In Defence Of Economic Growth

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Economic growth is commonly measured in terms of the increase in aggregated market value of additional goods and services produced, using estimates such as GDP. A second method of producing economic growth is technological improvement. An example of this is the invention of gasoline fuel; prior to the discovery of the energy-generating power of gasoline, the economic value of petroleum was relatively low. The use of gasoline became a better and more productive method of transporting goods in process and distributing final goods more efficiently. Improved technology allows workers to produce more output with the same stock of capital goods, by combining them in novel ways that are more productive. Clearly a central benefit of economic growth—the benefit to human welfare: greater longevity, lower infant mortality, later onset of chronic disease, higher intelligence, greater height, etc. At the moment, any discussion of economics and prosperity focuses on consumption, and in particular on individual consumer goods. So when you say that economic output should rise and there should be economic growth, people interpret that to mean simply that we will have more stuff. I don't think that's a problem; I think that's a good thing. But it's not just a questio