



Scott Antle, director of communications for the Canadian Cancer Society, stands in front of a cigarette powerwall. Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province which permits such displays of tobacco products. — Photo by Rhonda Hayward/The Telegram

Taking it to the wall

Anti-tobacco groups want big, colourful displays banned

By STEVE BARTLETT
THE TELEGRAM

Scott Antle hopes the government is finally ready to tear down the walls.

As director of community services with the Canadian Cancer Society, he has been involved in an effort to get rid of the large and colourful displays of tobacco products that are common at convenience stores, gas stations and smoke shops across the province.

Partnering with the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco and other groups, the cancer society has been pressing the province for the past couple of years to ban these cigarette setups, which are known as powerwalls.

Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province and territory that

doesn't have such legislation.

Antle says they've met with three different health ministers. Each supported a ban, he notes, but none made it happen.

"It's been very frustrating," he says. "We do understand that there's a process involved whenever you have to open up legislation, but we've seen province after province and all the territories move forward with this, and we've come up last in this part of tobacco control."

Antle and his colleagues believe powerwalls increase smoke sales.

They say the displays prompt impulse buys, trigger ex-smokers to start puffing again and increase the chances of youth taking up the habit.

"It's the draw and appeal it has for youth," Antle says. "When a young

teenager comes into a store and sees that big powerwall of tobacco there, it's attractive. ... (Tobacco companies) know they have to replace the 45,000, 47,000 people that die every year from tobacco."

Kevin Coady agrees.

The alliance's executive director

counter, near the candy, so that young people see it."

In fact, according to the cancer society, tobacco companies paid Newfoundland and Labrador retailers \$2.8 million in 2007 for these displays.

Antle, Coady and the others are



Let us be free. Tobacco free.

The fact is... It is illegal for anyone, including parents, friends, family and retailers, to give or sell tobacco products to youth **under the age of 19.**

Share the Facts. Not Tobacco.

Newfoundland
Labrador

Smokers' Help Line:
1-800-363-LUNG (5864)

SYNOPSIS

1.51

TOPIC 1.7

Politics and Culture

How does a government influence a country's culture?

What age do you think is an appropriate age for citizens to have the right to vote? Why?

Introduction

In Bangladesh or Columbia, you have to be 15 to legally buy cigarettes. In Canada, you must be 18 or 19, depending on the province in which you live. In Kuwait, you must be 21. What accounts for these differences?

All of these countries have decided that some kind of legal control needs to be placed on the sale of tobacco products to younger persons. However, each country has a different perception of the age to which this law should apply. It is likely that cultural differences have played a



1.52 Think of all the different ways that government controls affect your life.
Even where you cross the street or stop your car is affected by legislation.



1.53 Informal politics happens all around us each day ... at home, in the classroom, and at work.
This is often called small "p" politics. However, when most people speak of politics they are usually referring to formal politics.

role in this and therefore influenced the kind of legislation that has been passed. It might also be argued that young people are less apt to start smoking in a country where it is harder to legally obtain cigarettes. In this way, the legislation is in turn influencing a country's culture.

This is just one example of the many ways legislation or government controls can affect our lifestyle. Politics affects our lives in a variety of ways at multiple levels. In very general terms, politics is the process by which groups make decisions. The group making a decision could be the decision-making body for a country or it could be as simple as a group of friends deciding what to do on a Saturday night. Depending on the group, the political process varies. After some discussion, a group

might reach a consensus or agreement as to what they want to do. On another occasion it might be a simple democratic exercise – the will of the majority will prevail. In some cases, the group might defer to the will of one individual, and follow a more autocratic model.

In order for a decision-making group to make good decisions, its members need data about the people for whom they are making decisions. Well-being indicators are one tool that a government can use. Rather than using a single category of data, such as **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, social scientists sometimes group together different categories of data to create indicators that provide a complete picture of the quality of life in an area.



1.54 Sir Robert Bond

During the period of Sir Robert Bond's administration, the paper mill town of Grand Falls was born. This was due in no small part to the efforts of the prime minister himself, who believed in the need to develop the timber stands of central Newfoundland. Beginning with the incorporation of the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company in January 1905, the paper industry provided the backbone of the regional economy for over a century.



1.55 Centre Block, Parliament of Canada, Ottawa

In Canada, our political practice is based on a **parliamentary system**. In an election, the people in each district or riding vote to pick a representative to sit in government on their behalf. The individual with the highest number of votes in each district or riding becomes the Member of Parliament in the federal

government or the Member of the House of Assembly in the provincial government. The elected individual is usually a member of a specific political party. The party with the most elected representatives forms the government.

St. John's South - Mount Pearl Federal Riding Election Results 2008

Candidate	Party	Votes	% Votes
Terry Christopher Butler	Independent	179	0.5
Greg Byrne	Newfoundland Labrador First Party	402	1.2
Ryan Cleary	New Democratic Party	13 971	40.6
Siobhan Coady	Liberal	14 920	43.3
Ted Warren	Green Party	643	1.9
Merv Wiseman	Conservative	4324	12.6
Total number of valid votes:		34 439	
Rejected ballots:		92	
Total Number of votes:		34 531	

1.56 For this riding there were 34 531 people who actually voted, out of 66 467 eligible voters.
What might account for low voter turnout? Should voting be mandatory?

In the 2000 federal election, the Liberal Party obtained 57 per cent of the seats in Parliament. However, the Liberal Party received only 41 per cent of the popular vote. Do you think this is fair?

Types of Government

Candidate	Party	Votes	% Votes
Majority Government	50% + 1	The party with the majority of seat forms the government and will be able to successfully pass legislation during its term	
Majority Government	Less than 50%	The party with the largest number of seats can form the government. However, if it is unable to gain the support of other parties when passing important legislation that is considered a matter of confidence (such as an annual budget), a new election may be called.	
Coalition Government	Less than 50%	If no single party has a clear mandate to form a government, two or more parties may seek to work together and share the exercise of power. Similar to a minority government, if there is a vote of non-confidence, an election may be called.	

People frequently refer to this type of government as a democracy. One definition of democracy is that it is the rule of the majority. This definition implies that the majority can make a decision by which all citizens would be bound. Such decisions might disadvantage the minority. To guard against this, in Canada we have what is known as a constitutional democracy. While decisions are made by the majority, the constitution sets out basic rights that apply to all citizens. Thus the government is unable to make decisions that would threaten these rights.

It could be argued that, more than any force discussed in this section, politics has the greatest influence on culture. Elected governments hold the trust of the people to make decisions that will serve the interests of the **electorate**. Bound by certain limits, governments use economic, geographic, and historical data to enact legislation that governs virtually all aspects of our lives. In fact, try to identify an area of culture where government cannot exert influence.



1.58 Lobbying for the seal industry

In April 2008, a Canadian lobby group visited London, Paris, Brussels, and Berlin in an effort to avert a European Union ban on the importation of seal products. The delegation – which included Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik and Newfoundland and Labrador Natural Resources Minister Kathy Dunderdale – pointed out that much misinformation has been circulated about the Canadian seal hunt. Some animal rights groups continue to employ images of baby seals in their campaigns, for example, but the whitecoat hunt has been banned since 1987. Despite this visit and other efforts, the European Parliament voted in July 2009 to ban the importation of seal products.

Questions:

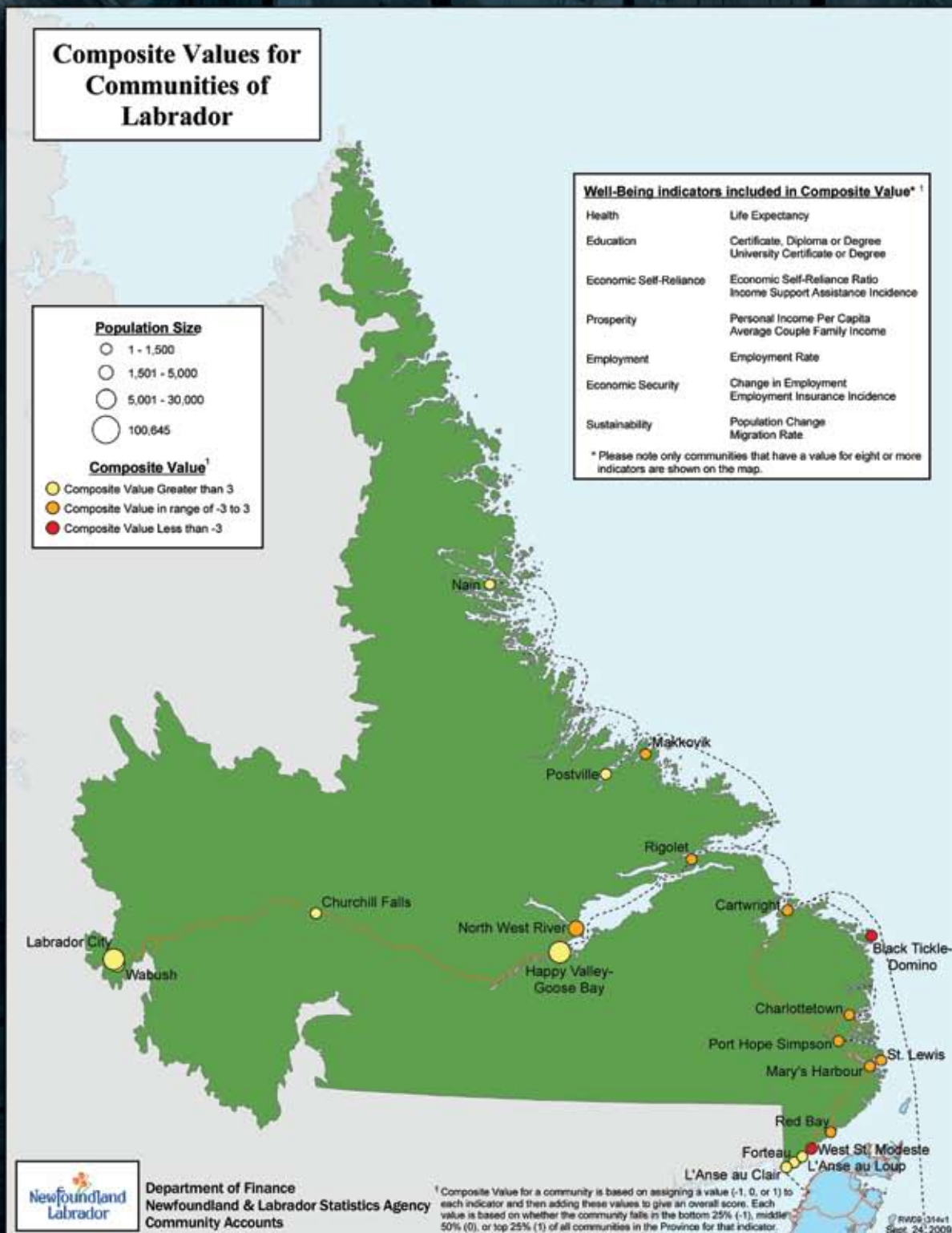
- Identify an example of an informal and formal political process that you observed recently. How were the decisions made in each example?
- What is the name of your federal riding and who is your Member of Parliament?
 - What is the name of your provincial district and who is your Member of the House of Assembly?
- What are some of the political issues facing your riding/district today?
- Given that formal politics both reflects and influences culture, with a partner develop three strong arguments that could be used to encourage people to vote.

CASE STUDY

Using Quality of Life Indicators to Make Decisions

IN 2009 RESEARCHERS EXAMINED SEVERAL categories of data and calculated an index of “well-being” for the communities throughout the province. This information is extremely useful for governments as they consider how to improve the lives of citizens.

1.59



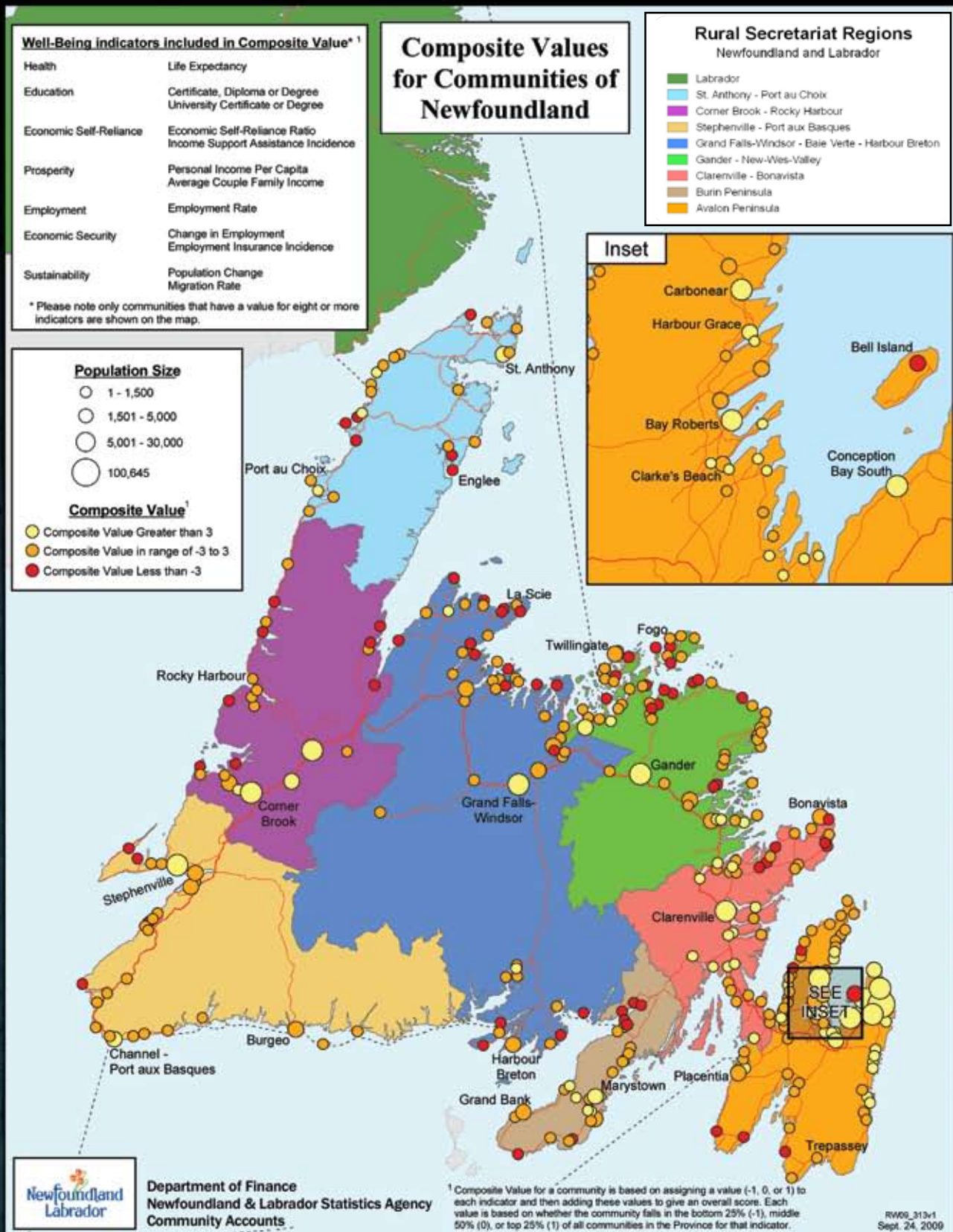


Fig. 1.60 The Rural Secretariat has developed detailed profiles for each of the nine regions of the province. The profiles serve as baselines that help examine change and progress over time. What is happening to the population? Are more people working? Are incomes rising? What are our health practices? How does one region of the province compare with others in terms of performance on any indicator? This data set examines how a variety of factors interrelate to affect "well being."

Questions:

- Look at Fig. 1.59 and Fig. 1.60.
 - What is the composite value for your community/region? What might account for this?
 - What inferences can be made from this data?
- What specific information would governments need in order to respond to this data to help improve the well-being of a specific community?