



**HAMILTON
MILLENNIALS
&
COMMUNITY
BELONGING**

A REPORT PREPARED FOR:

**HAMILTON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Foreword

Belonging is “simply a part of a collective we. It’s a two-way street: It’s about communities sending signals of acceptance and inclusion, and about individuals cultivating their own connections to community. A sense of belonging is important to build safe, vibrant communities, and it brings purpose to our lives....

What do money and work have to do with belonging? It turns out, a lot. For many people, workplaces are important places of belonging. On the other hand, precarious employment and poverty create barriers for people to be involved in their communities and can magnify a sense of being on the outside of our prosperous society.”

Belonging: exploring connection to community
Community Foundations of Canada 2017

In 2015, Hamilton Community Foundation’s Vital Signs report looked at the city’s economic renaissance and how widely its benefits were shared by Hamiltonians. Among its findings: the growth rate of Hamilton’s young adult population was outstripping both its neighbouring communities and the province overall. The study found this group - attracted by the city’s quality of life, historical character, arts, culture, access to nature, lower housing prices than Toronto, growing emphasis on sustainable transportation etc. and growth of employment networks like HIVE - to be “a major driving force of Hamilton’s renaissance” and new optimism, but cautioned about the importance of a welcoming labour market for that optimism to be sustained.

Hamilton’s Millennials and Community Belonging looks a little deeper into that topic, presenting a snapshot of upcoming research from McMaster University on the city’s millennials and the impact of precarious work. Specifically, this snapshot looks at some of the drivers of belonging and community engagement, including volunteering and participation in community events, as well as millennials’ overall sense of optimism about work, connections and prospects for the future.

We offer this brief narrative as part of our ongoing efforts to stimulate dialogue, engagement and action towards a vibrant, inclusive Hamilton — a place where everyone belongs.

Read more about how Hamilton Community Foundation is working toward an inclusive Hamilton in our 2017 annual report: A Place to Belong.

About the Report

Hamilton Millennials and Community Belonging:

Preliminary findings from the 2017 Hamilton Millennial Survey

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The Hamilton Millennial Survey

Hamilton Millennials and Community Belonging was prepared for Hamilton Community Foundation and provides preliminary results to selected questions from the full *Hamilton Millennial Survey* to be published in early 2018. The full survey looks at young adults who live and work in Hamilton, comparing their work experiences and the effect on their social and economic wellbeing, with those of other generations. Much, if not all, of the research and literature on precarious work has used gender, race, age, Indigenous- and immigrant-status but little, if any, research has studied it from a generational point of view.

The Hamilton Millennial Survey study's methodology included both qualitative (personal interviews) and quantitative (online survey) data gathering and was approved by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board. The survey was conducted between April 1 and May 7, 2017. Eligible individuals were born between 1982 and 1997, and had worked for pay in the previous three months. A total of 1,817 eligible respondents participated in the full 89-question survey; this report looks at 1,246 millennials who had Hamilton and Burlington postal codes and were not full time students.

The Millennials

Millennials are the largest generation both in Canada and in Hamilton, representing 25-28% of the city's population, and outnumbering their parents, the baby boomers. Hamilton has a higher proportion of millennials than Ontario. Today, Hamilton has become one of the most economically diverse cities in Canada, offering a greater range of employment opportunities and, until recently, much more affordable housing than Toronto and other GTA municipalities.

But with that growth and diversity have come far more precarious work. Preliminary results from the full *Hamilton Millennial Survey* suggest that precarious employment is now becoming the norm for a significant portion of an entire generation of workers who are well-educated and trained. The millennials may possibly be the first generation to experience a lower standard of living than previous generations, including their parents.

The PEPSO Study and Employment Precarity Index

Findings presented in this excerpt from the study are compared, where indicated, with results for the city of Hamilton's overall population age 35 to 65, using studies in precarious employment conducted by the [Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario](#) (PEPSO) research group in 2011 and 2014.

The report also breaks down the millennial population by PEPSO's [Employment Precarity Index](#), which was developed to provide a more precise way of identifying precarious employment. The Index is used to divide the sample into four employment security categories – secure, stable, vulnerable or precarious. The Index includes 13 measures of the form of the employment relationship and measures of the characteristics of employment, including:

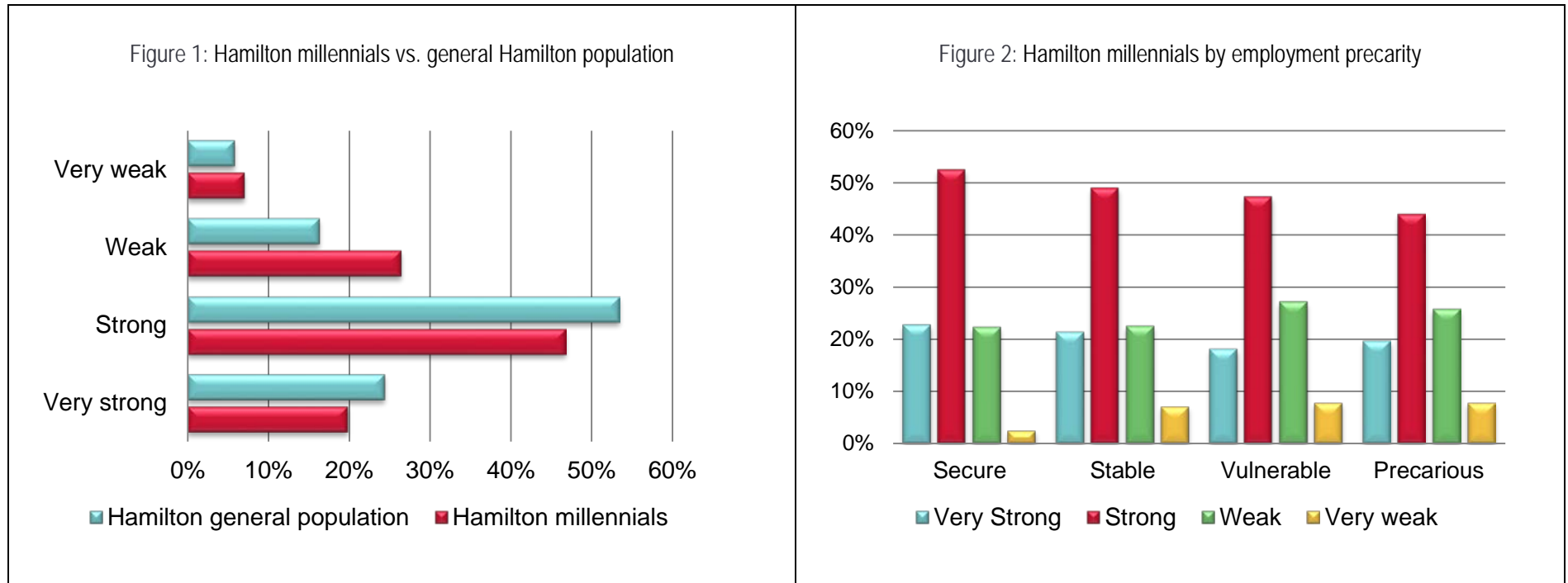
- Whether the person is in temporary employment or in a Standard Employment Relationship
- Expected changes in hours of employment
- Variability of earnings
- Ability to voice concerns at work without fear of job loss
- How often the person works on-call or is paid in cash
- Whether the person is paid if they miss a day's work

HAMILTON MILLENNIALS AND COMMUNITY BELONGING

Sense of Belonging

How would you describe your sense of belonging to the community in which you live?

Sense of belonging to the community

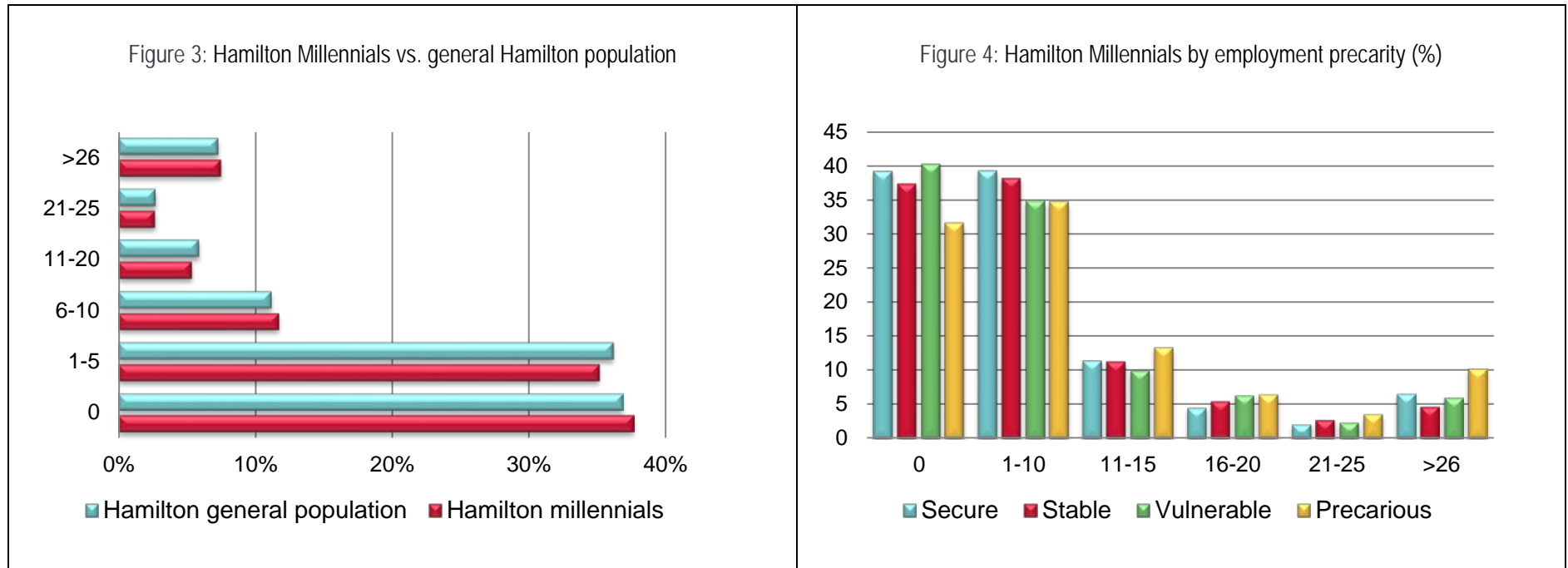


Overall, there is a strong attachment to community in both the *Hamilton Millennial Survey* and the PEPSO studies. Hamilton millennials' sense of belonging to the community is slightly less than the general population (Hamilton) who participated in the 2011 PEPSO study. Specifically, 67% of Hamilton millennials and 78% of the general population indicated their sense of belonging to their communities was *strong/very strong*. Among Hamilton millennials, the sense of belonging was *strong/very strong* across all four of the employment categories — from 75% of those in secure employment to 64% of those in precarious work. These results suggest the strong sense of belonging to the Hamilton community goes beyond the realm of work and that other factors about Hamilton may be having a positive impact on millennials.

Volunteering

Volunteering involves applying your expertise, ideas, energy and labour to support an organization without being paid. In the last 12 months, how many hours per month did you volunteer on average?

Number of hours volunteered in past 12 months



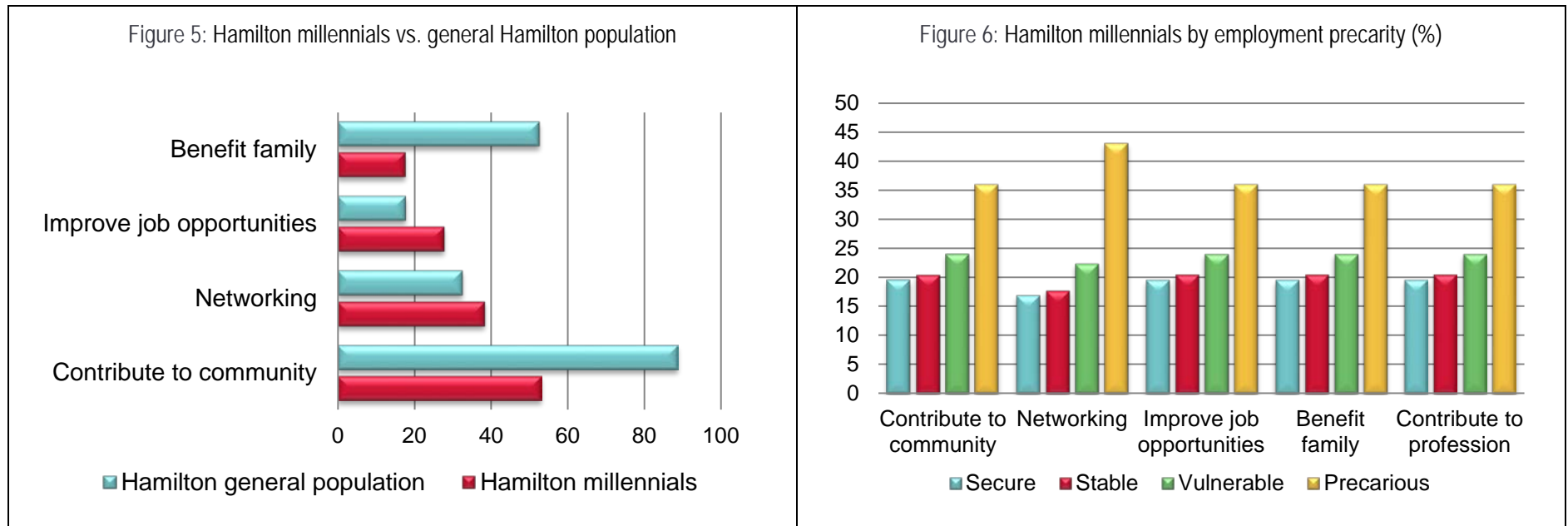
Millennials and the general Hamilton population do a similar amount of volunteering. Just over one-third of both groups have not volunteered at all in the last 12 months. As shown in Figure 4, the level of precarity does not seem to have an impact on the number of hours volunteered; however, precariously employed millennials volunteer more hours at the high end. Overall, volunteering is hard to interpret as some people may work precariously so they can volunteer more. Others may volunteer less as they may be spending their time looking for work.

Thinking about the reasons why you volunteer, which of the following were important to you? Select as many as appropriate.

- To network with or meet people
- To make a contribution to the community
- To contribute to my profession*
- To improve your job/client opportunities
- Doing work that benefits your children, family or yourself

**This question was not asked on the original PEPSO studies*

Reasons for volunteering



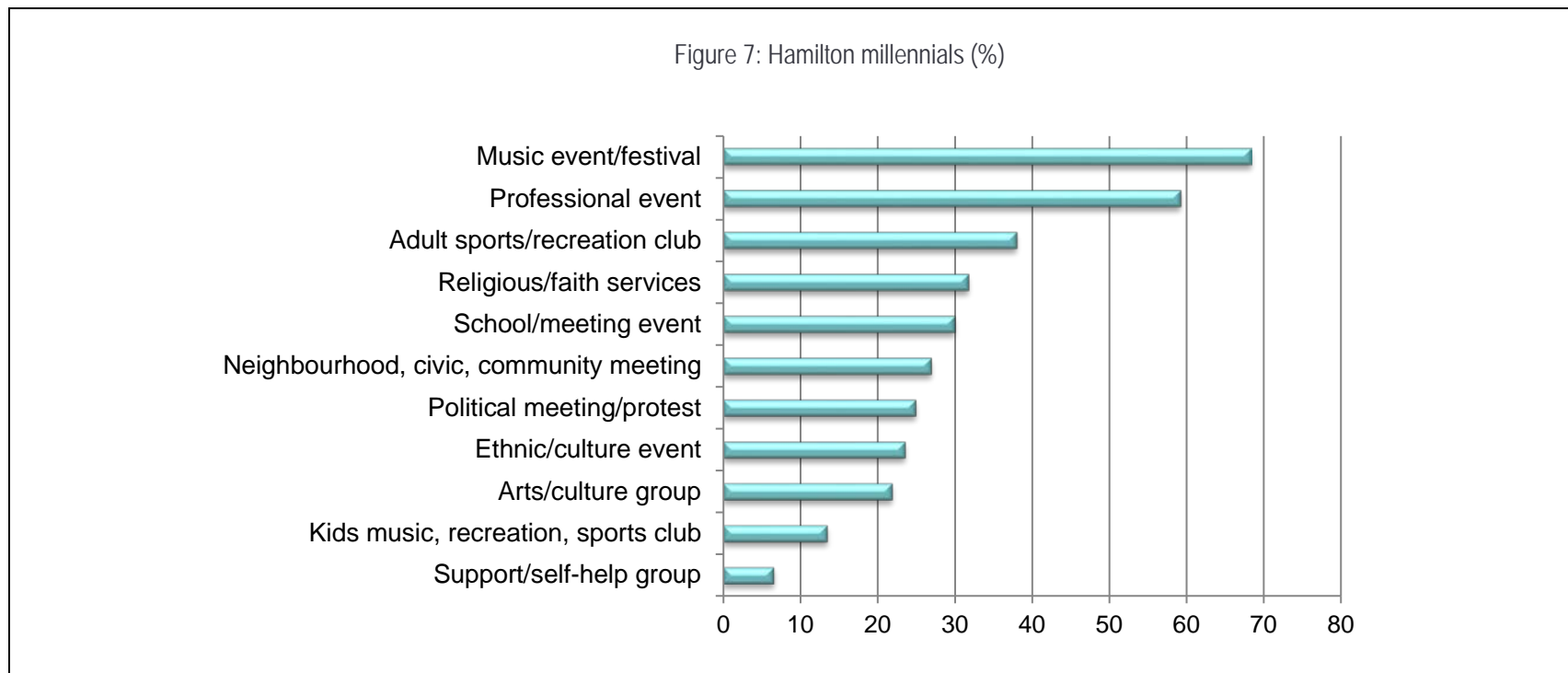
Millennials are more likely to volunteer for job opportunities and networking, whereas the general population which is more likely to volunteer for family benefit and to contribute to their community. Among the general Hamilton population who volunteer, 89% do so to contribute to the community compared with just over half of millennials. Further, the Hamilton general population volunteers more to benefit family (52%) compared to millennials (18%) who are less likely to have established a family. Figure 6 breaks this down further showing that Hamilton millennials in precarious work volunteer at almost twice the rate of those in secure employment, regardless of the reason for volunteering. Just over four in 10 precariously employed millennials volunteer to network, more than twice as many millennials in secure or stable employment. Not surprisingly, the proportion of millennials who volunteer to improve job opportunities almost doubles from 19.5% for those in secure employment to 36% for those in precarious employment.

Community Activities and Work Uncertainty

In the last 12 months, did you do any of the following? Multiple responses were allowed.

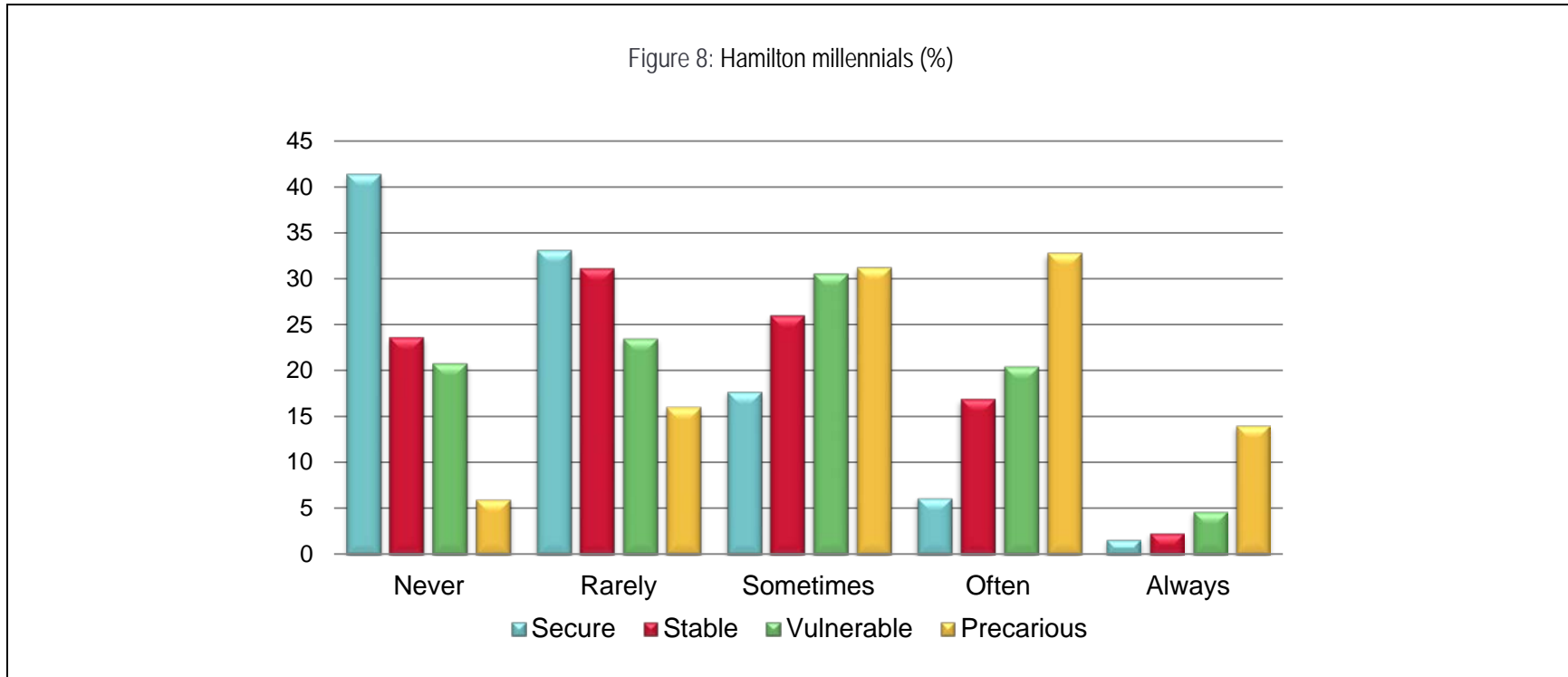
- Attend a political meeting or protest event
- Attend an event organized by an ethnic or cultural organization
- Enroll your children in recreation, sports or music clubs/organizations
- Attend religious or faith services
- Attend a school meeting/event
- Attend a local music event or festival
- Attend an event sponsored by a professional organization
- Belong to an arts or culture group (e.g., theatre group, book club, game club, etc.)
- Belong to an adult recreation or sports club/group (e.g., hockey league, golf club, exercise club)
- Belong to a support or self-help group/club (e.g., AA, cancer or diabetes group, mental health support, etc.)
- Attend a neighbourhood, civic or community association meeting/event

In the last 12 months, did you attend or do any of the following?



Millennials participate in or attend a variety of activities in the greater Hamilton community. The top five activities include attending a music event/festivals (68.5%), an event sponsored by a professional organization (59.2%), and adult recreation or sports club/group (38%), attending a religious or faith services (32%), and attending a school meeting/event (30%).

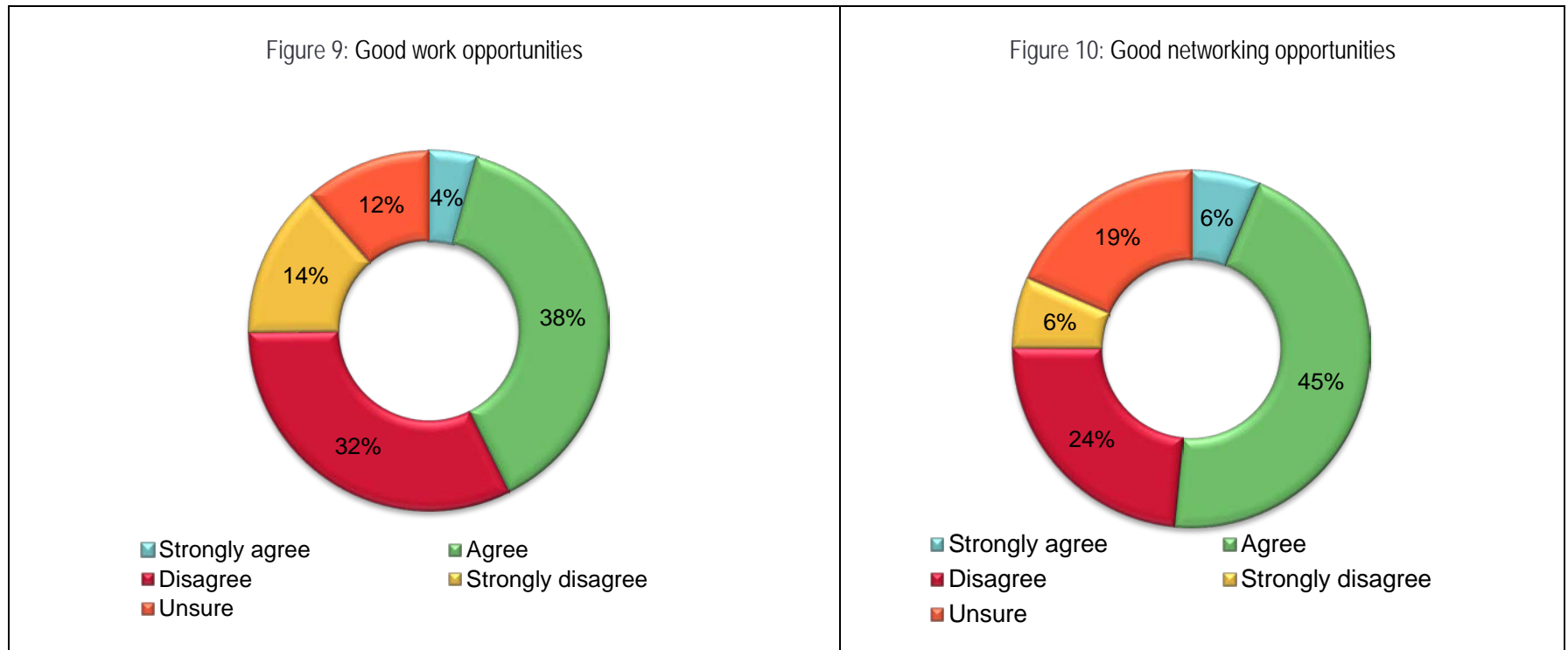
How often does uncertainty about your work schedule prevent or limit you from doing any of the above community activities?



Approximately one in four millennials reported *often/always*, and almost one in three *sometimes* that uncertainty about their work schedule prevents or limits them from doing any of the identified community activities. However, when viewed through the employment precarity index, the results reinforce the negative impact that work schedule uncertainty has on vulnerable and precarious workers. Three-quarters of Hamilton millennials in secure employment reported *never/rarely* did schedule uncertainty limit their community activity, compared with 22% of precarious workers. Only 8% of millennials in secure employment reported that schedule uncertainty limits their community activity *often/always*, compared to 47% of those in precarious employment. Precarious workers are more than eight times more likely to *always* have their community activities limited by their work schedule uncertainty.

How does Hamilton-Burlington measure up for millennials?

- ***The Greater Hamilton-Burlington area provides good work opportunities for my generation.***
- ***The Greater Hamilton-Burlington area provides good networking opportunities for career development.***



Work opportunities

Millennials are split on whether Hamilton provides good work opportunities. Overall, 42% *strongly agreed/agreed* while 46% *strongly disagreed/disagreed* and 12% are *unsure*. Just over half of millennials in secure employment *strongly agreed/agreed* compared to one in three of those in precarious work. Conversely, where one-third of millennials in secure employment *strongly disagreed/disagreed* that Hamilton provides good work opportunities, more than half (56%) of those in precarious work *strongly disagreed/disagreed*. Almost six in 10 survey respondents *strongly disagreed/disagreed* or were unsure of whether Hamilton provides good work opportunities. This may suggest that while millennials are committed to Hamilton and feel they belong, without better, more longer-term employment opportunities, they may be forced to move.

Networking opportunities

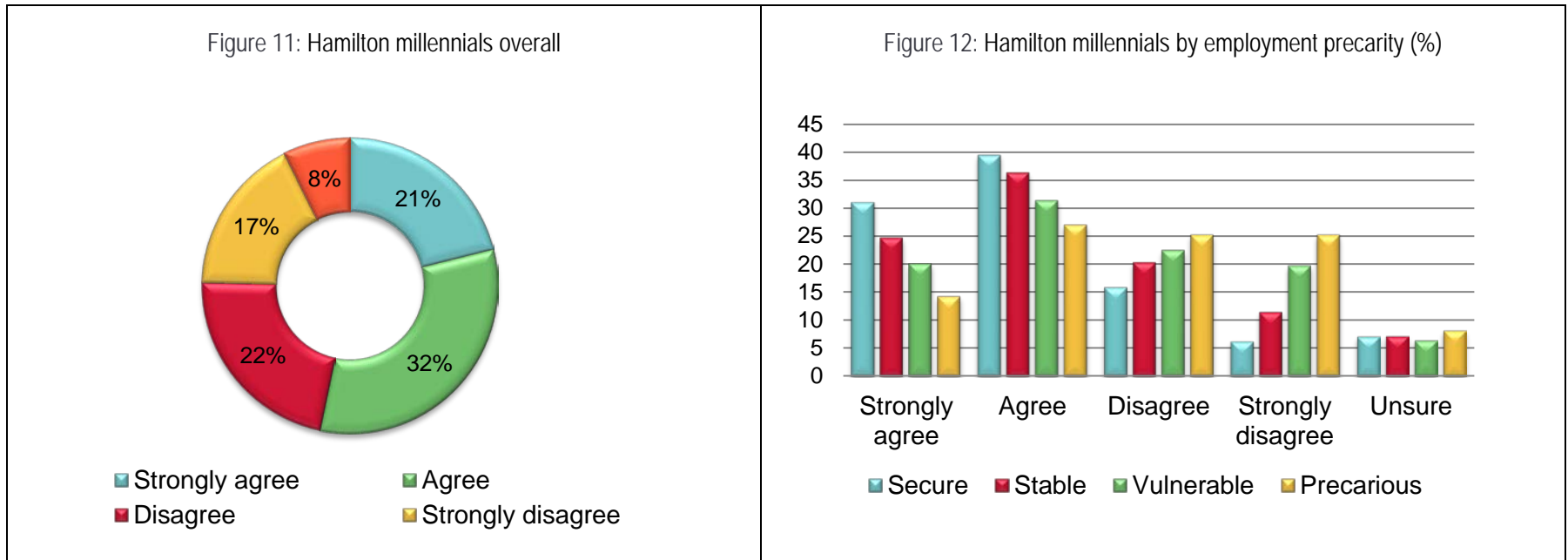
As Figure 9 illustrates, just over half of the millennials (51%) *strongly agreed/agreed* that Hamilton provides good networking opportunities. Millennials in precarious work were more likely to *strongly disagree/disagree* that Hamilton

provides good opportunities (56%) compared to those in secure employment (34%). The fact that half of survey respondents could not agree that Hamilton provides good career opportunities may reflect their inability yet to connect to a career and stable employment

Quality of life

Quality of life — I expect to have a quality of life the same or greater than my parents' generation.

Expect the same or better quality of life as/than parents

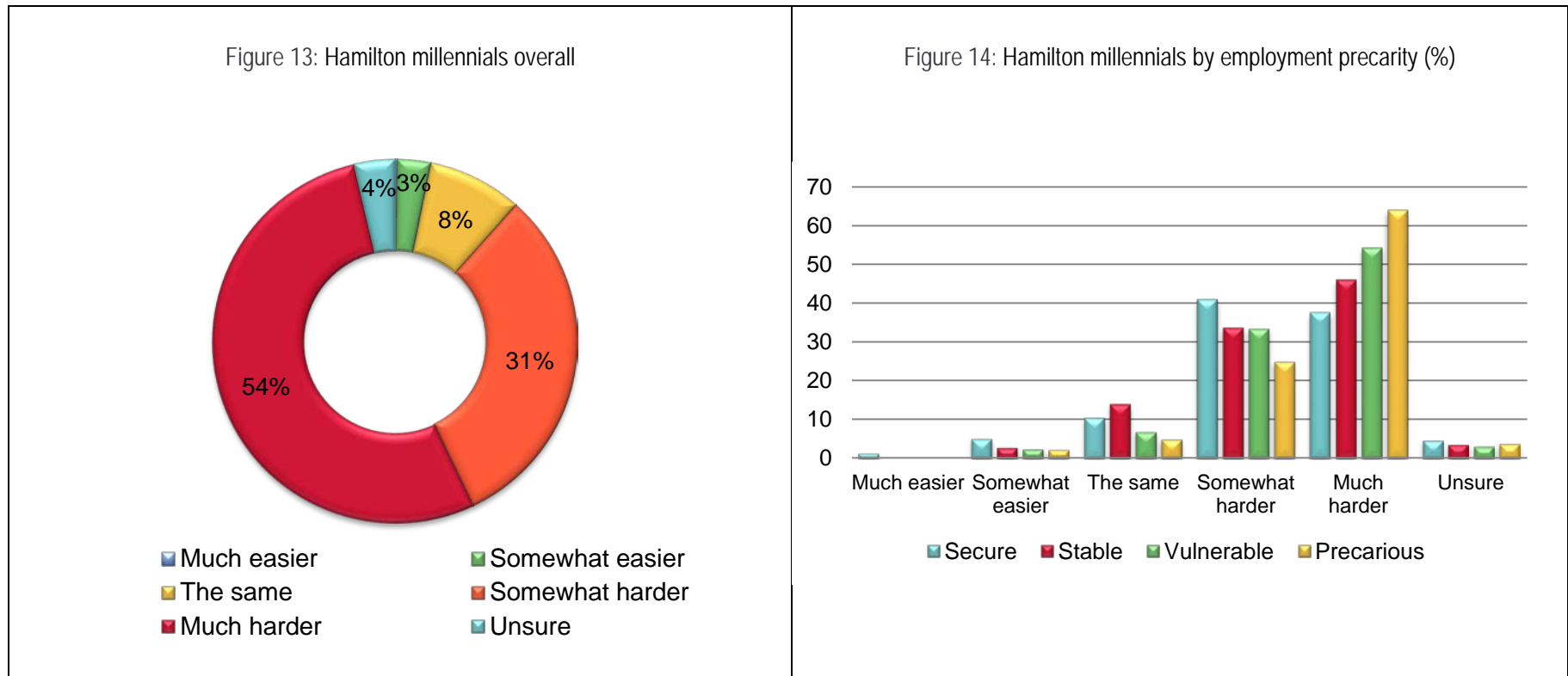


As Figure 11 shows, millennials were almost split on their expected quality of life. While 54% of millennials said they expected a better or same quality of life as their parents, 39% did not, and just under one in 10 were unsure. Among millennials in secure employment, 71% *strongly agreed/agreed* compared to 41% of those in precarious employment, a meaningful finding. Agreement steadily declined as participants moved from secure work to precarious work. The survey results reflect similar findings in U.S. studies of millennials. The 2016 Pew Research-EIG study reported that 38% of American millennials believe their standard of living will better than their parents, 21% worse and 33% the same.

The game ...

Life is like a game of "snakes and ladders." Opportunities come along that move you ahead in the game, but then you can face barriers that cause you to fall back. Do you think "THE GAME" is getting easier or harder for your generation of workers?

Is the game getting easier or harder for your generation?



Almost nine in 10 millennials (85%) said "the game" was getting *much/somewhat harder*, compared to 4% who said it was *somewhat easier*, just under 9% who said *about the same*, and 3% who were *unsure*. An overwhelming majority of millennials in every employment-type category – secure, stable, vulnerable and precarious – agreed that the game is getting harder. Eighty-nine per cent of those in precarious employment agreed the game is getting harder compared to 88% in vulnerable employment, 80% in stable employment and 79% of those in secure employment. And despite a somewhat optimistic outlook on their expected quality of life, millennials also believe they have far more challenges and hardship in getting there than previous generations.

In summary

Community of Foundations of Canada has stated, "Belonging is at the heart of building stronger communities and a more cohesive, inclusive country. It is about how much we believe we fit in a group or place, and is also fundamental to our sense of happiness and well-being." Inclusiveness in the workplace, whatever it may be, is also fundamental to our sense of happiness and wellbeing, and belonging. The Hamilton Millennial Survey, the PEPSO studies and other research have shown us that precarious employment and income uncertainty can have a negative effect on a person's ability and reason for participating in and feeling part of their community.