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### Political Potential and Capabilities of Online Communities

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How can online communities gain influence in different political systems? This is the central question the article deals with. It focuses on the situation in Germany, but also refers to international dimensions of the issue where suitable. The text analyses options of online communities for political actions systematically and illustrates them in international and German examples. It presents internet user data to show which segments of the population are underrepresented online. And it explains why the degree of influence finally exerted usually depends on intensifiers and multipliers such as prominent persons, offline pressure groups and traditional media. Finally it is pointed out that the democratic yield of the communities remains unclear, especially in a long-term perspective.

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