

Residential energy retrofits: how disruption impacts homeowner decisions

John Curtis, Gianluca Grilli, Muireann Lynch

Progress on retrofits

- Target of 25% of existing stock to ~~B5~~ **B200k**
- 107k B2 retrofits to end Aug 2026
- Reasons
 - Supply side barriers
 - Demand side barriers

Homeowners' appetite for disruption

- What is disruption?
- Minimal research focus on it
- Would knowing more help?
- Classify by sociodemographics & building traits

Research objectives

1. Understand where people are in their retrofit journey
 - Retrofitted/Not retrofitted conceals full story
2. Quantify disruption preferences
 - To what extent is it impinging on retrofit decisions?

Homeowners' retrofit journey

Retrofit Stage	Share	Scenario description
• Not thinking about renovations	23%	“We’re content with our home as it is. We wouldn’t dream of making any major changes to its layout or physical properties”
• Thinking about renovations as a possibility	30%	“We are aware of things we could change about our home by renovating. We may go ahead and renovate at some point in the future, or we may not, it all depends. We haven’t yet got a good sense of the costs, contractors available, and how to get the work done”
• Planning renovations	26%	“Planning renovation works but still finalising the details. We have some information about costs and financing options. We’ve talked to experts or contractors, and one or more has visited our home.”
• Completed major renovations	21%	“Renovations are completed or all the details of our renovations are decided and renovations underway with contractors.”

Renovation preferences

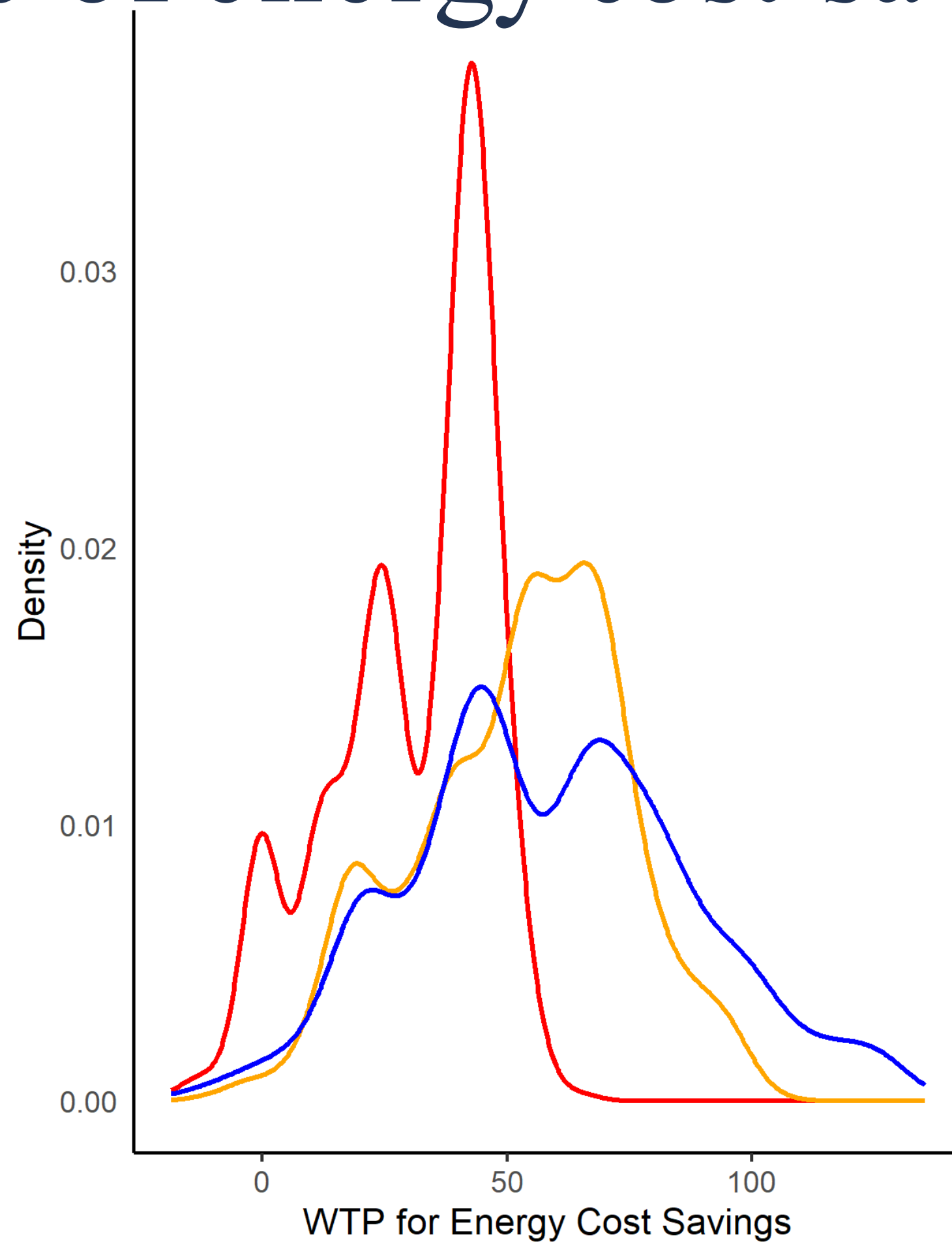
Euros as metric to measure preferences

1. How much are energy cost savings worth?
2. How much to avoid renovation disruption?

Shape of distribution more important than its mean



Value of energy cost savings



30% savings

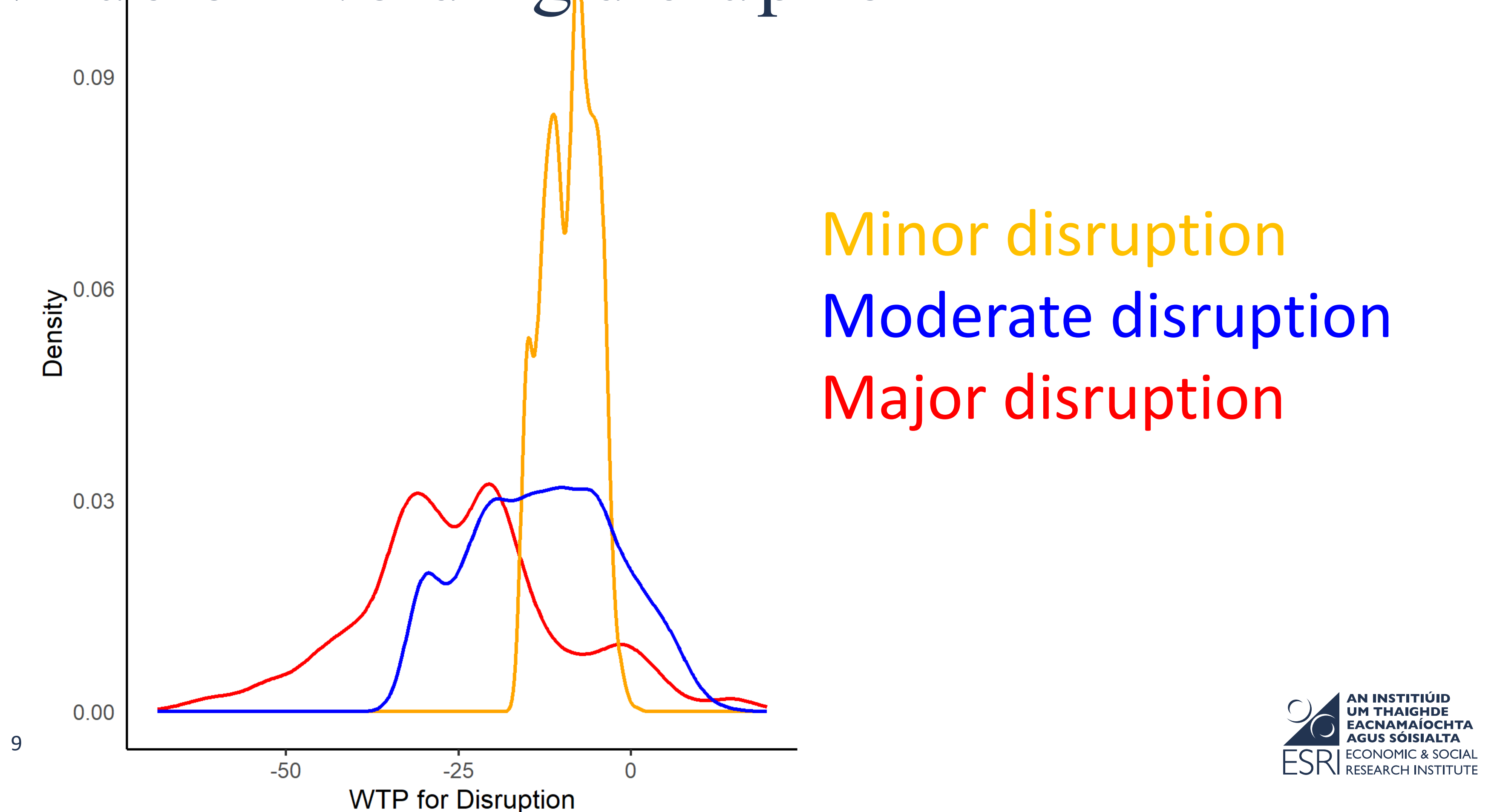
50% savings

70% savings

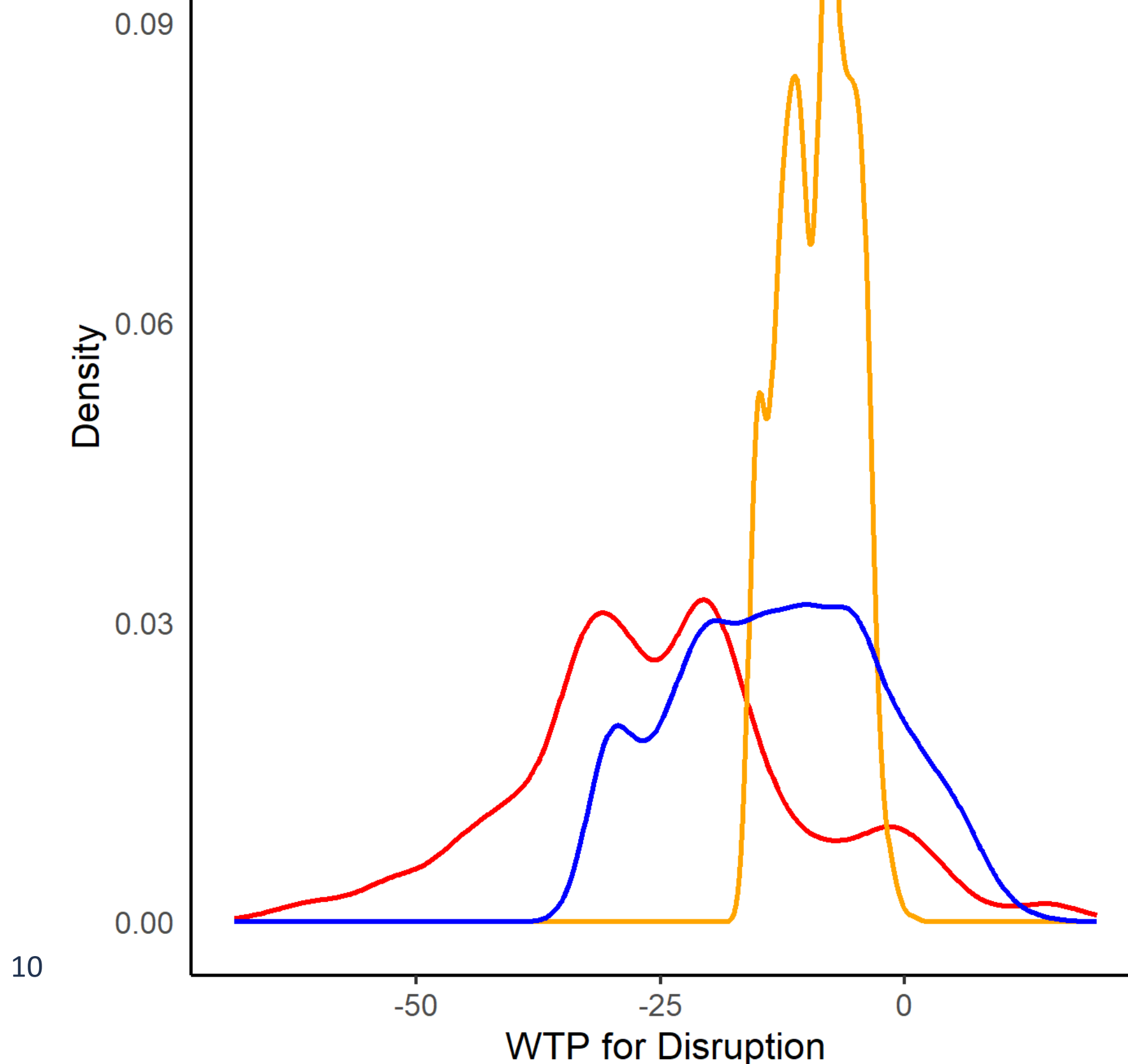
Disruption definitions

Label	Description
No invasive internal works	No invasive work affecting walls, floors or ceilings — full use of property during renovations
Minor internal works	Minor internal works, dust and materials affecting use of some rooms during renovation
Moderate internal works	Moderate internal works, some rooms are not suitable for use at times during renovations
Major internal works	Major internal works, whole property is not suitable for use during renovations

Value of avoiding disruption



Value of avoiding disruption



Mean
values

Minor

€-9k

Moderate

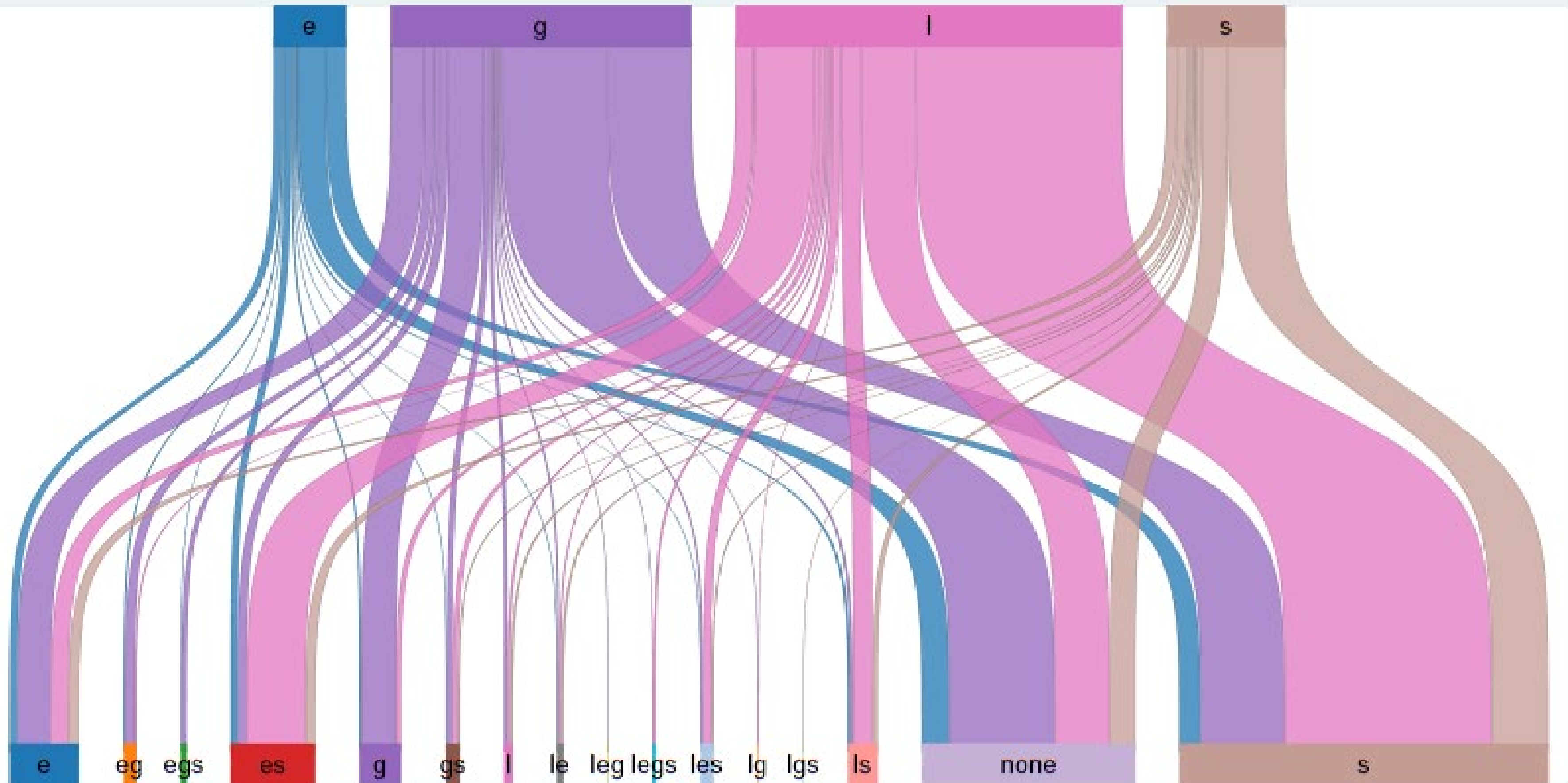
€-13k

Major

€-25k

Primary and secondary heating

N=997



Takeaways

1. % homeowners open to incentives – less than half
2. Are there active measures beside grants to change this?
3. Disruption isn't a number it's a distribution
4. For some that number is large – dwarfing grants

Thank you

Residential renovations: Understanding cost-disruption trade-offs

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