

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Comparative Political Theory

edited by

Leigh K. Jenco

London School of Economics

THE PLURALISTIC FRAMEWORKS OF IBN RUSHD AND ABDULLAHI AHMED AN-NA'IM

Ayesha Omar

*University of the Witwatersrand
and SOAS, University of London*



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-51730-0 — The Pluralistic Frameworks of Ibn Rushd
and Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im
Ayesha Omar
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009517300

DOI: 10.1017/9781009386333

© Ayesha Omar 2025

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009386333

First published 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-009-51730-0 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-38632-6 Paperback

ISSN 2633-3597 (online)

ISSN 2633-3589 (print)

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
remain, accurate or appropriate.

The Pluralistic Frameworks of Ibn Rushd and Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im

Elements in Comparative Political Theory

DOI: 10.1017/9781009386333
First published online: January 2025

Ayesha Omar
University of the Witwatersrand and SOAS, University of London
Author for correspondence: Ayesha Omar, ao32@soas.ac.uk

Abstract: The purpose of this Element is to analyse the assiduous attempts of two Islamic political thinkers – the twelfth-century Andalusian philosopher Ibn Rushd and the contemporary Sudanese reformist Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im – to theorise Islamic politics through what this Element calls 'pluralistic frameworks'. A pluralistic framework is a systematic mediation of Islamic ethics and politics that incorporates extra-Islamic traditions of thought from diverse sources. Pluralistic frameworks selectively and self-consciously enable dialogue, synthesis, and hybridity and seek to maintain a distinct conception of Islamic ethics that concords with a preferred set of political arguments. They enable reflexivity within the ethical purview of Islam and with an awareness of the normativity of *shari'a*. Both Ibn Rushd and An-Na'im reconcile *shari'a* in two very different ways, but to a common end; Ibn Rushd lays out a method of harmonisation with Greek thought, while An-Na'im resorts to the radical subversion of *shari'a* under liberal thought.

Keywords: Ibn Rushd, An-Na'im, pluralistic frameworks, Islamic ethics, politics

© Ayesha Omar 2025

ISBNs: 9781009517300 (HB), 9781009386326 (PB), 9781009386333 (OC)
ISSNs: 2633-3597 (online), 2633-3589 (print)

Contents

1	Islamic Ethics and Politics	1
2	Harmonising Greek Thought and <i>Shari'a</i> : The Pluralistic Framework of Ibn Rushd	20
3	Negotiating <i>Shari'a</i> and Liberal Thought: The Pluralistic Framework of Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im	39
4	Rethinking Islamic Politics: Pluralistic Frameworks and the Future	58
	Bibliography	70