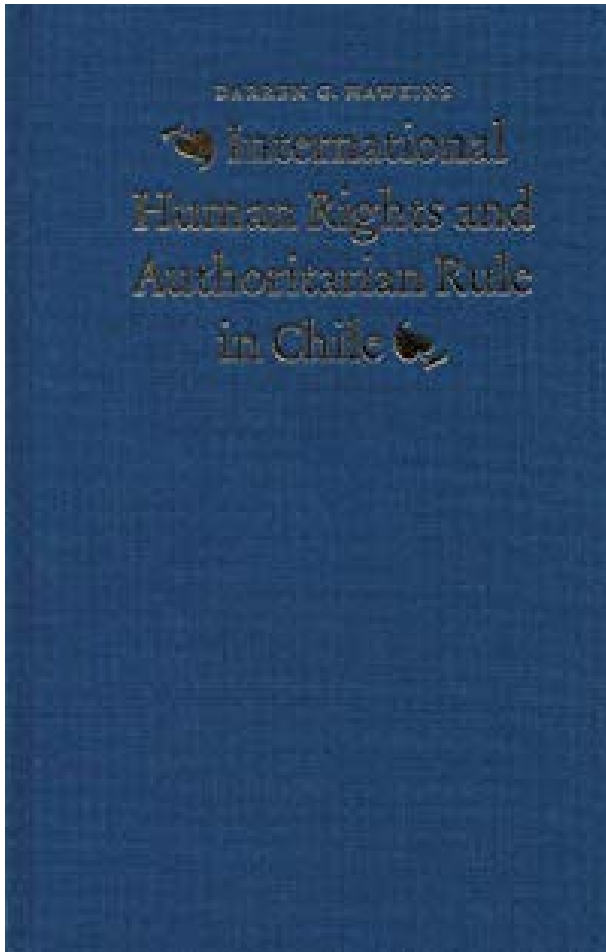


International Human Rights and Authoritarian Rule in Chile



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What is the influence of international human rights activism on authoritarian governments in the modern era? How much can pressure from human rights organizations and nations affect political change within a country? This book addresses these key issues by examining the impact of transnational human rights organizations and international norms on Chile during Gen. Augusto Pinochet's regime (1973–90) and afterward. Darren G. Hawkins argues that steadily mounting pressure from abroad concerning human rights did, in fact, make Pinochet more vulnerable over time and helped stimulate Chile's movement to a liberal democracy. Such international expectations could not be ignored by Pinochet, and they gradually and cumulatively made themselves felt. By 1975 some Chilean officials were adopting the discourse of human rights and claiming their adherence to international norms; two years later the government's security apparatus responsible for the reign of terror was reorganized, and disappearances in Chile nearly ceased. In 1980 the regime abandoned its insistence on unlimited authoritarian rule and approved a constitution that set term limits and promised future democratic institutions; Pinochet lost a constitutionally mandated plebiscite in 1988 and ultimately left office in 1990. Hawkins contends that these changes not only were internally driven but reflected an ongoing response to an international discourse on human rights. Well-researched and cogently argued, this case study

further illuminates and complicates our understanding of modern Chilean history and provides ample testimony of the far-reaching effects of international human rights work.