Solo self-employment and membership of interest organizations in the Netherlands: Economic, social, and political determinants

Giedo Jansen
University of Twente, The Netherlands

Abstract
Falling in-between the category of employers and employees, solo self-employed persons are poorly accommodated by the traditional system of corporatist interest representation through which the interests of employers are represented in employers' associations, and the interests of employees are represented by trade unions. For business associations 'micro businesses' with no employees are difficult to reach and serve, as their interests are considered distinct from companies with employees. Trade unions in many countries even resisted the emergence of solo self-employment, fearing that these and other flexible arrangements would undermine not only secure working conditions but also union solidarity. This study examines differences in membership of interest organizations among solo self-employed workers. Various types of organizations are investigated, not only trade unions and business associations, but also new freelancer associations. Theoretically, three categories of determinants are examined to explain differences in membership: economic explanations, social explanations, and political explanations. Empirically, survey data are used from the Netherlands, a country with an increase in self-employment and a diverse supply of interest organizations. It is concluded that economic determinants explain both 'generic' membership (of any organization), as well as membership of specific organizations. Social and political determinants do not explain generic membership, but instead help to explain why some self-employed workers join particular types of organizations.

Corresponding author:
Giedo Jansen, Institute for Innovation and Governance Studies, University of Twente, PO Box 217, 7500 AE Enschede, The Netherlands.
Email: giedo.jansen@utwente.nl

Introduction

The recent re-emergence of self-employment is one of the most remarkable changes of post-industrial labor markets (Arum and Müller, 2004; Jansen, 2016; OECD, 2000). While traditional forms of self-employment have faded, 'new' self-employment jobs have emerged that are increasingly more often 'solo' (i.e., without employees), increasingly heterogeneous (e.g., both high-skilled knowledge professionals and low-skilled workers), and increasingly associated with precarious and vulnerable conditions (e.g., with low legal protection, and little capacity for savings, insurance or pensions) (Barbieri and Scherer, 2009; Dekker, 2010; Kalleberg, 2000; Muehlberger, 2007; Muffels, 2013; Pernicka, 2006; Schulze Buschoff and Schmidt, 2009; Stanworth and Stanworth, 1995). On top of their weak social protection, people in 'new' self-employment may also be weakly organized. Falling in-between the category of employers and employees, solo self-employed persons are poorly accommodated by 'the traditional system of corporatist interest representation through which the interests of employers are represented in employers' associations, on the one hand, and the interests of employees are represented by trade unions, on the other hand' (Schulze Buschoff and Schmidt, 2009: 157). For business associations, 'micro businesses' with no employees are more difficult to reach and serve, as their interests are different from companies with employees (Bennett and Ramsden, 2007). Trade unions in many countries have even resisted the emergence of solo self-employment, fearing that these and other flexible arrangements would undermine not only secure working conditions but also union solidarity (Goslinga and Sverke, 2003; Pernicka, 2006; Vandaele and Leschke, 2010).

Despite the alleged representation gap, there is remarkably little research that looks into the membership of interest organizations among the solo self-employed. More specifically, our knowledge on this topic is limited, for three reasons: the few prior studies (a) only focus on one type of organization, typically either trade unions *or* business associations (Battisti and Perry, 2015; Bennett and Ramsden, 2007; Pernicka, 2006), (b) ignore the recent emergence of new 'solo self-employment' or 'freelancer' organizations, exclusively representing freelancers, independent contractors, and other solo self-employed workers (cf. Dullroy and Cashman, 2013; Wynn, 2015), and (c) often take organizations as the units-of-analysis, rather than analyzing individual-level membership determinants (Bispinck and Schulten, 2011; Heery, 2009; Keune, 2015; Pedersini, 2010). We therefore lack a good understanding of the determinants of membership of interest organizations among solo self-employed persons. In particular, it is unclear to what extent different types of organizations attract different types of self-employed workers. This issue is pressing as recent research indicates that not only has the supply-side of interest representation become more diverse (e.g., by unions opening up to the self-employed, and the emergence of separate organizations), but that also the socio-demographic 'demand-side' of self-employment has diversified (Arum and Müller, 2004; Jansen, 2016). To address this lacuna, this article sets out to answer the following research question:

> What economic, social, and political determinants (a) explain the willingness of solo self-employed workers to join interest organizations, and (b) to what extent do different determinants of membership hold for different types of organizations?
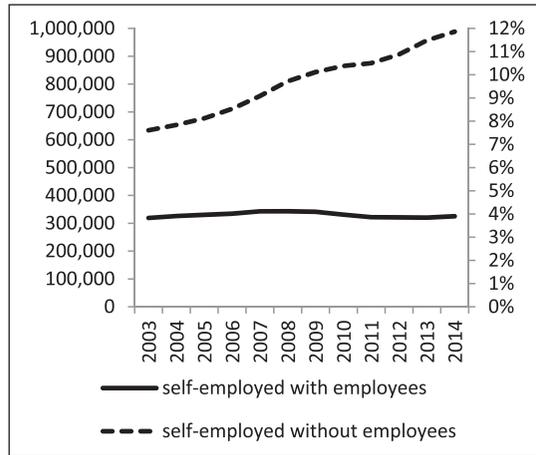
Figure 1. Self-employed in the Dutch labor force.
Source: Statistics Netherlands (CBS) (2015a).

Answering this research question requires detailed micro-level data on solo self-employed persons and their attitudes towards interest organizations. As this type of data is virtually absent in the literature, this article relies on a novel data collection. Survey data have been collected in the context of the Netherlands through the Solo Self-employment Panel 2014, wave 2. In this survey – which is discussed in more detail below – the units-of-analysis are 'solo' self-employed persons (i.e., people holding a self-employed job without employing others, sometimes labeled 'own account workers' [OECD, 2015]). The Netherlands is an important case not only regarding the recent rise in solo self-employment, but also because of its diverse landscape of interest representation.

The empirical context

Solo self-employment in the Netherlands

At approximately 16%, the rate of self-employment in the Netherlands is close to the European average. As in the rest of the EU, the vast majority of the self-employed have no employees (OECD, 2015). The number of self-employed persons without personnel (abbreviated as 'ZZP'ers' in Dutch) has increased spectacularly over the last decade (see Figure 1) (CBS, 2015a). This upward trend in solo self-employment is among the sharpest in Europe (Kösters and Souren, 2014). The source of this growth is often attributed to a combination of institutional reforms since the early 2000s that, on the one hand, made self-employment more attractive (e.g., by simplifying administrative procedures and/or introducing fiscal benefits for self-employment), but, on the other hand, also 'pushed' people into self-employment by relaxing employment protection for regular workers and making it easier for employers to hire and fire temporary (freelance) personnel (Van Es and Van Vuuren, 2010). Along

with this increase, issues around solo self-employment have gained prominence on the political agenda, in particular regarding their (limited) level of protection under labor law and the social security system (Dekker, 2010; Jansen, 2017). In the Dutch social insurance system, being self-employed implies that a person is largely excluded from important insurance schemes, in particular insurance against the risks of sickness and disability, old age, and unemployment (cf. Dekker, 2010; Schulze Buschoff and Schmidt, 2009).

Interest organizations in the Netherlands

The focus of this study is on membership organizations that engage in collective interest representation on behalf of self-employed persons without personnel. Like in other countries, the collective interests of large and medium-sized businesses are primarily represented via employer and business organizations (e.g., *VNO-NCW* – the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers – or *MKB Nederland* representing SMEs) and a wide array of industry-specific trade associations. Estimates indicate that while almost 90% of firms in the Netherlands are a member of a trade, business or employers' organization (SER, 2015), the affiliation with such organizations is considerably lower among the solo self-employed (i.e., approximately 10–20%; Van der Berg et al., 2009). What makes the Dutch context particularly interesting is that – in the light of emerging solo-entrepreneurship – a number of new organizations have emerged since the 1990s to represent and give a voice to the growing group of solo self-employed persons. These organizations often differ from traditional trade and business associations because they are either linked to trade unions and/or exclusively represent self-employed persons without personnel (see Table 1).

Both major Dutch trade unions have set up branches to organize people in solo self-employment, i.e., *FNV Zelfstandigen* in 1997 and *CNV Zelfstandigen* in 2007. In doing so, the Netherlands was among the first countries in Europe where trade unions actively opened their doors to self-employed workers (Bispinck and Schulten, 2011; Pedersini, 2010; Pernicka, 2006; Vandaele and Leschke, 2010). Moreover, in addition to such union-affiliated organizations, several new specific 'solo self-employment' organizations such as *Platform Zelfstandige Ondernemers (PZO-ZZP)* (approx. 20,000 members) and *ZZP Nederland* (approx. 40,000 members) emerged. These organizations resemble similar organizations in other countries, such as IPSE in the United Kingdom, or the Freelancers Union in the United States (cf. Dullroy and Cashman, 2013). In the Dutch system of social dialogue, the interest representation by *FNV Zelfstandigen* and the *PZO-ZZP* are the most institutionalized, as both organizations also hold a seat in the Dutch Social-Economic Council (SER), an important tripartite advisory and consultative body.

Interestingly, different organizations often provide very similar individual membership benefits. Both *FNV Zelfstandigen* and *PZO-ZZP*, for example, offer discounts on health insurance, liability insurance, and/or disability insurance. Nearly all organizations listed in Table 1 give legal and fiscal advice to their members and offer support via a helpdesk. Although geared towards the needs of solo-entrepreneurs, these types of individual membership services are very much like the individual services provided to employees by trade unions. Moreover, multiple organizations also provide training,

Table 1. Main organizations representing self-employed without employees in Netherlands.

Est.	Organization (+abbreviation)	Name in English (+affiliation)	Approx. members (2014)
1995	Vereniging van Zelfstandigen Zonder Personeel (VZZP)	Association of Self-employed Without Employees	600
1997	FNV Zelfstandigen (FNV-ZZP)	FNV Self-employed (Trade union/FNV)	12,000
2000	Zelfstandigen Bouw (ZBo)	Self-employed Construction (Trade union/FNV, until 2012)	10,000
2002	Platform Zelfstandige Ondernemers (PZO-ZZP)	Platform for Independent Entrepreneurs (SME association/MKB)	20,000
2006	ZZP Nederland (ZZP/N)	Solo Self-employed Netherlands	40,000
2007	CNV Zelfstandigen (CNV-ZZP)	CNV Self-employed (Trade union/CNV)	600
2009	ZZP Netwerk Nederland (ZZP-NN)	ZZP Network Netherlands (SME Association/MKB)	5000
2013	Netwerk Zelfstandig Werkenden (NZW)	Independent Contractor Network (Trade union/De Unie)	?

Source: Personal communication with organization officials.

workshops or network activities (albeit sometimes on an irregular basis), but these types of services are perhaps most systematically offered by *FNV Zelfstandigen*. By representing the interests of solo self-employed in the construction sector, *Zelfstandigen Bouw* bears similarities to a trade association or a professional association. In addition to sectoral-specific lobbying, *Zelfstandigen Bouw* for example also initiated a quality label for its members.

The collective interest representation generally comprises a blend of activities to improve the legal and tax position of solo self-employed workers and to develop better social policies with respect to pensions, social insurance, and mortgages. The differences between disparate organizations regarding the main lobbying topics are sometimes small. On a number of key issues, for example regarding pensions or fiscal benefits, multiple 'ZZP' organizations, including *FNV Zelfstandigen* and *PZO-ZZP*, have even set up joint campaigns and coordinated lobbying activities (*Financieel Dagblad*, 2016). Yet, the trade union branches sometimes deviate from other organizations on social security issues. *FNV Zelfstandigen* and *CNV Zelfstandigen* consider including 'minimum tariffs' for solo self-employed workers in collective agreements as an acceptable (but exceptional) measure in sectors where pressure on tariffs are high (CNV, 2017; FNV-ZZP, 2017a). *PZO-ZZP* and *ZZP Nederland*, on the other hand, oppose setting minimum tariffs for solo self-employed, as it would interfere too strongly with market mechanisms. And where most organizations strongly reject any mandatory insurance scheme for the self-employed, *CNV* and *FNV Zelfstandigen* are more open to the idea of a collective and compulsory disability arrangement, preferably in a new system stretching beyond solo self-employment (FNZ-ZZP, 2017b; Leupen and Hinrichs, 2015).

Theory and hypotheses

Theoretically, this article builds on studies on membership of business associations (Battisti and Perry, 2015; Bennett, 2000; Bennett and Ramsden, 2007), as well as the literature on trade union membership (Goerke and Pannenberg, 2004; Scheurer, 2011; Schnabel and Wagner, 2005). Although both streams of literature have remained rather separate, they generally provide three types of determinants of membership: (a) economic explanations, related to cost-benefit considerations; (b) social explanations, related to social customs and norms; and (c) political explanations, related to political attitudes and partisan alignments. Below, these approaches are briefly discussed, and applied to solo self-employment. It should be noted, however, that the three categories are by no means mutually exclusive, and while different theoretical approaches emphasize different determinants, several determinants could be consistent with more than one approach (see also Schnabel and Wagner, 2005). Moreover, it is hypothesized that different types of organizations (i.e., business associations, trade unions, solo self-employment organizations) may appeal to different groups of self-employed workers.

Economic explanations

In the economic literature, the decision to join or not to join an interest organization is often understood through individual-level cost-benefit calculations. The costs of membership are primarily financial, i.e., membership fees and dues. The benefits provided by interest organizations are nearly always a blend of *collective* and *individual* services. Examples of individual services are legal advice and tax assistance or networking and training activities (cf. Bennett and Ramsden, 2007; Pedersini, 2010). Membership would depend positively on such personal services, because it would be more advantageous economically for members who obtain, for example, legal advice via an interest organization than for non-members who directly pay private lawyers or consultants (Pernicka, 2006: 137; see also Bennett, 2000; Van Waarden, 1992). Collective representation by trade unions and employers' associations often occurs through collective bargaining. Yet, in the case of solo self-employment, collective bargaining is difficult to provide because competition laws usually prohibit price agreements between companies. But there are a few exceptions. For example, in the German (Bispinck and Schulten, 2011) and Dutch (Pennings, 2015) media, sector agreements have been negotiated regarding minimum fees for self-employed workers. Generally, however, collective representation on behalf of the self-employed takes the form of lobbying. Lobbying to governments, for example for more lenient regulations, is one of the core collective services provided by business associations (Barber et al., 2014; Battisti and Perry, 2015). Unions, on the other hand, may lobby for better legal protection of freelancers (Bispinck and Schulten, 2011).

Based on cost-benefit reasoning, the first factor to be taken into account is the *demand for services*. The logic of collective action (Crouch, 1982; Offe and Wiesenthal, 1980; Olson, 1971) dictates that the decision to become a member is more strongly motivated by getting individual services rather than collective representation. Collective services are often non-exclusive, meaning that non-members are able to free-ride and evade costly membership fees (Barber et al., 2014; Schnabel and Wagner, 2005). The incentive

to free-ride would be powerful among entrepreneurs, because they are subject to competition and thus forced to pursue self-interest in order to survive (Van Waarden, 1992). Prior research on business associations (Bennett, 2000) and trade unions (Pernicka, 2006) has shown that individual services offer the strongest incentive for self-employed individuals to join.

To analyze differences in demand and supply of services, the literature on trade unions has focused on the socio-demographic and occupational characteristics of employees (e.g., Checchi et al., 2010; Scheurer, 2011; Schnabel and Wagner, 2005). Generally, it is expected that the benefits of membership, relative to the costs, depend on the degree of *attachment to the labor force*, and decrease when workers are less strongly attached to their jobs, for instance in the case of part-time work or flexible employment contracts (Jansen et al., 2017). Recent research on self-employment has shown increases in both part-time self-employment (Hatfield, 2015; Meager, 2015) and so-called 'hybrid' self-employment, i.e., self-employed workers with a second job in wage-employment, or vice versa (Bögenhold and Klinglmair, 2016; Dekker et al., 2013). Other studies have also pointed to an increase in 'involuntary' self-employment of workers who are 'pushed' into self-employed jobs (Kautonen et al., 2010; Sevä et al., 2016). For all three types (i.e., part-time, hybrid, and involuntary) it is expected that they have a lower degree of attachment to self-employment, which would decrease the benefits of membership.

Finally, the demand for membership would be shaped by its costs, and the degree to which workers can afford the membership fees. Studies on trade unions have established that *income* correlates positively with membership, and that unions face difficulties in recruiting low-paid workers (Scheurer, 2011; Schnabel and Wagner, 2005). Checchi et al. (2010) showed the relationship is nonlinear and that also highly-paid employees are more likely to be non-members compared to those on the median income. Translated to the context of self-employment, it is expected that more wealthy business owners would gain relatively little from membership because they are able to pay for services directly, without being reliant on interest organizations (Bennett, 2000).

In sum, from an economic approach to membership, three hypotheses are derived:

H1: Solo self-employed that (a) have a stronger demand for individual services, are more willing to join an interest organization; whereas (b) membership is generally not related to the demand for collective services.

H2: Solo self-employed who (a) work part-time (vs. full-time), (b) have additional sources of income (vs. being fully reliant on self-employment), and (c) who are in self-employment involuntarily (vs. voluntarily), are less willing to join an interest organization.

H3: Solo self-employed in (a) low-income groups and (b) high-income groups are less willing to join an interest organization, than those around the median income.

Assuming that individual motives are decisive, the abovementioned economic determinants are expected to generally hold for all types of membership organizations. As noted before, various kinds of organizations often provide very similar individual membership benefits, such as legal and fiscal advice and network or training activities (cf. Bennett

and Ramsden, 2007; Pedersini, 2010). Yet, different organizations might vary regarding the collective services they offer. The biggest differences are expected between trade/business associations, on the one hand, and trade unions and new freelancer organizations, on the other hand. Where business associations may primarily lobby to reduce the burden of taxes and regulations (Bennett and Ramsden, 2007), unions that engage in political lobbying may do so with different objectives, for instance to improve the position of solo self-employed in the domain of social security (Bispinck and Schulten, 2011: 47; see also Pernicka, 2006). Likewise, the lobbying by new freelancer organizations generally comprises a blend of activities to improve the legal and tax position of solo self-employed workers and to develop better social policies with respect to pensions, social insurance and mortgages. In general, the demand for collective benefits may not have an effect on membership, but specific collective demands may be associated with membership of specific types of organizations, i.e., typical business interests concerning taxes and regulations might be the driver of business association membership, but collective efforts to adapt social and labor laws may drive membership of new freelancer organizations and trade unions. Hence, it is expected that:

> *H4*: (a) Collective demands concerning the business environment are related to membership of trade/business associations, and (b) collective demands concerning social security are related to membership of freelancer organizations and trade unions.

Social explanations

Next to purely material cost-benefit considerations, social customs and norms would matter (Goerke and Pannenberg, 2004; Schnabel and Wagner, 2005; Visser, 2002). Rooted in standard sociological and psychological theory, the argument is that individuals do not make isolated choices, but instead are embedded in social groups and communities. Individuals would generally comply with the norms and customs of the groups they belong to, either because they have internalized these norms, for example through socialization, or because of the social costs associated with not complying (e.g., peer-pressure, free-rider punishment; cf. Akkerman et al., 2013). Therefore, the existence of group norms could stimulate membership and prevent free-riding behavior (Visser, 2002). Social customs theory may be used to single out particular 'segments' of self-employed workers that – for reasons beyond merely economic considerations – are oriented towards specific types of interest organizations. This could in particular hold in the case of trade unions, which may otherwise be perceived as 'unnatural' for self-employed workers.

Based on social customs theory, the first factor to be taken into account is one's *occupation*. Pedersini and Coletto (2009) have stressed that particular occupational groups sometimes have very specific organizational patterns. People in more 'traditional' forms of self-employment, e.g., craftspeople, small proprietors, shop-keepers, and farmers (cf. Arum and Müller, 2004), are typically represented by specific trade and employer organizations (Pedersini and Coletto, 2009: 2). Their organizational alignments differ from those in 'newer' forms of self-employment. Instead of selling goods, self-employed workers in new occupational types more often provide services on wage-like tariffs,

either in low-skilled manual jobs or in high-skilled professional jobs (cf. Arum and Müller, 2004; Jansen, 2016). For both groups a looser relationship is expected with trade and employers' associations, and besides economic reasons they may have social reasons to join other professional organizations, including trade unions. First, like workers in wage-employment, self-employed blue-collar workers are sometimes considered to be part of the working class (Form, 1982), and might adhere to working class norms and customs prescribing membership of trade unions. Moreover, union membership norms are also typically strong for particular professional occupations, especially in the social and cultural domain such as teachers, journalists, and artists (Pedersini and Coletto, 2009). In these cases, membership is mostly driven by people's occupational identity rather than their self-employment status. Hence, it is expected that compared to the self-employed in 'traditional' businesses those in 'new' types of self-employment are less likely to join trade/business associations, and more likely to join other organizations, including trade unions.

Next to one's current occupation, a second characteristic to take into account is someone's previous occupation or *occupational background*. In the Netherlands, the lion's share of newcomers to self-employment are former employees (CBS, 2015a). Social customs theory has been used to explain the impact of reference groups (e.g., parents, spouses, co-workers) on union membership. A 'union-friendly socialization process' (Schnabel and Wagner, 2005: 14), such as a blue-collar father, would have a positive influence on the willingness to join a union. Likewise, one's previous job might influence attitudes towards union membership. Apart from a merely economic motivation, self-employed workers who have previously worked in an environment in which union activities are more strongly supported (or less strongly rejected) might be more likely to join a trade union. Hence, the self-employed with a history in wage-employment are expected to be more strongly oriented towards trade unions than those who have no background in wage-employment.

In sum, from a social customs approach to membership, two hypotheses are derived:

H5: Compared to people with 'traditional' self-employment occupations, those in 'new' types of solo self-employment – and in particular (a) manual workers and (b) social-cultural professionals – are less likely to join trade/business associations, and more likely to join new organizations, including trade unions.

H6: Solo self-employed who previously held a job in wage-employment are more likely to join a trade union than those who have no background in wage-employment.

Political explanations

Next to economic and social explanations, attitudinal differences among the self-employed may also account for differences in membership. In particular, the political attitudes of individuals may matter. Historically, political cleavages between the left and the right are closely tied to interest representation in the system of industrial relations (Almond, 1958; Korpi and Shalev, 1979; Lipset, 1961): with, on the one hand, trade unions linking to labor parties to promote welfare distribution and social security, and on

the other hand, business organizations linking with right-wing parties to advocate capitalist markets and limitation of government interventions. As an expression of such traditional left/right divisions, previous studies on employees have systematically found that left-wing political orientations positively correlate with trade union membership (Kollmeyer, 2013; Schnabel and Wagner, 2005). Recent research has shown that solo self-employment in the Netherlands is associated with heterogeneous political preferences, and that growing segments of self-employed voters move away from typical right-wing voting behavior, and instead support 'new-left' and 'social-liberal' parties (Jansen, 2016, 2017). Membership of business associations might be less likely – and trade union membership might be more likely – among self-employed workers with more left-leaning political orientations. The opposite may apply for those holding rightist views: strong free-market beliefs and other right-wing attitudes may be associated with positive perceptions of business associations, and negative perceptions of trade unions. New freelancer organizations, however, have no history of political alignments. They are not anchored in the traditional left/right cleavage between capital and labor. It is expected that while left/right political orientations are related to membership of trade unions and business associations, this does not hold for new associations that specifically represent solo self-employed workers.

In sum, based on political orientations, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H7: Solo self-employed with (a) right-wing party preferences are more likely to join a trade/business association, and are less likely to join a trade union, whereas (b) the reverse is true for self-employed with left-wing party preferences. (No relationship is expected between left/right party preferences and membership of solo self-employment organizations.)

Data and measures

The Solo Self-employment Panel (2014, wave 2)

The hypotheses are tested using the second wave of the 2014 Solo Self-employment Panel (abbreviated in Dutch to 'ZZP Panel'). The ZZP Panel, organized by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and the research company Panteia, is an annually conducted survey among 3000 self-employed persons without employees. The main aim of the panel is to map the management, organization, and continuity of solo self-employed businesses in the Netherlands. To be included in the panel respondents must have (a) a self-employed job, (b) employ no other people, and (c) work at least 15 hours per week in their business. Respondents are recruited using the DM-CD address file of MarktSelect, which is directly derived from the registers of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, using stratified sampling by 10 areas of economic activity. The panel started in 2009, and has since been conducted at a frequency of two waves per year. Every first wave is conducted using a telephone survey and mainly comprises a fixed set of questions. The second wave is a smaller, internet-based follow-up questionnaire, with rotating topics. To deal with panel attrition the sample is 'topped up' to 3000 once per year. More information on the ZZP Panel and a technical discussion can be found in Hoevenagel et al. (2015).

The analysis in this study is based on the second wave of the 2014 ZZP Panel ($N =$ 851). The relevant questions on interest representation (i.e., items about membership and membership propensity) were only included in this wave. In fact, specifically for this study a tailor-made module concerning interest representation was designed and added to the internet-based follow-up questionnaire. The survey was fielded between mid-December 2014 and mid-January 2015. In total 2498 panel members who participated in the first 2014 wave were invited again, of which 851 eventually completed the questionnaire. This response rate, 34%, is comparable to earlier follow-up surveys of the ZZP Panel (Hoevenagel et al., 2015). By and large, the sample corresponds to demographic figures by Statistics Netherlands, showing that the solo self-employed are often more highly educated, predominantly male, and that the majority are between 35 and 55 years old (CBS, 2015a). Descriptive and bivariate statistics are presented in the Appendix (see Tables A2, A3, and A4). A sector weight is applied, however, to retain the same distribution of economic sectors of activity compared to the first 2014 wave.[1]

Dependent variables

Two types of dependent variables are used. The first, *membership of any type of interest organization*, is retrieved by asking respondents whether they were associated, either directly or indirectly, with five types of organizations, i.e., (1) professional organizations, (2) trade organizations, (3) trade unions, (4) solo self-employment (freelancers) organizations, (5) employer or business associations. Respondents who are a member of any of these organizations are coded as 1, non-members are coded as 0. This question was adapted from Van der Berg et al. (2009). Multiple answers were possible. For each category a short explanation was given, including a few examples.[2] Descriptive statistics on membership are presented in Table 2. The numbers in the table show that more than half of the self-employed under study (52%) are not members of any organization. Membership is most common with respect to professional organizations (19%), followed by solo self-employment organizations (12%). Employer/business associations and trade unions, both at approximately 10%, are least common.

A second set of dependent variables is used to differentiate between the various types of organizations. To avoid analyses with rather low numbers for individual categories, *membership propensity* questions are used rather than actual membership. Respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 0 ('not at all likely') to 10 ('very likely') their willingness to join each type of organization within the next five years, or their willingness to stay in the case of current membership.[3] The advantage of propensity scores is that the continuous nature of the variable allows estimation through linear regression techniques (Van der Eijk et al., 2006). Accordingly, membership propensities provide the same level of information on each type of organization, regardless of the actual size or popularity of each type. Table 2 shows the propensity to join interest organizations is relatively low; none of the categories score > 3 on a 0–10 scale. On average, the willingness to join is highest with respect to professional organizations ($M = 3.0$) and solo self-employment organizations ($M = 2.9$), and lowest for trade unions ($M = 1.3$) and business/employer organizations ($M = 0.9$).[4]

Table 2. Membership interest organizations.[a]

	Membership				Membership propensity[c]		
	N	%	N	%	Mean	SD	d.k. (%)
None	448	(52.2)					
Don't know / no answer	9	(1.0)					
Any organization[b]	394	(46.3)					
Professional organization			165	(19.4)	3.0	3.7	160 (18.8)
Trade association			94	(11.1)	2.5	3.4	159 (18.7)
Trade union			93	(11.0)	1.3	2.7	144 (16.9)
Solo self-employment organization			104	(12.2)	2.9	3.2	156 (18.3)
Employer/business association			84	(9.9)	0.9	2.0	161 (18.9)
Total	851	(100)					

[a]Sector weights applied.
[b]Multiple responses possible.
[c]11-point scale (0–10) based on the question: How likely are you to join/stay in [organization] within the next five years?
d.k. = don't know.

Economic variables

To test the first 'economic' hypothesis regarding the demand for individual and collective services, a question is used about the tasks of interest organizations. '*Below are some topics that interest organizations may deal with. In your opinion, how much attention should interest organizations spend on these topics?*' Respondents were asked to rate on an 11-point scale whether interest organizations should pay 'very little attention', rated 0, or 'a lot of attention', rated 10, to each of the following services: (1) Reducing rules and administrative burden for entrepreneurs; (2) Making social security more accessible for solo self-employed; (3) Lowering taxes for entrepreneurs; (4) Tackling false self-employment; (5) Strive for fair tariffs for self-employed; (6) Provide discounts on services; (7) Provide training and workshops; (8) Provide assistance with filing taxes; (9) Organizing network meetings; (10) Providing legal assistance.

    Individual demands were measured regarding four services, i.e., training and workshops, assistance with filing taxes, network meetings, and legal assistance. An index scale (0–1) was created by computing the mean/10 over the items, including at least three items with non-missing values per respondent[5] (Cronbach's alpha of .78). *Collective demands* were measured with two scales, one for *demands concerning the business environment* and another concerning the *social security* demands. The business environment demands relate to three services, i.e., 'reducing rules and administrative burden for entrepreneurs', 'lowering taxes for entrepreneurs', and 'providing discounts on services' (Cronbach's alpha of .77). The social security scale consists of services related to 'making social security more accessible for the solo self-employed', 'tackling false self-employment', and 'striving for fair tariffs for solo self-employed' (Cronbach's alpha of .72).

Next, three dummy variables are included to measure the level of attachment to self-employment, i.e., *part-time* work (< 35 hours a week, based on the question '*how many hours a week do you generally spend on your business?*'), *involuntary self-employment* (indicating whether respondents would prefer to work in wage-employment, based on the question: '*If you could choose, would you prefer to work in self-employment or wage-employment?*'), and a dummy indicating whether the respondent has *other sources of personal income* (based on the question '*Do you have other sources of income than from your business (for example from wage-employment, social benefits, pensions, etc.)?*') The final 'economic' variable included in the analysis is *income*. Income is measured as respondent's net monthly income derived from their business, and differentiates between lower income (< €1500), middle income (€1500–3000), and higher income (€3000+).

Social variables

With respect to social customs two variables are included: respondent's occupation and their potential background in wage-employment. For the latter, a dummy variable is included indicating whether or not the respondent *previously worked in wage-employment* doing the same job. This dummy is measured by first asking respondents whether they were ever in wage-employment, and whether or not this wage-employed job was different in terms of job content and skills from their current self-employment job. Current *occupation* is measured in an open question by asking respondents to describe their business (i.e., what kind of goods they sell or what kind of services/labor they provide). On the basis of this information each respondent was assigned an occupational code, using the International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008. Applying the classification of Arum and Müller (2004), these occupations are first classified into *traditional self-employment*, *manual self-employment*, and *professional-managerial self-employment.* Professionals and managers are further reclassified into sub-groups for *self-employed technocrats* and *self-employed social-cultural specialists* (cf. Güveli, 2006; Jansen, 2017). An overview of the specific occupations allocated to each type is presented in the Appendix, see Table A1.

Political variables

As a proxy for respondents' political orientations, they were asked to report their voting behavior during the last parliamentary elections. Party preferences are classified into three main categories. First, the category of *Right-wing* parties includes respondents who voted for the Liberal Party (VVD), the Christian Democrats (CDA), and the right-wing populist Freedom Party (PVV). Second, the parties commonly defined as *Left-wing* in the Netherlands are the Labor Party (PvdA), the Socialist Party (SP), and the GreenLeft Party (GL). Third, as a separate category in-between the left and the right, respondents are grouped who voted for D66, a centrist *liberal-democratic* party, which next to the VVD is the most popular party among the solo self-employed in the Netherlands (Jansen, 2017). In addition to these three main party groups, two additional categories are included for respondents who voted for *another (minor) party*, and for respondents who did not vote or provided no answer.

Analyses and results

To test the hypotheses, two sets of analyses are presented. First, logistic regression models are shown with respect to membership of any organization (Table 3). The models in this table are built step-by-step by first entering the economic variables in Model 1, and adding the social and political variables in Models 2 and 3, respectively. All models are controlled for *age, gender* (female = 1) and the (logged) number of years since the respondent started his/her self-employment career. The second part of the analysis differentiates between various types of interest organization. For this purpose, a series of OLS regression models are estimated regarding membership propensity of each type of organization (Table 4). Here, for reasons of space, all variables are entered simultaneously.[6]

Membership of any organization

Hypothesis 1 stated that the self-employed would be more likely to join an interest organization as they have a stronger demand for individual services, whereas membership would not be related to the demand for collective services. In order to test this hypothesis Table 3 includes one index scale for the *demand for individual services* and two for collective services, i.e., *business environment demands* and *social security demands*. For the hypothesis to hold, the estimates should indicate a positive effect of individual demands on membership, and no effect of collective demands. As expected, the results show that stronger demand for individual services are positively associated (1.24) with membership, whereas there is no such association for collective demands (supporting hypotheses 1a and 1b).[7]

Hypothesis 2 stated that individuals with a looser attachment to self-employment would be less likely to join an interest organization. This expectation is tested by entering dummy variables for *part-time work*, the availability of *other sources of income* and for *involuntary* self-employment. The results in Model 1 indeed show a negative effect (−0.38) of part-time work, supporting hypothesis 2a. Contrary to the expectation, however, similar effects are not found for involuntary self-employment, or for self-employed with additional sources of income. Hence, the estimates in Table 3 provide no support for hypotheses 2b and 2c.

The final economic determinant tested in Table 3 (Model 1) is income. Yet, the non-significant estimates indicate that – compared to those around a median income – neither lower-income groups nor higher-income groups have an effect on membership. Hence, there is no support for hypotheses 3a or 3b. Finally, although no specific hypotheses about non-economic determinants were formulated regarding membership of *any organization*, it is interesting to note that neither social variables (Model 2) nor political variables (Model 3) have an effect on generic membership. The only exception is the occupational group of 'technocratic' professionals: that is, the results in Model 3 suggest that organizational membership is less likely for this group (e.g., consisting of independent accountants and other financial and legal specialists, civil engineers, and self-employed ICT professionals), relative to the reference category of traditional self-employment occupations (e.g., shop-keepers, retailers, farmers).

Table 3. Logistic regression for membership (any organization).[a]

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Intercept	−1.32*	(0.56)	−0.94	(0.60)	−1.09	(0.62)
Gender (female = 1)	0.49**	(0.20)	0.33	(0.21)	0.28	(0.21)
Age	0.02**	(0.01)	0.02*	(0.01)	0.02	(0.01)
Years in self-employment (logged)	−0.13	(0.13)	−0.18	(0.14)	−0.18	(0.14)
Demand for individual services	1.24***	(0.44)	1.16***	(0.45)	1.23***	(0.45)
Demand for collective services (business)	−0.77	(0.50)	−0.76	(0.51)	−0.68	(0.52)
Demand for collective services (social security)	0.49	(0.46)	0.49	(0.48)	0.41	(0.49)
Part-time	−0.38*	(0.21)	−0.43**	(0.21)	−0.44**	(0.21)
Other sources of income	−0.05	(0.22)	−0.06	(0.22)	−0.08	(0.22)
Involuntary	−0.34	(0.29)	−0.33	(0.29)	−0.35	(0.29)
Income (middle = ref.)						
Low income	−0.20	(0.21)	−0.23	(0.21)	−0.21	(0.21)
High income	−0.04	(0.21)	0.02	(0.22)	0.04	(0.22)
Occupation (traditional self-employed = ref.)						
Technocrats			−0.37	(0.25)	−0.44*	(0.26)
Social-cultural specialists			0.18	(0.24)	0.11	(0.25)
Manual workers			−0.34	(0.26)	−0.33	(0.26)
Former wage-employee (same tasks)			−0.25	(0.19)	−0.26	(0.19)
Party preference (right-wing = ref.)						
Left-wing					0.24	(0.24)
Centrist					0.36	(0.27)
Other party					−0.48	(0.41)
Did not vote / don't know					0.15	(0.22)
Nagelkerke pseudo R^2	0.06		0.07		0.08	

N = 693. * p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01. [a]Sector weights applied.

The propensity to join a specific type of organization

Next, Table 4 examines the membership propensity regarding different types of organizations, i.e., professional associations (Model 1), trade associations (Model 2), employer associations (Model 3), trade unions (Model 4), and solo self-employment organizations (Model 5). By investigating whether different determinants of membership propensity hold for different types of organizations, these models shed light on the interaction between demand and supply.

To begin with, confirming the models on generic membership, *individual demands* are positively correlated with the propensity to join all types of organizations. But differences do occur with respect to collective demands. Hypothesis 4 stated that collective demands concerning the business environment would be related to membership of trade/business associations, and that collective demands concerning social security would be

Table 4. Linear regression for the propensity to join an interest organization.[a]

	Model 1:	Model 2:	Model 3:	Model 4:	Model 5:
	Professional association	Trade association	Employers' association	Trade union	Solo self-employment organization
Intercept	2.13*	3.62***	2.04	0.62	1.43
	(1.18)	(1.06)	(0.65)	(0.85)	(0.98)
Gender (female = 1)	1.07***	0.45	−0.31	−1.03***	0.63*
	(0.39)	(0.36)	(0.22)	(0.29)	(0.33)
Age	−0.01	−0.04**	−0.01	−0.02	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Years in self-employment (logged)	0.09	0.17	−0.26*	0.04	−0.43**
	(0.25)	(0.23)	(0.14)	(0.18)	(0.21)
Demand individual services	3.29***	3.94***	2.67***	1.56***	2.96***
	(0.84)	(0.76)	(0.46)	(0.60)	(0.70)
Demand collective services (business)	−0.85	−1.15	−1.58***	−0.37	0.49
	(0.90)	(0.83)	(0.50)	(0.67)	(0.77)
Demand collective services (social security)	−0.67	0.57	−0.05	1.48***	0.51
	(0.88)	(0.80)	(0.49)	(0.65)	(0.75)
Part-time	−0.42	−0.79**	−0.15	0.83***	−0.42
	(0.39)	(0.36)	(0.22)	(0.29)	(0.33)
Other sources of income	0.25	0.08	0.02	−0.84***	−0.80**
	(0.41)	(0.38)	(0.23)	(0.30)	(0.35)
Involuntary	0.90*	0.00	0.21	0.73*	0.14
	(0.54)	(0.51)	(0.31)	(0.40)	(0.46)
Income (middle = ref.)					
Low income	−0.81**	−0.20	−0.20	0.00	−0.60*
	(0.39)	(0.35)	(0.21)	(0.28)	(0.32)
High income	0.21	0.01	−0.10	−0.19	0.06
	(0.40)	(0.37)	(0.22)	(0.30)	(0.34)
Occupation (traditional self-employed = ref.)					
Technocratic professionals	0.71	−0.86**	0.57**	0.01	1.02**
	(0.48)	(0.43)	(0.26)	(0.35)	(0.40)
Social-cultural professionals	2.06***	−1.05**	−0.17	0.68**	1.48***
	(0.47)	(0.43)	(0.26)	(0.34)	(0.40)
Manual workers	0.04	−0.60	0.20	0.15	1.87***
	(0.50)	(0.45)	(0.27)	(0.36)	(0.42)
Former wage-employee	−0.94***	−0.76**	−0.44**	0.12	−0.36
	(0.35)	(0.32)	(0.19)	(0.26)	(0.29)
Party preference (right-wing = ref.)					
Left-wing	−0.09	−0.32	−0.47*	0.96***	0.38
	(0.44)	(0.40)	(0.24)	(0.32)	(0.37)
Centrist	0.05	−0.04	−0.57**	−0.09	−0.09
	(0.49)	(0.45)	(0.27)	(0.36)	(0.42)

Table 4. (Continued)

	Model 1:	Model 2:	Model 3:	Model 4:	Model 5:
	Professional association	Trade association	Employers' association	Trade union	Solo self-employment organization
Other party	0.44	1.00	0.47	−0.69	−0.11
	(0.71)	(0.65)	(0.39)	(0.52)	(0.60)
Did not vote / don't know	0.08	−0.15	0.00	0.56*	−0.19
	(0.41)	(0.38)	(0.23)	(0.30)	(0.34)
R^2	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.16
N	568	565	566	582	575

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01. ªSector weights applied.

related to membership of freelancer organizations and trade unions. Interestingly, the estimates in Table 4 show that stronger *social security demands* are only related to membership propensity regarding trade unions – but not regarding other types of interest organizations. The positive effect (1.48) in Model 4 indicates that respondents are more inclined to join trade unions as they perceive collective services related to the social security position of self-employed workers to be more important. This finding supports hypothesis 4b – albeit only partially, as a similar effect is not found regarding the propensity to join freelancer organizations.

Next, the demand for collective services regarding the business environment is only related to the propensity to join employers' associations (Model 3). Surprisingly, instead of positive this effect is negative (−1.58), suggesting that solo self-employed individuals are less inclined to join such associations as their demand for collective services regarding taxes and regulations is stronger. The interpretation of this effect is not straightforward. On the one hand, this finding may indicate that respondents perceive employers' organizations not to match the needs of solo self-employed workers. The effect of collective demands would be negative because solo self-employed workers feel that employers' organizations are only there for big companies. But it could also be a signal that 'free-riding' on collective services is a problem for organizations that represent typical business interests. Consistent with the logic of collective action, a strong demand for collective, non-exclusive services is related to a lower propensity to join.

As a next step, the effects of occupational differences are assessed. Hypothesis 5 stated that people in 'new' self-employment occupations would be more likely to join new organizations/trade unions than business/trade associations. To test this hypothesis the reference category is formed by people working in traditional self-employment jobs. The categories included for 'new' self-employment occupations are those for social-cultural professionals, technocratic professionals, and manual self-employed. The estimates indicate that the self-employed in professional occupations (both social-cultural and technocratic professionals) are indeed less inclined to join trade associations (Model 2: –1.05 and −0.86, respectively) compared to respondents in traditional self-employment jobs. In

particular, new freelancer organizations seem to appeal to the self-employed in new occupational types. Compared to the traditional self-employed, all three groups – i.e., social-cultural specialists (1.48), technocrats (1.02), and manual workers (1.87) – are more inclined to join specific solo self-employment organizations. Social-cultural professionals in particular seem to deviate from people in traditional self-employment, as they are also more strongly inclined to join trade unions (Model 4: 0.68). All in all, these estimates support hypothesis 5b about the organizational alignments of self-employed social-cultural professionals. Hypothesis 5a about manual self-employed workers is only partially supported; unlike social-cultural specialists, manual self-employed workers are not more inclined to join trade unions.

Hypothesis 6 stated that solo self-employed who previously held a job in wage-employment would be more likely to join a trade union than those who have no background in wage-employment. Although Table 4 indicates that former wage-employees are indeed less inclined to join professional organizations (Model 1: −0.94), trade associations (Model 2: −0.76) or employers' associations (Model 3: −0.44), no effect is found with respect to the propensity to join trade unions (Model 4). Hence, hypothesis 6 is not corroborated.

The final set of variables to investigate in Table 4 is party preference. On the basis of political alignments it was expected left/right political preferences would be associated with the 'old' divide between trade unions, on the one hand, and employers' organizations, on the other. Models 3 and 4 seem to support hypothesis 7: compared to a right-wing orientation, a left-wing orientation is associated with a lower propensity to join employers' organizations (−0.47, although only significant at the 90% confidence level) and a higher propensity to join trade unions (0.96). As expected, no relationship is found for left- vs. right-wing orientations on the propensity to join new solo self-employment organizations. This supports the notion that new freelancer organizations are generally free of strong political alignments, in particular those related to the traditional left/right divide.

Although no specific hypotheses were formulated, it is interesting to highlight some of the effects concerning part-time, hybrid, and involuntary self-employment when the analysis is broken down by different types of organizations. The models on trade union membership stand out (Model 4). Unlike other organizations, trade unions seem to attract part-time self-employed (0.83) and 'involuntary' self-employed who would rather work in wage-employment (0.73). Individuals with other sources of income, on the other hand, have a lower propensity to join trade unions (−0.73).

Discussion and conclusion

This is the first study aimed at systemizing and testing potential determinants of membership of interest organizations among solo self-employed workers. By linking the diversity in the demand for representation to the diversity in the supply, this study theoretically expanded upon both the trade union literature as well as research on business associations (Battisti and Perry, 2015; Bennett, 2000; Bennett and Ramsden, 2007; Goerke and Pannenberg, 2004; Scheurer, 2011; Schnabel and Wagner, 2005). Empirically, this is not only one of the first micro-level studies on solo self-employment and interest

representation, but also one of the first to address new freelancers' organizations (Dullroy and Cashman, 2013; Wynn, 2015).

Returning to the central question, this study was not simply aimed to determine 'why self-employed workers join interest organizations?' but also 'who joins what and why?' With respect to the determinants of membership, the conclusions can be broken down into two parts. First, economic determinants can be used to explain both 'generic' membership (i.e., of any organization), as well as the membership propensity of specific associations. Second, social and political determinants do not explain generic patterns of membership, but help to explain why some self-employed workers are more inclined to join particular types of organizations. The economic effects in this study are largely consistent with the logic of collective action (Offe and Wiesenthal, 1980; Olson, 1971). This study confirmed that membership of interest organizations is more strongly motivated by individualistic demands than by collective demands. This finding therefore supports previous research that the decision to join an interest organization is largely driven by self-interest and that self-employed workers tend to internalize individualistic orientations (Bennett, 2000; Pernicka, 2006; Van Waarden, 1992). Collective demands generally do not seem to play a role in determining membership, albeit with one important exception: the propensity to join trade unions. The results in this study suggest that collective demands concerning social security at least partially determine membership of trade unions among solo self-employed workers. This finding confirms the suggestion by Bispinck and Schulten (2011: 47) that unions may attract self-employed workers not only by offering individual membership benefits, but also by lobbying to improve the social security framework, or by negotiating collective agreements that set certain minimum conditions for contracts between the self-employed workers and their contracting companies. Hence, this is the first study to show that specific interest organizations may attract self-employed workers using specific appeals or strategies. This finding resonates with the observation that striving for fair tariffs, and trying to use collective bargaining to do so, is one of the distinctive features of trade unions compared to other freelancer organizations. It suggests that unions aim to utilize the existing system of social dialogue – in which they are more strongly embedded than most of the newer organizations – to address issues surrounding the potentially precarious nature of self-employment. The finding that trade unions in the Netherlands mobilize on social security issues opens interesting directions for future research. More research is needed to look into the differences between unions more closely, and to investigate further the interplay between demand and supply.

Also consistent with cost-benefit calculations is that part-time work is generally associated with a lower probability to join. The exception – again – are trade unions, for which part-time work has a positive effect on membership. Interestingly, and contributing to the debate around precarious self-employment (Kautonen et al., 2010; Sevä et al., 2016; Vosko, 2006), involuntary self-employment is also positively related to a stronger orientation towards trade unions. Further research is needed with respect to some of the other economic variables. For income, for example, no effect was found, but further research may explore more refined income measures to better test the potential (nonlinear) relationship with membership (cf. Checchi et al., 2010; Scheurer, 2011).

The second conclusion to arise from this study is that social and political explanations are relevant to determine who is likely to be a member of which organization. Yet, a

reservation applies: only one political factor was tested, and only one of the social factors tested here – occupation – is associated with diverging membership propensities. People in traditional self-employment jobs are generally more inclined to be a member of traditional trade, business, or employers' organizations. New freelancer associations are more likely the domain of 'newer' self-employment occupations, both high-skilled and low-skilled jobs. Trade unions in particular attract professionals in the social and cultural occupations. Although current occupation matters, this study provides no evidence for any socializing effect of the previous work environment. Moreover, from a political perspective, left/right attitudes appear to correlate to membership propensity. Whereas a rightist orientation is accompanied with a stronger tendency towards organizations supporting business interests, a left-wing political preference is linked to a stronger orientation towards joining trade unions. This finding contributes to our understanding of the political alignments associated with self-employment, which appear to be much more diverse than social class theories maintain (cf. Jansen, 2017).

Finally, two important limitations and suggestions for future research should be considered. First, the current study exclusively focused on self-employed persons without employees. Further research needs to be done in order to compare organization membership of solo self-employed workers to small- and medium-sized firms (i.e., with employees) and/or wage-employees. Second, being limited to the Netherlands, this study did not address the membership patterns of the self-employed in other countries. Although the Netherlands provided a relevant case given the diverse supply of interest organizations, further research is required to assess the membership of interest organizations in other countries. Country comparative research is needed as, for example, the emergence of new freelancer organizations is not a specifically Dutch phenomenon, and the 'freelancers movement' has pan-European aspirations (Dullroy and Cashman, 2013).

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Notes

1. The weight factor adjusts the sector distribution and mainly increases the share of respondents in wholesale and retail trade (including the accommodation sector), and in 'other' service activities (including arts and entertainment). Not applying this weight generally yields similar results. Only the occupational effects are affected slightly. When unweighted, the effect of occupation in Table 4 (not significant in this article) turns out significant, i.e., social-cultural specialists are somewhat more likely to join any organization, and unskilled self-employed are somewhat less likely to join. Weighting does not alter the occupational effects in Table 4, i.e., similar effects are found regarding professional organizations, trade associations, and freelancer associations. Also for trade unions and employer organizations the unweighted

occupational effects show similar results, but these effects lose significance when controlled for political attitudes (which correlate with occupation, see Appendix, Table A3).

2. *Professional organizations* (category 1), for instance, were referred to as 'organizations specific to your occupational group, such as the Photographer Federation, the Order of Interim Managers, or the Association of Nurses and Caregivers'. Next, *trade organizations* (category 2) were referred to as 'organizations specific to the sector in which you are active, so broader than your occupational group'. For *trade unions* (category 3), *solo self-employment organizations* (category 4), and *employer/business organizations* (category 5), the main (peak) organizations are given as examples. Subsequently, a follow-up question was asked to see whether respondents were a member of specific freelancer organizations and/or trade union branches (see organizations listed in Table 1). The follow-up question was used to more accurately determine association membership in categories [3] and [4] of the first question.

3. The question aims to measure membership propensity, i.e., the tendency to be(come) a member in the next five years. To check whether the willingness to remain a member confounds the willingness to join, a sensitivity analysis is conducted by estimating all models only based on the propensity to join. In these models, current members of a particular type of organization are assigned the highest value on the membership scale, i.e., a 10 on the 0–10 propensity scale (reflecting the notion that their tendency to be a member is highest). By and large, the sensitivity analyses do not lead to substantially different results compared with the models presented here.

4. It should be noted that a non-trivial portion of approximately 16–18% of the respondents used the 'don't know' response category when asked about their willingness to join. Additional analyses show that this group are more often younger self-employed workers, who previously held wage-employed jobs and are currently in self-employment on an involuntary basis – and who less often hold left-wing political attitudes.

5. In measuring the demand for services a substantial number of respondents use the 'don't know' category when asked about certain tasks (e.g., up to 22% regarding 'tackling false self-employment'). To avoid loss of cases the scales allow for two missing values per respondent. Yet, dropping scales for individual demands and collective demands from the model, and running the regression analyses on a larger sample does not alter the results presented for the other variables in the models.

6. A more gradual model building approach does not lead to substantially different results.

7. The two scales for collective demands correlate positively (.7), but no signs of problematic multicollinearity are detected. Combining the business services scale and social security scale in one single scale for collective demands leads to the same results regarding the likelihood to join any organization (Table 3) – i.e., no significant effect – but conceals the disparate effects the two scales have concerning different types of organizations (Table 4).

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Author biography

Giedo Jansen is Assistant Professor at the University of Twente, Institute for Innovation and Governance Studies, the Netherlands. His research is on the intersection of sociology, political science, and labor relations. He has recently published in these areas in journals such as the *American Journal of Sociology, Socio-Economic Review, Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Acta Politica*, and *Social Science Research*. Currently, he is working on a research project on self-employment and political alignments, based on a VENI grant from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO).

Appendix

Table A1. Overview of occupational groups.

Occupational group	ISCO-2008 codes[a]	Examples (most frequent)
Self-employed technocrats Based on Adjusted-EGP classes for professional-managerial occupations: classes I-a (higher grade technocrats) and II-a (lower grade technocrats).[b]	2142;2145;2264;2265;2411;2412;2421; 2431;2511;2512;2513;2522;2523;2619; 3112;3115;3116;3118; 3142;3152;3153; 3240;3251; 3313;3321;3322;3333;3334; 3339;3343;3352	• Business agents • Management and organization analysts • System analysts • Software developers • Accounting associates professionals
Self-employed social-cultural specialists Based on Adjusted-EGP classes for professional-managerial occupations: classes I-b (higher grade social-cultural specialists) and II-b (lower grade social-cultural specialists).[c]	2161;2163;2164;2166; 2211;2212; 2222;2230;2250;2261;2263;2266; 2269;2320;2353;2354;2355;2359; 2422;2423;2424;2432;2621;2622; 2632;2634;2635;2641;2642;2643; 2651;2652;2654;3332;3412;3413; 3422;3431;3432;3521	• Training and staff developments professionals • Other teaching professionals • Authors, journalists, and other writers • Film directors, producers, and photographers • Medical specialists and other health professionals
Traditional self-employed (agricultural and petty bourgeois) Based on EGP classes III (non-manual in sales in services) and IV-c (self-employed farmers).[d]	1420;3433;4221;5111;5120;5141; 5142;5151;5152;5163;5164;5165; 5211;5221;6111; 6112;6113;6121;6222	• Shopkeepers and retailers • Wholesalers • Farmers • Other service and sales businesses (small restaurateurs, bed and breakfast operators, hairdressers, beauticians)
Manual self-employment Based on EGP classes VI (skilled worker), VII-a (unskilled workers), and VII-b (farm laborers).[e]	3214;5153;5311;5322;7111;7112; 7113;7114;7115;7119;7121;7123; 7124;7125;7126;7131;7132;7133; 7211;7212;7221;7223;7231;7233; 7311;7312;7313;7314;7315;7317; 7412;7421;7522;7531;7532;7536; 8211;8322;8343;9112;9211;9212; 9214;9215;9332	• Car, taxi and van drivers • Building and construction workers • Electronics, mechanics, and servicers • Home-based personal care and childcare workers • Farm laborers

[a]To convert ISCO-08 codes into (Adjusted) EGP categories conversion tables based on ISCO-88 (Güveli, 2006) were adapted. The above-mentioned codes match ISCO-88 conversions, with a few exceptions.

[b]Accounting associate professionals (ISCO-08 3313) were classified as self-employed technocrats. And ISCO-88 2419 (business professionals not elsewhere categorized) was broken down into social-cultural specialists (ISCO-08 2422 and 2432, policy advisors and PR professionals, respectively), and technocrats (ISCO-08 2412, 2421, 2431, 2619, for financial, management, marketing, and legal professionals).

[c]Social work associate professionals (ISCO-08 3412) and other teaching professionals (ISCO-08 3422), and conference and event planners (ISCO-08 3332) were classified as self-employed social-cultural specialists.

[d]Cooks (ISCO-08 5120), hairdressers and beauticians (ISCO-08 5141, 5142), and undertakers (ISCO-08 5163) were classified as traditional self-employment.

[e]Home-based personal care workers (ISCO-08 5322) and childcare workers (ISCO-08 5311) coded as manual self-employment.

Table A2. Descriptive statistics (*N* = 815).

	Mean	SD	%
Age	51.01	9.27	
Years in self-employment	13.00	9.12	
Demand for individual services	0.52	0.23	
Demand for collective services (business)	0.72	0.24	
Demand for collective services (social security)	0.66	0.26	
Gender			
Male			67.1
Female			32.9
Part-time			
Part-time			26.2
Full-time			73.8
Other sources of income			
Other source			21.7
No other sources			78.3
Involuntary (0/1)			
Involuntary			10.1
Voluntary			89.9
Income			
Low			33.3
Middle			43.1
High			23.6
Occupation			
Traditional self-employed			20.6
Technocrats			28.5
Social-cultural specialists			25.3
Manual workers			25.6
Former wage-employee			
Former wage-employee			28.3
Not former wage-employee			71.7
Party preference			
Right-wing			36.3
Left-wing			20.0
Centrist			13.9
Other			4.8
Did not vote / don't know			24.8

Table A3. Correlation matrix (N = 691).

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Association (Pearson's r)				Association (Eta)							
1. Age	**0.39**	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.01	**0.15**	**0.28**	0.07	**0.08**	**0.13**	0.09	**0.18**
2. Years in self-employment		0.04	0.06	−0.05	**0.12**	0.04	**0.10**	0.02	0.07	0.05	**0.15**	0.09
3. Demand business services			**0.70**	**0.51**	**0.13**	0.02	0.02	**0.12**	0.07	**0.15**	**0.20**	0.12
4. Demand security services				**0.55**	**0.13**	0.04	0.03	**0.12**	0.03	**0.25**	**0.30**	**0.13**
5. Demand individual services					**0.19**	**0.11**	0.04	0.04	0.05	**0.15**	**0.16**	0.09
							Association (Cramer's V)					
6. Female						**0.28**	0.03	0.07	0.02	**0.39**	**0.40**	**0.27**
7. Part-time							**0.33**	0.08	0.02	**0.30**	**0.23**	**0.19**
8. Other sources of income								0.06	0.05	**0.19**	0.10	0.09
9. Involuntary									0.03	**0.16**	**0.12**	0.08
10. Former wage-employee										0.04	**0.18**	0.09
11. Income											**0.26**	**0.12**
12. Occupation												**0.24**
13. Party preference												

bold p < .05; sector weights applied.

Table A4. Economic variables, mean values, and frequencies by occupational groups (N = 691).

	Individual demands	Collective demands (business)	Collective demands (security)	Part-time	Other sources of income	Involuntary
	Means	Means	Means	%	%	%
Technocrats	0.49	0.66	0.54	21.9	24.6	4.8
Social-cultural specialists	0.56	0.71	0.66	36.1	22.2	9.4
Traditional self-employed	0.53	0.79	0.73	34.0	25.2	11.8
Manual workers	0.46	0.74	0.72	11.3	15.5	13.8
Total	0.51	0.72	0.66	25.4	22.0	9.6
F-test (sig.)	5.25***	9.74***	21.1***			
Cramer's V				0.23***	0.10*	0.12**

F-test = ANOVA; K-W test = Kruskal–Wallis test; CR-V = Cramer's V: *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01; sector weights applied.