

ABSTRACT: This study aimed at exploring black South African women's experiences of and opinions about motherhood and attachment. A qualitative research methodology was utilised and eight new mothers from Johannesburg were recruited to participate in the study. These women were accessed through a post-natal clinic and on a voluntary basis. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. These interviews focused on themes including the mothers' perceptions of their experience of motherhood, bonding and attachment as well as their experiences of cultural practices around motherhood. The theoretical framework of the study was based on attachment and psychoanalytic theories. Within this theoretical framework the researcher aimed to understand motherhood and mothering experiences from the mother's point of view as well as from a cultural and social perspective. Because a psychoanalytic theoretical framework was used for the study, this needed to be integrated with the aims of qualitative research hence a psychoanalytic approach to qualitative data analysis was used. This study suggests that motherhood brings joy to many mothers but it can also be a difficult period for a mother who lacks family support and financial independence. Culture also has a bearing on how some mothers experience motherhood. In particular, culture seems to enforce certain practices and places certain demands on the mothers without considering the mother's circumstances and context and often does not allow for ambivalence to be expressed, which in turn impacts on a mother's attachment to her infants.