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City Magnets II: Benchmarking the Attractiveness of 50 Canadian Cities

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What's New

- Analysis conducted at the city level rather than at the CMA level, making it easier for city officials to use the results in their policy choices.
- Analysis broken down by level of education. This is a very important breakthrough. The study investigates whether certain attributes appeal more to university-educated migrants while other appeal more to non-university-educated migrants.

The Premise

- According to the 2006 Census, 2/3 of Canada's population growth between 2001 and 2006 was attributable to net immigration.
- Statistics Canada predicts that by 2030, net immigration will account for **ALL** of Canada's population growth.
- Therefore, if a city is unable to attract people, it will be faced with weak population growth down the road, which does not bode well for its economic potential.

The Premise

- The “people go where the jobs are” paradigm is slowly changing and we believe that it will keep on changing.
- Given the aging of the population and the impact that this will have on the labour force, more and more businesses will choose to locate in cities with a relatively big pool of skilled labour, allowing them to grow over the short, medium and long term.
- As a result, a city that struggles to attract people will also struggle to attract businesses—yet another blow to the future prosperity of that city.

Methodology

- 41 indicators are used to measure a city's attractiveness to people
- Indicators are split between seven domains: Economy, Education, Environment, Health, Housing, Innovation and Society

Methodology

- For each indicator, a grade of A, B, C or D is distributed to each city, using the following formula:

(Highest Score – Lowest Score) / 4

- Top quartile gets an A, second quartile a B, etc.

Methodology

- Scores for each indicator are then normalized, allowing for the calculation of overall scores by domain. This is done using the following formula:

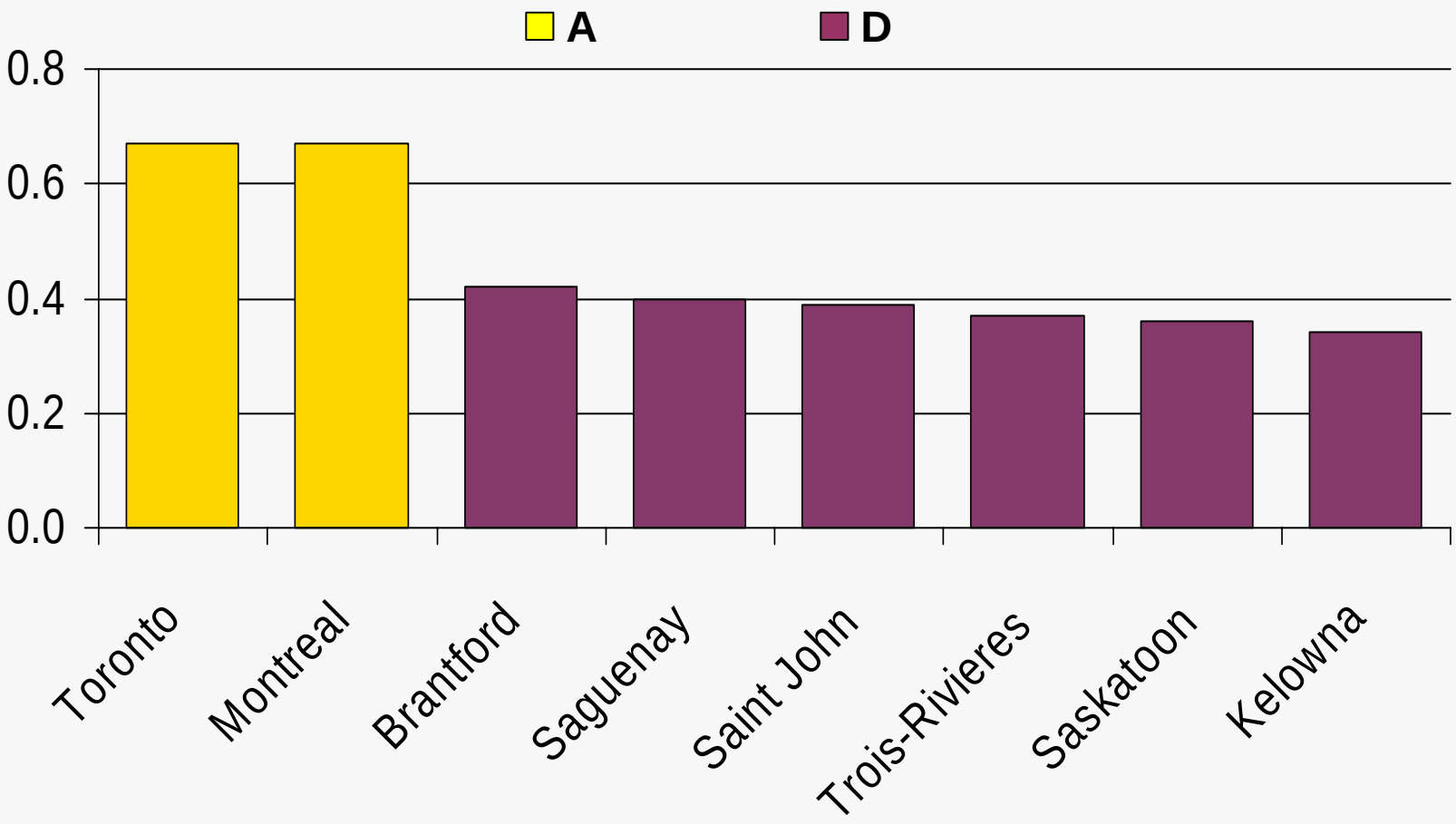
(Score – Lowest Score) / (Highest Score – Lowest Score)

- That way, the highest score gets a 1 and the lowest score gets a 0. The domain score is the average score of all the indicators of that domain.

Society

- 14 indicators, covering:
- Accessibility: mode of travel, population density, access to culture
- Diversity: foreign-born population, age of population, multilingualism
- Social cohesion: immigrant success, crime, gender equality, poverty
- Creativity: cultural employment

Society

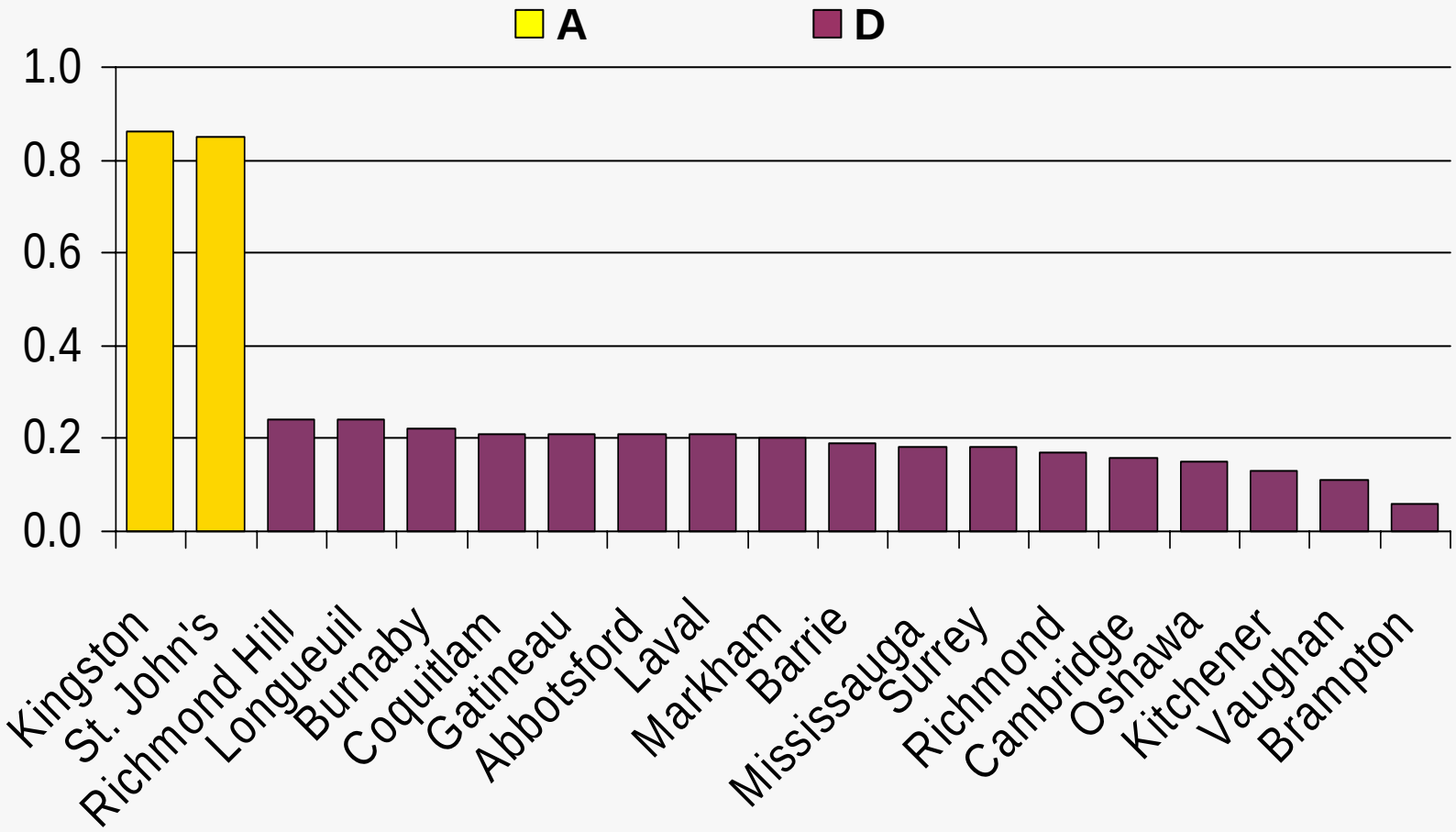


Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Health

- 4 indicators
- Hospital beds per 100,000 population
- General practitioners per 100,000
- Specialist physicians per 100,000
- Proportion of population employed in health-care services

Health

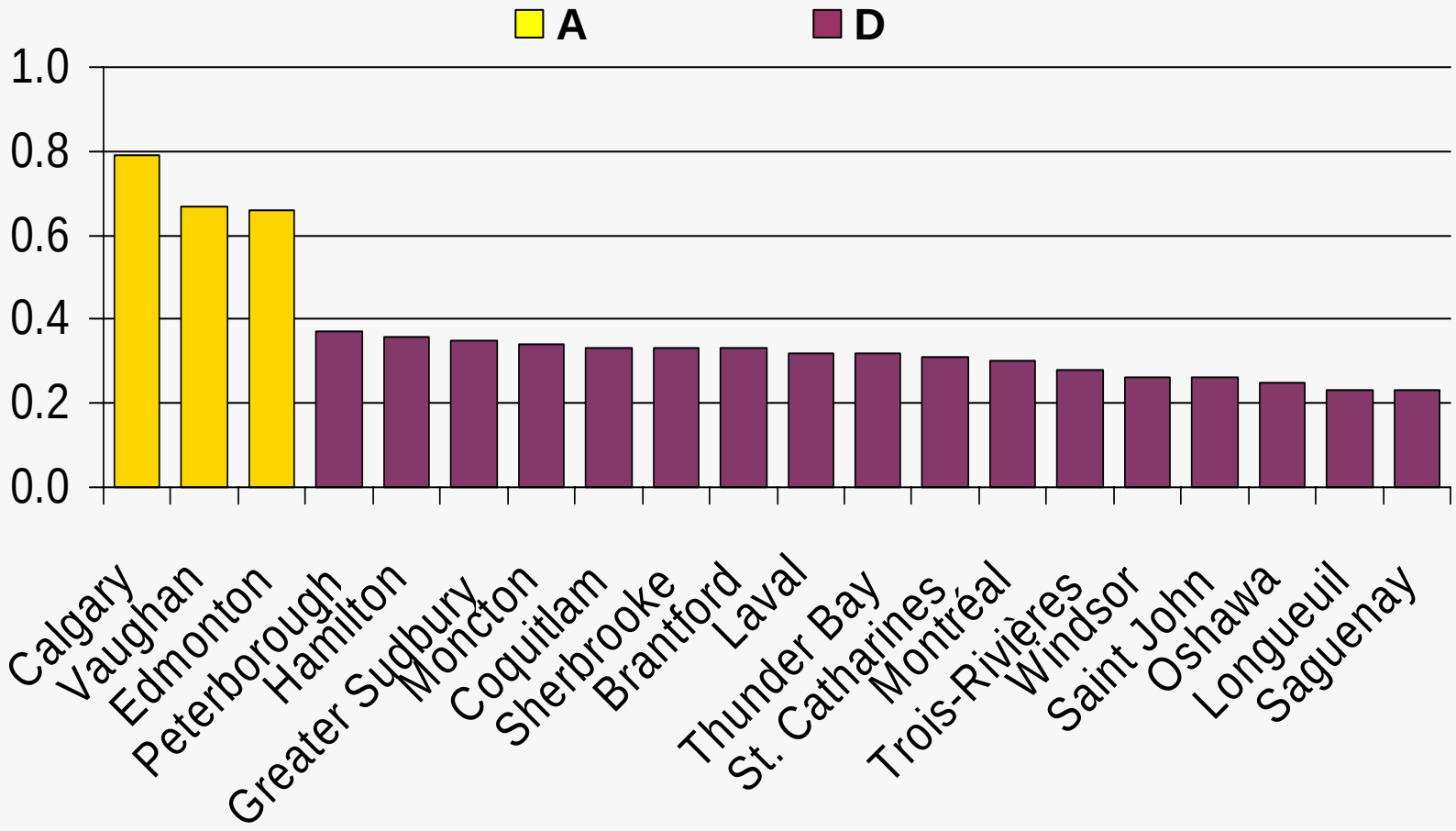


Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Economy

- 7 indicators, including:
- GDP level
- GDP growth
- Employment growth
- Unemployment rate
- Disposable income per capita

Economy

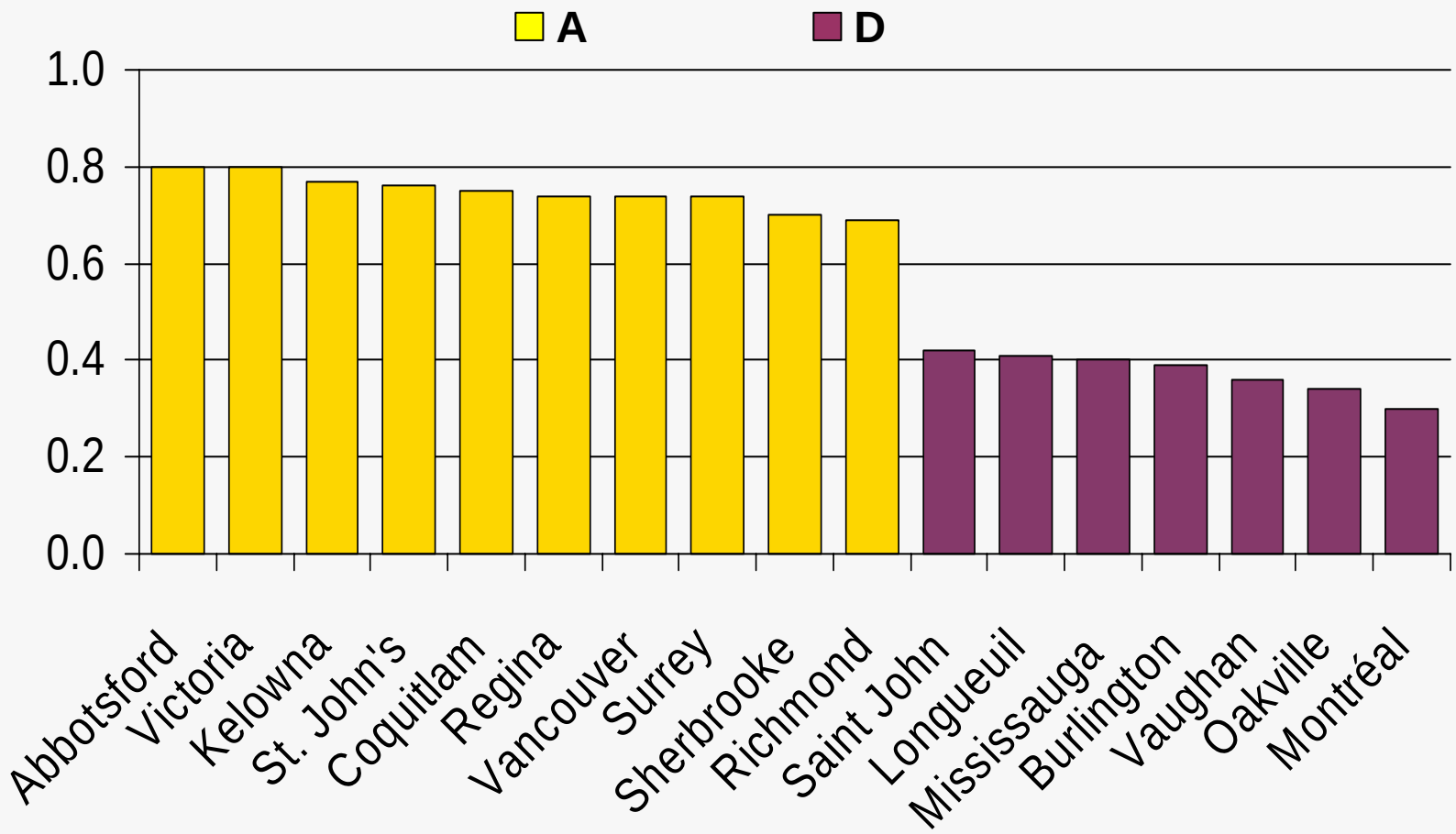


Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Environment

- 4 indicators
- Average monthly maximum temperature
- Domestic water usage
- Air quality advisory days
- Median driving distance to work for solo commuters

Environment

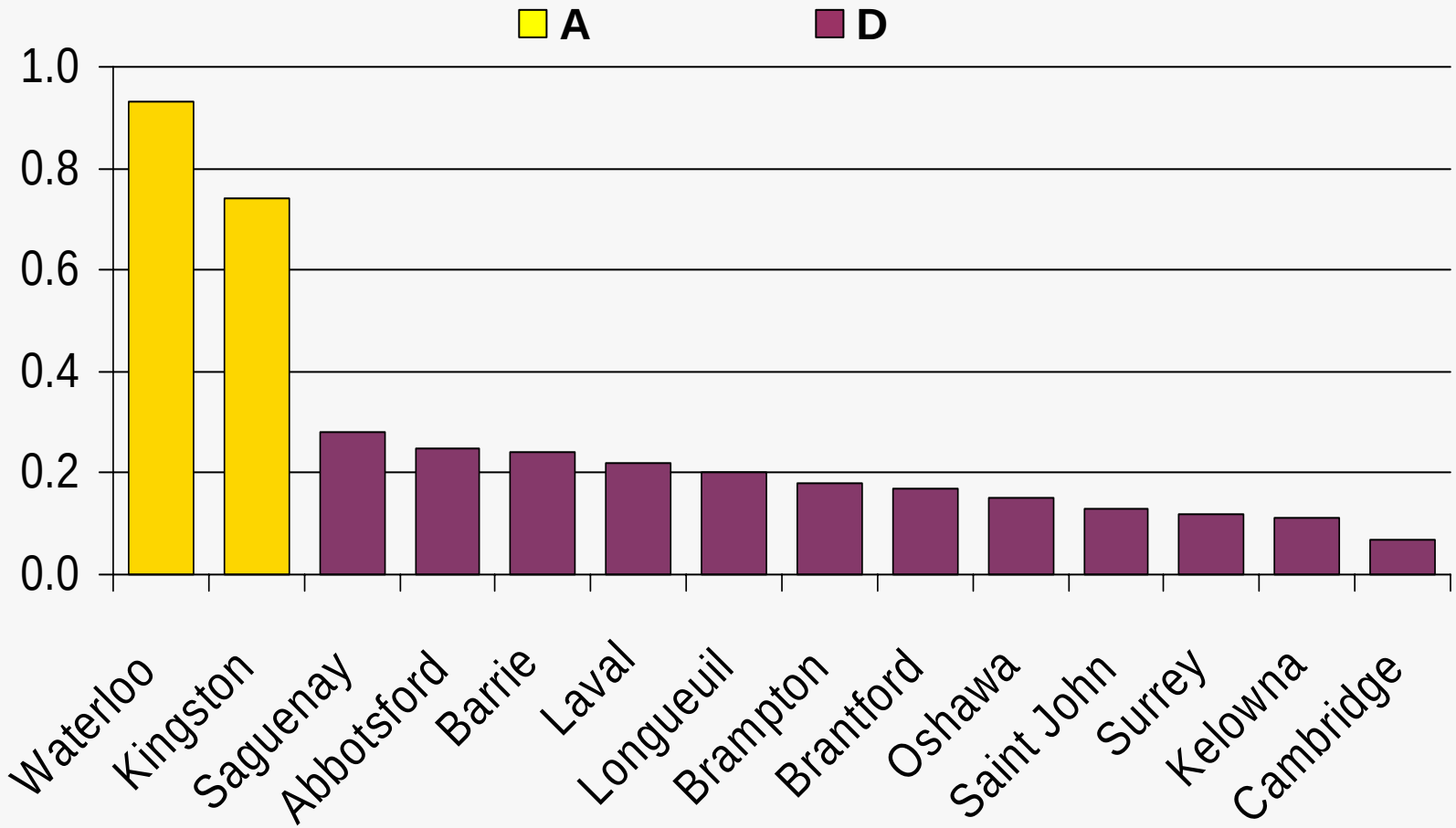


Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Education

- 4 indicators
- Proportion of the population with a bachelor's degree
- Proportion of the population with an advanced degree (master's, doctorate, law, medicine)
- Number of teachers (elementary and secondary per school age population
- Number of professors and college instructors per 1,000 adult population

Education

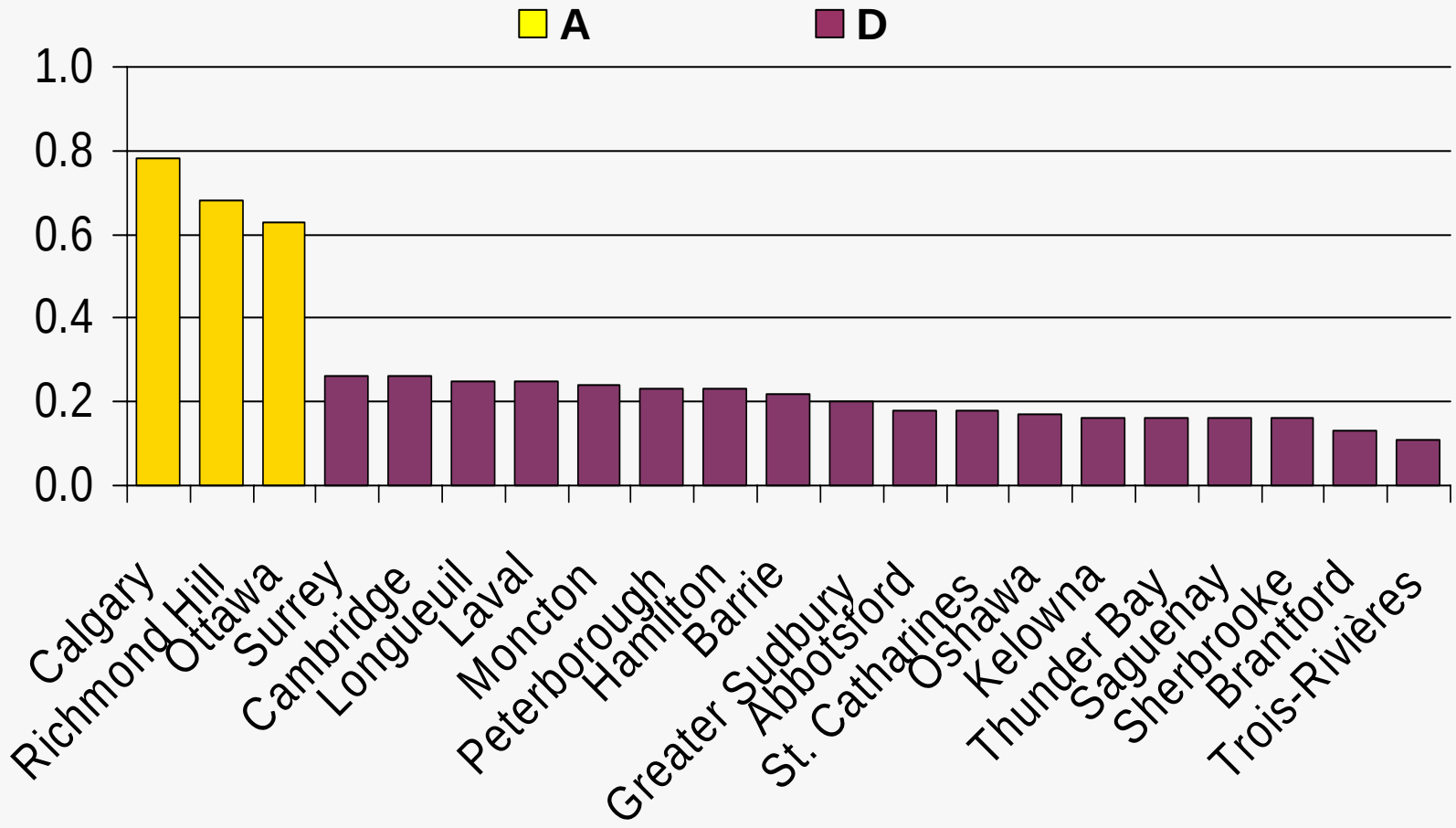


Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Innovation

- 5 indicators
- Productivity level and growth
- Proportion of workers employed in natural and applied sciences
- Proportion of workers employed in computer and high-technology occupations
- Number of university graduates with a major in engineering, mathematics, or computer, applied, and physical science

Innovation

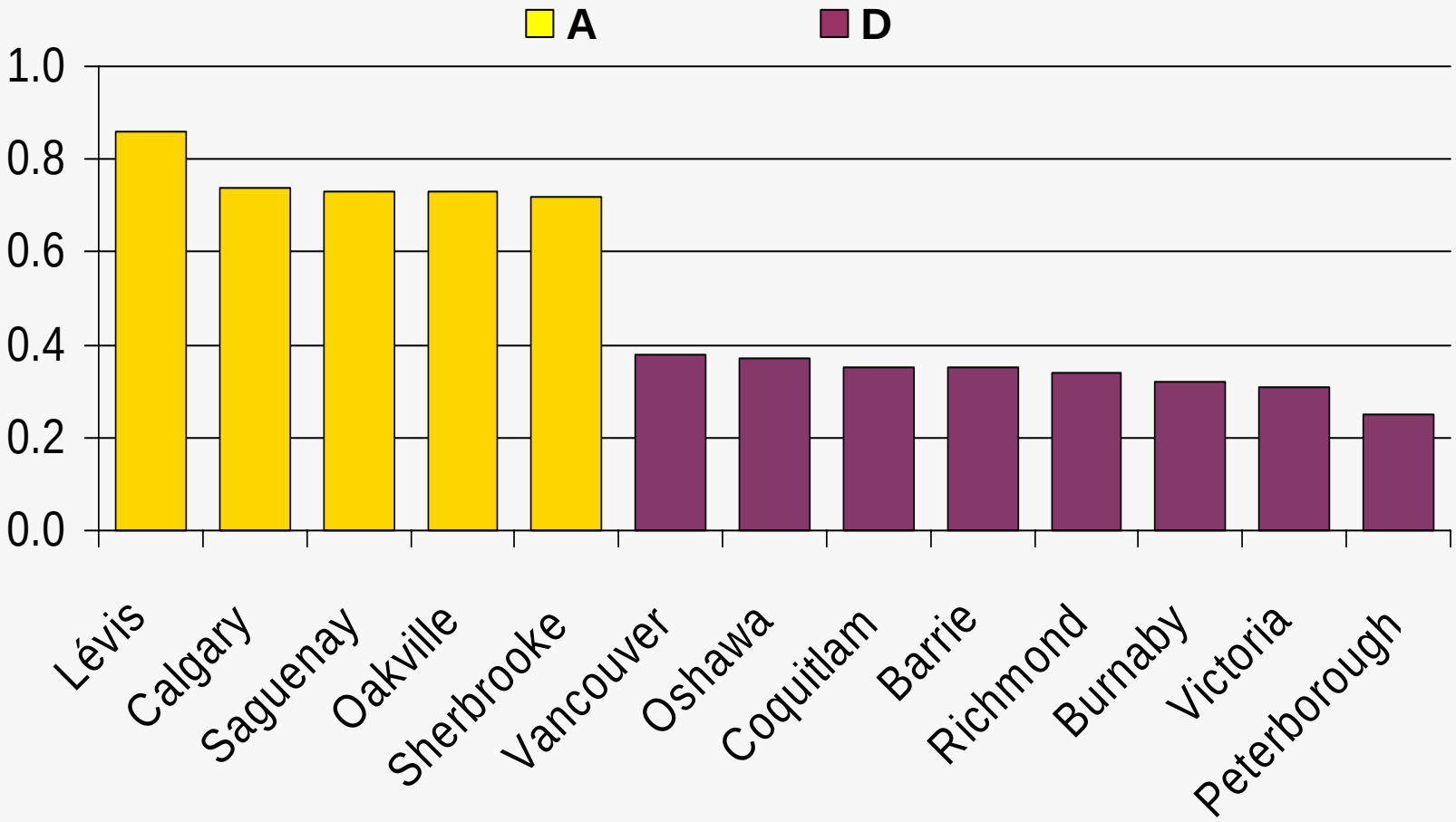


Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Housing

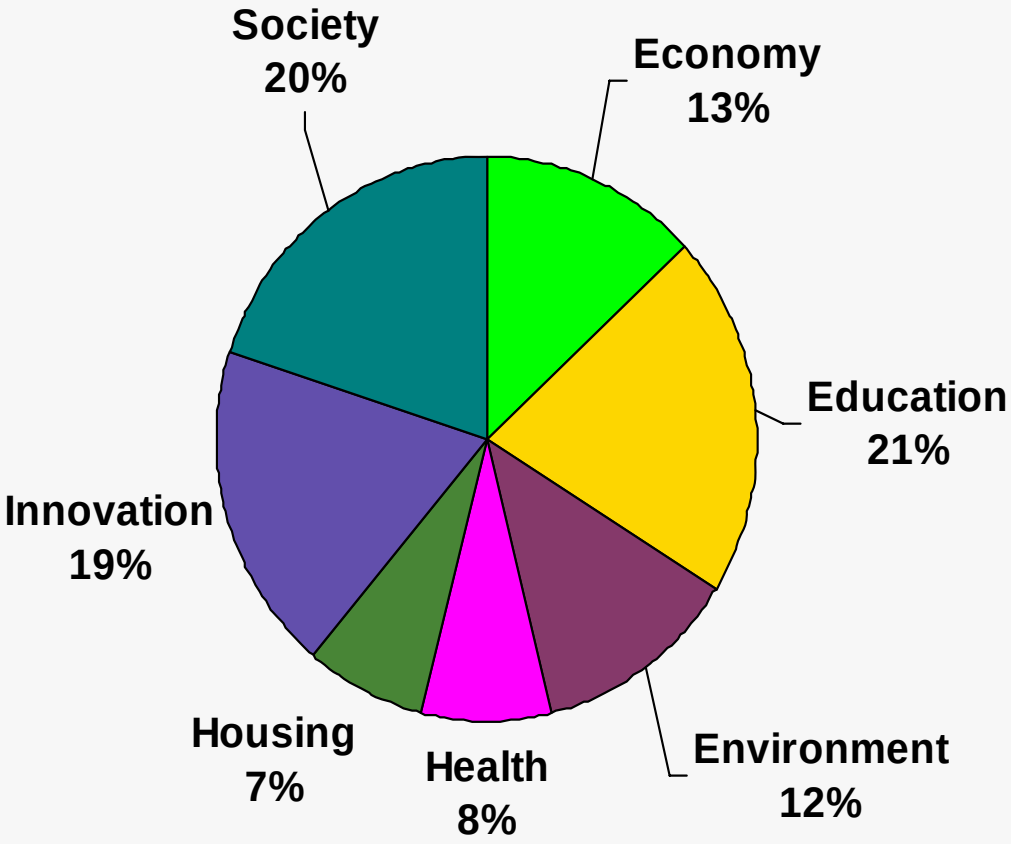
- 3 indicators
- Percentage of household income spent on mortgages
- Percentage of household income spent on rent
- Percentage of homes in need of major repair

Housing

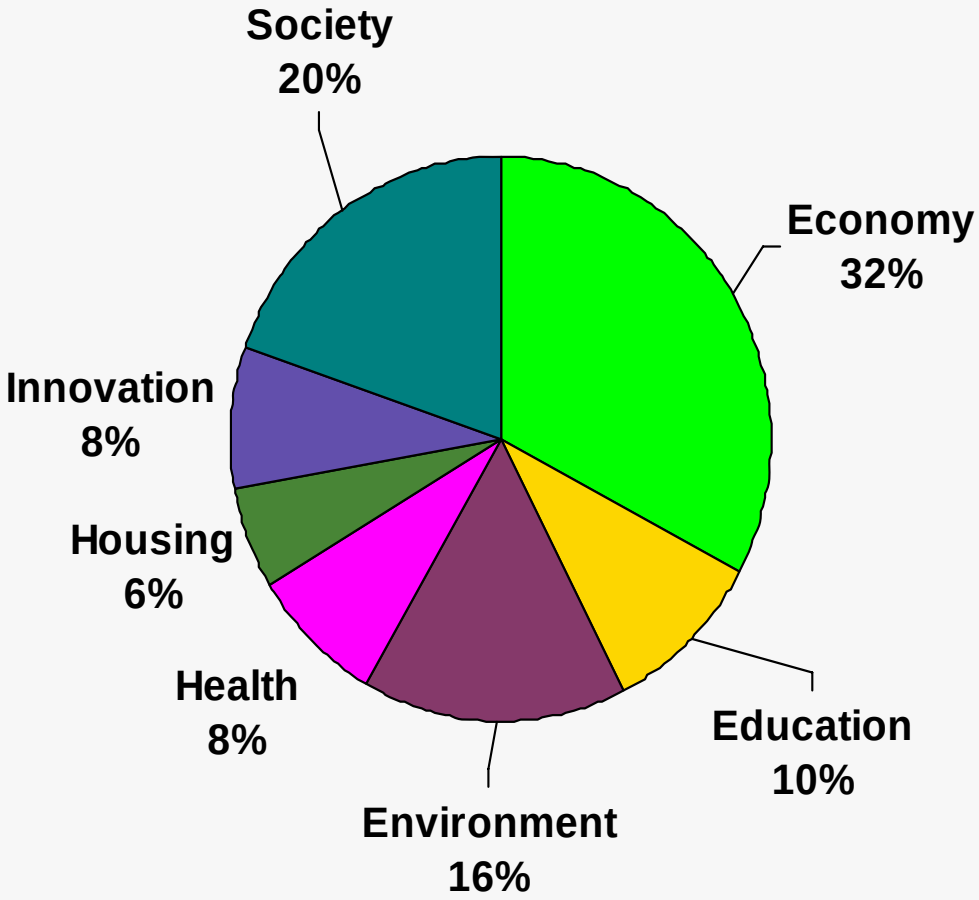


Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

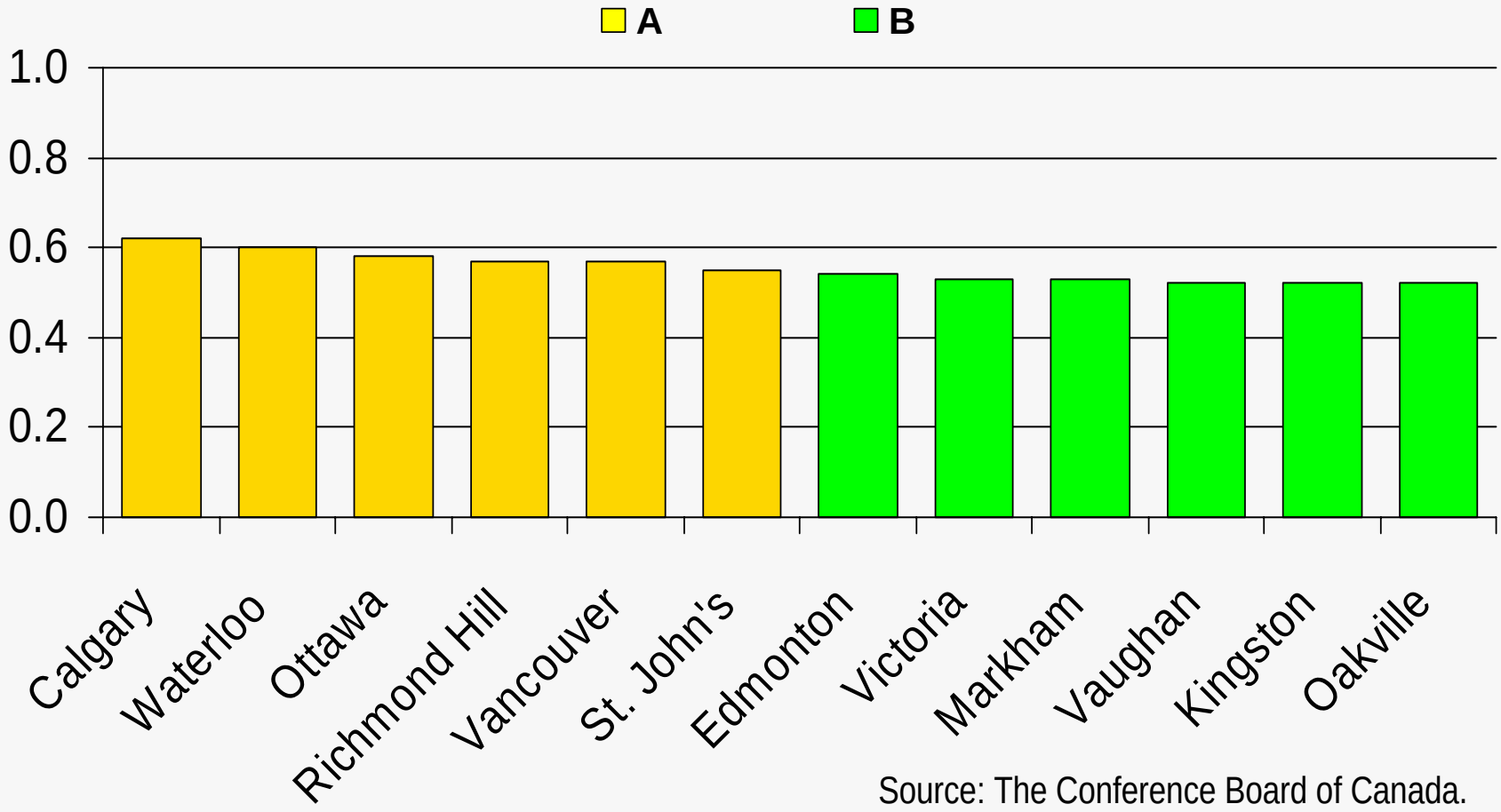
Weights of Each Category in University-Educated's Decision to Move



Weights of Each Category in Non-University-Educated's Decision to Move



Final Ranking: Who Is Attractive and Who Is Not



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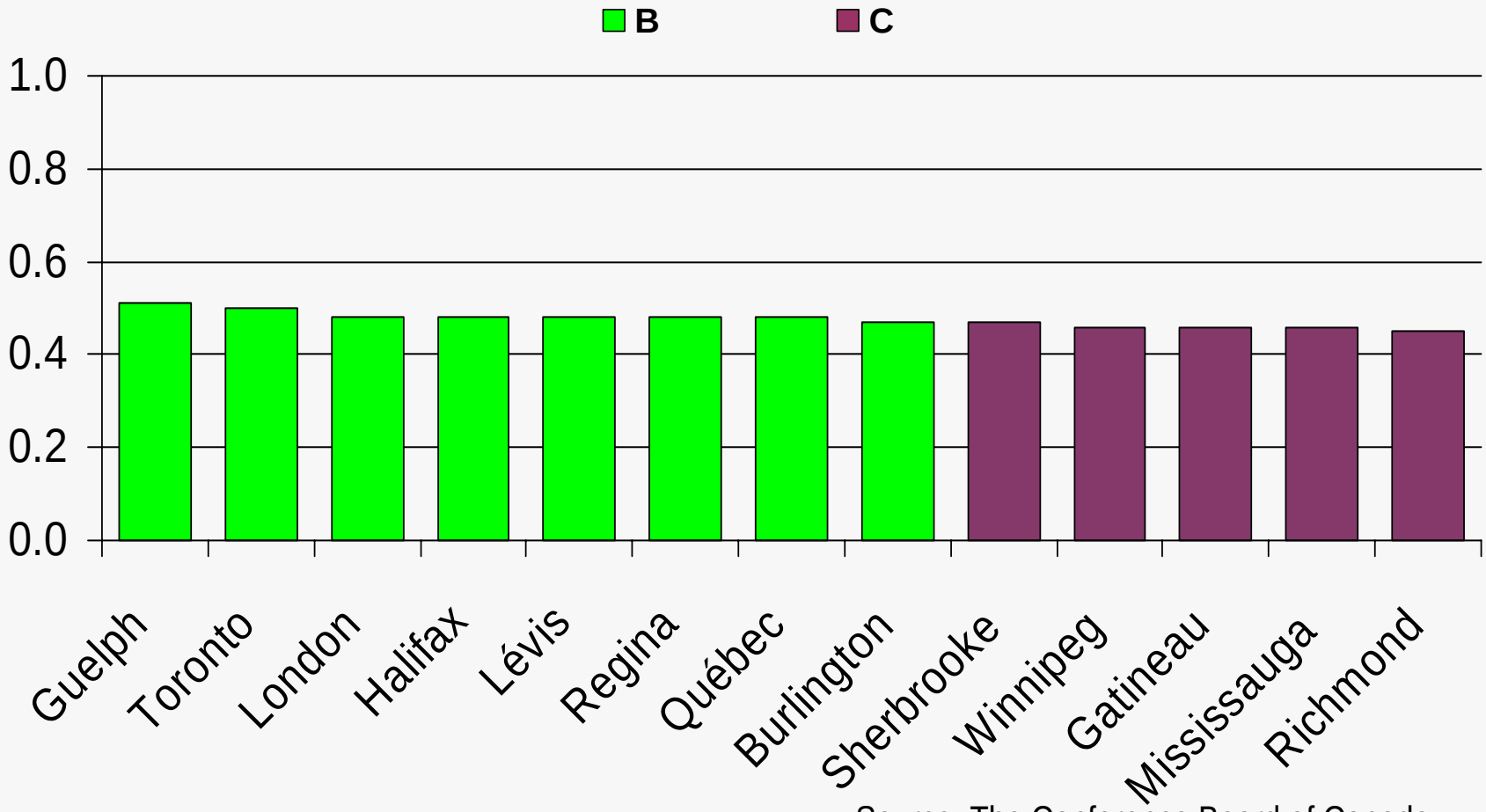

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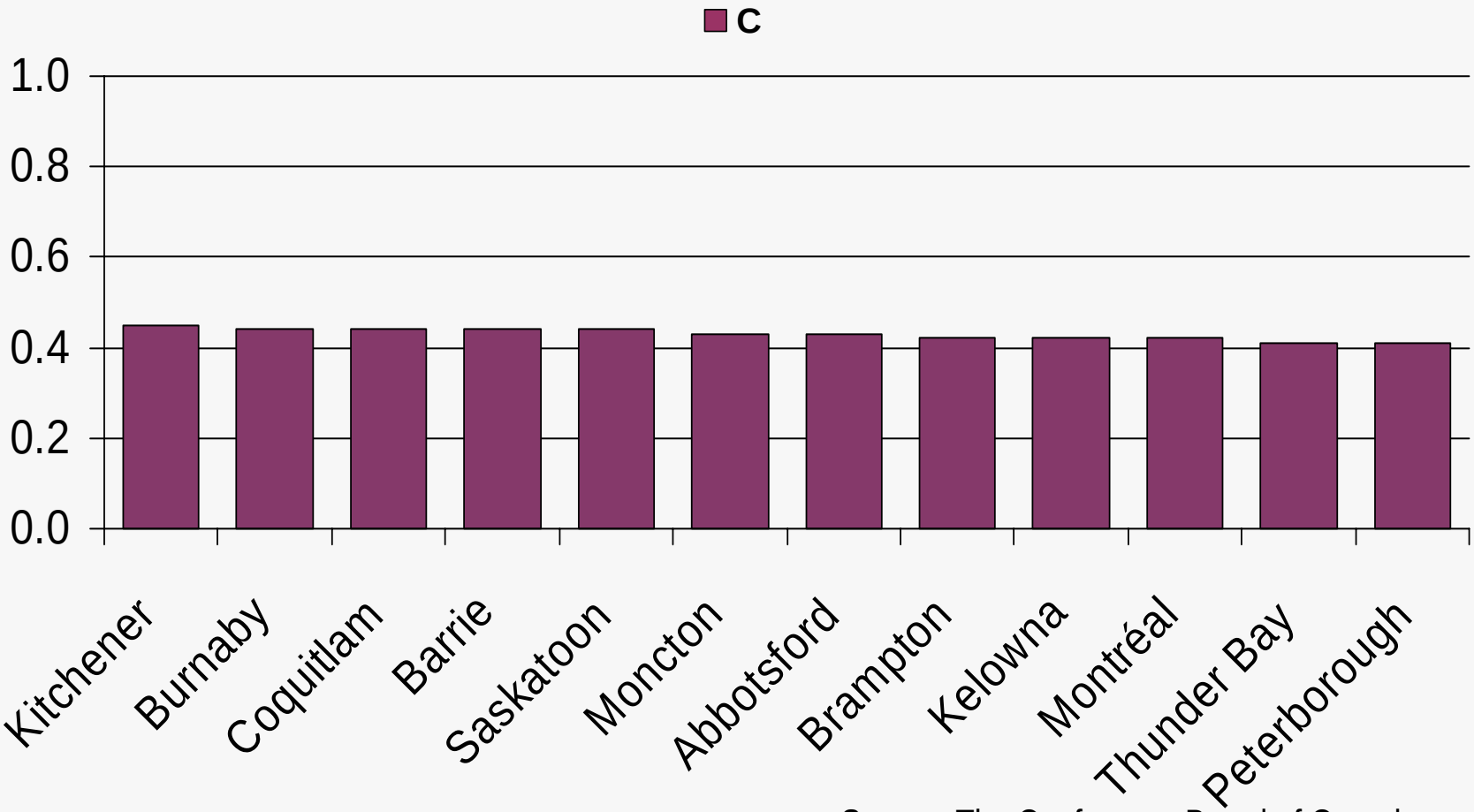

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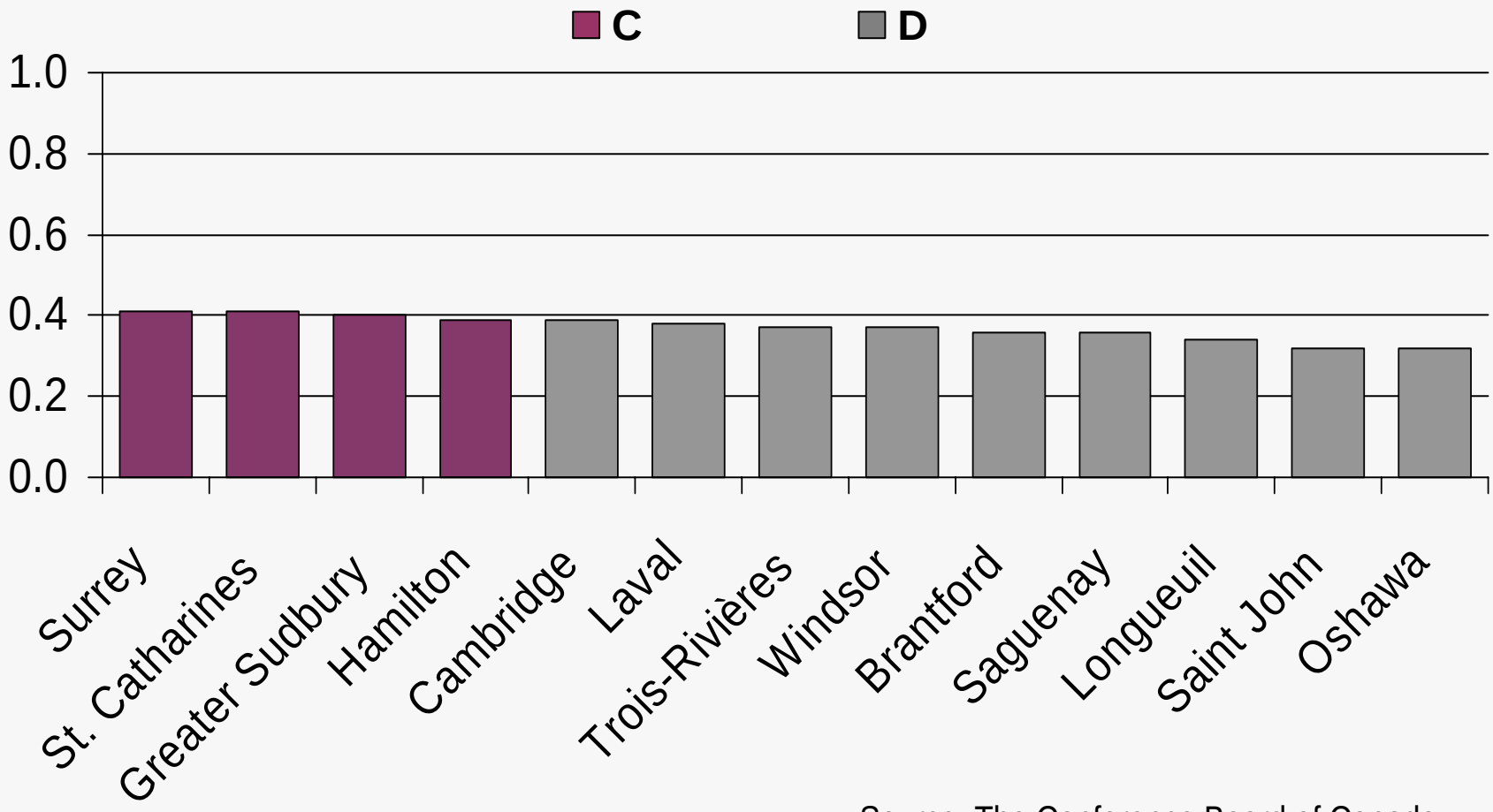

Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Conclusion

- The study does bring empirical evidence forward that migrants value different criteria in their choices about where to live depending on their level of education.
- University-educated people prefer cities with higher Education and Society outcomes.
- Non-university-educated place more value on the Economy category.
- Notwithstanding these important distinctions, an attractive city is attractive to everyone.

Conclusion

- The top six cities – Calgary, Waterloo, Ottawa, Vancouver, St. John's and Richmond Hill come out on top in all rankings.
- Unlike other work, this study does not argue that attracting university-educated migrants first will necessarily generate an influx of all types of newcomer. The dynamics of domestic and international migration are too complex to leap to such conclusion. Thus, policy makers have to be careful in crafting policies solely aimed at attracting university graduates.

Final Thought

- Immigrants will be a critical part of Canada's future and they will continue to flock to our urban centres. Building a strong, competitive and caring Canadian society will require the contributions of immigrants with all kinds of skills and education backgrounds. We have to continue to learn about what makes cities attractive to people in order to find the right policies and guidelines to create dozens of "A" cities, not just a handful.

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Thank you

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