



Trust but verify

Distinguishing distrust from vigilance

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The problem

Too trusting?

- Trust is important for constructive social relationships
- Problem with trustfulness: there is evidence that trustfulness entails gullibility

The trustful are naïve

Garske 1975 Distrustful show higher cognitive complexity

Schlenker et al. 1973 Trusters exhibit unwarranted gullibility

Gurtman & Lion 1975 Trusters demonstrably gullible.

The distrustful are indiscriminate

Good news: there is also evidence that trustfulness entails vigilance

Yamagishi 2001 Trusters are more discriminating

Yamagishi et al. 1999 Trusters are better at judging trustworthiness.

Furthermore, there is also evidence that trustfulness and vigilance are independent constructs

Rotter 1980 Trustful individuals are no more gullible than non-trustful individuals are



Toward a synthesis

Defining some terms

Trustfulness or trusting Propensity to trust others in general

Trust (*n*) Tendency to believe the communication of others when there are no obvious reason to be suspicious

Vigilance Attention and sensitiveness to information that reveals potential opportunism

Goal of study (apart from tenure)

Show that the distinction I assert exists and matters:

H1 The trustful vary in their vigilance

H2 Prudent trusters are more accurate in their expectations of others' behavior than naive trusters or low trusters.

The 2 × 2 grid


	Trustful	Distrustful
High vigilance	prudent trustees	ordinary distrusters
Low vigilance	naive trustees	passive- distrusters



The Study

Data

- Hypotheses were tested in the context of a large scale social dilemma: the California Energy crises of 2001.
- Trustfulness, vigilance and expectations were measured by a survey
- Accuracy of expectations of others' behavior was measured through accuracy of comparing one's own electricity conservation effort to that of others.



California electricity crises as a social dilemma

Social dilemmas

A *social dilemma* (AKA *n-person prisoner's dilemma*) is a situation in which each individual has an opportunity to *cooperate* or *defect*. An individual's outcome is

- Best if everyone else cooperates while they defect
- Worst if everyone else defects while they cooperate
- Better off if everyone cooperates than when everyone defects.

When supply doesn't meet demand

The price paid by end users for electricity was capped. Thus it was possible for supply and demand to not meet. This mismatch resulted in shortages implemented through rolling black-outs and requests made for people to conserve.

Because there was a need to conserve, and the price paid by end users was artificially low we had a social dilemma.

Non price sensitive conservation

Some more reasons to believe that some conservation was not merely due to price.

- 1 Usage reduction occurred also where no price increase
- 2 Peak-time usage reduced more than overall usage although price is (mostly) not peak/off-peak sensitive.
- 3 Individuals expressed concern about rolling blackouts as well as price



Measure for Measure

Trustfulness items

Trustfulness items from Yamagishi (1992), following Rotter (1967):

1. Most people tell a lie when they can benefit by doing so;
2. When someone says something complimentary about you it's because they want to get something from you;
3. People take advantage of you when you work with them; and
4. Given the opportunity, people are dishonest.

Vigilance items

Vigilance items from Yamagishi (1992), based on Rotter (1967)

1. In dealing with strangers one is better off to be cautious until they provided evidence that they are trustworthy
2. In these competitive times, one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you;
3. Society will fall apart if the police power that fights criminal activities weakens; and
4. One should be careful to trust others until one knows them well.

Accuracy of expectations

Subjects asked if they thought they conserved much more, more, about the same, less or much less than their fellow Californians.

- Accuracy was measured by how well that matched actual electricity conservation.
- The accuracy of individuals' estimates of their own electricity conservation effort was also measured.



Results

Two by Two (minus 1)

	High trust	Low trust
High pru.	prudent trusters $N = 210, 30\%$	ordinary distrusters $N = 336, 48\%$
Low pru.	naive trusters $N = 133, 19\%$	passive low-trusters $N = 21, 3\%$

Cross-correlation table

	\bar{x}	σ	alt-acc	ego-acc	Trustful
Acc-others	2.77	1.45			
Acc-self	3.00	1.33	.20***		
Trustful	3.86	.96	.17***	.17***	
Vigilance	1.30	1.04	.18***	.21***	-.18***

*** $p < .001$

Accuracy of others (Dunnett T3)

Group I	Group J	\bar{I}	\bar{J}	$\bar{I} - \bar{J}$	std err
Prudent	Naive	3.13	2.69	.44*	.16
Prudent	Distrust	3.13	2.68	.45*	.16
Naive	Distrust	2.69	2.68	-.01	.18

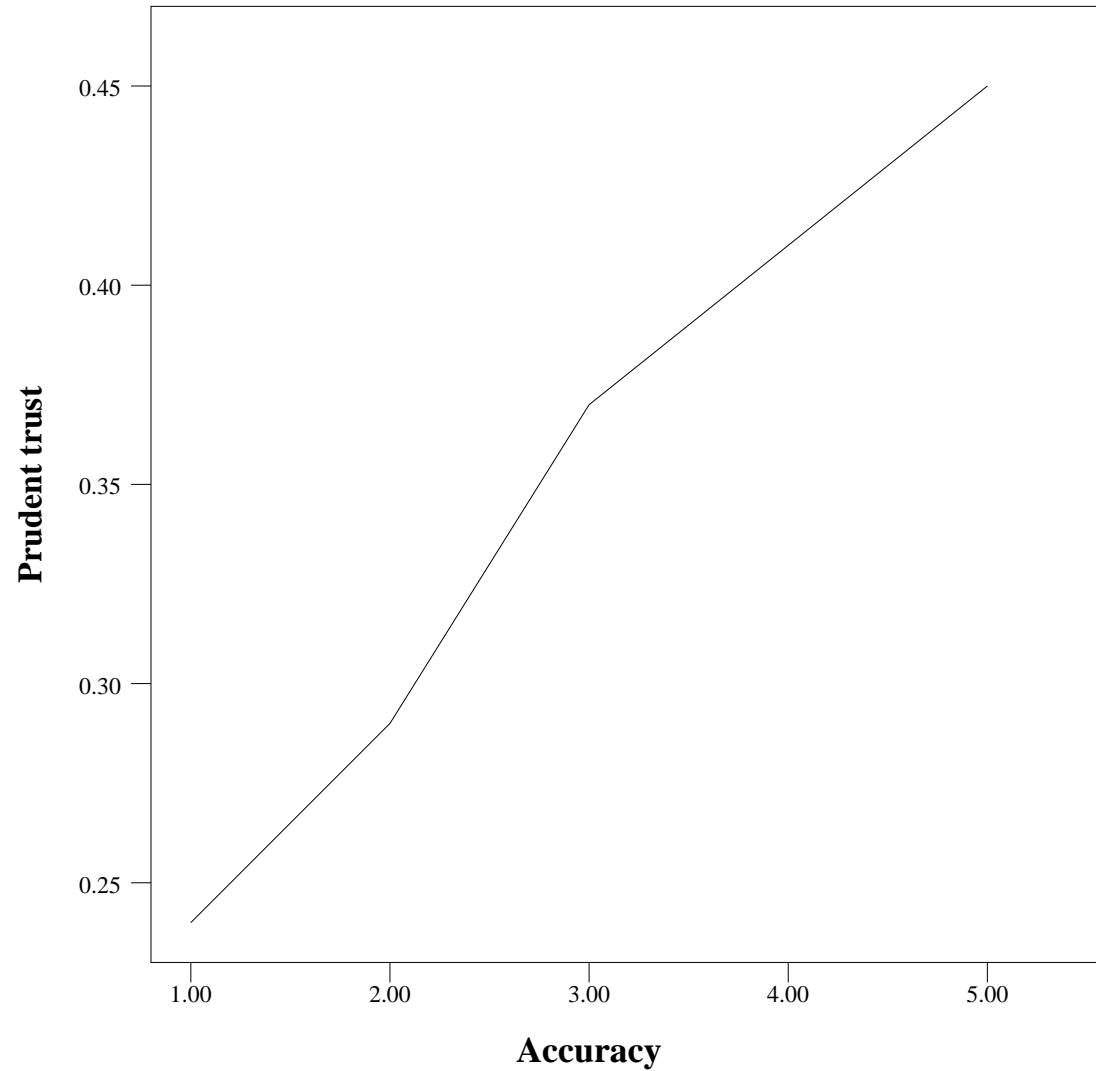
* $p < .05$

Accuracy of self (Dunnet T3)

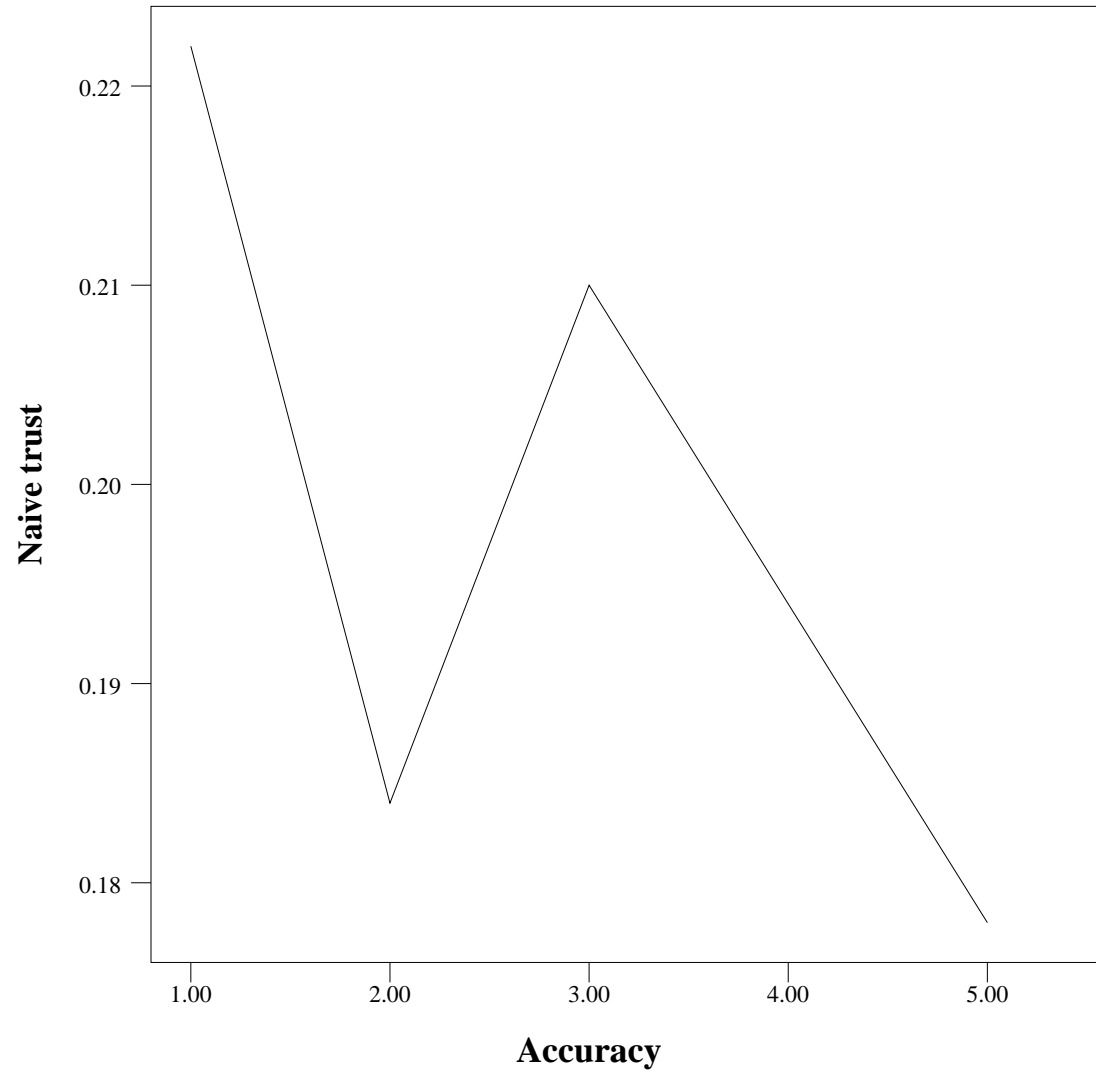
Group I	Group J	\bar{I}	\bar{J}	$\bar{I} - \bar{J}$	std err
Prudent	Naive	3.33	3.10	.23	.11
Prudent	Low-trust	3.33	3.11	.22	.14
Naive	Low-trust	3.10	3.11	-.01	.12

* $p < .05$

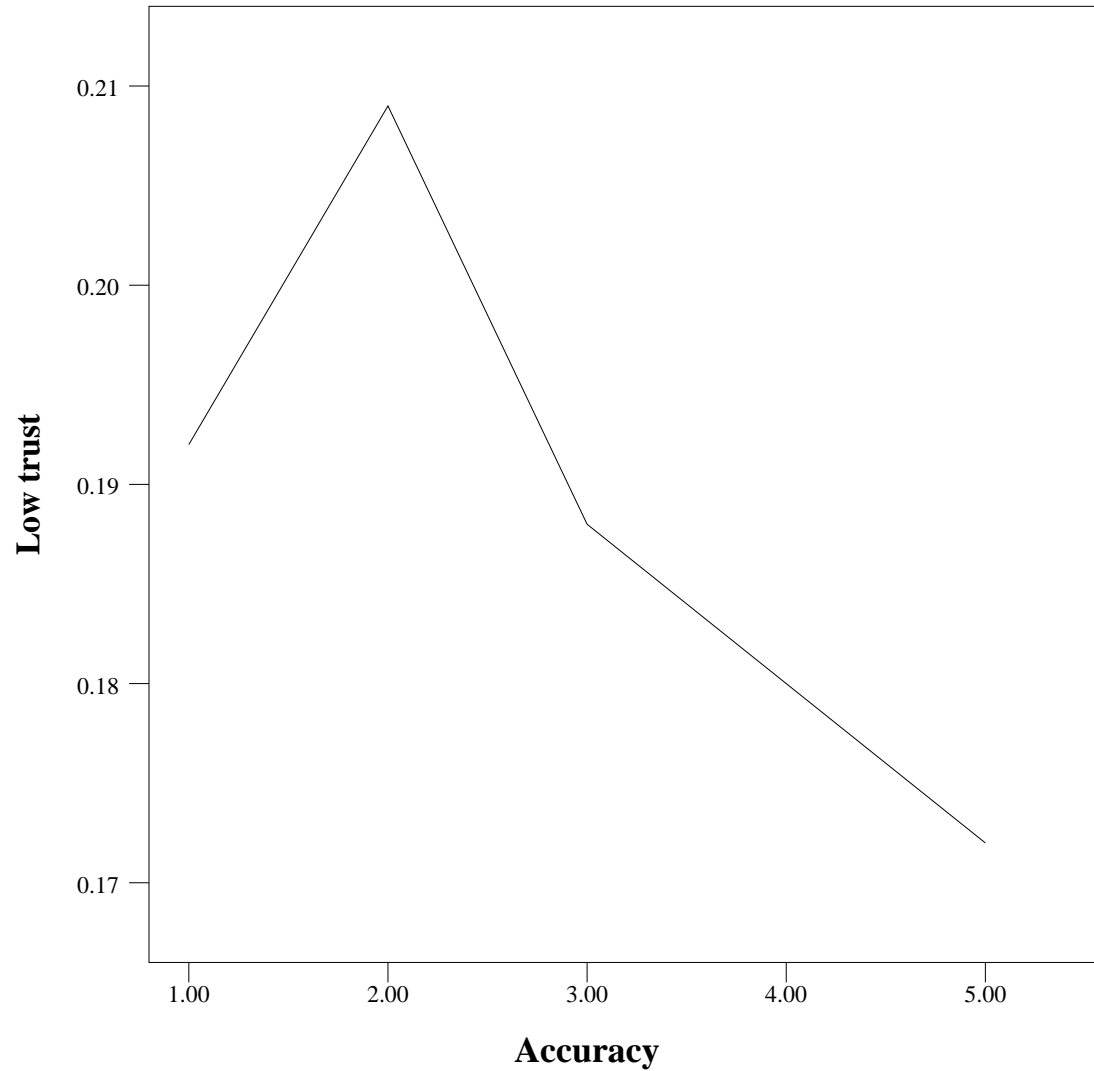
Prudent Trust and Accuracy



Naïve Trust and Accuracy



Low Trust and Accuracy





Conclusions, musings, etc

Two trustings!

Hypotheses have been supported:

H1 Trusting individuals vary in their vigilance

H2 Prudent trustfulness is positively related to accuracy of expectations for others

Is this “Social Intelligence”?

The ability to form accurate expectations of others is a form of social intelligence.

There are many definitions available for social intelligence, but all of them entail that those with high social intelligence will be better at predicting the social behavior of others better than those with low social intelligence.

Resources

A (relatively) up-to-date version of the full paper as well as these slides (PDF) can be found at

`www.goldmark.org/livia/papers/socint/`