**Brief Summary**

**Criminal Justice and Civil Justice**

This chapter explores the differences between American civil and criminal justice systems and how the ideals of social justice impact each of these systems. Criminal justice refers to the government’s response to crime. Civil justice is the means for a person (an individual or a company) to be compensated for a wrong done to them. The civil justice process is related to, and has impact on, the criminal justice system. Social justice is based on the ideals of fairness and equality, which should be present in both justice systems.

**Social Justice and American Values**

Laws and criminal justice policies are often shaped by the political culture and documents of a nation. For example, American values of liberty and equality are promoted in the Constitution and Declaration of Independence and are likewise incorporated into our criminal justice system and other major social institutions.  Public belief and support in the government's ability to ensure these values then legitimizes the operation of an effective criminal justice system, which attempts to balance liberty with law-abiding behavior.

**The Development of Criminal Justice Policy**

The chapter further explores the various influences that lead to the development of criminal justice policy.  Federalism refers to the allocation of power between the national government and the states. Under federalism laws may vary among states and between state and federal governments, and within each level of government, there is a separation of powers into three branches.  States are given the responsibility to define and address their own problems, but when conflicts arise between state and federal laws, federal law controls under the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution.  Other forces that influence the definition and creation of laws include perceptions of what crime issues need to be addressed, the mass media, interest groups, politicians, and bureaucrats.  When a strategy is implemented to reduce crime, these same groups may judge the value of the policy in effectively reducing crime. While the effectiveness of a strategy may legitimize certain policies, the lack of public, political, and financial support can lead to the demise of other policies.