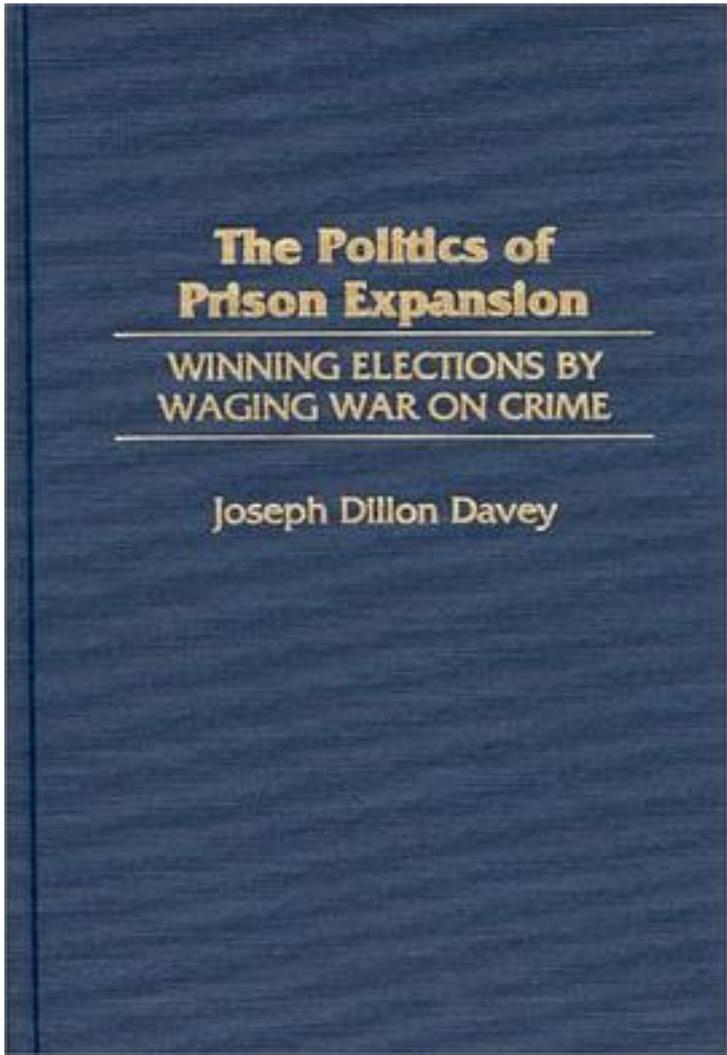


# The Politics of Prison Expansion



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In the last two decades there has been an unprecedented increase in the use of imprisonment in the United States. This expansion of the imprisonment rate did not happen in the other Western democracies and, more importantly, it happened very unevenly among the fifty states. Professor Davey examines the change in the rate of imprisonment in relationship to the crime rate as well as six other socio-economic variables. Davey then examines a number of states in detail to assess the key factors that resulted in increased imprisonment. Professor Davey concludes from the analyses that law and order politics of individual governors was the pivotal factor in the decision to expand prisons. Expansion was neither an outgrowth of unusual crime increases nor an effective method of reducing further crime increases, but waging war on crime was a very effective method of winning elections.

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目录:

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