

# Abortion Representations in Television and Film

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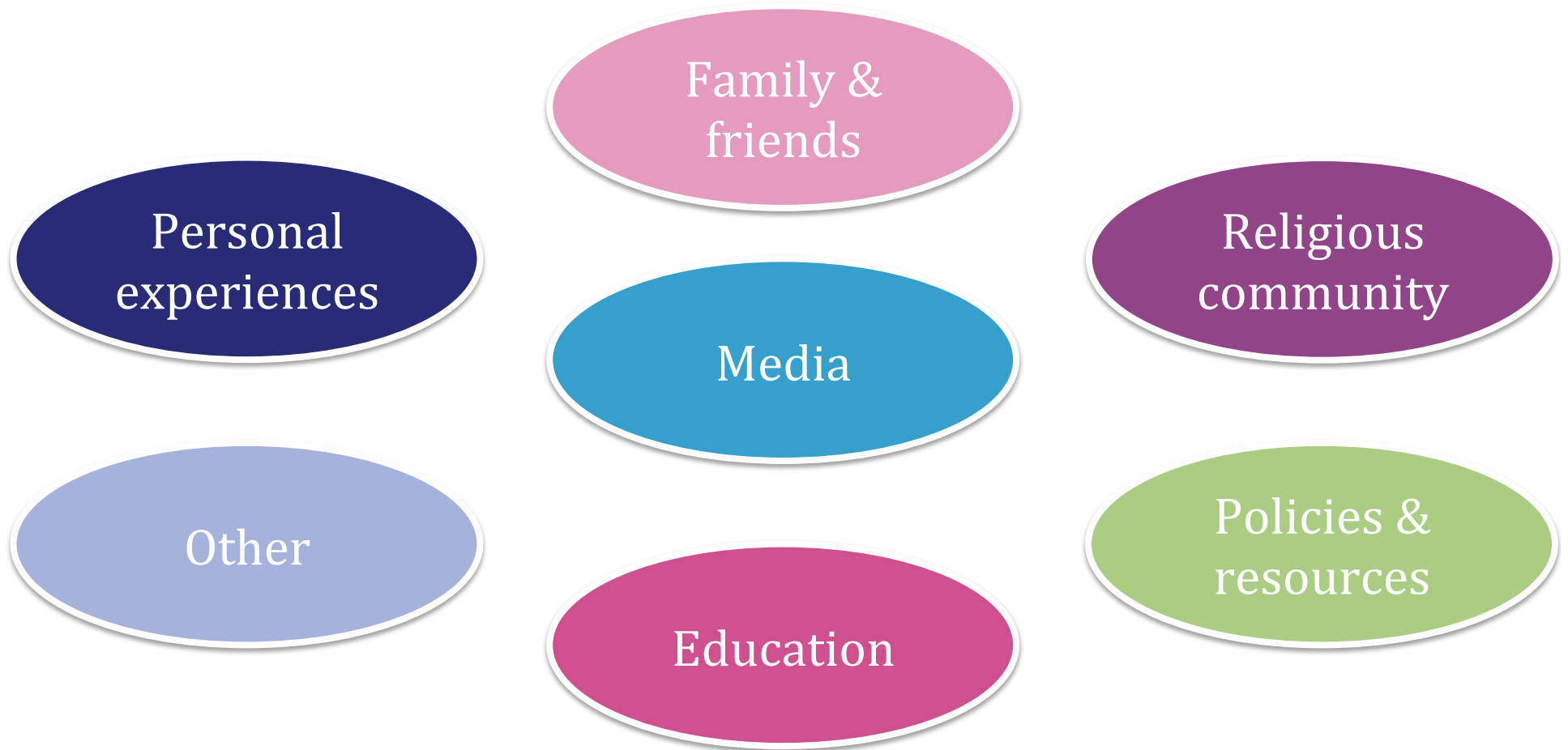
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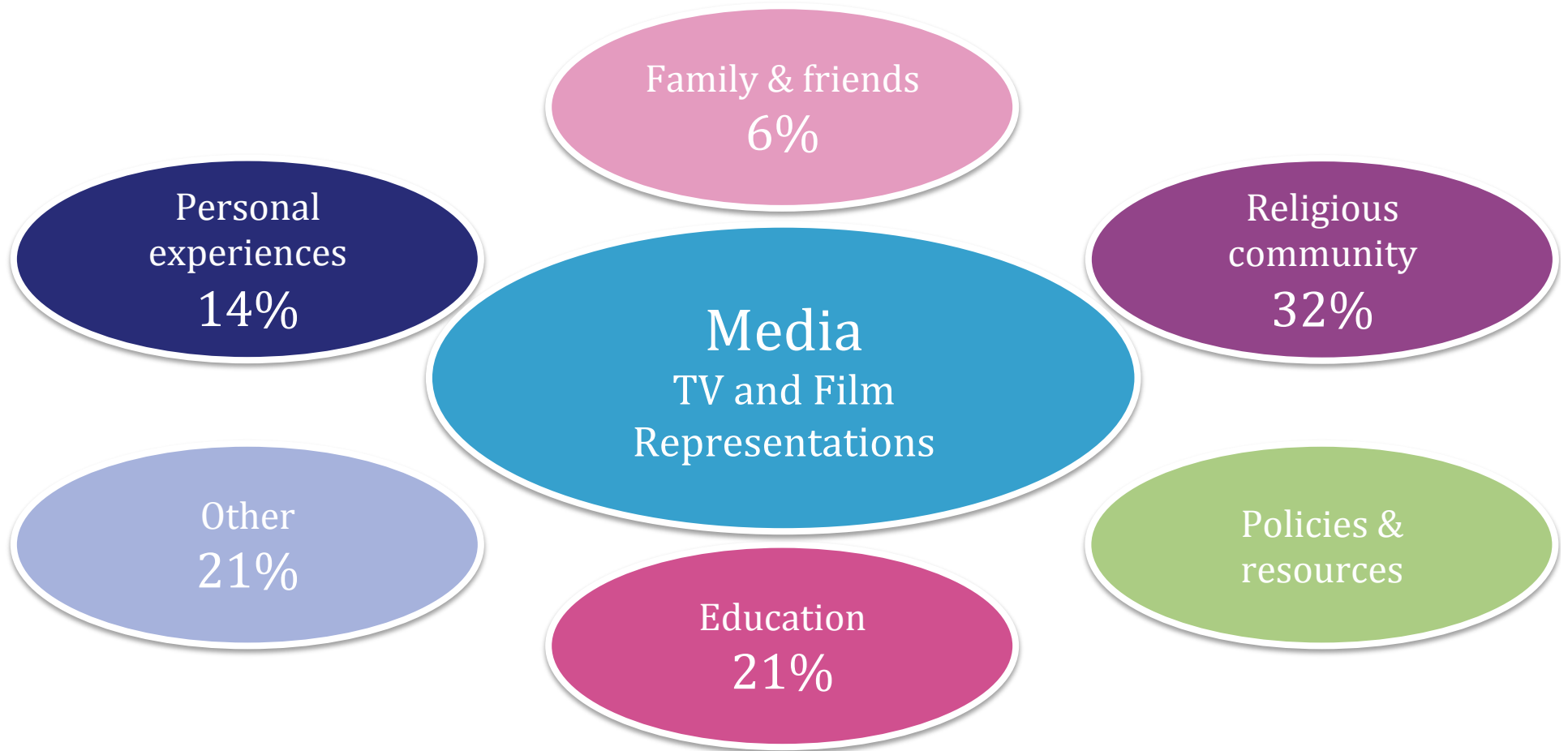
*Acknowledgements: Tracy Weitz, PhD, MPA*



# What influences people's views on abortion?



# What do people say influences their views on abortion?

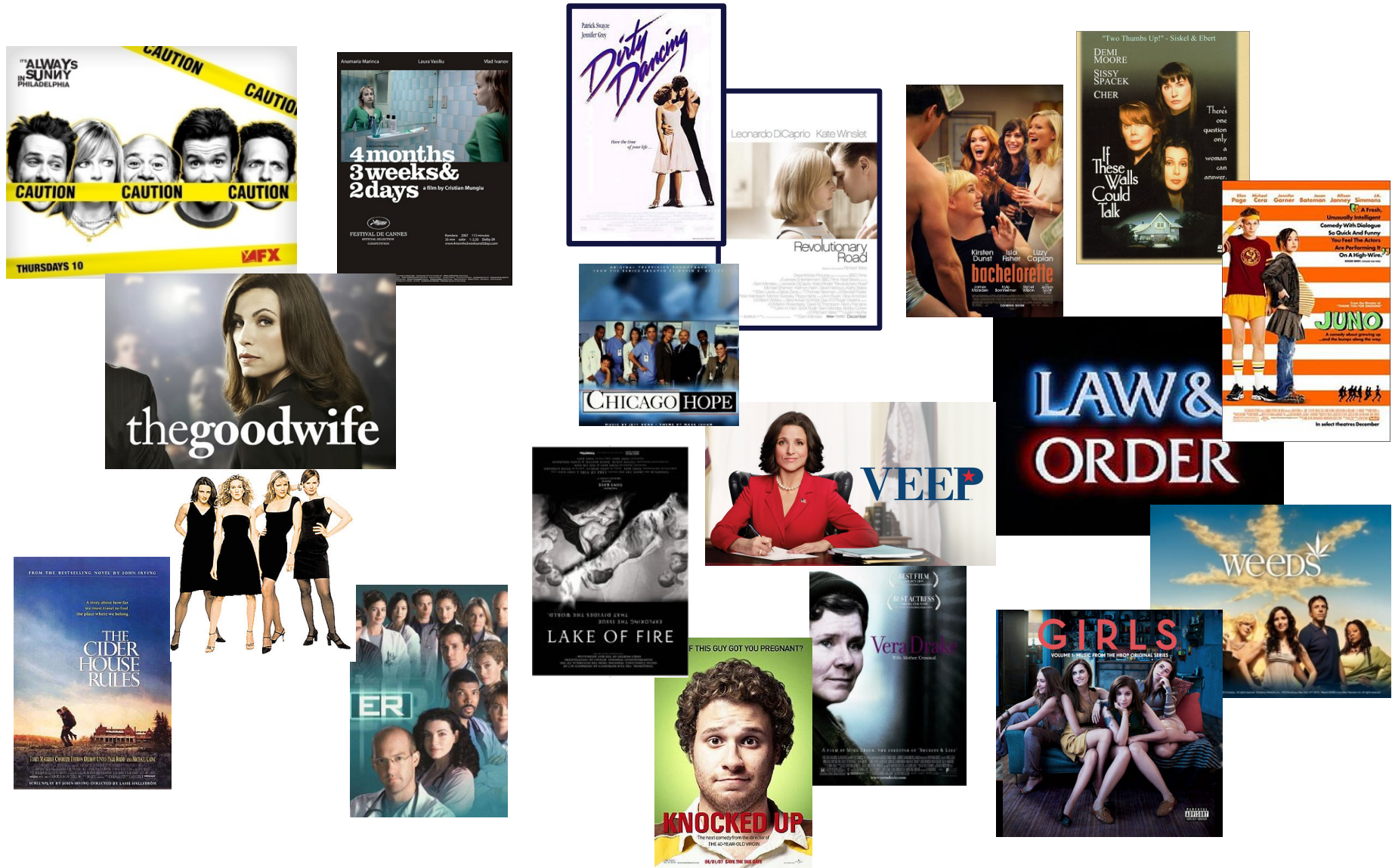


# Depictions in TV, film, internet, news, music, books, magazines. . .

- . . . influence and reinforce beliefs

*“Although a single exposure to a particular message isn't likely to change someone's opinion on any particular topic, continued exposure to media messages will help shape points of view over time.”<sup>1</sup>*

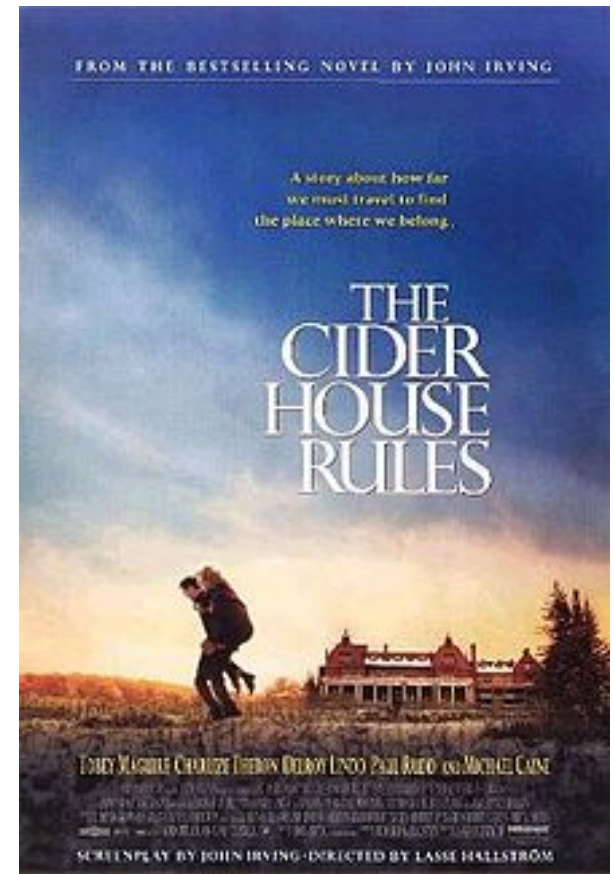
- Average American watches<sup>2</sup>:
  - 5 hours/day of TV
  - Children: 1200 hours/year of TV
  - 30 movies/year



# Many films and TV shows address abortion

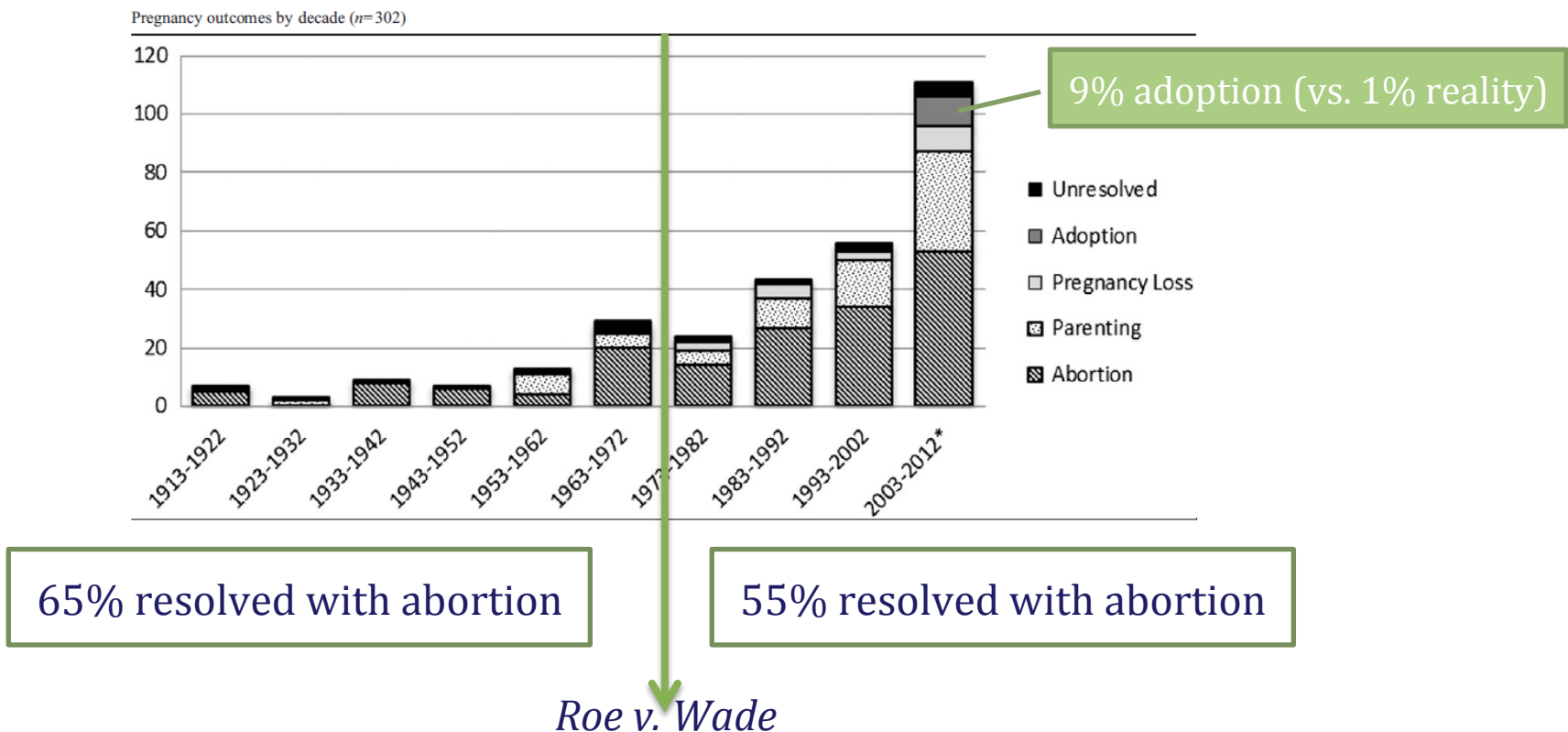
# TV and Film can Influence Abortion Beliefs

- Fictional representations can impact real-life attitudes
- Subjects (n=194) who watched a favorable abortion film were more likely to support legal abortion scenarios than those who watched unrelated film

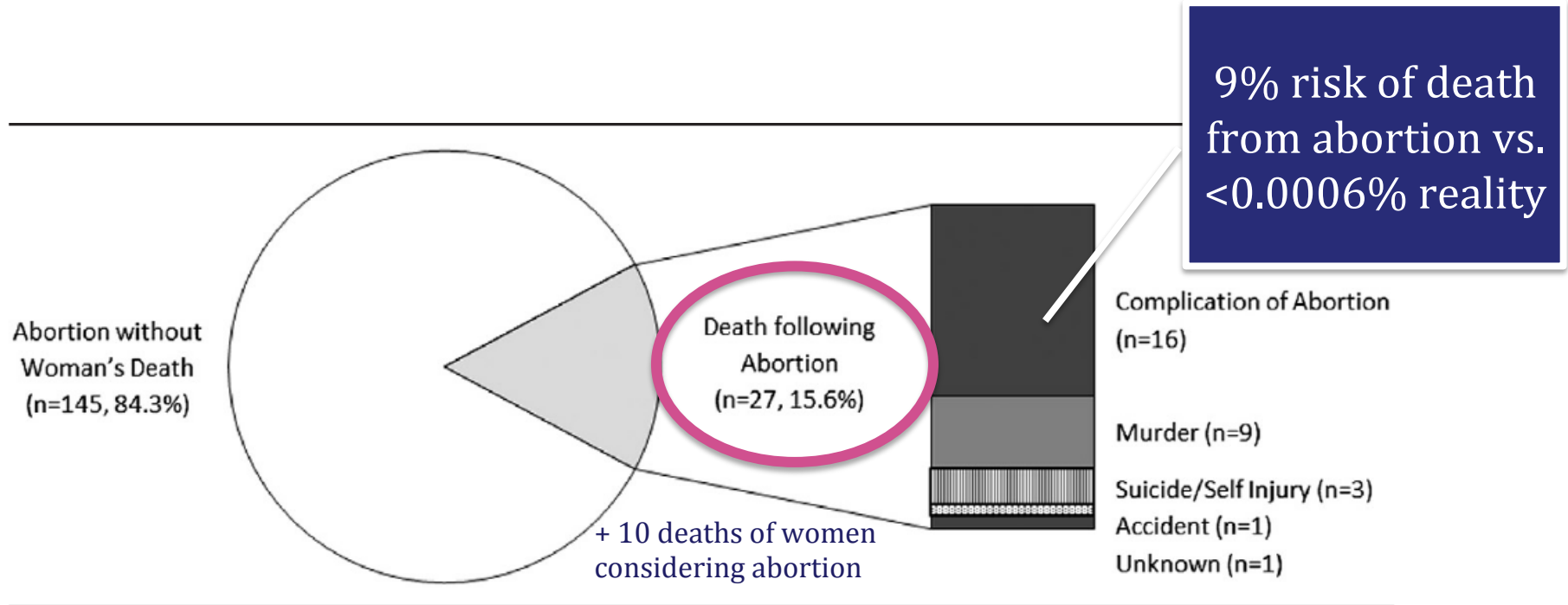


# How often and how is abortion mentioned in TV and film?

- Since 1916, 310 abortion plotlines



# Portrayal of Abortion as “Dangerous”



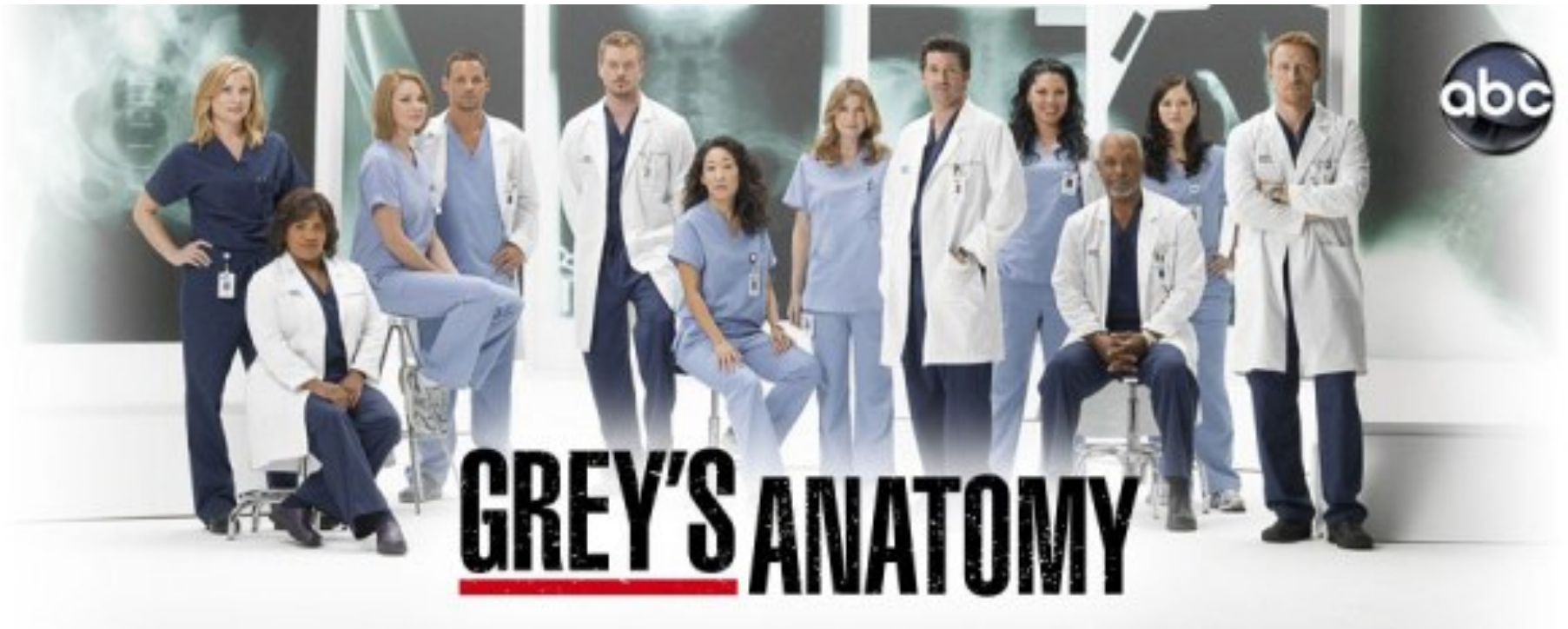


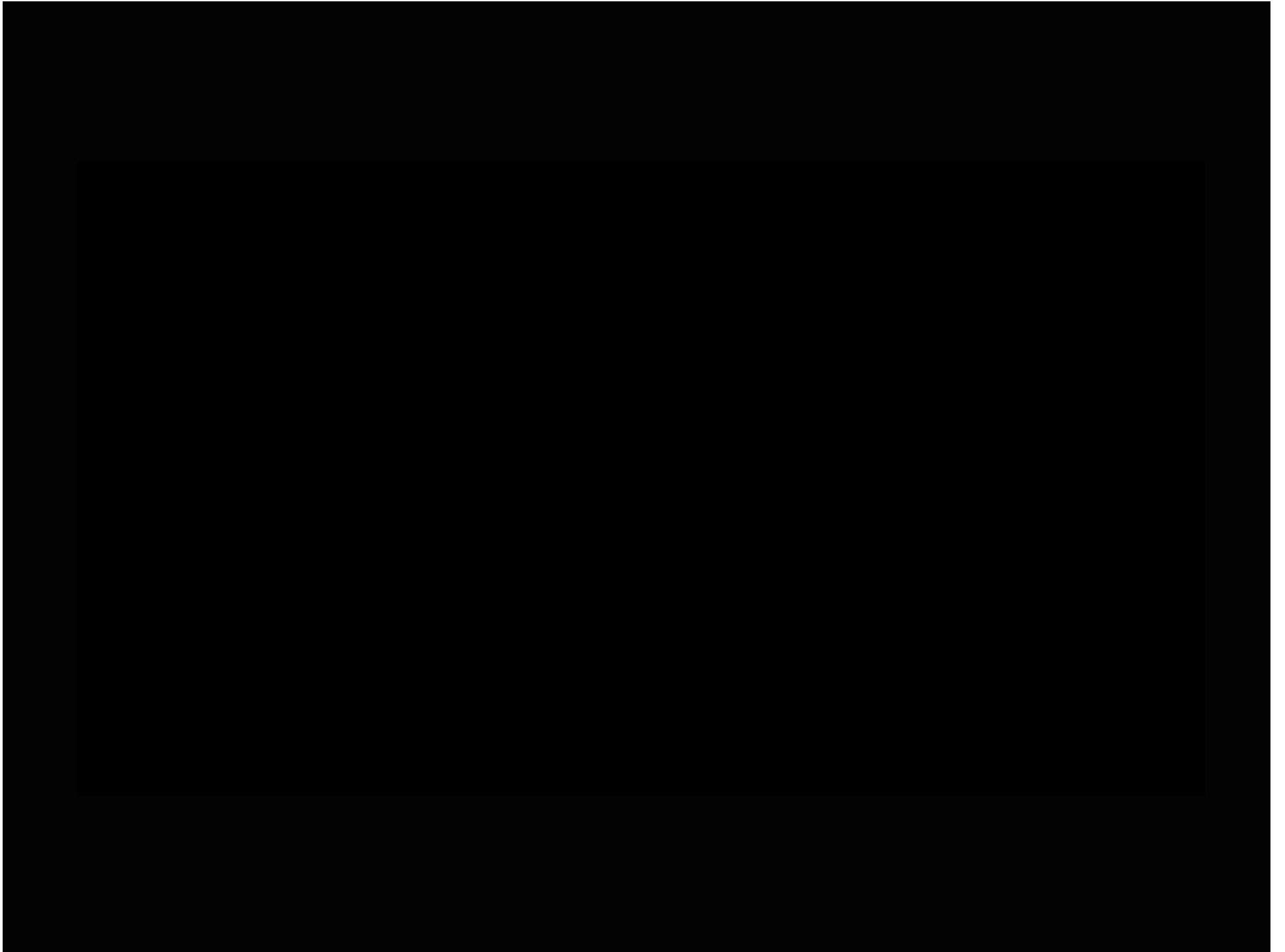
# Stigma, Silence and Secrecy





# Social Support around Decision





# Social Support around Decision





# Interactions with the Health Care System







# Interactions with the Health Care System

- Positive experiences
  - Friday Night Lights
  - Parenthood



# Common themes

- Fictional media representations of abortion tap into issues of stigma
  - Reinforce stigma with shame/secretcy
  - Debunk stigma with humor
- Positive and negative feelings about abortion can be traced to experiences surrounding the abortion (i.e. stigma, social support) as they can in real life
- Minimal attention to logistical barriers of abortion
- Decision making is often about career goals
  - Not reflective of broad range of women's experiences

# Abortion in TV and Film

- Fictional representations can both reflect reality and perpetuate myths.
- Entertainment media has potential to help destigmatize and normalize abortion experiences.