Political scientists have long painted American voters’ dependence on partisan cues at the ballot box as a discouraging consequence of their overall ignorance about politics. Taking on this conventional wisdom, Jeffrey D. Grynaviski advances the provocative theory that voters instead rely on these cues because party brand names provide credible information about how politicians are likely to act in office, despite the weakness of formal party organization in the United States. Among the important empirical implications of his theory, which he carefully supports with rigorous data analysis, are that voter uncertainty about a party’s issue positions varies with the level of party unity it exhibits in government, that party preferences in the electorate are strongest among the most certain voters, and that party brand names have meaningful consequences for the electoral strategies of party leaders and individual candidates for office.

Jeffrey D. Grynaviski received his doctorate in political science from Duke University in 2002. Since that time he has been Assistant Professor in Political Science at the University of Chicago. He was a recipient of the prestigious George A. and Eliza Gardner Howard Foundation Fellowship for the 2006–7 academic year. His previous research has been published in a range of scholarly journals, including the American Political Science Review, Journal of Politics, Political Analysis, Journal of Theoretical Politics, Party Politics, and Dubose Review.
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Political parties are organizations created by politicians to facilitate their collection of rents from holding office, often at the expense of ordinary citizens. *Partisan Bonds* is the product of my efforts to explain why those ordinary citizens do not reject, at the polls, the politicians who belong to such an organization. I began to work on this subject when pursuing my doctorate at Duke University. While there, I benefited tremendously from the help of my teachers and classmates. My dissertation committee of John Aldrich (the chair), John Brehm, Scott de Marchi, and Mike Munger provided incredible guidance and support for my research and for my career. I am also indebted to my classmates at Duke, especially Mike Ensley, John Griffin, Renan Levine, Jenn Merolla, and Brian Newman who provided a great deal of constructive advice during the writing of my dissertation.

My work on this book continued at Chicago where I acquired numerous additional debts. Among my colleagues at Chicago, I would like to single out Chris Berry, Carles Boix, John Brehm (again), Michael Dawson, Sean Gailmard, Will Howell, Luis Medina, Jeff Milyo, Roger Myerson, Eric Oliver, Jong Hee Park, Boris Shor, Betsy Sinclair, and Duncan Snidal for their friendship and almost unrelenting criticism. Michael Dawson merits special thanks for his close reading of the entire manuscript as it neared completion.

I gained a great deal of insight from exchanges with Steve Ansolabehere, Gary Cox, Bernie Grofman, Dave Rohde, Steve Smith, and Mike Ting while the manuscript was in various stages of disrepair. I would especially like to thank Steve Ansolabehere and Dave Rohde – as I struggled to bring my book to its completion – for making demands about what I must do to ensure that the final product came close to reaching its potential and for their advice about how to get there.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my research assistants, including Minnie Go, Shang Ha, Kateri Somrak, and Jon Rogowski, for their help. I am grateful for the financial support provided by the Howard Foundation, which provided me with the opportunity to take a year of leave that was crucial to the success of the project, and to the Harris School of Public Policy for providing me with a home for that year. Excerpts from Chapters 3 and 4 first appeared in my paper “A Bayesian Learning Model with Applications to Party Identification.” The paper is published online at http://online.sagepub.com. The final definitive version of this paper has been published in *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, vol. 18, 2006, by Sage Publications Ltd., All rights reserved. I would also like to thank Eric Crahan and his colleagues at Cambridge University Press for their encouragement, patience, and professionalism.

Most of all, I would like to thank my family. For too long, my mood at home has been affected by how I felt about my progress on this book. I am thankful for my children who lifted my spirits when I was discouraged and for their patience when my writing kept me away from them. I promise that next Saturday will be a “stay-home day” for Daddy too. I am also thankful to my wife, Nicole. She has stuck with me every step of the way, from the day I first sat down to work on my dissertation proposal to the penning of these acknowledgments. I don’t know how she put up with me during the years in between, but I am deeply grateful that she did. I am so lucky to have her by my side.