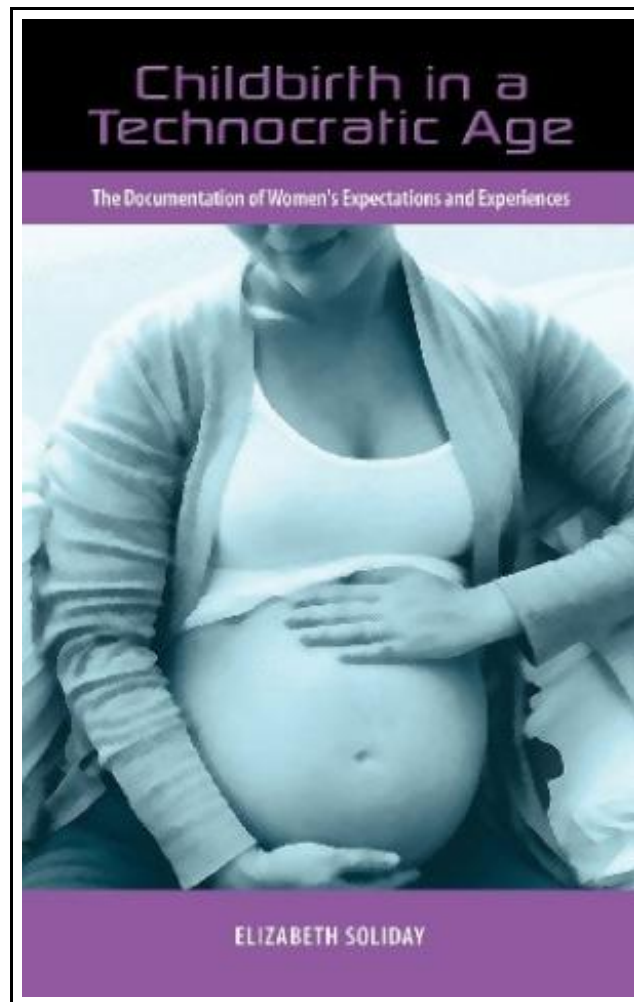


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Cambria Press. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 264 pages. Dimensions: 9.0in. x 6.0in. x 0.8in. Across time and place, pregnancy and childbirth rank among the most transformative physical and psychological events in womens lives. Womens childbearing experiences depend not only on their own biology and psyche but also on the nature and quality of care they receive. The nature of the prevailing obstetric care model in the early 21st-century United States has been described as high-tech, low touch, highlighting its emphasis on using medical technology, as opposed to non-technological care and support, to control unproblematic physical processes on the argument that this approach improves maternal safety and comfort. However, it should be noted that reasonably reliable national data fail to show significant maternal or newborn health gains corresponding to recent, dramatic rises in hospital obstetric procedures such as labor induction, labor acceleration, and cesarean delivery. In this context where medical intervention, necessary or not, assumes an increasingly central role in the childbearing equation, questions of what mothers expect to happen in labor and delivery and how their subsequent birth experiences meet those expectations become paramount. Global numeric indicators cannot capture the quality of womens reactions to childbirth itself, particularly as maternal care shifts in response to consumer interests it presupposes, offering options for comfort, care, and even the possibility of foregoing the labor process altogether. This work reflects the critical need to document early 21st-century U. S. mothers own words on what they expected to happen in childbirth and later, how labor and delivery went and how it met their expectations. Among this books most important contributions is its inclusion of extensive interview material drawn from 75 diverse women who spoke freely on their childbirth expectations and subsequent experiences. By itself, the interview material lends an important, though at times unsettling,...

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