Corty, Cross and Young (2000) – Rebuilding Canadian Party Politics:

Chapter 1: Party Politics at Century’s End

**Thesis/Topic:** Chapter one is an introduction. The book is about the collapse of Canadian party politics in the 1990s, the pattern of party organization and competition prevalent in Canada and the struggle to build a new system.

**Summary:**

* Chapter one provides an outline of the book and the history of party politics in Canada
* Three party systems over time in Canada – fourth is emerging
  + First collapse was after the first world war – move from patron appointments to ma more democratic and regionalized system.
  + Second collapse – 1960s parties began to promote their own national agendas. Attempt to marry Keynesian policies with executive federalism.
  + Third collapse 1993 – introduction of Bloc and Alliance, regional focus.
* Collapse of third system the result of: increased voter cynicism, declining public confidence in representative institutions, desire for more direct, unmediated public participation, rejection of consensus politics, greater representation of regional interests, and increasing pluralism in society being animated by rights discourse.
* Increased regionalization resulted in a fragmentation of the electorate.
* Question of whether regionalization has resulted in a loss of the national political debate.
* Demand on parties for an overhaul of leadership selection and greater grass roots participation.
* Significant rise in interest group activity.
* Still, as there has been no significant reform of the electoral system, there is an important element of continuity that anchors Canadian parties.

Corty Cross and Young Chapter 2: The Party Question in Canada

**Thesis/Topic:** 1993 election changed the face of party politics in Canada. Immense voter shift and the introduction of two new political parties (Alliance and Bloc).

**Summary:**

* Royal Commission 1991 – ¾ of the Cdn population believe that parties are necessary for democracy
* More detailed discussion of three waves:
* First Wave: National competition (opinions of the parties didn’t greatly differ on big issues), patronage appointments.
* Second Wave: 1920s – political regionalism, CCF and Social Credit. Regional brokerage. Closed model of politics, lack of public knowledge made it difficult for public to hold government accountable.
* Shift to executive federalism – rise of welfare state and thus increased provincial roles.
* Third Wave – Pan-Canadian politics – new tools, opinion polling and television.
* NDP emerged as a party representative of the industrial working class.
* Provincial parties were separated from the federal allowing federal parties to pursue their own interests even at the cost of their provincial counterparts.
* End of the third wave – we begin to see increasing cynicism in the public towards party politics. Creation of two new parties.
* Corty, Cross, and Young – need to rebuild the party system, lack of voters is calling into question the legitimacy of the government.
* The current electoral system rewards parties with regionalized politics. Division between the West, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

Corty, Cross and Young Chapter 5: Representing Interests

**Thesis/Topic:** The role of political parties as intermediaries between society and state. In Canada accommodation between competing interest or clashing identities often takes place within parties rather than between them. Failure to accommodate can lead to the breakdown of parties or the formation of new ones.

**Summary:**

* Emergence of interest groups challenged the primacy of parties.
* Interests captured in new parties ie: prairie populism = Social Credit Party; Quebec = Bloc Quebecois; West = Alliance; Labour = NDP
* Garnering the new immigrant vote – increased community level work (Andrew Thompson).
* Abu-Laban – party garnered the vote without reflecting ethnic diversity internally.
* Treatment of women in politics – some parties have incentives to participate. In some cases women aren’t interested – family commitments and funding. Certain parties offer funding for child care. Alliance/Conservatives don’t believe in prioritizing minorities.
* Interest group politics – Corty Cross and Young, examine the development of interest groups as a way for Canadians to promote a political issue that is important to them without going through the parties.
* Campaign involvement of interest groups – not always solicited by the party.
* 2004 Supreme Court ruling 6-3 in favour of a limit on campaign spending by interest groups. There were several Charter challenges on this issue prior to the 2004 Supreme Court ruling.
* Issue advocacy – some interest groups focus on specific issues during election time to try to put pressure on parties to promise something.
* Questions of how effective these tactics are.

Corty, Cross and Young Chapter 10:

**Thesis/Topic:** Party system collapsed in the 1990s and is in the process of being rebuilt.

**Summary:**

* The basic defining activities of parties changed little over the cycles of the changing party systems.
* Changing forms of governance have prompted changes to the party system.
* The 2nd party system didn’t work well because only the Liberals had sufficient strength in all regions to operate as genuine interregional brokers.
* In the 3rd era, pan-Canadianism served to exacerbate regional tensions and discontent.
* Substantial changes in demographic composition, basic values, and political beliefs of the Cdn electorate, as well as the decay of the dominant governing system broke the link between the electorate and parties.
* With the Bloc and Alliance (now Conservative) parties are likely to remain regionalized.
* Parties are now running separate campaigns according to region.
* Similarity among parties contributed to the downfall of the third party system – too many interests were left unrepresented.
* Fiscal and international pressures have significantly constrained the Canadian state.