1. Introduction

The relationship between the economic and spatial aspects of human life and the interference of cultural aspects in that relationship is as old as humanity itself. Certainly this relationship has been observable since man developed a sedentary way of living (Tichy 1998). Still, as a scientific discipline economic geography developed rather late in the history of science. According to Van den Bremen (1982) the German economist Götz was the first to name it as an individual branch of science (Götz 1882). Other German economists dominated the first half-century of its existence by developing impressive theories about the spatial order of economic activities. The names of Launhard (1882), Weber (1909), Christaller (1933) and Losch (1939) are landmarks in the early history of location theory. They gathered fame with their attempts to reach a theoretical description of the best possible locations for industrial and service firms and are still quoted in all major economic geography textbooks. Of course von Thunen also fits in the row of German spatial economists with his well-known theory about agricultural land use (which later on became the basis for urban land use theories as well) although he preceded the others by almost a century (von Thunen 1826).

In all these early spatial-economic theories, which we tend to describe now as ‘neoclassical’, the entrepreneur as a person is hardly visible. The theories put on stage a decision maker best described as a *homo economicus*, who possesses perfect knowledge and abilities and uses this knowledge and these abilities in a rational choice process leading to an optimal result in terms of cost, revenue and profit for the firm. Personal characteristics of the decision-maker do not matter, let alone his social relations or cultural background. This concept of the entrepreneur as a rational decision-maker is very much in
contrast with the views held by a growing majority of economic geographers in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. In recent decades we saw the behavioral, evolutionary and institutional approaches of economic geography, founded or inspired by theorists like Simon (1952, 1957), Pred (1967), Granovetter (1985) and Nelson and Winter (1982), grow to dominance. These approaches assign a very prominent role to personal characteristics of the entrepreneur, to the network of both personal and business relationships around the firm, and to cultural influences on the spatial economic system. Some authors consider the shift in attention to socio-cultural aspects of spatial-economic structures striking enough to characterise it as the ‘cultural turn in economic geography’ (Rodriguez-Pose 2001).

In a period of scientific renewal, such as we witnessed in economic geography in the past decades, the enthusiasm for new theories and concepts, often introduced from other scientific fields (economics, sociology, psychology, biology) sometimes obscures the view on the past. Sometimes new concepts have been present earlier than assumed, but under different names or have been used in different contexts. Sometimes the same words have been used earlier but with a totally different meaning. For a good understanding of the relationship between the social, cultural, economic, and last but not least spatial aspects of entrepreneurship it is important to determine the meaning of the concepts that are being used and to know the concept histories. In this paper we want to analyse the historical roots of the cultural turn in economic geography. We will start with a concise description of the paradigm shift of this discipline in the course of the past century and then try to unravel the concepts of economy and culture. Specifically we focus on the historical development of the idea(s) of a relationship between culture and economics and we will look at the positioning of the entrepreneur in this relationship. We will also discuss the implications of our conceptual considerations for economic geography. Finally, we will draw some conclusions.

2. Paradigm shifts in economic geography

In spite of the theoretical contributions of the German founding fathers of economic geography, mentioned above, the nature of the discipline was, in the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the twentieth century, much more descriptive than analytical. Stimulated by the general interest in foreign countries and nations that characterized the age of discovery and the colonial era, the first handbooks of economic geography were encyclopedic descriptions of the production and trade in different parts of the world, answer-
ing to the demand for commercial information about possible new trade partners in all parts of the world. In fact, ‘commercial geography’ is a better term for the discipline in that period than ‘economic geography’. As Berry et al. argue, the commercial approach in human geography can be traced back even further, to the work of the 17th century Dutch geographer Varenius who produced in his Geographia Generalis practical commercial information for the Amsterdam merchants. The commercial approach however reached its zenith in the decades just before and after the turn of the nineteenth century, in the work of the Scottish scholar Chisholm. He published his major work Handbook of Commercial Geography in 1889 which saw its 10th edition in 1925 (Berry et al. 1993).

Already during Chisholm’s lifetime, however, the commercial approach was being pushed aside by another paradigm, environmental determinism, which began to dominate the whole of the social sciences. Within economic geography, it led to a growing interest for natural causes as determinants of spatial variations in the nature and intensity of economic activities. From the nineteen thirties onwards, the deterministic thinking died away, giving way to the traditions of spatial variation and spatial analysis that were characterized by the drive to analyse spatial (economic) patterns in terms of all possible causal factors. These approaches used modern (quantitative) methods and techniques of analysis to find such causal factors and had the explicit purpose to put them in the frame of comprehensive theories. It the post-war period of the nineteen fifties and sixties the spatial analysis approach became the leading paradigm, and it is only then that the theories of the German ‘founding fathers’ Weber, Lösch and Christaller came to full use. The long period that elapsed since most of that work was originally written is explained by the fact that English translations only became available after the Second World War. Figure 1 represents a summary of the paradigm shifts of economic geography in the course of the twentieth century. We will not deal with all of these paradigms in detail, but restrict ourselves to a few general characteristics instead. After the commercial, deterministic, spatial variation and spatial analysis approaches geography witnessed (in the nineteen sixties) the origination of the spatial restructuring approach, which was influenced by Marxist analysis.

Restructuring geography paid attention to social aspects of economic activity and dealt with the roles of locality, class, race and gender (Peet 1989; Pickles and Watts 1992). Unlike traditional approaches in location theory, it did not confine its attention to the question of the best location but tried to cut into the causal chain of events leading to location choices at an earlier point and higher level, where not only economic but also social, political and even moral perspectives were taken to explain investment (and disinvestments) decisions (Dicken & Lloyd 1990).
Paradigm | Focus
--- | ---
commercial | facts about production and trade
 deterministic | dominance of natural/environmental influences
 spatial variation | study of spatial variations and relations
 spatial analysis | analytical and explanatory; statistical methods; factor approach
 spatial restructuring | about work, poverty and power
 spatial systems | systematic relationship in larger contexts; macro-oriented
 behavioral | knowledge and motives of individual actors; micro-oriented
 geography of enterprise | spatial behavior of large companies
 institutional | innovation, learning and embeddedness
 evolutionary | path dependence

Fig. 1. The paradigm shift in economic geography (1900-2000)

The spatial systems approach was developed in the same period but lacked the focus on social and political issues. It was much more a continuation and rounding off of the spatial variation and spatial analysis approaches. Its ultimate goal was to understand the spatial organisation of economic processes in terms of where the elements of such systems are located, how these are connected together in space, and what is the spatial impact of economic processes (Dicken & Lloyd 1990, p. 7). It aimed to find general answers to these questions and to frame these answers in theories of general validity. In retrospect, the nineteen sixties have been a very fruitful period in economic geographic thinking, because alongside the restructuring and systems approaches also the behavioral approach came into existence. It is largely to be understood as a reaction to the unrealistic assumptions about human behavior (perfect knowledge and rational choice) in the neo-classical location theory.

Furthermore and quite contrary to the restructuring and systems approaches the behavioral approach has not a macro- but a micro-orientation. Not the economic system as a whole, but the individual actor or decision-maker is the focus of attention. Definitely, the entrepreneur as a person is visible here! Location choices can only be understood from the imperfect knowledge and abilities of the entrepreneur. His rationality is bounded. Optimal solutions are impossible, only satisfactory ones can be achieved (Simon 1952, 1957; Pred 1967). Without accepting this, the economic landscape can never be understood.

The starting points of the behavioral approach raised great enthusiasm and are certainly still worthwhile. Unfortunately, however, the micro-focus of the approach hampers the development of general knowledge. A comprehensive behavioral location theory never developed. The approach more or less ran aground with an overload of case studies. The geography of enterprise approach came to the fore as a new paradigm in the nineteen seventies.
Basically this is a (rather late) recognition of the fact that a fast growing part of all economic activity takes the form of branches of large multi-plant companies. Understanding of the location choices of the individual establishments of such large, often multinational organisations requires an understanding of its internal structures and strategies. Hayter and Watts (1983, p. 157) define the enterprise approach as ‘the study of the policies and structures of multi-product, multi-plant enterprises on changes in industrial location and on processes of regional economic development’. Later the one-sided accent on multi-plant enterprises was alleviated and the attention shifted from change to innovation. In the nineteen eighties the approach was relabeled as ‘institutional’ and found a parallel way of thinking in economics. A key idea was that economic growth is dependent on innovation. Creating, spreading and applying knowledge in turn produce innovation. Another word for this process is learning. As a parallel of the management concept of the learning organisation, economic geographers started thinking and writing about learning regions (Morgan 1997; Van Geenhuizen 1999).

Network relationships prove to be essential for the learning processes. These are the seedbed in which they grow. Polanyi (1944) and Granovetter (1985) introduced the concept of embeddedness to describe how economic relationships always are cradled into social relationships. Loyalty and trust are considered to be very important. These are the basis for stable relationships between economic actors. Loyalty and trust stimulate information exchange and facilitate the realisation of transactions. To summarise: they support economic development. These ideas are becoming more and more widespread and not alone among geographers and economists, witness Francis Fukuyama’s book on Trust, the social virtues and the creation of prosperity. The new theory is ‘proved’ with the well-known success stories about regions such as Silicon Valley in the United States, Emilia Romagna in Italy, and Baden-Wurttemberg in Germany.

The last of the series of new approaches in economic geography that surfaced in the final decade of the twentieth century was the evolutionary approach. In fact this is a reasoning which applies concepts from Darwinian biology such as variation, selection and path dependence, on spatial-economic development. Path dependence is the key-concept of this approach. It refers to the firm’s unwillingness to enter new fields of activity (new products, new techniques, new markets) in which it lacks experience. The entrepreneur tends to follow the path on which he is, using knowledge and experience acquired in specific markets, ignoring side roads that promise profit but also contain unknown risks. This behavior is understandable, but sub-optimal (Boschma 1997; Boschma et al. 2002).
One of the most interesting things about the more recent approaches in economic geography such as the behavioral, institutional and evolutionary ones is that they no longer succeed and replace each other like the earlier paradigms did, but stay in place next to each other. In a way, this is understandable and even justified because of the partial overlap they show in some respects while in other respects they tend to complete much more than exclude each other. With reference to the behavioral and institutional approaches Pen recently even advocated that they should be combined in one comprehensive new theory (Pen 2002).

On the other hand the tendency to allow different theoretical viewpoints to exist next to each other seems to be the essence of what is considered as the 'post-modern', eclectic approach of scientific activity. Post-modern geography, accepting this starting point, rejects theories of general value and claims that only local knowledge is possible (de Pater 1996). The debate between the various economic geographical viewpoints has neither winners nor losers. As a consequence, Martin (1994) advocated a multidimensional, multi-voiced economic geography in which all different approaches take a part. This sounds attractive, but is highly questionable at the same time.

The ultimate consequence of 'post-modern' reasoning is that all theories may claim to be true. This is unacceptable because it allows inter-theoretical inconsistency, which implies that an internally inconsistent theory may be made true by splitting it up into several internally consistent, but externally inconsistent 'true' theories. In other words, allowing inter-theoretical inconsistency implies allowing intra-theoretical inconsistency, which implies allowing anything, including the nonsensical and the absurd.

3. The 'cultural turn' in economic geography

The economic geographic paradigms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century may not have offered much room for the role of the entrepreneur other than in the caricature of the homo economicus, but from the mid twentieth century onwards this starts to change. Beginning with the behavioral approach, and continuing and increasing with the institutional and evolutionary approaches, modern paradigms give room for human and even personal characteristics of economic decision makers. This includes the acknowledgement of the importance of the decision maker's cultural background and social embeddedness. Thus, the interest in social and cultural aspects of spatial-economic development grows. This is not only a matter of changing views. Reality itself changes as well, meaning that decision makers...
allow social and cultural ('soft') factors to play a greater part in their spatial choices, next to technical and economic ('hard') factors. This is clearly reflected in the results of a multitude of location choice studies (for an overview see Pellenbarg 1996, 1998, 1999). From such studies we may conclude that in the course of the twentieth century a gradual transition has taken place from once dominant primary location factors (transport and labour costs) via secondary location factors (agglomeration economies) to a category of tertiary location factors such as government, environment, knowledge, labour mentality and living conditions (Figure 2). The list of tertiary location factors shows how social and cultural factors have taken their place next to economic and technical ones. It is not just a replacement of old factors by new ones. The old factors stay in place and are still important. But they have become available in more places and over wider areas, and as a consequence of this the tertiary factors have been able to gain importance in location decision processes (Pellenbarg 2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phase I</th>
<th>phase II</th>
<th>phase III</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>industrial revolution</td>
<td>after 1950</td>
<td>1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>primary factors</td>
<td>secondary factors</td>
<td>tertiary factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transportation costs (transport of raw materials and products)</td>
<td>proximity of markets</td>
<td>government influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>proximity of suppliers and services</td>
<td>knowledge and IT-infrastructures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labour costs</td>
<td>other agglomeration benefits</td>
<td>quality of labour, environmental aspects, representative sites, mentality of people, living conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>etcetera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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growth pole theory

least cost location theory

behavioral location theories

cumulative causation theory

regional concentration

urban agglomeration

spatial diffusion


Fig. 2. Changing location tendencies
Supported by the paradigm shift as described above and inspired by observed changes in the spatial behaviour of economic subjects as summarised in Figure 2, economic geography in the nineteen nineties witnesses what has been labeled by several authors as a 'cultural turn'. In fact, this 'cultural turn' is not specific to geography. It concerns a broad movement within the whole of the social sciences (Cloke 1997 and Hall 1997, quoted by Haarstensen 2002, p. 74) which in the 1990s breaks through in geography as well and leads to an increased awareness of the importance of cultural processes for spatial developments. As Rodriguez-Pose recently stated, 'The ascent of this approach has had notable benefits... The cultural turn has brought forward new ideas, it has enriched and widened the theoretical debate, it has contributed to the development of new and exciting methods and it has opened the scope of geographical research beyond the traditional fields of economic disparities and development' (Rodriguez-Pose 2001). But at the same time the 'cultural turn' is already heavily criticised. Rodriguez-Pose quotes Markusen (1999) and Martin (1999):

> "Who have cogently shown that despite the current theoretical emphasis by some 'mainstream' geographers, the discipline is besieged by problems such as fuzzy conceptualization, lack of methodological rigour, lack of clarity and a tendency to favour description to the detriment of analysis. Empirical studies are on the retreat... When empirical evidence is used, it is often limited to a series of case studies which are repeated almost ad nauseam and based on a limited amount of anecdotal information." (Rodriguez-Pose 2001).

The criticism just cited is serious and justified. Rodriguez-Pose (2001) argues 'it is time to stop and think about constructing a solid empirical corpus around the new theoretical developments in the discipline’. But this can only be part of the remedy and certainly does not do anything to help solve the fuzzy conceptualisation. Rather on the contrary, empirical work based on fuzzy concepts will only increase their fuzziness.

As set out in the introduction we want to put the question of conceptualisation central in this article, concentrating on the issues of concept content and concept history. We will start with what is obviously the most critical concept: 'culture', and its relation to 'economy'.

4. 'Culture' and 'civilisation' in the 18th century

To trace the roots of 'culture' as a scientific concept, we have to go back in history, beyond the birth of economic geography, to the 18th century. In this century, the foundations for the modern social sciences were laid in the Enlightenment. Core concept of the Enlightenment was 'civilisation', which...
was (later) contrasted by the catchword of the Counter-enlightenment: ‘culture’. The 18th century opposition between culture and civilisation would change in meaning in the 19th century, ultimately leading to the modern culture – economy dichotomy.

This section deals with, respectively, the conceptual history of ‘civilisation’ and that of ‘culture’ in the 18th century. The next sections will focus on the 19th century development of the culture – civilisation dichotomy into the modern culture – economy dichotomy (section 5), with the dissolution of this dichotomy in classical geography (section 6) and with the theoretical and methodological implications of the dichotomy (section 7).

The Enlightenment was built on the foundations of Natural Law and ‘experimental philosophy’ (physics, etc.). From Natural Law the Enlightenment inherited the supposition that human nature is the same, whatever the circumstances, and that, therefore, there is a ‘natural order’. The French Physiocrats (early economists) argued that this (natural) order, the structure of social reality, should and could be explained by application of the methods of the natural sciences (‘experimental philosophy’). This methodological position, however, gave birth to two distinct, but not completely independent, approaches in social science: a strongly rationalist approach, focusing on deductive theorising based on generalisation, logic and mathematics; and a more empirical approach. The first of these flourished in economics, the second was the origin of sociology, but also – to a certain extent – of the Counter-enlightenment.

Most of this took place in the second half of the 18th century. In the beginning of this period the concept of ‘civilisation’ appeared simultaneously in both French and English.

The term was coined independently by Adam Ferguson and the marquis de Mirabeau, respectively a predecessor of sociology from the Scottish Enlightenment and a French Physiocratic economist. The birth of the concept of ‘civilisation’ is interwoven with the birth of social science. (Ferguson’s and Mirabeau’s casual use of the term, however, suggests that the concept had been introduced in spoken language earlier.) (den Boer 2001)

‘Civilisation’ was a slogan for the ideals of the Enlightenment. It came from the medieval Latin civilitas, meaning (a.o.) political community, humanity, citizenry, city life, etc. The concept of ‘civilisation’, however, had a far broader meaning. It was used to refer to the Enlightenment views of man and society and/or to a desirable stage in the development of societies (hence, the concept of ‘civilisation’ was strongly related to the Enlightenment ideal of progress), and as a comprehensive term for the Christian world. The first of these meanings is by far the most important (here).
As mentioned before, the Enlightenment inherited from Natural Law a ‘univeralist’ view of man and society. In this view, man is a rational being and all men, world-wide are alike. In other words: human nature is universal. Likewise, society is a kind of universal natural order (or at least, it should be). These are the views covered by the Enlightenment concept of ‘civilisation’. These are also the views that became the foundations of classical (and neo-classical) economics.

Scientific specialisation was rather unusual until far into the 18th century. Scholars tended to occupy themselves with numerous aspects of nature and society at the same time. Early social scientific thought was strongly normative, more art than science. Only in the 18th century the normative nature of social science slowly changed into a more descriptive and/or explanatory approach. At the same time specialisation started and the first social sciences arose.

The foundations of classical economics were laid by Adam Smith in his Wealth of nations (1776), a synthesis of earlier work of mainly the Physiocrats. Smith’s methodology was influenced by both approaches mentioned before. He used both empirical analyses of historical data and rationalistic arguments based on universal and rational man. After Smith, economics was pushed into a strictly rationalistic direction by his major students Ricardo and Senior. Economics became a science of logical and mathematical constructions on an empirically shaky foundation of universal and rational man: homo economicus. Mill tried to return economics to a broader ‘Smithian’ methodology, but he had very little success. (e.g. Landreth & Colander 1994) Extreme rationalism dominated economics until far into the 20th century. In (especially) the 1950s and 60s it infected (a.o.) economic geography (see section 2, Figure 1.). Only fairly recently homo economicus started loosing ground.

While economics from the start was attracted to the rationalist strand in the Enlightenment and slowly became an extreme case of rationalism and universalism, sociology, on the other hand, started of as an empirical investigation of society. The most important predecessor of sociology is Montesquieu, who combined normative and descriptive elements in his famous de l’esprit des lois (1748). Although some other scholars attempted to empirically investigate society in the 18th century (e.g. Mandeville 1714; Ferguson 1767), sociology became an independent science in the 19th century in the work of (a.o.) Saint-Simon, Comte and later Marx and Durkheim. As a predecessor of sociology, however, Montesquieu is of great importance, not just for sociology, but for Enlightenment itself and especially for the reaction thereupon: the Counterenlightenment.

Montesquieu’s de l’esprit des lois was an empirical study of the interrelationships between social phenomena, morals, habits, social institutions and
(most importantly) the laws within different societies. Montesquieu distinguished a number of different types of societies. This type or nature of a society is the result of (a.o.) physical geography, psychological nature of the people, cultural patterns, history, religion and economic mode of being. All these factors are part of a nation’s culture or character. The equilibrium of the parts in this cultural whole determines the legal and political shape of the society. Hence, the character (l’esprit) of a nation determines – to a large extent – the nature of its laws (des lois).

Montesquieu’s empirical work dismissed the universalistic view of man and society which was dominant in Enlightenment thought. James Steuart, who was strongly influenced by Montesquieu, started his An inquiry into the principles of political economy (1767) with: ‘Man we find acting uniformly in all ages, in all countries, and in all climates, from the principles of self-interest, expediency, duty, or passion. In this he is alike, in nothing else’ (quoted in Whitaker 1940, p. 731). At a first glance, this may seem to be a middle position between universalism and anti-universalism or even a defence of universalism, but Steuart claimed that the motives and their combinations of men are so varied, that there can be no mention of universal man.

Far less influential (at first), but not less important, was the work of the philosopher of history Giambattista Vico. His major work, Scienza nuova (1730; third completely reviewed edition: 1744), was written in Italian, which seriously hampered the initial spread of his ideas (later, he greatly influenced early comparative social science and linguistics, cultural psychology and sociology). Vico (1984 [1744]) concluded from an abundance of (empirical) historical data, that history is subject to a number of laws:

The order of ideas must follow the order of institutions. This was the order of human institutions: first the forests, after that the huts, then the villages, next the cities, and finally the academies. (§§ 236-239)

For the nations will be seen to develop in conformity with this division, by a constant and uninterrupted order of causes and effects present in every nation, (...) (§ 915).

Societies develop according to a fixed scheme in which each stage involves different problems. Hence, in each stage societies develop the institutions, values and habits to deal with the problems that are characteristic for that stage. According to Vico there is no such thing as universal human nature: ‘the nature of man is not, as has long been supposed, static and unalterable or even unaltered; (...) it does not so much as contain even a central kernel or essence, which remains identical through change; (...) (Berlin, 1976, p. xvi).’

(In fact, Vico thought that men are similar across cultures in only a very small number of respects. He suggested, for example, that all men bury their
dead (1984[1744], § 333). Of course the fact of the matter is that even in this respect there is no universal man).

The Enlightenment ideal of progress, which was especially strong in France and Germany, was reflected in the philosophy of history of (a.o.) Vico, Condorcet, Turgot, Hegel and Herder. The empirical confirmation of the ideal – as theory – by Vico and Montesquieu, however, implied a rejection of the (strongly related) univeralism of the Enlightenment. In other words: early (empirical) social science dismissed the idea of universal man.

The social and human diversity observed by (a.o.) Vico and Montesquieu was later named ‘culture’. ‘Culture’ became the catchword of the Counter-enlightenment. As such, the concept was opposed to ‘civilisation’, the Enlightenment slogan.

Contrary to ‘civilisation’, ‘culture’ is not a new word. Its earliest (known) form is the Latin cultura meaning tilling. In English, this meaning of ‘culture’ subsists in ‘agriculture’ and ‘cultivation’. Besides the literal agricultural meaning of the word, it was also used metaphorically in cultura animi (e.g. in Cicero’s (-45) Tusculan disputations) as an individual process of intellectual development. This metaphorical use of cultura resurfaces in the 17th century in the work of (a.o.) Hobbes and Bacon.

The first use of cultura as a social category is traced by Hirsch (1925) to Pufendorf (1998[1672]). In later German sources (e.g. Niederman 1941; Fisch 1991) this trace is reproduced uncritically. Pufendorf used the concept as a social category indeed, but only in a very limited number of occasions and without any emphasis. Moreover, it was not the Latin version of his work, but the French translation, in which Pufendorf’s dichotomy cultura – statu naturalis (culture – natural state) was translated as société civile – état naturel (civil society – natural state), which was widely read. (In the far less influential German translation cultura was translated as Bürgerlicher stand.) Den Boer (2001) concludes that Pufendorf had no influence whatsoever on the genesis of ‘culture’ as a social category.

The first influential use of ‘culture’ as a social category can be found in the work of the German philosopher of history Herder. To Herder (1966[1784-1791]) ‘culture’ was a core concept. Different peoples have different cultures, which only blossom in the area where that people (that culture), ‘belongs’. Cultures develop in stages as ‘eine Kette der Kultur’ (p.408), but not as a calm stream, ‘sondern vielmehr [wie] den Sturz eines Waldwassers von den Gebirgen’ (p. 410). This development can neither be stopped, nor return to its origins: ‘Wir schwimmen weiter; nie aber kehrt der Strom zu seiner Quelle zurück, als ob er nie entronnen wäre’ (p. 413). It is an inevitable and irreversible process of development to a common higher Humanität.
Although the social conceptualisation of ‘culture’ is of relatively recent date, a very similar notion predates it by hundreds of years. The (medieval Latin) concepts of gens and natio have been used since the early middle ages. Both have been translated as (a.o.) race, nation, people, tribe, family; sometimes even in the space of a single work. The concepts of gens and natio were associated with (or even defined as) descent, customs, language and law. Language and customs tended to be the most important in determining a gens or natio (Bartlett 2001). In the 18th and 19th century the concepts evolved (a.o.) into the concept of ‘race’. This, however, does not imply that the cultural (customs) and linguistic (language) aspects of gens and natio were lost. In the contrary, the 19th century concept of ‘race’ was very close to both the medieval gens or natio and to the modern concept of ‘culture’: it was culture plus descent. In fact, only fairly recently the notion of ‘race’ was completely abolished in social science in favour of the more politically correct ‘culture’ (Teillet 1997).

The culture – civilisation dichotomy that appeared in the second half of the 18th century was mainly a conflict of worldviews. On the one hand we had the Enlightenment with its universalistic and rationalistic view on man and society; on the other hand, we had the Counter-enlightenment of (a.o.) Vico and Herder which was strongly anti-universalistic. The Enlightenment slogan of progress, rationality and universalism was summarised in the concept of ‘civilisation’. The Counter-Enlightenment, on the other hand, used ‘culture’ as its catchword for tradition, diversity, ‘natural’ development, etcetera. In the 19th century, however, the dichotomy would radically change in character.

5. The 19th century synthesis and beyond

In the 19th century, the culture – civilisation dichotomy developed form a dichotomy of worldviews into one of aspects (or parts) of social reality. In a sense the change was from two competing social ontologies into a single complex ontology of interacting social ‘spheres’.

Especially in 19th century Germany, the ideas of ‘culture’ and ‘civilisation’ and the ideal of progress were integrated. In the resulting synthesis, the concepts of ‘civilisation’ and ‘culture’ no longer referred to competing word views (or ontologies), but to (the) two aspects (or spheres) of social reality. This synthesis came to full maturity in the work of Marx and Engels (who, however, replaced the terms ‘civilisation’ and ‘culture’ by ‘base’ (Basis) and ‘superstructure’ (Überbau) respectively). ‘Culture’ (or ‘superstructure’) usually referred to social artefacts, institutions, habits, norms and values (and often to the arts); ‘civilisation’ (or ‘base’) usually referred to economy, tech-
nology and the results of progress (the results of the Enlightenment in particular).

Montesquieu distinguished a number of interrelated aspects of society in, what Hegel (1971[1805-1817]) later would call a ‘totality’. This totality, the nation’s character determines its legal and political shape. Marx elaborated on this idea in his ‘historical materialism’ (not his term). According to historical materialism societies develop through a complex pattern of successive stages into a utopian final state (which is a clear reflection of the Enlightenment ideal of progress). This development takes place through adaptation to technological and economic changes. Hence, economic and technological change drives socio-cultural change, or in other words: civilisation (or base) determines culture (or superstructure).

As economy is the driving force in historical materialism, it is often understood as a form of economic determinism. However, this is a gross oversimplification of Marx and Engels’s thought. The core of Marx’s philosophy was dialectical materialism (not his term). Marx’s materialism did not (primarily) refer to matter in a physical sense, but to social reality. In traditional materialism, the material was primary and the ideal (the mind) secondary, a product of the primary matter; in Marxian (historical) materialism economy (as social matter) is primary and politics, culture, etc. (superstructure) is its (secondary) product. Thus far this seems to coincide with economic determinism. However, Marxian materialism is dialectic, which implies that there is some kind of reciprocal relationship between the material (base) and the ideal (superstructure):

Although indeed the material (the base, civilisation) determines the ideal (the superstructure, culture), this is not one-way traffic: the ideal also influences the (experience of the) material. In its socio-historical adaptation: economy (civilisation/base) determines culture (superstructure), but culture
also determines how a society deals with its economic circumstances and changes. (Engels [1894]; [1890]).

A number of more concrete clues to the influence of culture (superstructure) on economy (civilisation/base) can be found in the works of Marx and Engels. For example, race (as a 19th century equivalent of culture; see section 4) (Marx [1894], p. 800; Engels [1894], p. 206) and cultural differences in entrepreneurship play important roles in the economic development of a nation:

Es ist ein sonderbarer Übergang von den Staaten nach Kanada. Erst kommt's einem vor, als wär' man wieder in Europa, dann meint man, man wäre in einem positiv zurückgehenden und verkommenen Land. Es zeigt sich hier, wie notwendig zur raschen Entwicklung eines neuen Landes der fieberhafte Spekulationsgeist der Amerikaner ist (kapitalistische Produktion als Basis vorausgesetzt), ... (Engels, [1888], p. 93).

Marx has had a great influence on social science. Historical materialism, however, has been understood in very different ways. The orthodox codification by Plekhanov and Lenin lead to a purely mechanical interpretation in which the relation between base and superstructure was seen as a strict mechanical causality form base to superstructure. A number of (mostly Western) Marxists, including Lukács, Gramsci and Vandervelde, pointed emphatically at the dialectical character of historical materialism.

In the 19th century the concept of ‘civilisation’ developed from the universalistic and rationalistic worldview of the Enlightenment, with hyper-rationalistic economics as one of its most important products, into economy and technology, the parts or aspects of society closest to the Enlightened worldview. ‘Culture’ on the other hand developed from the anti-universalistic and romantic worldview of the Counter-enlightenment into a comprehensive term for all aspects of society furthest from the ideas of Enlightenment: the least universal, the irrational and the traditional.

Inspired by (a.o.) Nietzsche this dichotomy deepened considerably at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in Germany. By this time it was common to oppose economy and technology on the one hand to values, institutions, habits and social artefacts on the other hand. Usually the first were called ‘civilisation’ and the second ‘culture’ (e.g. Spengler 1918), but there was some variation in the terms used. Economy and technology were called ‘base’ by Marx ([1859]) and ‘culture’ by Barth (1897); values, institutions, etc. were called ‘superstructure’ by Marx and ‘civilisation’ by Barth. Striking is Barth’s reversal of the usual use of ‘culture’ and ‘civilisation’.

Contrary to the German situation, in England little difference was made between ‘culture’ and ‘civilisation’. Hence, Burckhardt’s (1860) Cultur, as a comprehensive concept containing all the thought and conduct of man and society in a specific era, was translated in English and French as ‘civilisation’.
In France, however, a similar distinction as in Germany existed, but the dividing line was far less sharp. 'Culture' usually referred more to the spiritual; 'civilisation' more to economy and technology (den Boer 2001).

Starting from the end of the 19th century in the Anglphone world the modern anthropological concept of 'culture' took root. This anthropological meaning of 'culture' was most influentially put forward by Tylor (1871): 'Culture or Civilisation, taken in its ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (p.1). Since the early 20th century this anthropological interpretation gained dominance in social science. As a consequence, in social science, the concepts of 'culture' and 'civilisation' grew back together (but never became completely synonymous), necessitating new concepts for the traditional dichotomy.

Although the sharp distinction between 'culture' and 'civilisation' disappeared in social science, the interest in the relationships between the so-named aspects of social reality did not. In the early 20th century, for example, Weber and Tawney studied the influence of religion on economy (and vice versa). In the course of the 20th century the concept of 'civilisation' in this type of dichotomies was replaced by 'economy' and studies on the relationships between culture and economy were getting far more frequent (see Brons 2002 for an overview). These studies had very different backgrounds: some were (neo-) marxist, some institutional some anthropological.

The 20th century also was the period in which the hyper-rationalism and universalism of neo-classical economics fully flourished. Economic imperialism (a term conceived by economists) infected other social sciences, such as geography and sociology, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s marxist and humanist scientist protested against this economic imperialism and new approaches came up (see section 2, Figure 1).

In the last decades of the 20th century new interpretations of 'culture' in cultural psychology lead to empirical measurements of aspects of culture. Especially famous is the work of Hofstede (e.g. 1980; 1991), which lead to an explosive growth in empirical research on relationships between culture, economy, and entrepreneurial behaviour (Brons 2002).

Before discussing the theoretical (and methodological) implications of the culture – economy (or civilisation) dichotomy, we need to give some attention to the contributions of classical geography. In classical geography the notions of 'culture' and 'economy' are dissolved in a single idea of man or society. Man (or society), however, is opposed to his environment. Hence, in geography the culture – economy relationship(s) have to be understood within the broader framework of men – environment relationships.
6. Classical geography and the man – environment relationship

The main argument in the 19th and the early 20th century geography was about the relationship geographical thought was physical determinism (see Figure 1.). This was, however, not a new idea from geography. Physical determinism, the idea that the physical environment determines man has been around since classical antiquity. Early protagonists include Aristotle, Hippocrate, Isidore of Seville and Albertus Magnus, who wrote in his De natura locorum (13th century): ‘Everything generated in a place derives its natural properties from that place’ (quoted in Bartlett 2001, p. 47). Physical determinism’s main travel route was form Aristotle and Hippocrate via the Arab scholars Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Kaldun to the 18th century European Enlightenment (Goldenberg 1999). The idea dominated Western thought on culture and race (in terms of gens; see section 4) for more than two millennia before it was adopted by geography.

Ritter was the first geographer to take some distance from physical determinism. He claimed that man cannot be understood without reference to his environment and the other way around. The environment to a large extent determines man, but as man becomes more civilised, he becomes less dependent on nature and even adapts his environment to his needs (Ritter 1817). Nevertheless, Ritter saw man as ‘ein lebendiger Spiegel der Natur’ (p. 19), which was repeated in almost identical words 65 years later by Ratzel (1882), the founder of modern, geographical physical determinism. The opposite position was taken in by (a.o.) Réclus and Marsh (1965[1864]), who wrote that ‘it is certain that man has done much to mould the form of the earth’s surface’ (p. 18).

These opposing positions were united in the early 20th century by Hettner, Fevre, Vidal de la Blache and Sauer. Hettner claimed that ‘Zur Eigenart der Länder gehören Natur und Mensch, und zwar in so enger Verbindung, daß sie nicht von einander getrennt werden können’ (1927, p. 126). Vidal de la Blache introduced the notion of genre de vie, the characteristic pattern of culture, mentality, way of life, etc. of the people in a specific region. The genre de vie is the product of centuries of interaction between man and his environment; it determines how these people deal with and influence their environment: ‘Un genre de vie constitué implique une action méthodique et continue, partant très forte, sur la nature, ou pour parler en géographe, sur la physionomie des contrées’ (Vidal de la Blache 1911, p. 194).

Sauer combined classical and modern ideas about ‘culture’. His notion of the ‘cultural landscape’ refers to the classical conception of ‘culture’ as tilling and agriculture. However, ‘the cultural landscape is fashioned from
a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result' ([1925], p. 343). The notions of ‘culture group’ and ‘culture’ as agent in this process clearly refer to the anthropological notion introduced by (a.o.) Tylor (1871). In Vidal de la Blache’s genre de vie and Sauer’s cultural landscape, culture and economy are dissolved. These concepts comprehend both culture and economy and oppose these to the (natural) environment. The cultural landscape is ‘the geographic version of the economy of the group’ (Sauer [1941], p. 358). This might imply that the culture – economy dichotomy may have to be reconceived as a triangle with ‘environment’ on the third (new) angle.

Traditionally there was no strong demarcation line between culture and economy in geography. The distinction was irrelevant and, hence, ignored. The spatial analysis and similar paradigms of the 1950s and 60s (see sections 2 and 3, Figure 1.) induced a onesided focus on purely econom(ist)ic explanations for economic behaviour. This was a break with geographical tradition in which a multitude of environmental and social factors influenced human behaviour. Critical reactions to the infection by neo-classical economics of economic geography in from the 1970s onwards (see section 2, Figure 1) reintroduced culture into geography.

The cultural turn in geography (see section 3), however, is not a return to the conceptual framework of classical geography. Recent trends in economic geography adopt heterodox economic and (economic) sociological terminology instead. In this way the culture – economy dichotomy entered geography. Whether this is a desirable development remains to be seen.

7. Theoretical implications of the culture – economy dichotomy

The historical development of the culture – economy dichotomy from competing worldviews into complex social ontology gives rise to serious doubt about the objectivity and, hence, the scientific benefit of such a conceptual carving up of reality. This doubt is fed even more by the fact that the distinction was irrelevant, even absent in geography for more than one-and-a-half century. Hence, one could (and should) wonder: does the distinction make sense?

The fact of the matter is that in practice it is not always easy to draw the line between culture and economy. Entrepreneurship conceived as the tendency to become an entrepreneur, for example, could be interpreted as both a cultural and an economic variable. Whether the dichotomy makes practical
sense remains to be seen, it may however have strong ontological and methodological implications.

As mentioned before, the culture – economy dichotomy started of as a conflict between ontologies or worldviews: one based on rationality and universality versus another based on difference. These somehow gave birth to a synthesis in which the economy (or civilisation) – culture distinction is the main categorisation of social phenomena. As is the case in any categorisation, the boundary line is the problem.

Boundary lines (1) are either drawn arbitrarily or reflect external fact and (2) are either fuzzy or crisp. To determine the nature of the boundary line between culture and economy, a conceptual analysis of both ‘culture’ and ‘economy’ is needed. This would require painstaking research of the literature in which these concepts are used (and, preferably, defined). In this paper, however, we will limit ourselves to some brief and preliminary notes.

In the preceding sections the conceptual history of ‘culture’ (and ‘civilisation’) was described. From this conceptual history we can construct a general idea of culture as values, norms, institutions, habits, etc. This coincides with (a.o.) Tylor’s famous definition (1871) and most 20th century ideas and definitions of culture (besides those mentioned in the preceding sections: e.g. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck 1961; Inkeles & Levinson 1969[1954]; Hofstede 1980; 1991; Swidler 1985; DiMaggio 1994). It also coincides with the more philosophically oriented notion of ‘rules’ (Wittgenstein 1971[1953]; Winch 1958). A broader, comprehensive, term for values, norms, rules etc. would be ‘meta-behaviour’ (that which guides behaviour) (Brons 2002).

While numerous definitions of ‘culture’ circulate, it seems to be impossible to find an explicit (scientific) definition of ‘economy’. Dictionary definitions and implicit definitions of ‘economy’ in the history of economics literature are variants (or combinations of variants) of two basic interpretations: (1) An economy is a nation’s (or other unit’s) system of wealth creation. Hence economy is the modes, prerequisites and/or (other) conditions of production (and/or consumption). (2) Economy is the aggregate behavior of consumers and producers.

The first of these interpretations defines economy as a specific set of rules, which would make it a (unclearly delimited) subset of culture. The second defines economy as a special type of (actual) behavior, which would oppose it to culture as meta-behavior. This would imply the interpretation of the culture – economy dichotomy as a special type of the meta-behavior – behavior dichotomy. This (last) dichotomy reflects the distinction between actual behavior (acts, actions, behavioral events, etc.) and that which guides this behavior (rules, culture, meta-behavior, etc.).
The first of these interpretations would make it very difficult to distinguish culture from economy as it would imply that economy is an aspect of culture (as meta-behavior). This interpretation would dismiss the whole of the literature on the culture – economy dichotomy as a conceptual confusion. The second interpretation makes a very clear and very real distinction between economy as a type of actual behavior and culture as meta-behavior (or rules). A further argument for the second interpretation is that it is foundational for current standard practice in macro-economic measurement as the size (or growth) of an economy is measured as an aggregate (or change therein) of (monetary) transactions, which are a form of actual behavior.

The interpretation of economy as actual consumer and producer behavior makes it possible to reinterpret the literature on the culture – economy dichotomy from a more rigorous perspective. This literature then suggests a general model in which meta-behavior determines (through decisions and constraints) actual behavior. However, historical materialism and similar ideas of economic influence upon culture suggest that aggregate behavior also influences or even determines meta-behavior. Figure 3 graphically represents the culture – economy relationships in a behavior – meta-behavior framework.

Of course, the model represented in Figure 3 is a simplification of the actual ideas described in the preceding section, but still it is remarkably more sophisticated than the basic (neo-) classical model of economic behavior. Figure 3 shows the complex network of relationships between aspects of individual and aggregate behavior and meta-behavior. It is important to note, that different arrows in this figure, although symbolised the same, may have very different meanings. For example, a single behavioral event or action is an element of aggregate behavior, not an influence upon it.

In words, the model claims that meta-behavior (rules/culture) partly determines individual decisions, which, depending on (a.o. environmental) constraints may result in actions (behavioral events). The total or aggregate of these individual actions influences or even (partly) determines meta-behavior.
What we are primarily interested in, is, of course, the practical use and implications of this model for economic geography. An economic interpretation of the model would replace ‘aggregate behavior’ by the more specific type ‘economy’ and would focus on the decisions and actions (behavioral events) related to production and consumption. Of course, the geographic point of view would imply a stronger focus on environmental constraints and spatial differences in rules and actual behavior.

The primary task of social science, economic geography included, is the discovery (or better: ‘uncovery’) of rules: the elucidation of meta-behaviors (e.g. Wittgenstein 1971[1953]; Winch 1958). Explaining social behavior is specifying rules (or meta-behavior). However, meta-behavior is not directly observable. The epistemological argument for behaviorism holds that we can only observe behavior (actions or behavioral events) and that, therefore, social science should be a science of behavior. Hence, we are left with no option but to study behavior to uncover meta-behavior that guides behavior.

The methodological implication of this is that social science should proceed by classifying and counting (behavioral) events and correlating these to data about the (environment of the) actors involved. This approach is traditionally called demography. Applying it to economics or economic geography would result in a demography of firms. As a research strategy demography of firms involves a theoretical and an empirical part. The first, theoretical, part focuses on classification and conceptualisation of events and objects (firms) (e.g. Struijs & Willeboordse 1988; Brons 2001). The second, more empirical or practical part models population change (e.g. van Wissen 1997) and/or counts, correlates and explains events (e.g. van Dijk & Pellenbarg (eds.) 1999; van Kranenburg 1999).

8. Conclusions/discussion

Since its introduction as an academic discipline in the last decades of the eighteenth century, economic geography went through a long series of paradigm shifts. It took a century for the paradigm struggle to reach a point at which cultural factors are recognised (again) as important determinants of spatial economic behaviour. Especially in the institutional and evolutionary approaches in economic geography culture gained firm ground, even to the degree that some authors now consider the level of attention to cultural factors excessive.

At the background of the present debate about the relationship between culture and economy is the feeling that these concepts somehow represent a contraposition, which then naturally causes a degree of surprise and enthu-
siasm when one learns that they are nevertheless related. This is however a very time-related experience. Looking at the history of the concepts, culture and economy have been interpreted quite differently in the not too distant past. The concepts originated from an eighteenth century opposition between worldviews but evolved during the nineteenth century into two distinct aspects or spheres of society. In classical geography, however, the distinction never gained ground; the concepts were simply dissolved in broader notions like Sauer’s cultural landscape or Vidal de la Blache’s genre de vie. The distinction was introduced in geography in the period of spatial analysis and similar approaches after World War II. The conceptual history of the culture – economy dichotomy gives rise to serious doubts about its validity. Moreover, in practice, the dichotomy is not always that clear. It is, for example, not at all clear whether the tendency to become an entrepreneur is a cultural or an economic variable. Hence, concept analysis should clarify whether there is an objective boundary between economic and cultural aspects of social reality.

The concept of ‘culture’ is usually associated with values, habits, rules, norms, institutions and all other kinds of immaterial ‘things’ that guide our (social) behavior. In one word: culture is ‘meta-behavior’. ‘Economy’, on the other hand, is either defined as a very specific set of rules, institutions, etcetera, which would make it a subset of culture; or as the actual productive and consumptive behavior of people. The latter sense of ‘economy’ implies that the culture – economy dichotomy is a specific type or application of the meta-behavior – behavior dichotomy.

This meta-behavior – behavior interpretation of the culture – economy dichotomy and the relationships between behavior and meta-behavior suggested by its history argue for a focus on behavioral events and, hence, for a demographic approach. Social science should proceed by carefully classifying and counting behavioral events and correlating these to characteristics in or of (parts of) the population. An application of this method in economic geography is the demography of firms, which tries to explain and model changes in populations of firms and the regional differences therein.

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