**SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:** (Plan on reading each selection AT LEAST two to three times; summary should be in your own words, not the journal article authors’ words)


**Purpose:** Challenged the assumption (often made by others) that if people are less visible to each other (contrast internet discussions with face to face discussions), they will be less susceptible to social pressure. They argue that if people do not have information that individuates people (e.g., facial expressions during discussion), they will be more sensitive to group membership cues (e.g., whether the person is part of my ingroup or outgroup and group stereotypes). Tested this idea by exploring whether internet-based discussions were less likely to polarize when participants were not personally identifiable to each other. If supported, the research would contradict current assumptions that 1) computer-mediated communication (in comparison to face to face discussions) can and will break down boundaries of race, language, ideology and 2) people who use the internet for group discussions will experience greater freedom from group-based constraints.

**Participants (no more than two to three sentences):** Participants for the first experiment were undergraduates at the University of Amsterdam and the University of Exeter. University affiliation corresponded with political differences. Participants for the second experiment were undergraduates at the University of Amsterdam.

**Design/Method:** Summarized two experiments. Study 1 was a 2 (Dutch vs. English) x 2 (individuated vs. depersonalized) x 3 (time – three one hour discussions took place over three weeks) factorial design. Individuated participants were associated with their name, their nationality and a photo, depersonalized participants were associated with their nationality and initials. Study 2 was a 2 (outgroups were sociology or business students) x 2 (discussion group members were individualized or depersonalized) factorial design. Psychology students thought they were discussing political issues with either business or sociology students. Participants completed attitude scales and a recognition task in which they had to determine “who said what” during the discussion.

**Most important results (in your own words):** Across both experiments, political opinions converged and polarized (about research on homosexuality, for example) for individuated discussion groups only. Most interesting are the data that show that 47% of the individuated participants correctly identified statements made by other participants but only 26% of the depersonalized participants correctly identified statements made by other participants. (Most of errors were due to “intragroup” mistakes – participants more clearly remembered the group associated with different statements, but not the actual person who said the statement.)

**Advantages/Disadvantages of their approach:** The authors used real groups but in the context of an experimental design, and the two studies complement each other (e.g., outgroup comments were rigged in the second experiment, but real in the first experiment.) The who said what measure provides behavioral evidence to support the attitude scales. However, there was limited
process evidence in the first study, and limited “divergence” evidence in the second study. The effect also requires group membership cues (sometimes missing when people are completely anonymous). Finally, these are students in limited group discussions without clear material consequences for their decisions (as opposed to the original groupthink data).

**Relevance to my question:** This research suggests that internet based discussions of problems or decisions can aggravate intergroup differences that already exist – particularly if the discussion cues relevant group memberships. It suggests that conducting important discussions over the internet (as opposed to face to face) can lead to more intergroup friction and worse decisions. Therefore, I would recommend that the department conduct important and difficult decisions during face to face meetings.