



## The sense of relational entitlement among adolescents toward their parents (SREap) – Testing an adaptation of the SRE



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### ABSTRACT

The quality of the adolescent–parent relationship is closely related to the adolescent's sense of entitlement. Study 1 (458 central-Israel adolescents, 69% girls, ages: 11–16) developed the sense of relational entitlement among adolescents toward their parents (SREap, adapted from the original SRE on adults' romantic relationships) and provided initial validity evidence of its three-factor structure: exaggerated, restricted and assertive – replicating the SRE's factor structure. Studies 2–5 (1237 adolescents, 56% girls) examined the link between the SREap factors and relevant psychological measures. Exaggerated and restricted SREap factors were associated with attachment insecurities. Restricted and exaggerated entitlement factors were related to higher levels of emotional problems, and lower levels of: wellbeing, positive mood and life satisfaction. Conversely, assertive entitlement was related to higher life satisfaction and self-efficacy and lower levels of emotional problems. The findings also indicate that SREap is not merely a form of narcissism. The implications of SREap are discussed.

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A person's sense of entitlement – the subjective perception of what one deserves in a specific situation – is a subject which in recent years has received an increasing amount of attention in psychological discourse and research. Individuals' sense of entitlement influences their interactions and attitudes in a wide range of contexts, depending on the subjective significance ascribed to them; it is considered an element of every interpersonal relationship (Spiegel, 1987) and an essential aspect affecting the way we conduct our daily lives (Solomon & Leven, 1975). However, the quality and intensity of entitlement-related feelings experienced in certain kinds of close relationships appear to be unique. As these relationships are by their very nature characterized by a high level of intimacy, they generate wants, needs and expectations of the sort we would not expect to find in other, less intimate relationships. Among these, the adolescent–parent relationship is an intersubjective field especially prone to raise issues of entitlement.

In the past decade, there have been a large number of studies focusing on the general sense of entitlement during adolescence. Excessive or exploitative entitlement has been associated with socially maladaptive dispositions and behaviors, such as greediness, aggression, poor work ethic, lack of financial responsibility, and reduced concern for the well-being of

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others (Beutler & Gudmunson, 2012; Lessard, Greenberger, Chen, & Farruggia, 2011). Non-exploitative or healthy entitlement has been, by contrast, related to higher self-esteem (Lessard, Greenberger, Chen, et al., 2011), greater happiness, and the development of fewer pathological symptoms (Rothman & Steil, 2012). General entitlement in adolescents has also been linked with attachment orientations. Rothman and Steil (2012) found that there were associations between insecure attachment and exaggerated entitlement, and between secure attachment and non-exaggerated entitlement. Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge, no study thus far has investigated adolescents' sense of entitlement towards their parent(s) as a separate measure (see, however, the study by Beutler & Gudmunson, 2012, on quantifying the amount of money affluent adolescents feel entitled to).

The goal of the current series of studies was to adapt the validated “sense of relational entitlement” scale (SRE, Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011) – which measures entitlement in adult romantic relationships – to a new self-report scale tapping adaptive and maladaptive manifestations of the sense of relational entitlement among adolescents towards their parents (SREap). In addition, the current study aimed to provide initial validity evidence about the scale's factor structure, and to examine the associations between SREap factors and personality and emotion-related variables.

### Developmental perspectives on entitlement

For many years, the sense of relational entitlement (SRE) was mainly understood in pathological terms, as a diagnostic criterion for a narcissistic personality disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) and as a component of psychopathy (Hare, 1999). An alternative perspective was suggested by a number of authors, who conceptualized the sense of entitlement in terms of attachment theory (Tolmacz, 2011; Wolfe & Bailey, 2003). These authors argued that the unique manner in which the primary caregivers respond to the infants' appeals indicates to the infants how entitled they are, and establishes the nature of their future sense of entitlement. According to this perspective, one's sense of entitlement is conceived as a part of his/her internal working models. As such, the sense of entitlement is influential throughout one's life, especially in the context of intimate relationships. In keeping with this perspective, one's sense of entitlement is no longer understood in pathological terms only. Instead, it is considered to be a universal phenomenon, encompassing both the pathological and the healthy assertion of needs and rights. On the one hand, entitlement can be adaptive, when it is *assertive* – when people can realistically appraise what they can expect from others and assertively stand up for their preferences. On the other hand, entitlement can be less adaptive, when it is *exaggerated* – when people believe that they deserve to have all of their needs and wishes fulfilled regardless of others' feelings and needs; or when it is *restricted* – when people are reluctant to express their needs and wishes as if doubting their right to have them. Both exaggerated entitlement and restricted entitlement have been considered to be defenses against psychic pain, reflections of an impaired sense of self-esteem, and the result of frustrating interactions (Kriegman, 1983; Levin, 1970; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990).

Conceptualizing the sense of entitlement in terms of attachment theory implies the important role it plays during adolescence, as children continue to rely on their parental figures as a secure base from which to explore and form new intimate relationships outside of the family (Allen & Land, 1999). The adolescents' expectations that their wishes and needs will be fulfilled by their parents may play a significant role in primary areas of psychological functioning, as the parent–adolescent relationship has a great influence on the adolescent's future well-being and emotional adjustment (Sund & Wichstrøm, 2002). For example, adolescents' assertion of independence – a central aspect of their sense of entitlement – is likely to lead to a renegotiation of parentally imposed restrictions, and to fundamentally affect the nature of the parent–adolescent relationship (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). If these relationship transformations and conflicts over everyday issues are negotiated in an atmosphere of closeness and support, they help the adolescents achieve individuation: a key task of adolescence. Inevitably, these relationships are profoundly influenced by adolescents' specific internal working models.

### Measuring the sense of entitlement

In the past, an exaggerated sense of entitlement was considered to be an aspect of narcissism (Emmons, 1984). However, growing interest in the topic led to the recognition that the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI, Raskin & Hall, 1979) was an inadequate measure for entitlement. Specifically, items in the NPI entitlement subscale failed to load on a single, differentiated factor (Emmons, 1984), lacked face validity, and had low reliability and a relative shortage of items (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). There is also a theoretical basis for making this distinction. Narcissistic attitudes usually imply a grandiose sense of self. By contrast, in many cases, people's entitlement demands may be based on a feeling of wrongs done to them in the past – for instance, congenital diseases or disabilities, as Freud mentioned as early as 1916 (Freud, 1963) – rather than a grandiose sense of self. These distinctions prompted the development of two independent scales of a general sense of entitlement: The Entitlement Attitude Scale (Nadkarni & Malone, 1989), and the Psychological Entitlement Scale (Campbell et al., 2004). These scales are based on the conceptualization that “a sense of entitlement [...] is experienced across situations” (Campbell et al., 2004; p. 32).

Other purviews consider entitlement to be dependent on the specific situation or relationship (e.g., academic entitlement, Chowning & Campbell, 2009) and the subjective meaning one attributes to it (Kriegman, 1983; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990). Recently, Tolmacz and Mikulincer (2011) developed and validated the SRE scale, measuring via 33 items one's sense of entitlement in adult romantic relationships. Their findings indicated that one's SRE in close relationships must be measured separately from one's narcissism and general sense of entitlement. A series of factor analyses revealed that the SRE scale was

organized around three main factors: exaggerated, assertive, and restricted. Higher scores on the exaggerated and restricted factors were related to a larger extent of emotional difficulties and attachment insecurities, a lower extent of adaptive personality dispositions and a lower sense of well-being. Conversely, higher scores on the assertive factor were related to more positive aspects of personality dispositions (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011).

## The current research

The current research includes five different studies. Study 1 describes the development and initial validation of a self-report scale aimed at examining individual differences in the SREap (the sense of relational entitlement of adolescents towards their parents). We defined SREap as the manifestations of adolescents' expectations that their relational wishes and needs would be fulfilled by their parents, as well as their affective and cognitive responses to their parents' failures to meet these wishes and needs. The SREap scale was adapted from the SRE scale (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), refining, removing and adding items to fit the target population. Study 1 also provides initial data about the factor structure of the SREap scale and the extent to which it replicates the three-factor structure of the original SRE scale. The subsequent four studies examined the link between the three SREap factors and relevant personality and mental health constructs. Given existing evidence that boys and girls may exhibit different relationship patterns (Correse & Ruggieri, 2012), gender differences were examined across all studies.

In Study 2, we examined the association between adolescents' sense of relational entitlement towards their parents and attachment. We adopted the theoretical conceptualization of the sense of entitlement as an aspect of one's internal working models (Kingshott, Bailey, & Wolfe, 2004; Rothman & Steil, 2012; Tolmacz 2011; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), acknowledging the important role played by entitlement expectations in the quality of the adolescent–parent relationship and its influence on future relationships (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000). Keeping with these ideas, it can be assumed that when one's attachment needs are not optimally met, attachment insecurities (anxiety, avoidance) together with doubts concerning the sense of entitlement may arise. We thus hypothesized that attachment insecurities would be associated with exaggerated and restricted SREap, as they were in the original SRE by Tolmacz and Mikulincer (2011).

In Study 3, we examined the associations between SREap and measures of narcissism, an examination based on the widely known notion that one's sense of entitlement is closely related to the construct of narcissism (Emmons, 1984; Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004; Miller et al., 2011). However, when this link was tested experimentally, evidence suggested that entitlement was not merely an aspect of narcissism, but rather a separate psychological construct (Campbell et al., 2004; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Study 3 also examined the association between SREap and measures of self-esteem, a variable closely associated both with narcissism and entitlement. Specifically, healthy self-esteem was related to one's adaptive entitlement feelings (Orenstein, 1994), whereas lower levels of self-esteem were associated with both inflated and restricted sense of entitlement (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). In keeping with the evidence presented above, which pertained to an adult population, we hypothesized that the SREap would be only moderately related to narcissism. We also expected adaptive SREap to be related to high levels of self-esteem, while we expected maladaptive SREap to be related to low levels of self-esteem.

The association between adolescents' sense of relational entitlement towards their parents and adolescents' emotional difficulties was examined in Studies 4 and 5. These links have previously been tested among adults. For example, the sense of entitlement among adults has been linked with depression (Halvorsen, Wang, Eisemann, & Waterloo, 2010; McGinn, Cukor, & Sanderson, 2005), and anxiety (Muris, 2006; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Recently, Grubbs and Exline (2016) concluded that exaggerated entitlement renders an individual more vulnerable to an ongoing sense of unmet expectations, to a threatened ego, and to a sense of perceived injustice, all of which may lead to psychological distress. It is reasonable to assume that when adolescents' expectations are not responded to adequately, the adolescents will experience emotional difficulties, which may as a result, interfere with the establishment of their healthy sense of entitlement. Hence, we hypothesized that imbalanced SREap will be associated with measures of anxiety and depression.

Study 5 also examined the association between SREap and self-efficacy, two constructs that seem to be inversely related. Individuals with high self-efficacy have been shown to be confident in their ability to effectively problem-solve and achieve their desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). At the other end of the spectrum, a tendency to externalize responsibility (low self-efficacy) is seen as the essence of exaggerated entitlement (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). For example, academic entitlement has been found to be inversely related to college course self-efficacy (Boswell, 2012). Similarly, when tested in the context of parent–child relationships, parental behavior that emphasized control over the child has been associated with the child's diminished self-efficacy and exaggerated psychological entitlement (Givertz & Segrin, 2014). We hypothesized that we would find comparable links between SREap and measures of self-efficacy.

## Studies 1–5 – general procedure

In all five studies, we implemented the same method to distribute questionnaires to schoolchildren. Several research assistants approached parents of children ages 11–16 years who resided in central Israel and were enrolled in middle school. Using the snowball sampling method, these parents were asked to contact other parents and refer them to the research assistants. No monetary reward was offered. Informed consent was obtained from both parents and their children in

accordance with the Institutional Ethics Board. The vast majority (>90%) of participants (in all five studies) were born in Israel and reported an average or above average socio-economic status.

### Study 1 – Developing the SREap scale

The goal of Study 1 was to adapt the SRE scale to the adolescent–parent relationship, to develop the SREap scale, and to provide initial validity evidence on its factor structure. We hypothesized that, as with the adult-romantic-relationship SRE scale, factor structure would be organized around assertive, exaggerated and restricted factors of entitlement.

### Method

#### Participants

Participants consisted of 458 schoolchildren (69% of whom were girls), ages 11–16 years ( $M = 13.65$ ,  $SD = .68$ ).

#### Measures

**Entitlement.** The items were adapted from the original SRE (we used 22 of the original 33 items, excluding items that were specific to romantic relationships, e.g., “I deserve to get in my relationship things I was deprived of in prior relationships”, see Table 1 in Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), with romantic relationship descriptions altered to parent-adolescent descriptions. For example: “When my partner frustrates me, I contemplate ending the relationship” was changed to “When my parents frustrate me, I sometimes think of running away from home.” Sixteen additional items were included to encompass the SREap theme. All of the items (adapted and new) were reviewed by three clinical psychologists who specialize in treating adolescents. Heeding their advice, ratings were done on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*), rather than a 7-point scale as was used in the original SRE, in order to simplify the procedure for the adolescent population. The same anchors as used in the Hebrew version of the SRE were used here.

Then, in order to ensure that items and testing procedures were clear, a preliminary version of the scale was administered to a sample of 80 adolescents, who were taken from the same sampling pool as described in Studies 1–5 (note, Study 1 participants were not included in any of the subsequent studies; in fact, there was no overlap whatsoever between study participants in any of the five studies). Upon completion, a brief interview was conducted to verify that items and testing procedures were well understood. This process led to a further simplification of the language used in the items.

### Results

In order to determine the ideal number of factors to retain in exploratory factor analysis, we employed a parallel analysis (Ledesma & Valero-Mora, 2007). The principal component analysis with oblique rotation indicated a three-factor solution, in accordance with our hypothesis. Next, we used Winsteps software to estimate the effectiveness of each item in distinguishing between participants, as well as to locate items with multiple loadings. In this step, we dropped 15 items with low loadings (<.4), multiple loadings or low discriminate ability, from the original 38-item scale. The final SREap comprised 23 items (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
Item loadings of the SREap (Study 1).

Item	Exaggerated	Restricted	Assertive
7 When my parents hurt me, I immediately feel I cannot trust them	.79		
9 Sometimes I have a lot of criticisms of my parents	.74		
6 I spend a lot of time thinking about my parents' weaknesses	.69		
12 I feel I do not deserve to be frustrated by my parents	.68		
11 When my parents frustrate me I get very angry	.65		
23 Sometimes I'm more angry with my parents than with other people	.64		
5 When my parents make me angry I sometimes regret the fact that I don't have other parents	.63		
19 When my parents frustrate me, I sometimes think of running away from home	.62		
8 I often feel my parents deserve a better child than me		.76	
15 I think my parents deserve a more successful child than me		.74	
22 Sometimes I feel I'm not good enough for my parents		.64	
16 I often ask myself whether I deserve such great parents		.54	
20 Sometimes, I think my parents love me more than I deserve		.53	
14 Usually, when my parents compliment me I believe I deserve the compliment		.49	
18 I feel my parents deserve more than they get from me		.46	
2 I cannot let go of the expectations I have of my parents			.62
3 My parents need to take care of my basic needs			.60
21 I'm not willing to forgo what I deserve to get from my parents			.56
4 I expect my parents to pay lots of attention to me			.54
13 I cannot make a compromise about my expectations of my parents			.53
10 My parents have to give me enough attention			.53
17 When I have problems, my parents should help me			.52
1 I have high expectations of my parents			.50

In sum, we developed a 23-item SREap scale (see Appendix). The Appendix also includes a list of the items that were removed from the original SRE scale, the items that were revised from the original SRE scale, and the items that were added to the current version of the scale. As with the factor structure of the original SRE scale, three factors (averaged across relevant items) tapped three main entitlement factors: (1) Items in the *exaggerated factor* (eight items) tap the adolescent's unrealistic expectations of the extent to which his/her parents would attend to his/her needs and wishes, and the adolescent's sensitivity and responsiveness to parents' falling short on such expectations (e.g., "I feel I do not deserve to be frustrated by my parents"). (2) Items in the *restricted factor* (seven items) tap the adolescent's feeling that he/she does not merit an adequate amount of care from his/her parents (e.g., "I often feel my parents deserve a better child than me"). (3) Items in the *assertive factor* (eight items) tap the adolescent's confidence in his/her right to receive an adequate amount of parental care (e.g., "My parents need to take care of my basic needs"). Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas and inter-correlations for the three SREap factors in this study are presented in the top panel of Table 2.

It should be noted that the SREap has a smaller number of items than the SRE, to make the questionnaire less daunting for the adolescent population. In the process of reducing the number of items, we were very careful to ensure that final items were represented proportionally across the different factors (7–8 items in each factor), and that the meaning of the factors remained intact, avoiding "construct underrepresentation" (see, American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014). In the following four studies, multi-regression analyses were conducted to examine the unique and non-overlapping effect of each of the sense of entitlement factors on the main study measures.

## Study 2 – SREap, attachment and life satisfaction

In Study 2, we examined the link between SREap factors and attachment orientations, in keeping with the original SRE study. In that original SRE study, which looked at adult romantic relationships, Tolmacz and Mikulincer (2011) found that attachment insecurities were significantly associated with exaggerated and restricted factors of SRE. In a conceptual discussion, Tolmacz (2011) suggested that these factors of entitlement are specific manifestations of internal working models that stem from attachment insecurities. In contrast, assertive entitlement is thought to be a reflection of more secure working models of attachment. As such, we expected to find similar links with the SREap: i.e., whereas we expected the SREap exaggerated and restricted factors to be associated with high levels of attachment insecurities, we expected the SREap assertive factor to be related to low levels of attachment insecurities. Finally, we predicted that life-satisfaction (as tested in this study) would likely be related positively with the assertive factor, whereas exaggerated entitlement, which reflects a basic dissatisfaction with the relationship, would be linked with lower life satisfaction.

## Method

### Participants

Study 2 participants consisted of 537 schoolchildren (52.2% of whom were girls), ages 12–16 years ( $M = 13.6$ ,  $SD = .63$ ), none of whom were involved in any of the other studies discussed in this paper.

### Measures

**Entitlement.** The newly designed SREap was used to measure adolescents' sense of relational entitlement towards their parents. The SREap is a 23-item measure that utilizes a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very inaccurate*) to 5 (*very accurate*).

**Attachment.** The *child version of the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale– Revised* (ECR-RC; Brenning, Soenens, & Braet, 2015) was used to assess attachment avoidance and anxiety. The anxiety scale (18 items) taps into feelings of fear of abandonment and strong desires for interpersonal merger (e.g., "I worry about being abandoned"). The avoidance scale (18 items) taps into discomfort with closeness, dependence, and intimate self-disclosure (e.g., "I prefer not to show how I feel deep down"). Items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from a (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). The children were asked to rate the 18 anxiety and 18 avoidance statements about their mothers.

**Life satisfaction.** The *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used to assess overall satisfaction and happiness with life. The scale does not assess satisfaction with life in specific life domains, but allows respondents to integrate and weigh satisfaction as a whole. The SWLS has five items (e.g., "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life") and employs a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Summed responses yield a life satisfaction total score, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of life satisfaction.

## Results

### Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas and inter-correlations for the three

SREap factors as obtained in this study are presented in the second panel of Table 2. To examine whether the three SREap factors were linked with attachment orientations (anxiety and avoidance) and life satisfaction, we conducted a series of

multiple regression analyses in which the factors served as predictors. Regression coefficients are also presented in the second panel of Table 2.

As expected, higher scores on the exaggerated entitlement factor were linked with higher attachment avoidance and anxiety scores, and with lower life satisfaction. Conversely, higher scores on assertive entitlement were associated with lower attachment avoidance and anxiety scores, and with higher life satisfaction. It should be noted that higher scores on the restricted entitlement factor were related to higher attachment anxiety scores, but not to avoidance or life satisfaction. An examination of this pattern of results can be found in the General Discussion.

### Study 3 –SREap, narcissism and self-esteem

In Study 3, pursuant to Campbell et al.'s (2004) and Tolmacz and Mikulincer's (2011) findings, we hypothesized that the SREap would be only moderately associated with narcissism. As mentioned earlier, Campbell et al. (2004) previously pointed out the limitations of the NPI narcissism scale in assessing the sense of entitlement. In addition, we suggest that narcissism implies a grandiose sense of self, while entitlement may also stem from an individual's feeling of wrongs done to him/her. With regard to self-esteem, we hypothesized that self-esteem would be positively correlated with the assertive factor and negatively correlated with the maladaptive factors of SREap. The reason we hypothesized as such is that assertive entitlement is likely to be related to adequate early relationships (Tolmacz, 2011). Research generally supports the view that if caregivers have been sensitive and available to the child, a child constructs an internal model characterized by positive representations of the self, including high levels of self-esteem. In contrast, if the parents have failed to be sensitive and accessible, a child constructs models of the self as unworthy and undeserving of love (Laible, Carlob & Roesch, 2004).

### Method

#### Participants

Study 3 participants consisted of 234 schoolchildren (58% of whom were girls), ages 11–15 years ( $M = 13.58$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ), none of whom were involved in any of the other studies discussed in this paper.

#### Measures

**Entitlement.** The SREap was used to measure adolescents' sense of relational entitlement towards their parents.

**Self-esteem.** The *Single Item Self-Esteem Scale* (SISE; Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001) was used to assess participants' self-esteem via the following question, "I see myself as a person with high self-esteem." Answers were given on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). The literature shows that this measure meets the desired criterion for validity, with significant correlations with a wide range of criterion measures.

**Narcissism.** The *Narcissistic Personality Questionnaire for Children-Revised* (NPQC-R, Ang & Raine, 2009) was used to assess narcissism among the adolescent study participants. It is a well validated 12-item questionnaire that consists of two of the four original NPQC (Ang & Yusof, 2006) subscales: Superiority and Exploitativeness. Participants are asked to rate how much they endorse items as descriptive of themselves on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all like me*) to 5 (*completely like me*). In the present study, we used the total NPQC-R score, which presents an average of all items, where higher scores indicate higher levels of narcissism as a trait.

### Results

Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas and inter-correlations for the three SREap factors as obtained in this study are presented in the third panel of Table 2. To examine whether the three entitlement factors were linked with narcissism and self-esteem, we conducted two multiple regression analyses in which the factors served as predictors. Regression coefficients are also presented in the third panel of Table 2.

As expected, lower scores on exaggerated and \ or restricted entitlement, and higher scores on assertive entitlement, were associated with greater self-esteem. Contrary to expectations, none of the sense of entitlement factors was related to narcissism. This last finding could indicate that the SREap taps an independent phenomenon and is not a mere reflection of narcissism. Alternatively, the link between entitlement and narcissism may become apparent only later in the cycle of adolescent development.

### Study 4 – SREap, depression and anxiety

In Study 4, we hypothesized that maladaptive factors of entitlement would be positively related to emotional difficulties and more school avoidance, whereas the assertive factor might not be strongly related to these issues. It should be recalled that inadequate early relationships are likely related to later maladaptive entitlement (Tolmacz, 2011), and research has

shown that inadequate early relationships are significant predictors of fear and anxiety in later childhood. There is also abundant evidence indicating that parents' insensitivity to- and inaccessibility for-their infants plays a role in the etiology of child and adolescent depression (see a discussion in [Muris, Meesters, van Melick, and Zwambag \(2001\)](#)).

## Method

### Participants

Study 4 participants consisted of 234 schoolchildren (61.3% of whom were girls), ages 11–15 years ( $M = 13.64$ ,  $SD = .68$ ), none of whom were involved in any of the other studies discussed in this paper.

### Measures

**Entitlement.** The SREap was used to measure adolescents' sense of relational entitlement towards their parents.

**Depression.** *The Mood and Feelings Questionnaire* (MFQ; [Sund, Larsson, & Wichström, 2001](#)) was used to assess depressive symptoms, as its wording was deemed appropriate for the cognitive and developmental level of the age group under study ([Kovacs, 1986](#)). It is a 34-item questionnaire designed for children and adolescents between the ages of eight and eighteen. The individual is asked to report on his or her feelings during the preceding two weeks. Responses are made to statements on a three-point scale (*not true, sometimes true and true*) and the total scores range between 0 and 68.

**Anxiety.** *The Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorder* (SCARED; [Birmaher et al., 1997](#)) was used. This self-report questionnaire contains 41 items related to common anxiety symptoms measured on a 3-point Likert scale. Five scores are computed, i.e., separate scores for each of the five factors: somatic/panic (3 items, e.g., "When I feel frightened, it is hard to breathe"); general anxiety (9 items, e.g., "I worry about other people liking me"); separation anxiety (8 items, e.g., "I get scared if I sleep away from home"); social phobia (7 items, e.g., "I don't like to be with people I don't know well"); and school phobia (4 items, e.g., "I get headaches when I am at school"). Each sub-score represents a sum of responses on the items in the respective factor.

## Results

Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas and inter-correlations for the three SREap factors as obtained in this study are presented in the fourth panel of [Table 2](#). To examine whether the SREap factors were linked with depression, we conducted a multiple regression analysis in which the three factors served as predictors. Regression coefficients are also presented in the fourth panel of [Table 2](#). As expected, higher scores on exaggerated and/or restricted factors, and lower scores on the assertive factor, were associated with greater depressive symptom severity.

To examine whether the three factors were linked with the liability for a panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), separation anxiety, social anxiety disorder and/or significant school avoidance, we conducted a series of logistic regression analyses. Standardized regression coefficients (i.e., odds ratios) are presented in the fourth panel of [Table 2](#). The analyses indicated that, as expected, a greater exaggerated factor was related to a higher susceptibility to each of the anxiety-related disorders. Specifically, a one-point increase in the exaggerated factor was associated with a higher likelihood for a panic disorder (202%), for GAD (229%), for a separation anxiety disorder (152%), for a social anxiety disorder (178%), and for significant school avoidance (257%). Higher scores in the SREap restricted and/or assertive factors were linked only with GAD and significant school avoidance. Specifically, a one-point increase in the restricted factor was associated with a higher likelihood for GAD (171%) and for significant school avoidance (182%). Conversely, a one-point increase in the assertive factor was associated with a lower likelihood for GAD (39%) and for significant school avoidance (54%).

In sum, as hypothesized, maladaptive factors were associated with higher scores (and likelihood) for depression, GAD and school avoidance, whereas assertive entitlement was related to lower scores on depression measures. In addition, exaggerated entitlement appears to have the strongest link to a higher likelihood of all forms of anxiety.

### Study 5 – SREap and positive psychological variables

In Study 5, we continued to examine the link between SREap factors and emotional aspects. Noting that inadequate early relationships are likely related to maladaptive entitlement ([Tolmacz, 2011](#)), we hypothesized that maladaptive factors would be linked with lower self-efficacy, and with a higher proclivity for emotional problems. Research generally supports the view that satisfying early relationships with parents are linked with positive representations of the self, including high levels of self-efficacy and other positive psychological variables ([Arbona & Power, 2003; Thompson, 1999](#), for review). This view concurs with [Bandura's \(1982, 1989\)](#) self-efficacy theory, suggesting that self-efficacy is influenced by positive and negative feedback from others.

**Table 2**

A summary of the data obtained in Studies 1–5 and the measures used. The top three rows in each study-section present the means, standard deviations and Cronbach's Alpha (Alpha) for the three SREap factors and Pearson inter-correlations for Studies 1–5. The bottom lines in the sections related to Studies 2–5 present standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients and Pratt's  $d_j$ s for the study-specific measures. The section related to Study 4 also presents standardized logistic regression coefficients (odds ratios) for predicting the liability for the SCARED sub-scales by the sense of entitlement factors.

	Mean (SD)	Alpha	Exaggerated			Restrictive			Assertive			$R^2$
Study 1 – Developing the SREap scale ( $N = 458$ )												
Exaggerated	2.17 (.91)	.87										
Restrictive	2.16 (.86)	.79	.33***			–						
Assertive	3.19 (.80)	.78	.28***			.04						
Study 2 – SREap, attachment and life satisfaction ( $N = 537$ )												
Exaggerated	2.20 (1.0)	.89										
Restrictive	2.05 (.99)	.86	.53***			–						
Assertive	3.26 (.86)	.81	.33***			.23***						
			<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	
Attach. Avoidance	3.62 (.87)	.92	.15	.17**	.27	.06	.07	.09	-.26***	.64	8.1%	
Attach. Anxiety	3.47 (1.35)	.83	.39	.29***	.47	.38	.28***	.44	.16	.1*	.07	28.0%
Life satisfaction	24.4 (7.4)	.87	–2.21	–.30***	.42	–.15	–.02	.01	2.9	.34***	.57	14.6%
Study 3 – SREap, narcissism and self-esteem ( $N = 234$ )												
Exaggerated	2.29 (.93)	.89										
Restrictive	2.27 (.88)	.82	.32***									
Assertive	3.27 (.86)	.83	.46***			.12						
			<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	
Narcissism	16.7 (2.8)	.71	.06	.02	.16	.1	.03	.28	–.42	–.12		
Self-esteem	20.5 (5.3)	–	–1.41	–.23**	.16	–1.33	–.23**	.28	2.56	.40***	.56	22.0%
Study 4 – SREap, depression and anxiety ( $N = 234$ )												
Exaggerated	2.11 (.94)	.87										
Restrictive	2.05 (.85)	.79	.29***									
Assertive	3.14 (.91)	.82	.30***			.16*						
			<b>Odds ratios</b>									
Somatic/panic	3.64 (4.5)	.89	2.02**			1.42			.72			7.2%
General anxiety	5.11 (4.4)	.86	2.29***			1.71*			.61*			12%
Separation anxiety	3.51 (3.0)	.71	1.52*			1.21			1.02			4.5%
Social anxiety	4.07 (3.4)	.81	1.78**			1.37			.81			5.8%
School avoidance	1.52 (1.7)	.68	.57***			1.82**			.46**			16%
			<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	
Depression	10.7 (11.9)	.94	5.82	.47***	.70	3.8	.27***	.31	–2.01	–.16***	–.01	34.3%
Study 5 – SREap and positive psychological variables ( $N = 232$ )												
Exaggerated	2.41 (1.0)	.88										
Restrictive	2.26 (.90)	.79	.30***			–						
Assertive	3.34 (.92)	.84	.50***			.11						
			<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	<b>B</b>	$\beta$	$d_j$	
Self-efficacy	29.0 (5.8)	.83	–.22	–.04	–.03	–.53	.08	.05	1.97	.32**	.98	9.2%
Mood regulation	100.5 (14)	.84	–5.25	–.37**	.94	–.91	–.05	.05	2.76	.17	–.01	12.1%

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; alpha = Cronbach's alpha;  $d_j$  = Pratt's index.

## Method

### Participants

Study 5 participants consisted of 232 schoolchildren (59.4% of whom were girls), ages 12–16 years ( $M = 13.66$ ,  $SD = .63$ ), none of whom were involved in any of the other studies discussed in this paper.

### Measures

**Entitlement.** The SREap was used to measure adolescents' sense of relational entitlement towards their parents.

**Self-Efficacy.** Perceived self-efficacy was assessed using the *General Self-Efficacy Scale* (GSE; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). The GSE is a 10-item self-report scale, on which respondents are asked to judge how accurately the items described them on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 4 (*exactly true*). A total score is obtained by summing the relevant item responses in each scale, and a higher score reflects greater self-efficacy.

**Mood regulation.** The *Negative Mood Regulation* (NMR, Catanzaro & Mearns, 1990) was used to measure mood and general expectations of being able to alleviate negative moods. It is a 30-item questionnaire, with scores ranging from 30 to 150. Responders are asked to rate on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), the degree to which they believe their use of coping strategies can counteract a negative mood. The stem, "When I'm upset I believe that...." is completed with items such as, "I can do something to feel better," or "planning how I deal with things will help." Higher scores indicate better negative-mood regulation.

## Results

Means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas and inter-correlations for the three SREap factors as obtained in this study are presented in the fifth panel of Table 2. To examine whether the three SREap factors were linked with self-efficacy and negative mood regulation, we conducted a series of multiple regression analyses in which the SREap factors served as predictors. Regression coefficients are also presented in the fifth panel of Table 2.

As expected, higher scores on exaggerated entitlement were linked with lower negative mood regulation, and higher scores on assertive entitlement were associated with higher self-efficacy. Restricted sense of entitlement was not related to either of the two scores.

### Studies 2–5 – Confirmatory factor analysis and gender effects

The samples of Studies 2–5 ( $N = 1237$ ) were collapsed and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted, in order to further validate the factor structure we identified in Study 1's exploratory factor analysis. In this analysis, we examined the fit of a three-factor solution model, and compared it with a one-factor model, in which all of the items were loaded on a single latent factor. The effectiveness of each model was compared using the Sample-Size Adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (Adjusted BIC). The model with the lowest adjusted BIC score was deemed the most effective. The CFAs were estimated using MPlus 6.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) software. Goodness of fit was examined using the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) scores. CFI and TLI scores above .95, RMSEA score below .06, and SRMR score below .07 indicate an excellent fit to the observed data. The analyses indicated again that the three-factor model had the lowest adjusted BIC score (31395.63; as compared with the one-factor model, 32490.92), and fit well with the observed data,  $\chi^2(200) = 363.27, p < .01, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .04, 95\% CI = .04, .05$  (96.8% probability that RMSEA was lower than .05),  $SRMR = .055$ .

In Studies 2–5, we wished to examine gender differences in regards to each of the sense of entitlement factors. As a preliminary step, we tested for factorial invariance of SREap across boys and girls. We conducted a series of multi-group CFA using MPlus 6.1. In these analyses, we compared boys' and girls' factor loadings and factors' variances/covariances by contrasting a model without equality constraints (i.e., fully free model) with a model in which factor loadings are constrained to be equal, and a model in which the factors' variances/covariances are constrained to be equal (see Dimitrov, 2010 for more information). In these tests, a non-significant  $\chi^2$  difference and a CFI difference  $\leq .01$  will indicate factorial invariance. As expected, the analyses indicated that boys and girls did not differ in the SREap factorial loadings [ $\Delta\chi^2_{(23)} = 14.04, p = .95, \Delta CFI = .00$ ] or in the factors' variances/covariances [ $\Delta\chi^2_{(3)} = .55, p = .90, \Delta CFI = .00$ ].

It should be noted that when this test was conducted on a single study (i.e., Study 2, since Studies 3, 4 and 5 had sample sizes that were too small for this type of analysis), the models fit was not adequate for the boys ( $\chi^2(227) = 6047, p < .001; SRMS = .08, RMSEA = .10, CFI = .83$ ) nor for the girls ( $\chi^2(227) = 5663, p < .001; SRMS = .08, RMSEA = .10, CFI = .80$ ). We also did not get adequate fit indices when we tested configural equivalence (with no constraints,  $\chi^2(454) = 1353.48, p < .001; SRMS = .07, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .82$ ). However, when the CFA analysis was conducted in Study 2, combining the data of boys and girls, the analyses indicated again that the three-factor model fit the observed data well,  $\chi^2(227) = 1005.14, p < .001, CFI = .84, TLI = .81, RMSEA = .08, 95\% CI = .075, .085$  (.000% probability that RMSEA was lower than .05),  $SRMR = .07$ .

As a second step, we conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with gender as the independent measure, and sense of entitlement factors as the dependent measures, separately in each study. In Studies 2 (280 girls and 257 boys), 3 (136 girls and 98 boys) and 4 (145 girls and 89 boys), the analysis revealed significant gender differences in the sense of entitlement across factors, ( $Pillai's T = .02, F(3, 485) = 3.85, p = .010; Pillai's T = .07, F(3, 148) = 3.88, p = .010; Pillai's T = .07, F(3, 147) = 3.53, p = .017$ ; for Studies 2, 3 and 4, respectively), but not in Study 5 (138 girls and 94 boys,  $Pillai's T = .05, F(3, 137) = 2.23, p = .087$ ). However, in post-hoc univariate analyses of variance (Bonferroni corrected, see Ben-David, Eidels & Donkin, 2014; Ben-David, Multani, Shakuf, Rudzicz, & Van Lieshout, 2016), none of the four studies revealed significant gender differences in any of the discrete factors, except for one unique case out of twelve (a difference in the assertive sense of entitlement in Study 4;  $M = 3.42, SD = .90$  and  $M = 2.96, SD = .94$ , for boys and girls, respectively;  $F(1,149) = 8.73, p = .004, \eta^2_p = .06$ ).

## General discussion

The parent–adolescent relationship is of major importance in an adolescent's life. Features of this relationship strongly influence future relationships and decisions, and the sense of entitlement among adolescents towards their parents (SREap) is a basic component in the dynamics of this relationship. Clearly, a better understanding of the nature of SREap, and its link with other personality traits, serves as a valuable tool both in practice and in research. In our first study, we developed and tested an SREap questionnaire and provided initial validity evidence of its factor structure. A factor analysis yielded three factors: (1) *exaggerated*, which denotes demanding attitudes, inflated sensitivity and vigilance towards negative aspects of parents; (2) *restricted*, which is expressed as a sense of limited sovereignty and self-assuredness; and (3) *assertive*, which is defined as a realistic appraisal of expectations of parents.

In four subsequent studies, we examined the link between the three SREap factors and related personality variables. First, attachment insecurities were associated with higher scores on the SREap exaggerated and restricted factors, and lower scores on the assertive factor of the SREap scale. Next, we ensured that adolescents' sense of relational entitlement towards their parents reflected a unique psychological phenomenon, and not merely a form of narcissism. Finally, as hypothesized, we found that the restricted and exaggerated factors were associated with a higher level of emotional problems, and with lower well-being, positive mood and life satisfaction. The assertive entitlement factor, on the other hand, was associated with life satisfaction, self-efficacy and reduced negative aspects.

### *The three SREap factors*

The three SREap factors are consistent with the original SRE scale (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), therapeutic experience, and theoretical literature (Kriegman, 1983; Levin, 1970; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990). The original SRE three-factor model has been supported by a number of previous studies. For example, the exaggerated and restricted factors of the SRE scale have been found to be related to pathological concern (Shavit & Tolmacz, 2014), whereas the assertive factor has been found to be related to relationship satisfaction (George-Levi, Vilchinsky, Tolmacz, & Liberman, 2014). The results of the current study suggest that three expressions of entitlement (as manifested by the three factors) are not limited to romantic relationships, but can be found in the adolescent–parent context as well. These findings further suggest that the same underlying mechanisms engender feelings of entitlement in different intimate relationships, across the life span. Possibly, this three-factor model of entitlement may extend to other interpersonal domains as well (e.g., the work environment).

It is important to note that these three entitlement factors can coexist within the same adolescent. For example, he/she can have high scores on assertive entitlement as well as moderately high scores on the two other factors. The SREap taps a dispositional sense of entitlement toward a parent that reflects a global average across thousands of daily interactions that adolescents have with their parents. Therefore, high scores on two or more entitlement factors (e.g., assertive and exaggerated) within the same adolescent can reflect the fact that s/he had a large number of meaningful interactions with a parent in which s/he felt assertive entitlement, as well as a large number of other meaningful interactions in which s/he felt exaggerated entitlement. Similar findings were indicated when evaluating the romantic relationship SRE (see, Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011).

### *SREap and attachment orientations*

In our model we conceptualized the SREap as an aspect of internal working models. The SREap assertive factor was associated with lower attachment avoidance, while the SREap exaggerated and restricted factors were related to attachment insecurities. These results are in line with previous findings on the SRE (George-Levi et al., 2014; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), implying that attachment insecurities and imbalanced entitlement factors are closely linked across different intimate relationships. In terms of attachment theory, the child's bids for proximity and support implicitly say: "Take care of me – I am entitled" (Tolmacz, 2011). The ways in which significant others respond to this appeal create specific types of internal working models that indicate to adolescents how entitled they are (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). If early expectations for proximity and support are not optimally met, this insufficiency may engender imbalanced forms of both attachment and entitlement in future intimate relationships. It is also possible that current insufficiencies on the part of the parent – i.e., partial and/or inappropriate recognition of adolescents' entitlement needs – lead to adolescents' imbalanced sense of entitlement.

The current data revealed that attachment anxiety was significantly related to both exaggerated and restricted entitlement. While the link with exaggerated entitlement has been noted before, the link between attachment anxiety and restricted entitlement may seem less intuitive. It is true that anxious attachment reflects early experiences of inconsistency in parental responsiveness, which can inspire feelings of anger and demandingness, but it is also true that attachment anxiety is related to an immense fear of rejection and abandonment. Thus, in addition to feeling overly entitled, anxiously attached individuals may also try to please others, and to refrain from expressing their own needs in order to avoid rejection (MacDonald, Locke, Spielmann, & Joel, 2013) and conflict (for an overview see the latest review by Mikulincer and Shaver (2016)). These findings resonate with Mikulincer and Shaver's conceptualization of the "ambivalent nature of anxious attachment" (p. 268) which on the one hand reflects anxiety and submission, and on the other hand, an unfulfilled desire to force one's will on someone else (see also results by Maio, Fincham & Lycett, 2000).

Another finding of the current study was that avoidant attachment was significantly related to exaggerated entitlement. This finding may again seem less obvious. However, avoidant attachment has been found in previous studies to be related to a devaluation of the other, an increased sense of self-sufficiency, and fantasies of power (Edelstein & Shaver, 2004). These characteristics can be expressed by an overblown sense of entitlement, in which the other is expected to serve the needs of the self. Thus, the exaggerated sense of entitlement as expressed by the avoidant-attached individual reflects a different psychological process from that which typifies the anxiously-attached individual. For the avoidant individual, it may relate to feelings of superiority; for the anxious, however, it may reflect a "righting" of wrongs (e.g., unresponsiveness of the parent) that were inflicted upon the individual in the past (see, Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

Finally, in this study the avoidant attachment style was not found to be significantly related to restricted SREap, in contrast to previous findings on the SRE. This finding could reflect the differences between the two populations and the two types of intimate relationships that were examined. The SRE focuses on adults, while the SREap looks at adolescents, for whom themes

of autonomy in general, and especially in regard to their parents, are of extreme importance (McGue, Elkins, Walden & Iacono, 2005). The adolescent's struggle for autonomy can be viewed as the background against which attachment processes play out (Allen, 2008). Adolescents with avoidant attachment orientation have difficulties in achieving autonomy and may not be able to adaptively manage the relational changes brought on by this push for autonomy (McElhaney, Allen, Stephenson, & Hare, 2009). This process, coupled with their increased sense of superiority, affects adolescents' relationships with their parents, as well as the expectations they have of this relationship, and might lead to an exaggerated rather than a restricted sense of adolescent–parent relational entitlement. It is possible that this difference, between the findings that emerged from the SRE vs. the findings that emerged from the SREap, might also relate to the larger number of items included in the SREap's restricted factor than were included in the SRE's restricted factor (7 vs 4). As a result of this larger number of items, the restricted factor is better represented in the SREap than in the SRE, and possible sources of variation in the scale were minimized.

### *Relating the SREap to psychological scales*

First, in accordance with previous findings on the SRE, none of the three factors of entitlement was significantly associated with narcissism. This finding further supports the claim that entitlement is a distinct construct, not embedded in other general psychological constructs. However, as the associations were lower than expected, future studies should reexamine the association between these two constructs. In the next step, we found the SREap to be related to major psychological aspects. Our results indicated that exaggerated and restricted entitlement were maladaptive and placed adolescents at risk for emotional problems. Namely, these two entitlement factors were correlated with a higher likelihood for depression, anxiety disorders and school avoidance, as well as lower levels of positive mood, self-esteem and life satisfaction.

A correlational study, of course, does not allow us to infer causality. It is possible that maladaptive SREap may be the *generator* of reduced well-being, as it can foster interpersonal difficulties in an adolescent's life. On the other hand, emotional problems and poor self-esteem may lead adolescents to adopt maladaptive expressions of entitlement as a *coping strategy*, either to (1) *restrict* their sense of entitlement, reducing their expectations for the fulfillment of their needs; or (2) *exaggerate* their demands and expectations of their parents in an attempt to alleviate distress. Moreover, maladaptive entitlement and emotional difficulties might be mutually influential. The link between maladaptive entitlement and a lower level of life satisfaction may reflect a vicious cycle, in which each factor engenders the other.

Assertive entitlement appears to present the opposite trend, as it is related to a *lower* likelihood of emotional difficulties (e.g., GAD) and negative behaviors (e.g., school avoidance), and *higher* self-efficacy and life satisfaction. This manifestation of entitlement represents what appears to be an adequate and efficient strategy for maintaining and promoting well-being and positive mood, and reducing the risk of emotional and interpersonal problems. In broader terms, assertive entitlement may represent a realistic approach to close relationships (e.g., romantic, parental), in that it seems to minimize conflicts related to inappropriate and imbalanced expectations. Again, one cannot infer directionality from a correlational finding. Higher self-efficacy, as well as lower anxiety, may lead to a sense of control in a person's intimate relationships (thus contributing to a person's assertive sense of entitlement), and, in turn, assertive entitlement may promote different aspects of well-being.

The SREap assertive factor was not found to be significantly correlated with all of the tested aspects of emotional difficulties (anxiety and depression measures, see Study 4), whereas the exaggerated entitlement factor was found to be highly correlated with all of these measures. Replicating previous findings on the SRE (see Table 4 in Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), assertive SREap was found to be related more strongly to higher levels of positive aspects (e.g., well-being), than to lower levels of psychological distress (e.g., anxiety). We therefore concur with Tolmacz and Mikulincer's suggestion (p.91) that assertive entitlement might be correlated with other factors (e.g., ambition, autonomy and intimacy) and would suggest that future studies further investigate this point in regard to both the SRE and the SREap.

### *SREap and gender differences*

In general, the data collected in the current research does not point to gender as a major factor in SREap. Moreover, when the data across all studies was collapsed, boys and girls did not differ in the SREap factorial loadings. These findings may seem at odds with evidence in the literature that points to differences in psychological aspects between boys and girls during adolescence. For example, these differences were noted in depression (Wade, Cairney, & Pevalin, 2002), risk-taking (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999), aggression (Card, Sawalani, Stucky & Little, 2008) and empathy (Garaigordobil, 2009). However, it is important to note that measures of attachment in adolescence have been highly consistent across genders (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). For example, using the attachment scale for children, Brenning, Soenens, Braet, and Bosmans (2011) found no gender differences. This finding was supported in a recent meta-analysis (Gorrese, 2016) which concluded that the links between attachment orientation and anxiety were not found to be moderated by gender. As we conceptualize the sense of entitlement as an aspect of the internal working models, the lack of gender effects in our data may further support this link.

We note that the data in Study 2 could not support the factorial invariance of the SREap with gender that we found when we collapsed the data of Studies 2–5. This finding could point to the possibility that gender differences do exist but were “lost” in this case due to the heterogeneity across studies. Future studies should reexamine this possibility.

## Limitations and future directions

The studies reported here represent only an initial examination of the validity of the SREap scale, focusing on Israeli participants. Future studies should attempt to examine the replicability and generalizability of the findings to other cultural (Icht & Ben-David, 2014), ethnic and religious groups, as well as to different family constructs, changes between generations (Ben-David, Erel, Goy, & Schneider, 2015) and testing which would, optimally, take place over multiple years in the adolescent's life. Future research should also examine the links between the SREap and the adolescent's adjustment in significant areas of functioning and other intimate settings. Also, while assertive SREap was found to have lower power in predicting a reduction in psychological distress (e.g., anxiety), and restricted entitlement was found to have lower power in predicting positive aspects (e.g., self-efficacy), future studies should further examine these links with other measures, to better understand the relationships between these constructs. Future studies should also further examine the potential for invariance between boys and girls, as it was found only when all studies were collapsed. Finally, the SREap may be of particular importance when testing adolescents with special needs, e.g., adolescents at risk, juvenile delinquents, and adolescents with disabilities.

## Appendix. SREap items in comparison to the SRE

SREap items	SRE original item
1 I have high expectations of my parents	2 I have high expectations of my partner
2 I cannot let go of the expectations I have of my parents	3 I can't give up my expectations from my partner in a relationship
3 My parents need to take care of my basic needs	new
4 I expect my parents to pay lots of attention to me	5 I expect my partner to be very attentive to me
5 When my parents make me angry I sometimes regret the fact that I don't have other parents	new
6 I spend a lot of time thinking about my parents' weaknesses	11 I am obsessed by my partner's faults
7 When my parents hurt me, I immediately feel I cannot trust them	12 When my partner hurts me, I'm immediately filled with a sense of distrust
8 I often feel my parents deserve a better child than me	new
9 Sometimes I have a lot of criticisms of my parents	14 Sometimes I become very critical of my partner
10 My parents have to give me enough attention	new
11 When my parents frustrate me I get very angry	16 When I'm frustrated with my relationship, I become filled with rage
12 I feel I do not deserve to be frustrated by my parents	17 When I'm frustrated with my relationship, I feel I don't deserve to be frustrated
13 I cannot make a compromise about my expectations from my parents.	new
14 Usually, when my parents compliment me I believe I deserve the compliment	new
15 I think my parents deserve a more successful child than me	new
16 I often ask myself whether I deserve such great parents	26 I feel my partner deserves to get more than s/he does in our relationship
17 When I have problems, my parents should help me	new
18 I feel my parents deserve more than they get from me	new
19 When my parents frustrate me, I sometimes think of running away from home	27 When my partner frustrates me, I contemplate ending the relationship
20 Sometimes, I think my parents love me more than I deserve	new
21 I'm not willing to forgo what I deserve to get from my parents	30 I insist on getting what I deserve in my relationship
22 Sometimes I feel I'm not good enough for my parents	new
23 Sometimes I'm more angry with my parents than with other people	33 In my relationship with my partner I'm sometimes filled with a kind of rage that I hardly ever experience in daily life

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