Narrating the “Right to Exist”: Are celebrity Zionist defenses a new development in digital nationalism?

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Social media discourses and networks have emerged as an influential actor in daily politics, particularly in shaping the soft power of states. In some cases, influential actors are not even located in the same geographical location. Utilising discourse analysis, I examine how this dynamic applies to Israel, the “Start Up Nation” which has long since used technology as a tool of nationalism. In particular, I am interested in how celebrity Zionists, namely those who are located in America but enjoy Israeli citizenship, have responded to outrage over the Israeli state's response to the October 7th attacks. Through rhetoric mapping, I analyse the implications for the emerging subfield of digital nationalism studies.

Emmett M (he/him) is interested in the politics of South Asia, the global trajectories of LGBT rights and the contradictions of populist rule. His undergraduate dissertation won the Outstanding Dissertation Award (from QMUL? If yes, why not put it here?), and his poetry has been published in the Resonance Anthology. He has previously fundraised for MAP (Medical Aid for Palestinians) and the SOAS encampment.