

# **LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

Twitter and the 2019 Lebanese October Revolution

Gen 2.0 and Web 2.0 for Lebanon 3.0

By

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## Dedication Page

To the 2.5 million Lebanese who have taken to the streets to draw their fate. To the women who have been on the frontline of the 2019 Lebanese October Revolution. To the revolution's martyrs who have laid their lives for change. And to the youths who still believe in the future of Lebanon. Your thawra will triumph.

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# Twitter and the 2019 Lebanese October Revolution

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### ABSTRACT

Social media played a focal role in determining political discourses in the 2019 Lebanese October Revolution. Precisely, they helped spread revolutionary enthusiasm and eagerness across the Lebanese territory. No one could have predicted that the government plan to tax WhatsApp calls would push 2.5 million Lebanese to the streets in the biggest cross-confessional protests in Lebanon's history. Yet, after Malak Alaywe-Herz kicked a ministerial bodyguard in the groin when he fired his rifle into the sky to disperse protesters on October 17, 2019, revolutionary fervor spread across the Lebanese blogosphere. The Lebanese have taken to the streets to protest decades-old corrupt system, hence threatening the coalition government. The 2019 Lebanese October Revolution had many triggers. One of which was 'Web 2.0' and its power to humanize mass frustration and anger at the status quo. Common stories amplified and augmented on Twitter and inspired dissidents to face the ordeal and name and shame Lebanon's confessional political ruling class. In the streets, dissidents created a human chain connecting the north and the south across the country, in show of unity. Online, they tweeted 'all of them means all of them' and 'the people are one,' using the hashtag #ينتفض\_لبنان. Online and offline protesting seemed to be genuinely in harmony. Thus, people started to ask: How would Twitter undermine confessional divide in favor of a cross-confessional communication revolution? Focused mainly on the microblogging site, this paper created a unique set of data collected from tweets posted using the



hashtag #ينتفض\_لبنان. The content analysis examined the nature of the discourse trending online and tracked dissident-generated tweets that reflect a sense of unity. The result is that for the first time we have evidence confirming Twitter's use for a cross-confessional communication throughout the 2019 Lebanese October Revolution.

Keywords: Revolution, Twitter, Tweet, Hashtag, Social Media, ICTs, Web 2.0, Gen 2.0, Echo Chamber, Online Homophily, Internet Shutdown, Political Order, Nationalism, Confessionalism, Lebanon, Arab Spring.

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