

# Omar Sayfo (January 2022)

## **Personal Information**

Nationalities: Hungarian

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## **Journalism**

2019- Deputy editor, Magyar Demokrata

2017- Affiliated journalist, Mandiner

## **Education and Affiliations**

2020-	Researcher, Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies
2016-	Affiliated Researcher at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry, Utrecht University
2014 March-July	Visiting researcher at the HRH Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World, University of Cambridge
2012-2016	Research Institute for History and Culture of the Faculty of Humanities at Utrecht University, PHD studies
2011- 2013	University of Debrecen, Department of Media and Communication, Faculty of Humanities, – Lecturer of ‘Intercultural Communications’ and ‘Media Economics’
2003-2008	Eotvos Lorant University, Budapest, Hungary, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Political Sciences and International Studies (Major, political sciences)
2002-2006	Budapest College of Communication and Business, BA in Business Communication
2001-2006	Eotvos Lorant University, Budapest, Hungary, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Semitic Philology and Arabic Language (Major, Arabic studies)

## **Non-Academic Employment and Work Experience**

2019-	External Research Fellow, <i>Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade</i> (Külügyi és Külgazdasági Intézet)
2018	Consultant for <i>Bukra fil Mish-Mish</i> a documentary on the early years of Egyptian animation (2019, Cassis Films)
2017	Cultural Consultant for <i>Robin Hood</i> (2018, Appian Way Productions)

- 2015, 2016 Cultural Consultant at the set of *Tyrant*, FX Channel's Middle East themed TV series (2014-2016)
- 2015- Editor of foreign affairs, Magyar Demokrata
- 2010-2012 Advisor at the at the Hungarian Ministry of Economics's Arab Strategic Group
- 2006-2008 Editor at the Foreign Desk of Hungarian News Television (Hir TV)

## **Publications**

### **Books**

- Forthcoming *God's Spacious Earth*, In contract with Syracuse University Press
- 2021 *Arab Animation: Images of Identity*, Edinburgh University Press.

### **Peer-reviewed Articles**

- 2022 *Identity Matters: The Cultural Logics of Animation Production and Distribution in the Arab World*, 'International Journal of Communication'.
- 2021 *A Celebrity from the Sky: 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ 'Abd al-Ṣamad's Journey to National and International Fame in 'Abd al-Nāṣir's and al-Sādāt's Egypt*, 'Die Welt Des Islams'.
- 2020 *Set for Success: Hollywood Runaway Productions in Socialist and Post-Socialist Hungary*, 'Media Industries Journal'.
- 2020 Hollywood (Mis)representations of Arabs and the Middle East From a Production Perspective – The Case of FX Channel's *Tyrant*, 'Series'.
- 2018 *Mediating a Disney-style Islam: The Emergence of Egyptian Islamic Animated Cartoons*, 'Animation'.
- 2017 *From Kurdish Sultan to Pan-Arab Champion and Muslim Hero: The Evolution of the Saladin Myth in Popular Arab Culture*, 'The Journal of Popular Culture'.
- 2016 *Why an anti-Islam campaign has taken root in Hungary, a country with few Muslims?*, 'V4revue'. Joint article with Zoltan Pall.

### **Book Chapters**

- 2018 *Animation and Identity in the Gulf*, in 'Arab Identities images in film, (Special issue of The Media Majlis at Northwestern University in Qatar).
- 2017 *Arab Animation: Between Business and Politics*, in 'Children's Television and Digital Media in the Arab World', eds. Naomi Sakr and Jeanette Steemers, (London: I.B.Tauris).

- 2017 *Local Minds, Foreign Hands: Animation in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf*, in 'Animation in the Middle East', ed. Stefanie Van de Peer, (London: I.B.Tauris).
- 2015 *Arab Sitcom Animations as Platforms of Satire*, in: 'The Power of Satire', ed. Sonja De Leeuw, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins).
- 2014 *The Emergence of Arab Children's Televisions and Animation Industry in the Gulf States*, in: 'State-society Relations in the Arab Gulf States', eds: Mazhar Al-Zo'oby and Birol Baskan, (Berlin: Gerlach Press).

### **Book Reviews**

- 2018 *Re-Imagining the Other: Culture, Media, and Western-Muslim Intersections*, Karim H. Karim and Mahmoud Eid (eds), 'Journal of Global Analysis'.

### **Selected Popular Articles**

*La televisión infantil en el mundo árabe*, Afkar ideas, No.59, 2019

*Clash of Syrian Clans: How an Online Game Reflects the Syrian Conflict*, The Huffington Post, 7 January 2016

*Drawing Politics: Arab Animated Cartoons, Then and Now*, The Middle East in London, Vol 11, No.1, December 2014.

*Syria's Music Wars*, al-Monitor, 6 May 2013.

*Another Casualty of War: Soap Operas*, The New York Times, 16 Augustus 2012.

*Mock Homs at Your Own Risk*, Foreign Policy, 17 February 2012.

### **Hungarian**

- 2003-2021 More than 600 analytical newspaper articles and opinion pieces on Middle-Eastern culture and politics in leading Hungarian newspapers. (HVG, Mandiner, Demokrata, Magyar Nemzet, etc)
- 2019 '*Az iszlámenesség mint új politikai korrektség*' Kommentár, 2019/2.
- 2018 *Allah tágas földje* (Budapest: KMTG)
- 2009 '*A tájékoztatás Szíriában és a szír közvéleményt döntően befolyásoló fórumok*' Kul-Vilag, March 2009.
- 2009 *Allah vendégei*, (Budapest: Geopen)
- 2008 *Közeli Kelet*, (Budapest: Magyar Haz)

### **Selected Conference Presentations and Seminars**

*Transnational networks of media production and distribution in the Arab and Muslim world*, Transnational religious flows between the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Europe, The Austrian Academy of Sciences, October 2021.

*Online Revolutionary Animation of the Arab Uprisings and Its Impact on the Arab Mediascape*, Media Infrastructures in the Middle East, American University of Beirut, January 2020.

*Trajectories of Online Revolutionary Animation Production Since the Arab Uprisings*, Politics and Popular Culture in the Middle East: Power and Resistance Post-2011, University of Warwick, April 2019.

*From Friends and Neutral Others to Foes: Shifting Hungarian Attitudes Towards Arabs and Muslims*, Talking about Arabs, Oriental Institute-Czech Academy of Science, May 2016.

*What do animated cartoons tell us about Egypt's politics?*, The University of Cambridge, FAMES, February 2016.

*The Jewish and Christian Roots of Egyptian Animation Production*, Minorities and Popular Culture in Modern Middle East: Representation and Participation, Woolf Institute and SOAS, June 2015.

*Web Animation as a Liberal Space for Political Criticism: the Case of 'Captain Khobza*, Media in Political Transition: Focus on Tunisia, University of Cambridge, UK, July 2014.

*Arab Animated Cartoons as Vehicles for Nationalist and Religious Nostalgia*, The Future of Nostalgia in the Middle East, University of Copenhagen, June 2014.

*The Evolution of the Saladin Myth in Arab Popular Culture*, Mediated Pasts: Visual Cultures and Collective Memory, Leicester, UK, June 2014.

*Mediating the Arab Uprisings in Animated Cartoons – The Case of Kharabeesh*, Arab Documentaries - Recording Whose 'Reality' Conference, Westminster University, April 2014.

*Religious identity in Arab Animated Cartoons*, Netherlands Interuniversity School for Islamic Studies (NISIS) Autumn School, Utrecht, The Netherlands, October 2013.

*Religious Education in Arab Children's Channels and Animated Cartoons*, NISIS Tunisia Spring School, Tunisia, Hammamet, March 2013.

*Arab Sitcom Animations as Tools of Social and Political Criticism*, International Conference Satire Across Borders, Utrecht, The Netherlands, January 2013.

*Transnational Networks in Arab Animation Industries*, NISIS Autumn School, Leiden, The Netherlands, October 2012.

*The Emergence of Arab Children's Televisions and Animation Industry in the Gulf States*, Cambridge Gulf Research Council, Cambridge, UK, July 2012.

*The Rise of Muslim Superhero Comics and Cartoons*, Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington DC, USA, December 2011.

### **Language Skills**

English: fluent, Arabic: fluent, Hungarian: native, German: reading, French: reading

### **Fields of Research**

Arab Media and Politics, Arab Media Industries, Arab Television, Arab Cinema, Arab Identity Politics, Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Popular Culture in the Arab World