How significant was the impact of Prohibition on US society between 1920 and 1933?

The “noble experiment” of Prohibition of alcohol in America was introduced by the 18th Amendment, which commenced in January 1920. Prohibition was undertaken to reduce crime and corruption, solve social problems and boost supplies of important grains. It was also felt that it was wrong for some Americans to enjoy alcohol while the country's young men fought in World War 1. Some historians have said that the significant impacts of prohibition on US society between 1920 and 1933 were the rise in organised crime and corruption. This view has been challenged and many people have argued that the economic effects significantly impacted US society. However, other people have argued that Prohibition itself did not have the most significant impact on US society between 1920 and 1933. Historians have argued that factors such as the Wall Street Crash created more significant impacts. This argument needs close thought and consideration.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the significant impact of Prohibition on US society was the rise in organised crime. Firstly, liquor's illegal status built a base in which organised crime blossomed. In the first year of Prohibition the rate of crime increased by 24% and the homicide rate per 100,000 increased from 5.6 to 8.4 and the amounts of thefts and burglaries increased by 9%. Prohibition led to an increase in gangs and gangsters as they saw a business opportunity in which they could flourish. An example of a famous gangster who pounced on this opportunity was Al Capone who made millions supplying illegal alcohol. This was mainly due to the increase in demand for alcohol from the public which caused an increased amount of people willing to break the law to make money. Criminal groups had a large steady income provided by the laws against victimless crimes such as drugs, alcohol, gambling and prostitution, this contributed largely to an increase of 561% in the number of federal criminals. As these gangsters became more and more well-known and wealthy they could widen their horizons and the power and wealth meant they could corrupt some law enforcement agencies which led to an increase in racketeering, which had a huge impact on business owners and therefore US society.

Furthermore, a large contribution to the increase in organised crime was due to the increased amount of men joining gangs. This was mainly because people needed to provide for their families. Due to the scarcity of jobs