

## The Power of the Situation

Many feel that they would commit crimes if invisible. This is the nature of **de-individuation**: concealing individual characteristics (eyes, hair etc.).

**Zimbardo (1961)** replicated milgram's conformity studies with 'teachers' in hoods, they delivered longer shocks.

**Beaman et al. (1976)** studied children invited in to a house and asked to wait with a bowl of sweets. One group were 'individuated' (i.e. identified personally or asked where they lived) and another were left anonymous. Anonymous groups were most likely to steal sweets.

### Interpreting the Situation

First we need to consider how people interpret and construe the situations that they are in.

### Smoke Filled Room: Latane & Darley (1969):

Participants in a group and smoke filled group were less likely to react to the smoke than those individually or in pairs (pairs of friends). This characterises many things, mostly **pluralistic ignorance** but also diffusion of responsibility, social conformity and more generally, the construal of the situation and bystander intervention.

**Pillivain et al.** measured bystander intervention on the NY subway with either a 'drunk' ill person on the floor or a 'cane person' lying on the floor. They found that diffusion of responsibility was not evident. The quickest help came from the largest groups. However, the 'state' of the person did modulate the amount of help given, but the majority helped in both conditions.