

APPENDIX

**Curricula during the Assad and al-Sharaa Periods:
A Comparative Overview and Implications.**

Criterion	Bashar al-Assad Era	Ahmad al-Sharaa Era	Significance/ Conclusion
Central Ethos	Syrian Arab nationalism; the centrality of the state, the army and the Assad family.	Syrian Arab nationalism; enhanced conservative Islamic component and removal of the cult of personality.	National-authoritarian continuity; shifting the focus of legitimacy from the Ba'ath to the revolution. The public recognizes and assimilates the principles of jihad warfare according to classical Islam, but Syria remains a nation-state, with no horizon of jihad conquests.
Attitude Toward Israel	Intense hostility; the "Zionist terrorist entity"; justification of "resistance." And yet, "the Arabs want peace," let's put together a joint peace plan.	Israel as an enemy and a "Zionist entity" (usually without "terrorist"); a certain softening of the messages of the struggle [against Israel].	Some softening of language without normalization; less blatant incitement, but the underlying hostility remains.
The Golan	Very present as a central national symbol and occupied territory as part of the story of the struggle [against Israel].	Remains part of the Syrian map, but without highlighting or with reduced references.	Reduced prominence may indicate an internal focus, or alternatively, caution in revealing intentions until power is established.

Criterion	Bashar al-Assad Era	Ahmad al-Sharaa Era	Significance/ Conclusion
Attitude Toward Iran	A political alliance in practice; an ambivalent attitude in textbooks; ignores Hezbollah.	Critical presentation; removal of positive references; appearance of hidden anti-Shi'a messages.	In both periods, there is no identification with the Iranian ethos; under al-Sharaa, there is a clear distancing.
Attitude Toward Türkiye	Suspicion and hostility; emphasis on the "Ottoman occupation" and territorial disputes.	Considerable softening; use of the term "Ottoman rule"; reduction of explicit hostility. Adherence to the heritage of "Arab-Islamic Civilization"	Notable change: political alignment with proximity and reliance on Türkiye while maintaining a distinctly Syrian Arab narrative.
Attitude Toward Russia	Very positive; presenting Russia/the Soviet Union as a modern and friendly power.	The positive relationship continues; Russia remains a legitimate player in the educational consciousness.	Russia is a relatively stable component of the Syrian strategic identity in both periods.
Attitude Toward the West	General hostility in a distinctly colonial and anti-Western context; modern secularism.	Complex: along with criticism there is openness to dialogue between civilizations and international relations; removal of the theory of evolution and planetary geology.	A shift toward pragmatic governance with religious conservatism—favoring more openness and flexibility—though with limited “liberal” values.

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Religion and Islam	Secular national setting; Islamic components exist but are limited.	Strengthening of the Islamic component and increased religious presence; no extremist jihadist line; a parallel Qur'anic education system for children adopted by the government.	A movement between conservative state Islam and political and public constraints.
Jihad and Martyrdom	Exist as part of the national-state narrative of the struggle and as part of the religion of Islam.	Remain as central values in Islam; in some content, they are ideologically strengthened. <u>Outside of State Education:</u> In mosques, children in uniform participate in militaristic jihadi rituals	Continuity in the discourse of struggle [against Israel], but under al-Sharaa the tone becomes more religious and prominent.
Jews and Christians	Hostility toward Israel; in some cases, a non-blatant interpretive space is maintained toward the "Other."	Initial attempts at religious radicalization were thwarted; a general interpretation was chosen.in the final version.	The new regime experimented with extremism but restrained itself in the face of international pressure and criticism.
Minorities	No recognition of minorities; emphasis on a unified Syria and Arab identity.	There is no recognition of Kurds, Druze and Alawites as distinct groups.	An aspiration for forced homogenization of the Syrian space in both periods.

Criterion	Bashar al-Assad Era	Ahmad al-Sharaa Era	Significance/ Conclusion
Human Rights	Almost never discussed; lack of discussion of the regime's oppression and violence.	No liberal framework; partial language of law and order without pluralism.	There is no transition to liberalism; it is about symbolic moderation and shaping a new national discourse.
Women's Status	Presented in a modern and egalitarian manner relative to the region; without religious coercion.	Women's style appears more conservative; representation in the public sphere is reduced; in contrast some of the books show modern, colorful depictions of women's styles.	Regression in the visual-cultural dimension; an indicator of the regime's religious traditionalism.
Perception of the State	Authoritarian, centralized, militarized, and Ba'athist.	Authoritarian, centralized, and more religiously traditionalist; Syrian Arab nationalism is maintained as the primary basis of identity.	Not a democratic revolution, but rather a replacement of the regime's formula while preserving its core elements.
History	A heroic narrative and glorification of the Assad regimes (the Corrective Movement').	Elimination of the Assad cult; emphasis on the events of 2011 and the crimes of the former regime.	The sharpest change is visible in the internal narrative, more than any change in foreign policy.
Pre-Islamic Heritage	Preserved as an integral part of Syrian national heritage.	A partial attempt at reduction was unsuccessful; most of the content remained unchanged.	The regime is not interested or unable to erase the non-Islamic layers of the curriculum.

Criterion	Bashar al-Assad Era	Ahmad al-Sharaa Era	Significance/ Conclusion
Legitimacy	Relies on a cult of personality, the military, the Ba'ath Party, and confrontation with Israel.	Relies on the narrative of "liberation," a new order, religion, and a renewed national identity with a religious overtone.	A shift from a familial regime cult to one of revolution and a new state.