



Responsible Conduct of Research-Creation: A Portrait of an Uncharted Field of Research

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Acknowledgments. Thanks to members of our steering committee for their comments and help throughout the research process: Philippe Gauthier, François-Joseph Lapointe, Marianne Cloutier, Cynthia Noury and André-Éric Létourneau.

This project is funded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) Concerted Action program "La conduite responsable en recherche : mieux comprendre pour mieux agir".

Introduction

Responsible conduct of research (RCR) is ubiquitous, and present in most areas of research. One area that has received little attention is Research-Creation (RC):

- an emergent field at the interface of academic research and creative activities
- in Quebec, Canada, RC is defined as "research activities or approaches that foster the creation or interpretation/performance of literary or artistic works of all types"

Researcher-Creators – who are at the same time researchers and practising artists, musicians, or designers – may be faced with very different issues or challenges from colleagues in the rest of academia.

- How are RCR issues articulated in RC?
- How does the heterogeneous RC community responds to institutional policies or provincial/national RCR guidelines?

This review aimed to identify and categorize RCR issues, and RC-specific factors.

General research objectives

- (1) explore RCR challenges – common and distinct – that arise in RC
- (2) document perceptions of researcher-creators about these issues and the application of RCR principles/frameworks
- (3) identify needs and gaps in existing policies (institutional, national) and develop awareness and management tools for RC

Literature review objectives

- (1) Map key challenges to determine scope and nature of RC-specific issues
- (2) Synthesize data
- (3) Identify specific determinants of RCR issues in RC

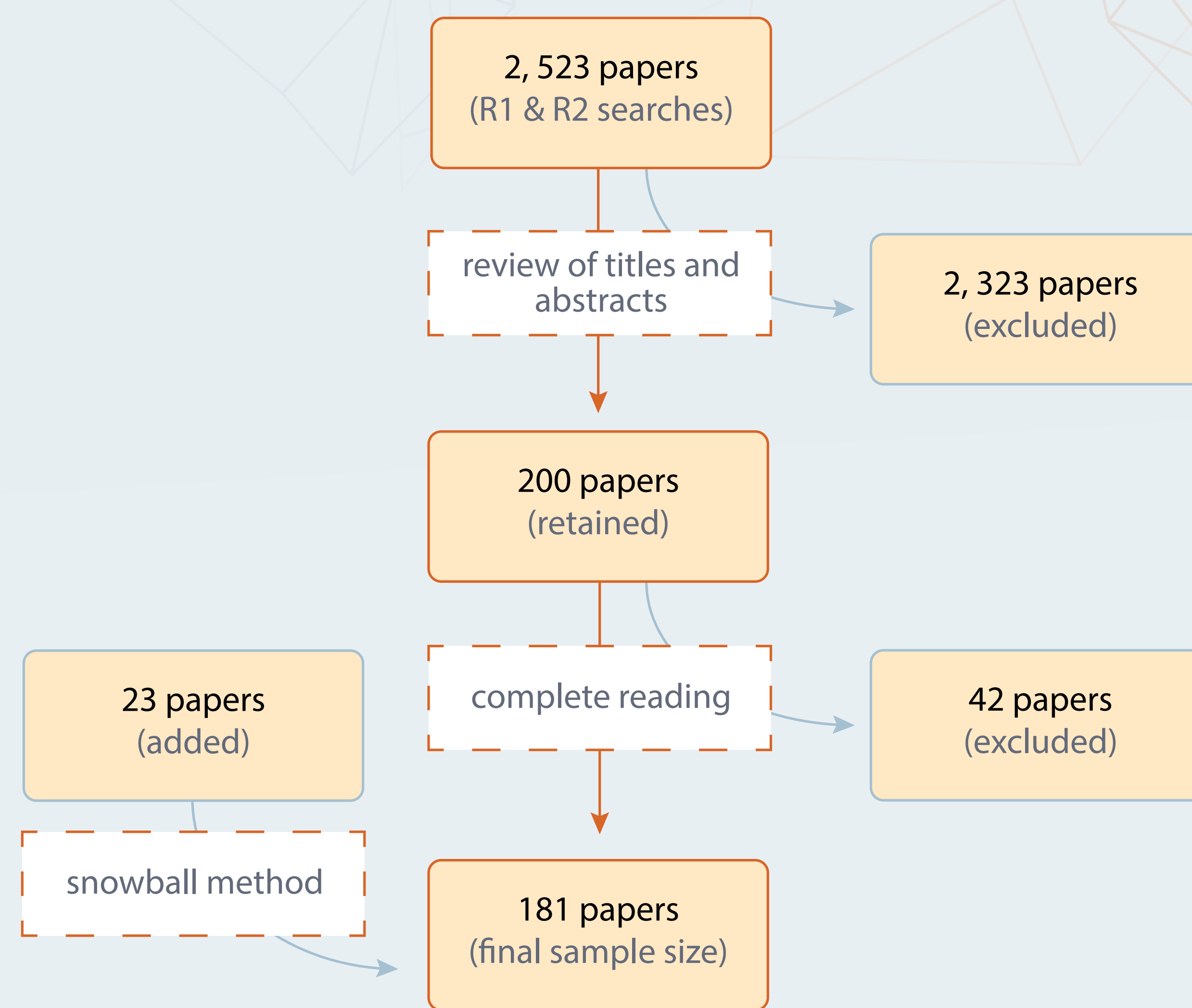
Methods

Scoping review of academic literature dealing with RCR in RC; n = 2,523 papers

- Analysis of titles and abstracts resulted reduced sample to 181 papers, which were then read in detail and coded using QDA miner software.
- This literature review was the first step in a two-year project to build tools which will raise awareness and support RCR in RC.

Two research strategies on 10 databases from humanities (ex. Scopus) to biosciences (ex. EBSCO):

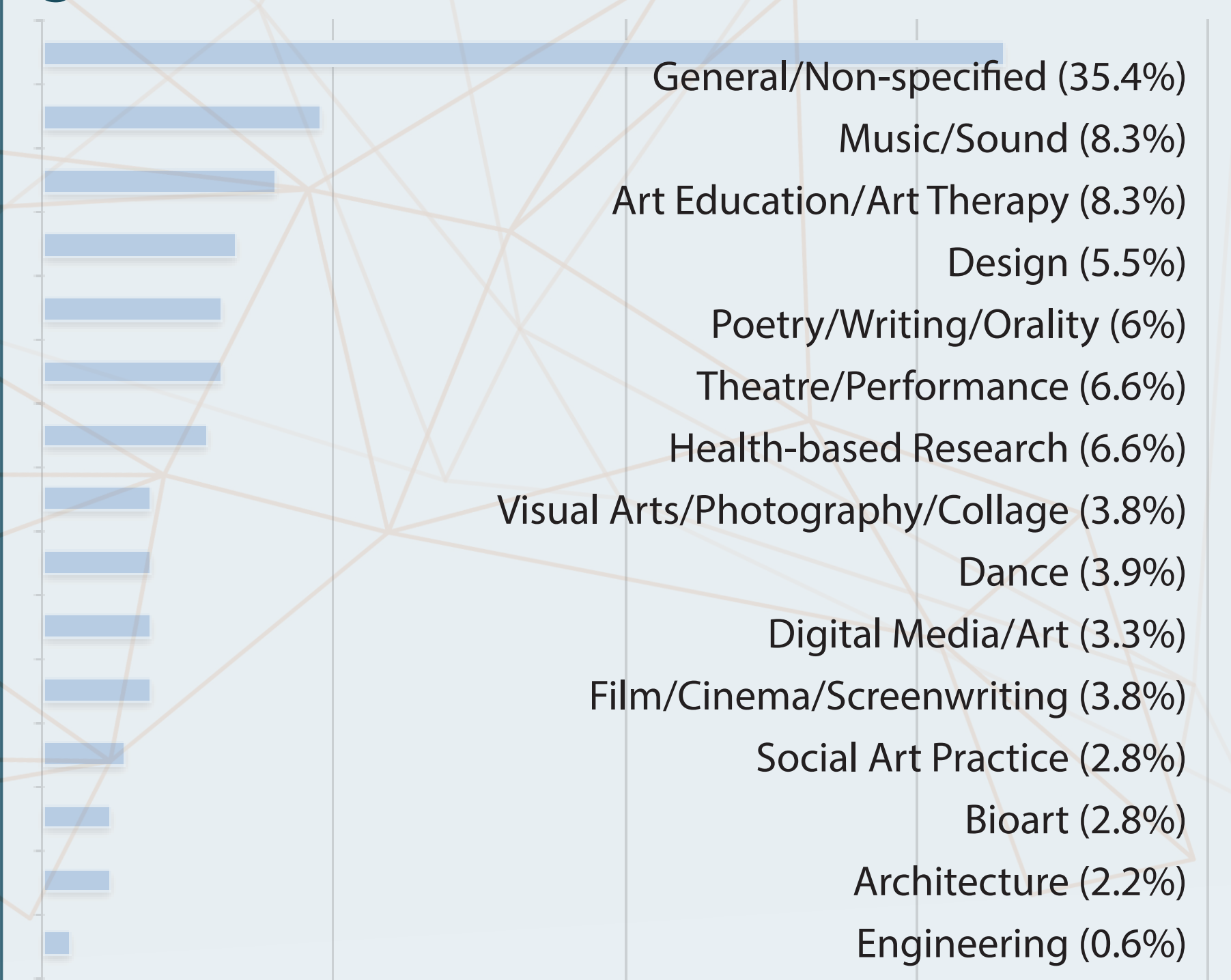
- R1 "CRR keywords" AND "RC keys words"
- R2 "RC" keywords only



Thematic/category analysis; sample representativeness according to 14 variables attesting to the relevance of the selected texts.

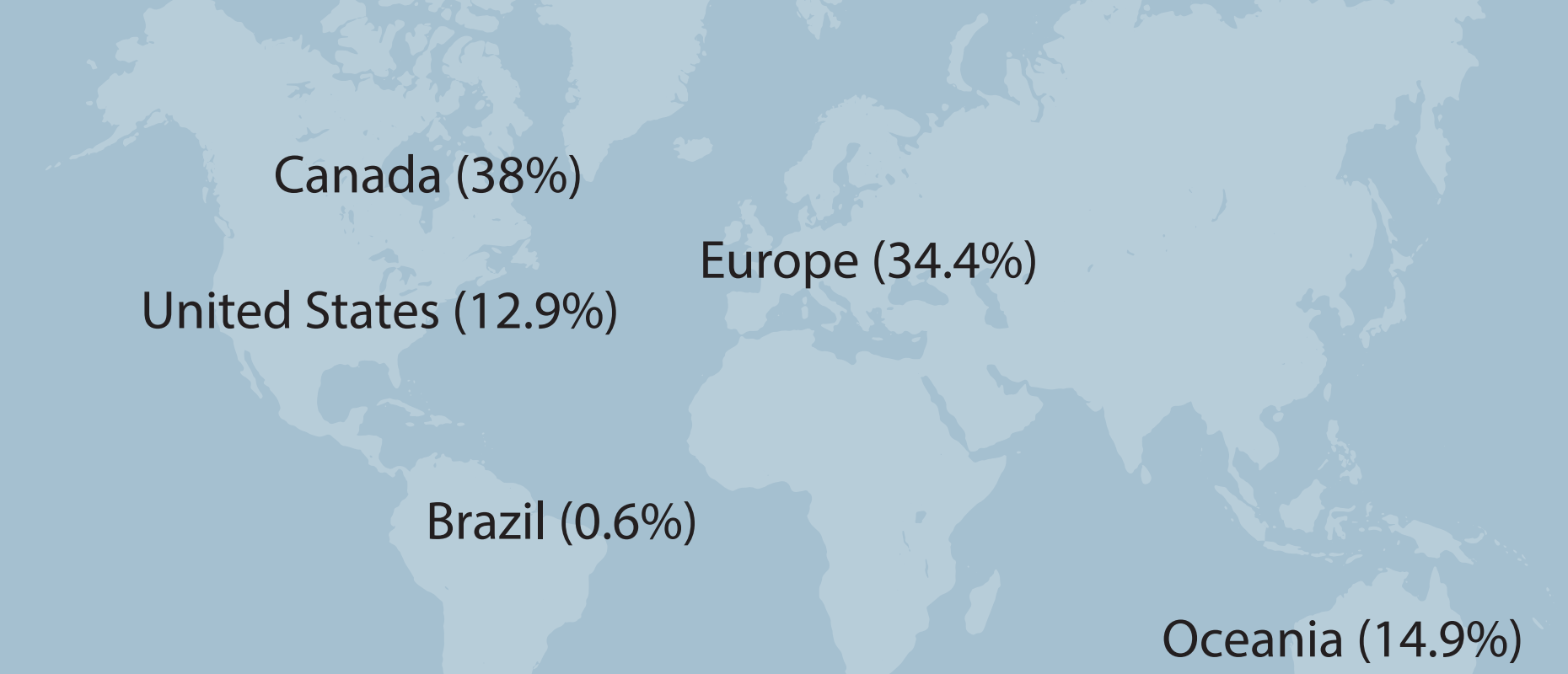
Charting the data

Sample representativeness by general domains of research-creation



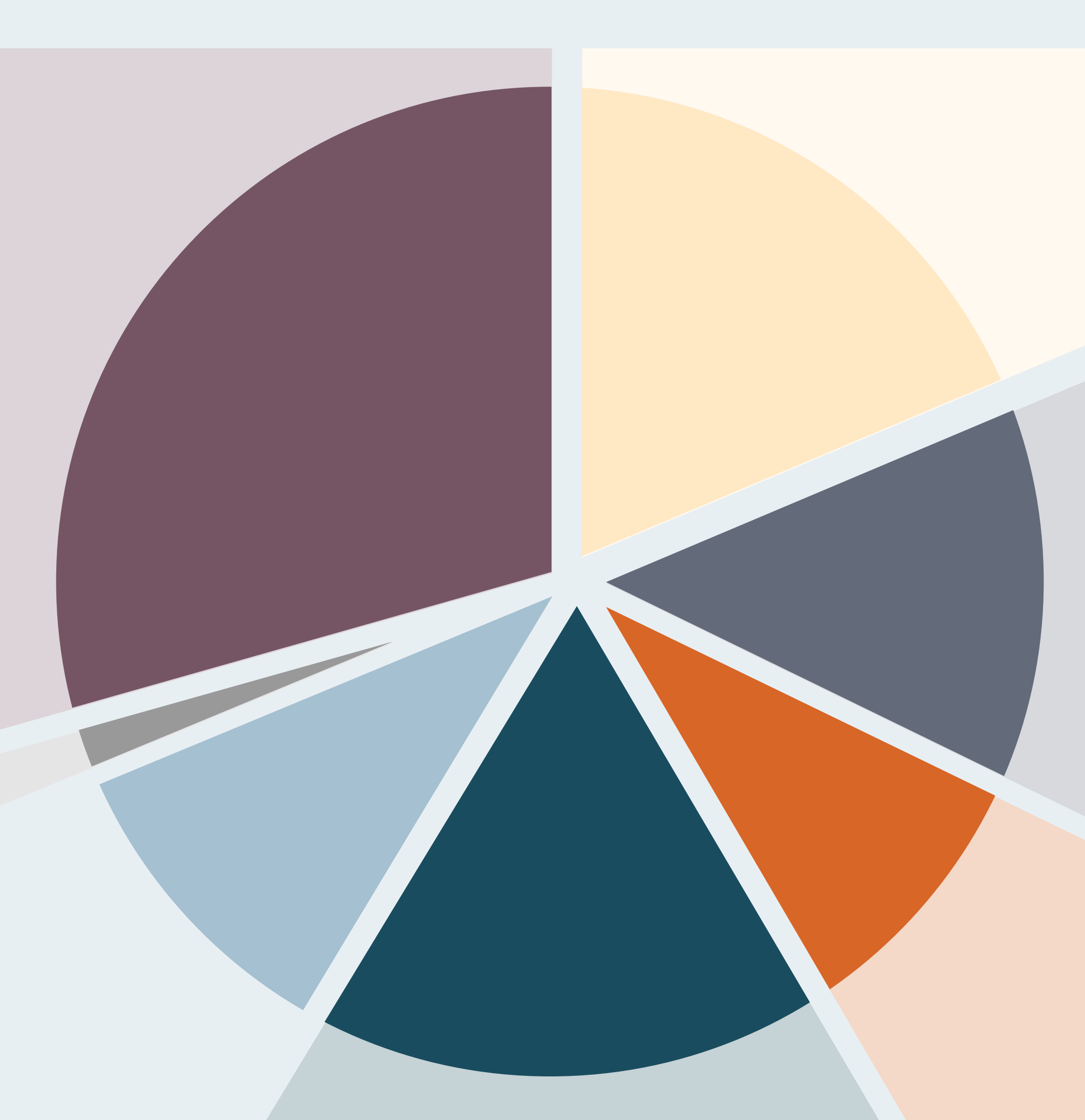
Of the 77 secondary domains listed, the most represented were: a/r/tography (4.6%), music therapy (4.6%), arts-based health research (2.3%), creative writing (2.3%), documentary (2.3%), and socially engaged art (2.3%).

Sample representativeness by region



RESULTS

Issues by code family (proportion of results)



QUALITY (29%)

With regard to Bioart and RC projects involving animals, there appears to be a mismatch between current RCR guidelines and their specificities, which can inhibit/impair the emergence of relevant projects. Concerning the involvement of humans, two major "tensions" specific to RC were identified:

- Tension 1: preserve participant integrity without harming artistic process during all stages.
- Tension 2: Ensure free and informed consent while respecting the nature of creative approach that cannot be fully determined upstream.

These tensions depend upon:

- disciplines and art forms (e.g., creations involving visual representations like photo and video) but also archiving (audio) and secondary use;
- type of research, use of creation/art, e.g., "art-based-therapy" and "art-based education", where art is a means of intervention, do not have same repercussions as projects where creation is the purpose.

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS AND COMMITMENTS (2%)

Conflicts emerge from different roles of artist-researchers, different interests, and different actors:

- aesthetics and integrity of research;
- students' interests and those of the institution;
- multiple affiliations (e.g.: industry, academy, art);
- participants and artist-researchers' approaches;
- authenticity and bureaucratic requirements;
- rigor and audience seduction;
- multiple stakeholders;
- research approach and institution hosting the project.

Recommendation:

- protect participants, be aware of conflicts with others and oneself.

AUTHORSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER (KT) (10%)

Identified issues related to:

- representation/objectivity: researcher difficulty remaining neutral in the representation of participants within creative works;
- new (creative) medium: (sometimes "alternative") challenges traditional academic KT and may be more difficult to protect/archive;
- taking the audience into account: power over the form of KT, desire to reach audience yet ensure no misinterpretation;
- authorship/co-authorship/contributorship: issues of recognition for all actors in co-production of RC works (i.e., research participants);
- free access and wide dissemination: censorship vs artistic freedom, need to depart from usual modes of scientific communication to increase accessibility;
- publications containing creative components (definition of peer review, constraints of traditional academic mediums, devaluing of artistic production);

But recognized that research and creation are complementary in KT:

- research brings credibility
- creation as KT overcomes limitations of traditional KT modes for both research and creation

Recommendation:

- acknowledge all stakeholders – artists, researchers, participants – to give credit and recognition

POSITION (18%)

Identified issues related to:

- Collaborative work often central to RC; multiplication of research milieus questioned, as are relations of power that emerge, and ways to frame multi-centric approaches;
- Dual expertise common among artist-researchers, which requires dual training, reflexivity and new expectations of excellence;
- Intention: questions concerning participatory research that engages communities in political projects to develop new discursive and ethical spaces; questions about identity as artist, researcher or artist-researcher;
- RC research may also place participants and artist-researchers in positions of vulnerability;

Recommendation:

- reflexivity, pay attention to most vulnerable participants, and develop culture of collaboration.

DEFINITION (19%)

No consensual definition of RC = one determinant of different RCR issues in RC.

- No agreement on what constitutes "real" RC
- Influences debates about what should be financed, who should evaluate it, the nature of training, content, etc.

ACADEMIC TRAINING (13%)

Identified issues related to:

- Place of ethics in academic curricula and project evaluations;
- Complex and contested integration of RC within the academy, still embryonic nature of RC education, and assessment standards, and future career prospects for students;
- Difficult recognition of hybrid projects for which the form is still uncertain in terms of financing, evaluation and support by the institution;
- Nature of appropriate support that supervisors should offer;

Recommendation:

- Pay attention to RC specificity and create environment attentive to students' reality.

FUNDING (9%)

Identified issues related to:

- Private funding: risks related to a loss of autonomy and a utilitarian vision of art;
- Eligibility criteria (academic and ethical): may undermine artistic merit and specificity of RC, potential for abusive use of "RC" label to access research funds (distributive justice, research credibility);
- Evaluation: difficulty establishing clear and objective criteria; risk of identity loss and impeding creation in academy; problem defining who has expertise to evaluate RC projects (e.g., for funding);
- Deliverables: outcomes become a priority with traditional academic production at the top (may undermine RC quality), equivalences between different modes of production, "project culture" leads to promises that are difficult to formulate in RC;
- Productivity: very high demands (tight deadlines, competition, "publish or perish", unrealistic expectations from funders) lead to increased pressure = quantity over quality.

No consensus on what may be prevalent in evaluation practices (artistic vs scientific value) although acknowledged that both should be recognised in a global vision.

Recommendation:

- traditional models are insufficient, so adapt/rethink funding and recognise RC criteria;
- define who can evaluate RC, and promote more flexible approach.

Discussion and conclusion

More than just having the potential to deal with sensitive subjects, creation encompasses flexible, subjective and even "narrative" approaches capable of generating a high degree of emotional involvement. And this raises important RCR issues:

- (1) participatory nature means power relations, so risks regarding recognition, interpretation and use of contributions;
- (2) reflection on anonymity, authorization (participant and audience), dissemination, and secondary use of artistic productions (which risk "romanticizing" data) or academic productions (which risk of "psychologizing" data);
- (3) tension between need to ensure free and informed consent and iterative and inductive nature (or even unpredictability) of creative approach makes it difficult to use conventional approaches and traditional RCR tools (e.g., consent forms).

Very few articles dealt directly with RCR in RC.

- Possibly widespread use of non-RCR language to describe similar (but also different) issues.
- Definition and quality were the most commonly reported issues in RC, while traditional RCR challenges (related to KT and authorship, funding and conflicts of interests and commitment) were less discussed.

Difference of language used in RC to talk about RCR may limit our research results (as we used RCR keywords for R1); also, the issues reported only come from academic publications (in/about RC) which could limit the results. These findings highlight the need to develop RCR guidance that is pertinent and adapted to the realities of the RC community, and confirm the need for adapted and relevant RCR training tools.