

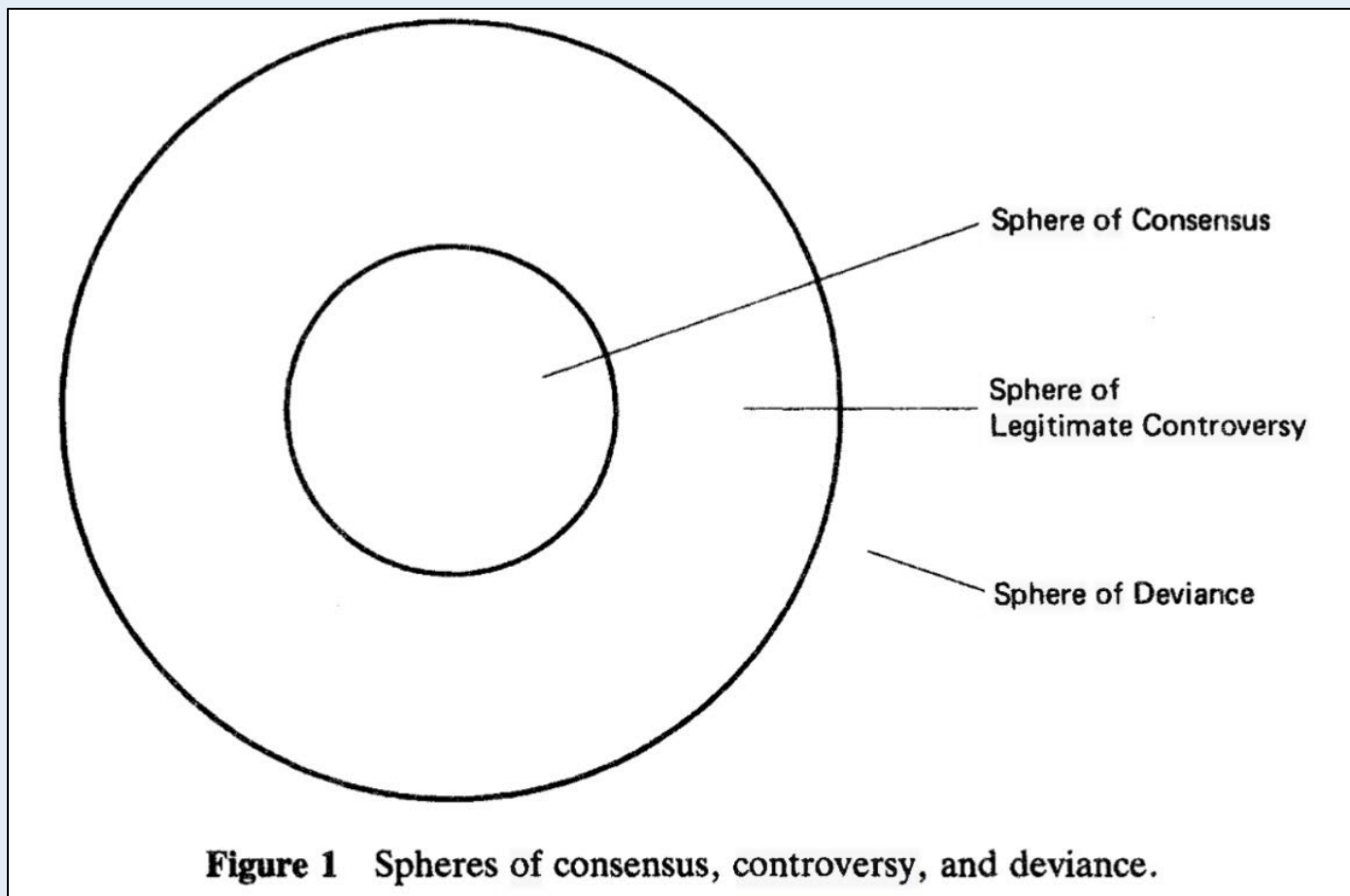
Education Reporting

- Singular news topic, because:
 - It's universal
 - Paid for by public money (mostly)
 - Sensitive issue – involves children
 - People's youth experiences vastly different
 - People's adult experiences vastly different
- Bigger issues relate to it
- Public perceptions have changed
- Become more politicized in recent years
- No longer a consensus issue

Consensus

- Shared belief in what is right or wrong
- Ongoing Public Discourse
 - Core American concept – citizens’ continuing discussion of social and political topics that are important to them
 - Best ideas evolve into **consensus**
- ‘E Pluribus Unum’ – out of many, one
- Events have eventually brought people together
- Mass media helped create consensus
- Splintered media have opposite effect
- Consensus traditionally considered good
- Education traditionally a consensus issue, in a broad sense

Consensus



Daniel C. Hallin – Spheres Model

Education: It's Complicated

- Children → Vulnerable
- Socialization – social learning
 - Parents, peers generally homogenizing influences
 - School, media generally heterogenizing influences
- Elementary education
 - Teach subject skills, social skills
 - Learn about different kinds of people, cultures
 - Broad notions of right, wrong
- Higher education
 - More specialized subject skills
 - More sophisticated, diverse topics
 - Many students' first time on their own
 - More likely to break with parents' ideology
 - Traditionally more controversial

Education: Issues in Recent Decades

- Loss of other areas of social consensus
- Questioning of “received history”
- Change of racial makeup
- Immigration – change of schools’ approach
- Secular vs. religious education
- Political organizations target school boards
- Rise of the Internet → outrage
- Increase in wariness of institutions
- Rise in home schooling
- School shootings
- COVID-19

Results in Education Coverage

- ‘Noble beat’ has become divisive
- Routine coverage can miss important issues
- Reporters’ educational experience often differs greatly from what they’re now covering
- Fall 2018 – nonwhite students outnumber whites
- Question traditional teachings? At what age?
- Education writers need to know politics
- Divisions on basic facts
- Politicians using education as wedge issue – opposite of consensus

Education Coverage: Current Issues

- School choice – access to the best schools vs. making all public schools better
- Critical race theory – how early, or at all?
- Social class issues – rich vs. poor schooling
- Gender and sexuality issues – accommodating students vs. ‘warping’ them?
- Freedom of speech, academic freedom
- School safety – arming teachers?
- In-person vs. remote instruction?
- Value of higher education
- ‘Education vs. Indoctrination’