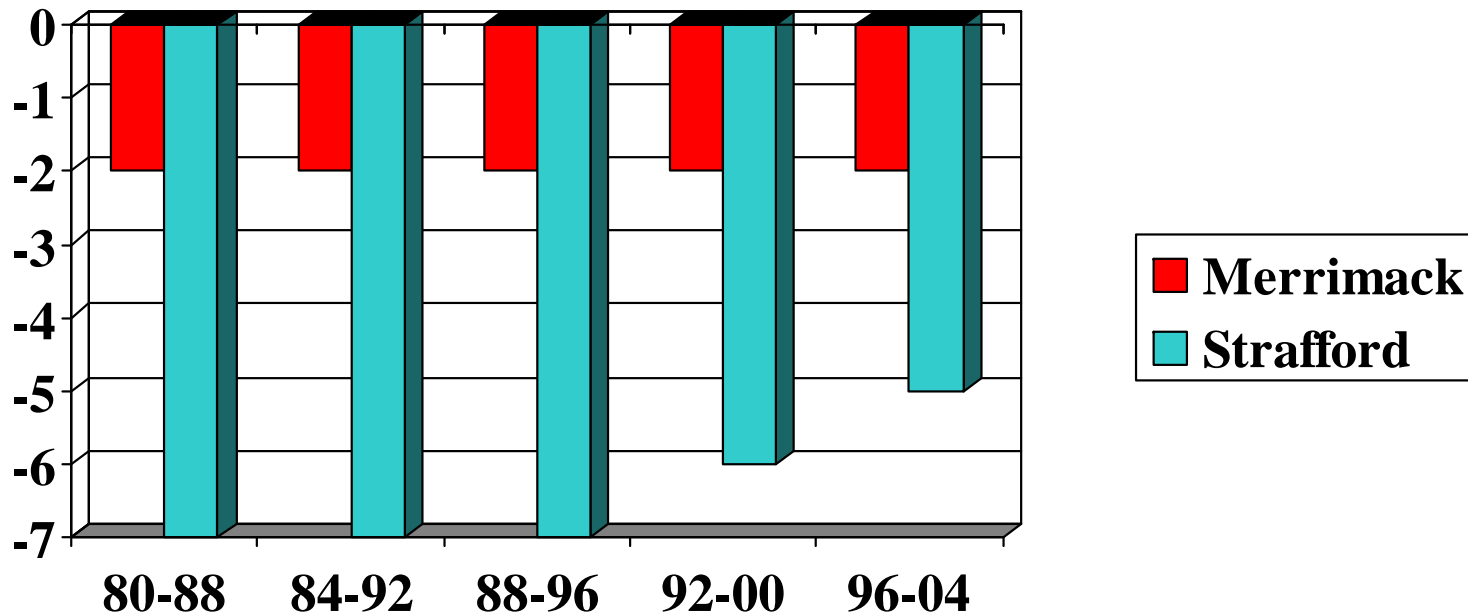
# The core stabilizes

**GOP share of vote, compared to statewide**



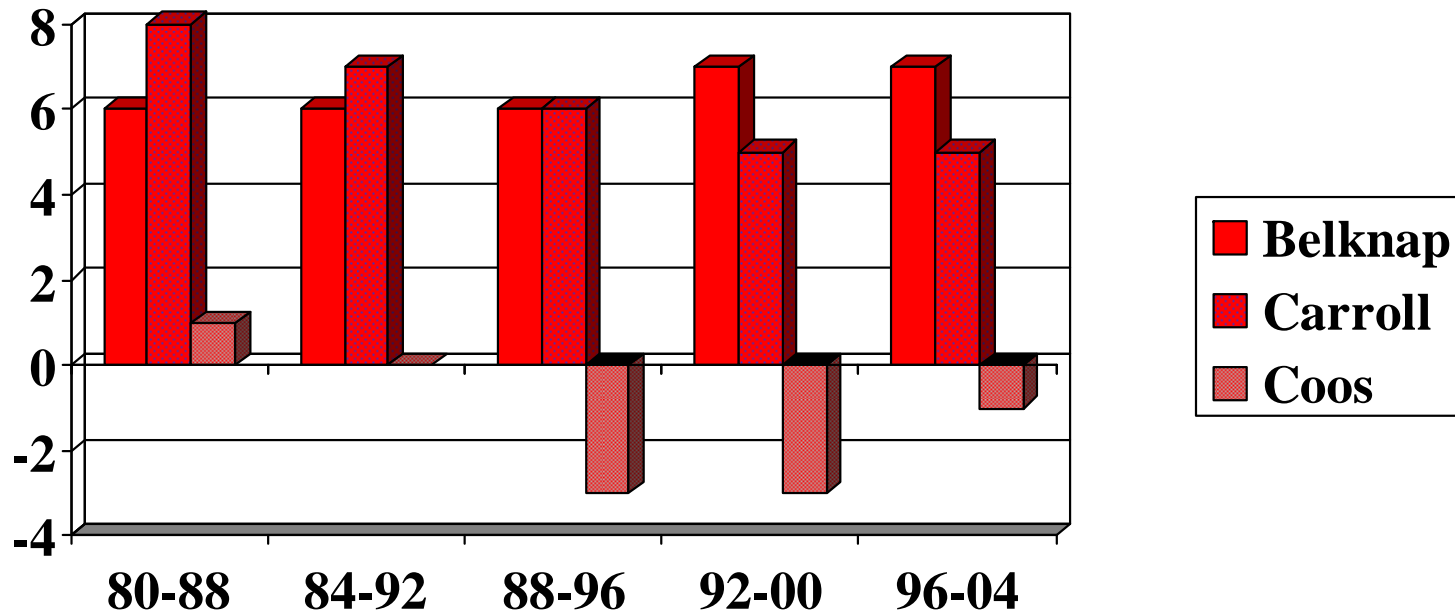
# Merrimack = Strafford lite?

**GOP share of vote, compared to statewide**



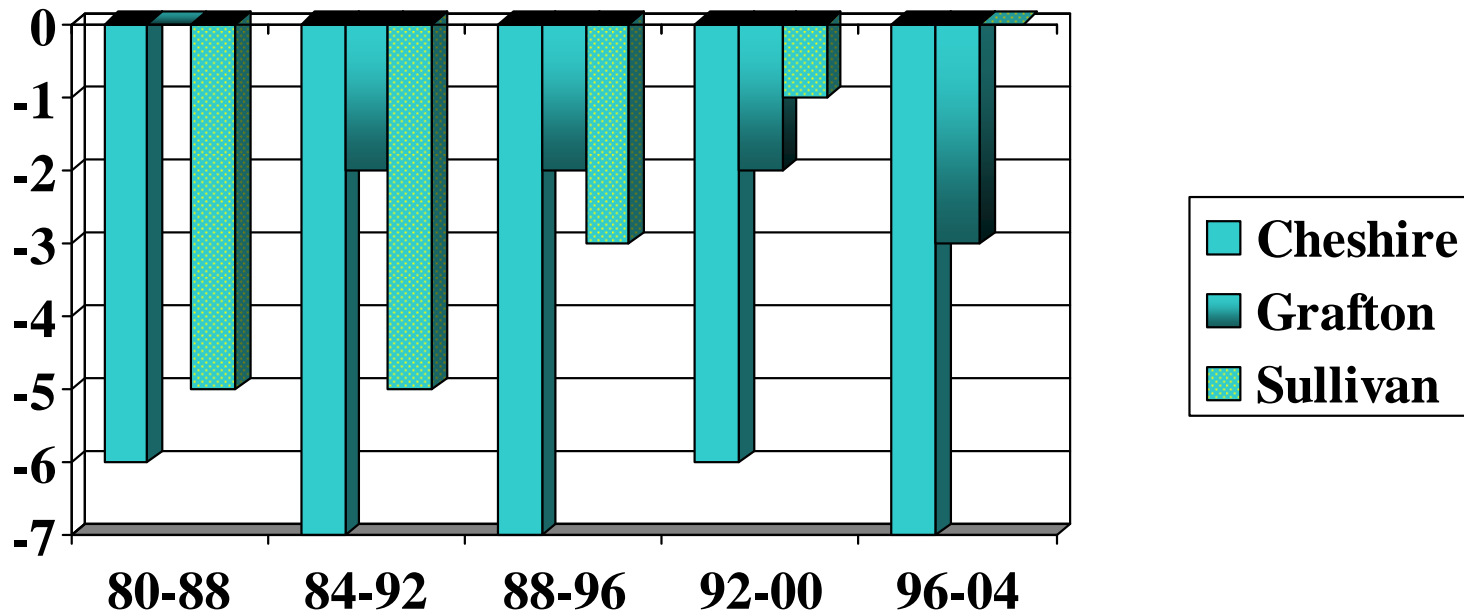
# North a minor plus for GOP

**GOP share of vote, compared to statewide**



# Vermont East?

**GOP share of vote, compared to statewide**



# The downside of the tradeoff

- **Republican footprint:** Bush outperforms statewide share of vote in just one county in 2004 (**Belknap: + 7**)
- **Democratic footprint:** Bush underperforms by -5 or more in three counties
- **Cheshire (-9), Grafton (-6), Strafford (-5)**

# 2004: Periphery beats core

- **CORE**
  - Bush's margins --
  - Hillsborough + 5,600
  - Rockingham + 6,600
  - **Total margin: +12,200**
- **PERIPHERY**
  - Bush's losses --
  - VT border: - 15,200
  - Core border: - 11,000
  - North: + 4,700
  - **Total margin: -21,500**

# The beginning of realignment, or the end?

- Conventional wisdom: Exodus of Massachusetts residents to southern tier made New Hampshire more liberal
- Actually, it appears that the exodus of Massachusetts residents to southern tier has kept New Hampshire marginally GOP
- Stabilization? Doomsayers cannot ignore GOP performance in Hillsborough, Rockingham counties

# 2006: Tsunami or earthquake?

- Democrats take control of state government
- Democrats win both Congressional seats
- Two theories:
- Tsunami, “perfect storm” hit the GOP
- Earthquake – political landscape changed permanently

# Democrats' Congressional victories

- NH 02: Paul Hodes defeats Charlie Bass with almost 54 percent of two-party vote
- NH 01: Carol Shea-Porter ousts Jeb Bradley, 51 percent – 49 percent
- Total NH vote:
- Dems = 52.5 percent
- GOP = 47.5 percent

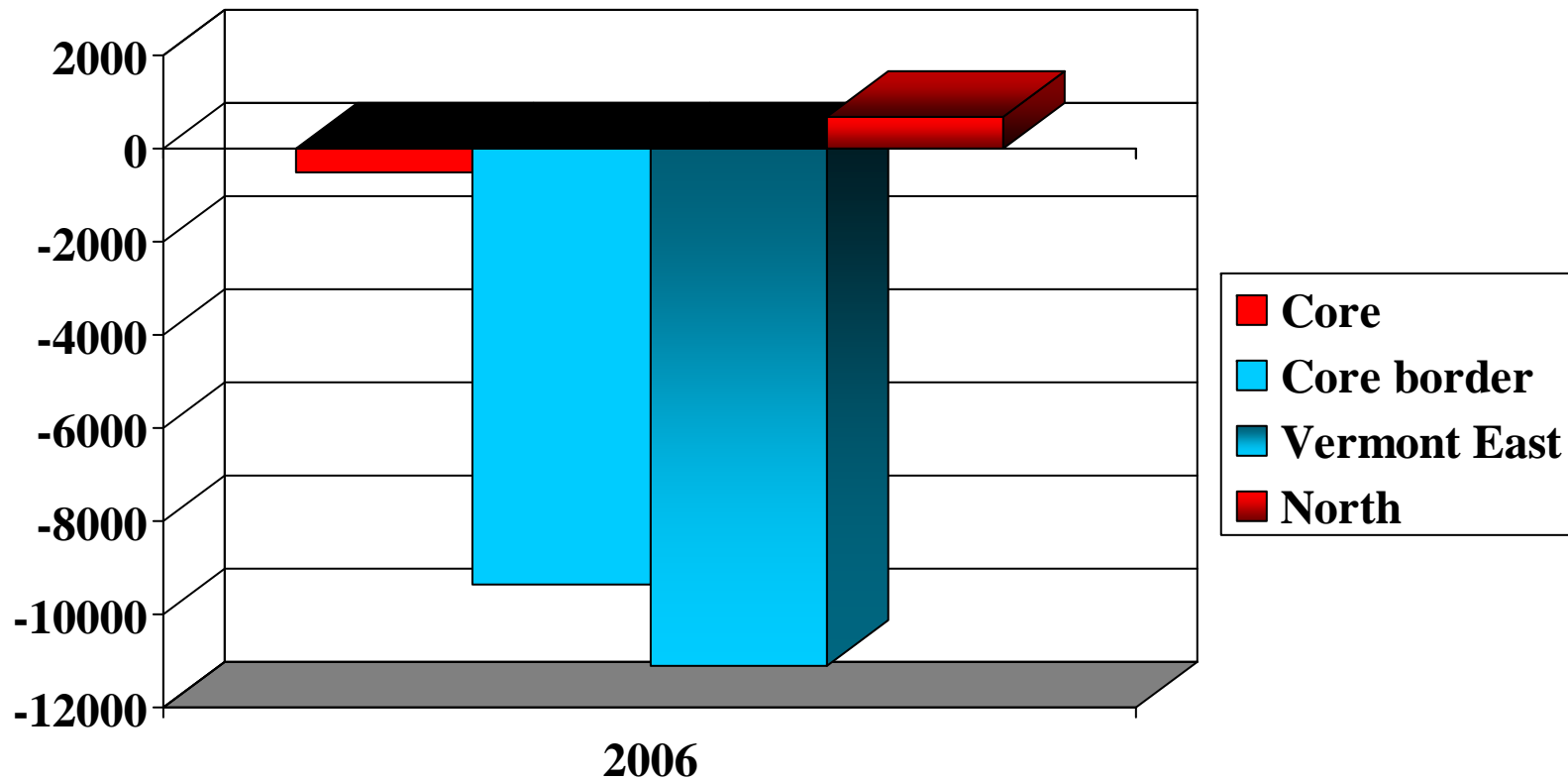
# Any bright spots for Republicans?

- Core: Hillsborough, Rockingham counties voted 2-3 percent more GOP than statewide
- Belknap County: Republican candidates won 53 percent of the vote (+ 6)

# Democratic strongholds

- “Vermont East”
- Cheshire (60 percent), Grafton (57 percent), Sullivan (56 percent)
- “Core Border”
- Merrimack (54 percent), Strafford (58 percent)

# Periphery beats core, again



# The levees are broken

- Yes, 2006 was a tsunami
- But Republicans no longer can withstand storms like 2006
- Traditional advantages in historically Republican counties have evaporated
- Arguably, Democratic footprint bigger than Republican footprint
- 2008: Sununu and Shea-Porter