Lower Electricity Prices, Higher Demand? - The Effect of Introducing a Subsidized Flat Electricity Price to Norwegian Households

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***Abstract*—To shield Norwegian households from high and increasingly volatile electricity prices, the Norwegian government decided to offer all households the *Norway Price* electricity cost support scheme, with a subsidized flat-rate electricity price from 01.10.2025. At that time, about 95% of Norwegian households were on variable electricity contracts linked to the day-ahead spot price.**

This paper investigates how the introduction of *Norway Price* has affected households' electricity consumption using real-world data. A detailed data set of hourly electricity consumption from 01.10.2023 - 31.01.2026 was provided by *Elhub*, and applied to a *Difference in Difference* approach.

The results show that households who choose *Norway Price* increased their electricity consumption by 2-5% compared to households without *Norway Price* in the winter of 2025 - 26. Moreover, the demand increase is higher in the afternoon peak load hours, around 6%, implying that households shift less load to night hours. The magnitude of impact cannot be quantified in this paper, yet the results shows an unfavourable trend.

***Index Terms*—Demand Response, Energy Saving Incentives, Norway Price, Variable-to-Fixed Electricity Prices**

I. Introduction

Most Norwegian households choose electricity price contracts that are based on the spot price from the day ahead market. Since all households have smart meters, they are directly exposed to electricity price fluctuations. Following the European energy crisis, spot prices became both higher and more volatile, compared to before 2021. Therefore, an electricity cost support scheme was implemented, *Stømstøtte*, which subsidised around 90% of the spot price over 75 øre/kWh, depending on the year [1]. Prices were still high and volatile in 2025, prompting the Norwegian government to propose a new subsidised optional flat-rate electricity price of 40 øre/kWh (excl. VAT). This support scheme, referred to as *Norgespris* or *Norway Price*, entered into force on 01.10.2025 [2].

Electricity plays a central role in Norwegian households, which rely on it not only for lighting and appliances but also for space heating and domestic hot water [3]. Electrification has further intensified with the rapid adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). By 2025, 96% of new passenger cars sold were fully electric [4], and EVs accounted for approximately one-third (about 32%) of Norway's total passenger car fleet [5]. As a result, household electricity consumption is substantial and increasingly flexible.

At the time when *Norway Price* was introduced, around 95% of Norwegian households were on spot price electricity contracts, and smart meters had been installed in 99% of households [6][7]. Combined with the high level of electrification, these conditions offered significant potential for demand-side flexibility in the Norwegian power system. However, by providing a fixed price for all consumption up to 5000 kWh per month, the *Norway Price* scheme effectively removed households' incentives to respond to market price signals. Such a pricing structure may alter both the overall electricity consumption, and the daily load profile by affecting electricity consumption behaviour.

During the European energy crisis of 2021-2022, many countries, including Norway, introduced temporary support schemes to mitigate households' high electricity bills. After 2024, Norway remains the only country to continue such a subsidy scheme, and the only country to introduce a new scheme, *Norway Price*, in 2025 [8]. The government's implementation had characteristics of a rapid process with limited prior evaluation. There is rising concern that loss of incentives for energy saving measures and consumer flexibility, could have drastic consequences for the power system, e.g. increased power demand and increased market prices for end-users without *Norway Price* .

This work uses an econometric model to evaluate how the introduction of *Norway Price* affects households electricity consumption. Using detailed consumption data provided by *Elhub*, the scheme's impact on electricity consumption is assessed and the broader implications for the electricity market is discussed.

This paper will answer the following research questions regarding the effect of *Norway Price* on household electricity consumption:

- Does the introduction of a subsidized electricity price increase electricity consumption?
- What is the effect on the daily load profile when changing from a dynamic hourly electricity price to a fixed price?

II. Literature Review

Previous research provides substantial evidence from Norway and internationally that households respond to electricity price signals. In Norway, electricity prices increased sharply in

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2021 as a result of the European energy crisis. Because the majority of Norwegian households were on spot price contracts, these price increases were transmitted to consumers almost immediately. An analysis of household responses to the price shock by Hofmann and Lindberg [9] shows that electricity consumption declined by 11.4% during the winter of 2021/22. Moreover, the study finds that households with access to smart charging for electric vehicles shifted a significant share of their electricity consumption to nighttime hours, when prices were lower. Evidence from recent dynamic pricing pilots in Norway further supports the conclusion that households respond to electricity price signals. A pricing experiment [10] , which exposed households to strongly varying hourly electricity prices, found that households reduced their electricity consumption by 2.9% during high-price hours. Norway's largest distribution system operator conducted a trial of a time-of-use tariff and reported an average demand reduction of 1.8% during hours with higher prices [11]. Another distribution system operator tested a critical peak pricing scheme and achieved a substantially larger demand reduction of 13% during peak hours [12].

International evidence similarly indicates that households are willing to adjust their electricity consumption in response to higher or more variable electricity prices. A review of more than 300 international dynamic pricing pilots by Faruqui et al. [13] finds that households consistently respond to variable electricity prices, although the magnitude of the response varies widely. Approximately half of the pilots achieved demand reductions below 10%, while some reported reductions of up to 40% or more. More recent dynamic pricing experiments in the United States report average demand reductions of around 7.5% [14], while California's time-of-use pricing pilots achieved reductions ranging from 1.4% to 6.1% [15]. In line with these findings, a meta-analysis by Buckley [16] suggests that more recent studies point to a demand reduction potential in the range of 1.9% to 3.9%.

In summary, the literature provides clear evidence that households respond to dynamic electricity prices when they are exposed to them. However, existing research primarily examines household behaviour under conditions of higher and more variable electricity prices. An open question is whether these observed responses are symmetric and whether they also apply when households change from highly variable prices to lower and fixed prices, such as under the Norwegian scheme *Norway Price*. In this case, the expected response would be an increase in electricity consumption and a shift in demand toward hours with already high household demand in Norwegian households, typically the afternoon and early evening hours.

The contribution of this paper is

- Analysis of real world data using a unique data set of electricity consumption from 1.7 million Norwegian households
- *New*: Change from volatile price to fixed price
- *New*: Change from high to low price

III. DATA

The data set used for this analysis was provided by *Elhub* [17] and includes hourly consumption data for households (cabins are excluded) in the price zones NO1, NO2, and NO5, in the time period 01.10.2023 to 31.01.2026. The data set is further categorized on the basis of whether and when the household enrolled in the *Norway Price* scheme. An overview of the groups can be found in Tables I and II, also showing the average electricity consumption in each group for the full time frame of the data set. The individual household consumption data was aggregated per group level and per price zone for every hour by *Elhub* before the data set was received. Next, the consumption per group is divided by the number of households within the group, hence making Y_{it} reflect the average consumption per household within each group, and will be introduced in Equations 1 and 2.

Table I
OVERVIEW OF DATA GROUPING

Group i	**Date Enrolled in Norway Price**
Without Norway Price, i=0	Not enrolled by 31.01.2026
With Norway Price, i=1	Enrolled up to and including 01.11.2025
Residual	Enrolled between 02.11.2025 - 31.01.2026

Table II
GROUP CHARACTERISTICS. AVERAGE CONSUMPTION EQUALS HOURLY GROUP CONSUMPTION DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS, AVERAGED OVER THE THREE-YEAR SAMPLE PERIOD.

Price Zone	**Group i**	**No. of Households**	**Average Consumption [kWh/h per househ.]**
NO1	Without Norway Price	391 658	1.18
NO1	With Norway Price	387 214	1.93
NO1	Residual	125 218	1.69
NO2	Without Norway Price	161 693	1.32
NO2	With Norway Price	331 860	1.89
NO2	Residual	77 900	1.68
NO5	Without Norway Price	103 978	1.32
NO5	With Norway Price	73 917	1.95
NO5	Residual	41 410	1.77

The group *With Norway Price* includes households that enrolled in the scheme before 01.11.2025. Although *Norway Price* was active from 01.10.2025, the analysis uses 01.11.2025 to include all households that choose *Norway Price* in the first month of the scheme. It is also important to note that the group *Without Norway Price* is not subject to a full spot price, as they still receive the Norwegian *Strømstøtte*, explained in the I Introduction. All necessary data also needed to be available for the metering point to be included in the data set.

As electricity is primarily used for heating in Norway [18], consumption is highly sensitive to outdoor temperature [19]. Illustrated in Figure 1, the consumption data is plotted vs. outdoor temperature, using hourly time resolution for the time frame of 01.10.2023 - 30.09.2025. Here, the temperature data for Oslo, Stavanger, and Bergen from [20] is used as proxy for NO1, NO2, and NO5, respectively.

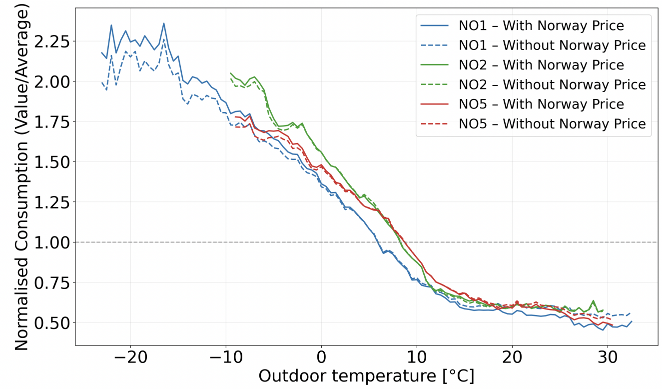

Figure 1. Normalised electricity consumption vs. outdoor temperature per group (i=0 and i=1), and price zone, using data from 01.10.2023 - 30.09.2025. Consumption is expressed relative to the average electricity consumption within each group and averaged within 1°C temperature intervals.

The group *With Norway Price* exhibits slightly higher temperature sensitivity compared to the group *Without Norway Price*, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2 shows the monthly average spot price for each of the price zones for the same period as the provided data set, based on hourly spot prices from [21]. The red line marks the implementation of *Norway Price*.

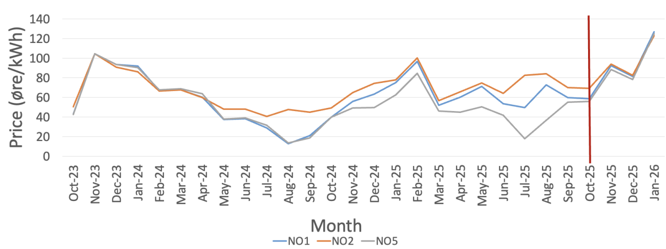

Figure 2. Monthly average spot price from 01.10.2023 - 31.01.2026 for NO1, NO2, and NO3 [øre/kWh] [21]

IV. Method

To evaluate the changes in households' consumption behaviour due to the introduction of *Norway Price*, a *Difference in Difference* approach is applied. The method is based on the work of Adan and Fuerst. [22]

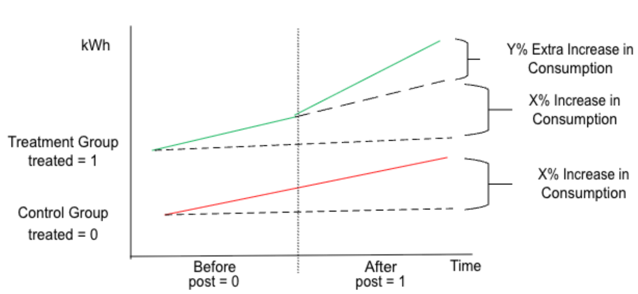

Figure 3. Illustration of the *Difference in Difference* Method Applied

Table III
Investigated Periods

	Reference period j=0	Period of interest j=1	Remaining j=2
Month	November 2024 December 2024 January 2025	November 2025 December 2025 January 2026	Remaining months Remaining months Remaining months
Winter	Winter 24/25	Winter 25/26	Remaining seasons
Hour	Every hour 0-23 in Winter 24/25	Every hour 0-23 in Winter 25/26	Remaining hours

Figure 3 illustrates the applied *Difference in Difference* method. The treatment group's, *With Norway Price*, change in electricity consumption is compared to the control group's, *Without Norway Price*, and analysed by comparing the same time period in the preceding year, before and after the introduction of *Norway Price*. The investigated time periods are presented in Table III. Data outside the defined analysis periods are allocated to a separate parameter (for period j=2), utilized to strengthen the estimates. This approach enables the evaluation of general changes in the electricity consumption level over long time periods, as well as changes in consumption behaviour by evaluating the daily pattern by using the hourly time resolution of the model. The models used in this analysis are adapted from [22], and presented in the following Equations 1 and 2. Equation 2 controls for consumption changes due to outdoor temperature, but is otherwise identical to Equation 1.

$$\log(Y_{it}) = \alpha + \gamma\, G_i + \beta\, G_i\, P_j + \tau_t + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{1}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \log(Y_{it}) = \alpha + \gamma\, G_i + \beta\, G_i P_j \\ + \theta_1\, G_i T_t^{24h} + \theta_2\, G_i (T_t^{24h})^2 \\ + \theta_3\, G_i (T_t^{24h})^3 + \tau_t + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

$$\%Change = (e^{\beta} - 1) * 100\% \tag{3}$$

Both models are log-linear, giving logarithmic results. Equation 3 converts the results from a logarithmic to a percentage scale, which is used in the subsequent results. In the analysis, β is the coefficient of interest. Table IV provides the interpretations of each coefficient and variable.

Temperature sensitivity accounts for how outdoor temperature influences household consumption per group differently. With colder temperatures, households tend to increase demand as indoor heating is mainly electric in Norwegian homes, cf. Figure 1. Households with *Norway Price* are slightly more temperature sensitive, and therefore tend to increase consumption more in colder periods. If not controlled for this may lead, in colder months e.g. January, to a higher estimate. The parameter $(T_t^{24h})^x$ in Equation 2 controls for this.

Table IV
INTERPRETATION OF THE DIFFERENT REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Coefficient	Interpretation
α	Intercept
γ	Group fixed effect
β	Change in electricity consumption for group *With Norway Price* in period of interest compared to *Without Norway Price* and reference period
$\theta_1, \theta_2, \theta_3$	Controls for temperature sensitivity of the household consumption
τ_t	Captures all factors that vary over time t
ϵ_{it}	Error term for each group i and hour t
G_i	Categorical variable for the different groups, see Table I
P_j	Categorical variable for the periods, see Table III
T_t^{24t}	Average outdoor temperature for the last 24 hours for each hour t
$(T_t^{24t})^2, (T_t^{24t})^3$	Non-linear temperature terms for the last 24 hours, for each hour t
Y_{it}	Average electricity consumption per household for each group i and hour t [kWh/h]

A. Limitations

Since each household has to actively enrol into *Norway Price*, the treatment group is subject to self-selection rather than random assignment, introducing selection bias, such as households that are more price sensitive, better informed, or higher educated being more likely to opt in. Moreover, systematic differences between treated and control households can exist irrespective of treatment, for instance the presence of electric vehicles and associated charging, access to district heating, poorly insulated buildings, or housing contracts with hot water included, which materially affect electricity consumption.

A quasi-experimental *Difference in Difference* design is therefore implemented, as the causal interpretation rests on exogenous choices affecting treated and control households. To evaluate the robustness of the estimates, the *Difference in Difference* model is estimated both with and without controlling for temperature, allowing an assessment of the relevance of considering temperature sensitivity of electricity demand in the different groups.

The dataset covers three years, during which substantial within household changes may have occurred, for example the purchase and charging of electric vehicles, which could significantly alter consumption patterns. As the necessary information to identify and control for such changes is not available, these potential sources of endogeneity cannot be corrected for directly, and are therefore acknowledged as a limitation of the analysis. However, these changes in electricity demand would only affect the results if they had occurred differently in the treatment and control group, for example if a larger share of households *With Norway Price* had bought an electric car after the reference period.

V. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The impact of *Norway Price* on Norwegian households electricity consumption is presented in the following. First, the impact on the average consumption level in kWh/h per household is analysed for different periods. Second, the impact on the average daily consumption profile is evaluated to investigate possible changes.

A. Impact on the Average Consumption Level

Figure 4 presents the *Difference in Difference* results for the four time periods (cf. Table III), both with (triangle) and without (circle) controlling for temperature. The results are presented for each price zone NO1, NO2, and NO5, and show a statistically significant increase in consumption among households subject to *Norway Price*, compared to those without. This supports the hypothesis of symmetry in households' response to price changes; consumption decreases with higher prices, and increases with lower prices. The temperature difference to the same month one year prior may affect the results of the two models, and is therefore shown on the right y-axis.

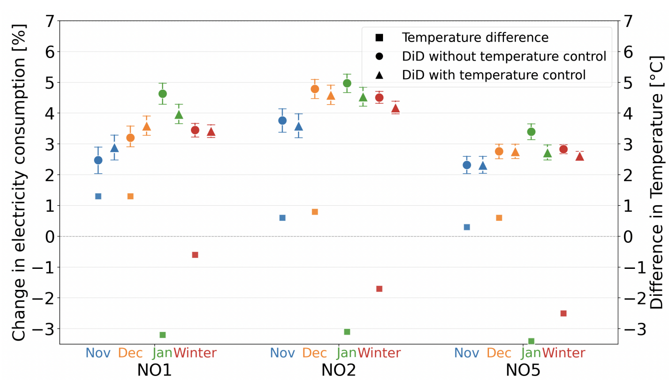

Figure 4. Average consumption changes due to *Norway Price*, for each price zone and time period,with temperature differences.

Further, Figure 4 shows that controlling for temperature sensitivity affects the effect of *Norway Price*. For all price zones, the increase in electricity consumption due to *Norway Price* is highest in January when temperature is not controlled for. Controlling for temperature generates more similar results across time periods within each price zone, and enhances comparability of results without external factors, isolating the effect of *Norway Price*, and is therefore the focus of the subsequent analysis.

Figure 4 shows that the individual months consistently have larger confidence intervals than the winter, as they have less data points. The average confidence interval of an individual month is 0.64%, and 0.38% of the winter period.

Evaluating the average results of the three winter months, NO2 has the highest consumption increase at 4.18%, compared to NO1 and NO5. NO2 has historically experienced the highest spot prices of the three price zones, see Figure 2, which might attribute to the large difference. This underpins that households are price responsive, and that *Norway Price* removes the price incentive to change, move, or decrease electricity consumption. This is opposed to the group *Without Norway Price*, who has a stronger incentive to reduce its consumption.

B. Impact on the Daily Consumption Profile

Next, the models were run on an hourly basis for all the time periods, however as the impact in January was the most significant, it is the only result shown in Figure 5. The plot shows the impact of *Norway Price* on the changes in the daily consumption pattern for each hour of the day (hour 0 to 23), on average, comparing January 2025 to January 2026. The effect of *Norway Price* is shown for each price zone, with and without controlling for temperature.

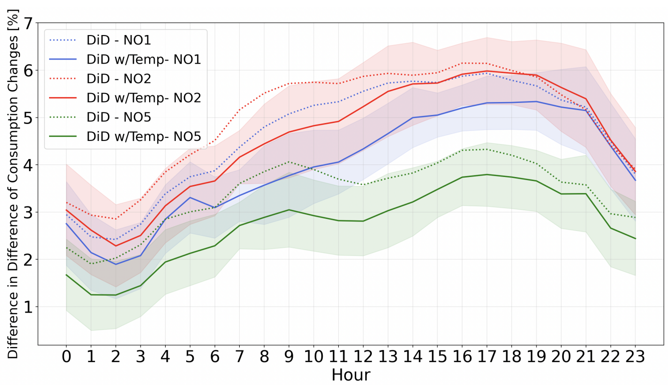

Figure 5. Hourly consumption changes due to *Norway Price* per price zone, both with (solid line) and without (dotted line) controlling for temperature.

There is a clear pattern of the impact of *Norway Price* in all price zones, showing that consumption increases more during daytime and in the evening, compared to the night hours. The general daily load profile shows a similar pattern, indicating that households increase their consumption in relative numbers more in hours when electricity consumption is already high. If Figure 5 had displayed a flat profile, it would imply that the *With Norway Price* group consistently used the same additional percentage amount of electricity throughout the day, compared to *Without Norway Price*. However, the figure clearly demonstrates that this is not the case.

The higher consumption increase in the evening hours might imply that energy intensive tasks (e.g. EV charging), that were previous postponed to later in the evening when spot prices were lower, is less significant. If sufficiently widespread among Norwegian households, this behavioural shift could substantially increase peak-hour demand and place greater strain on the power grid.

The sufficiently smaller change in consumption observed during nighttime supports this argument, as the modest increase in consumption is likely driven primarily by continued indoor heating.

VI. Discussion

Households with *Norway Price* have significantly changed their level of electricity consumption, both on an average level and their daily load profile. Figure 4 shows an average increase in consumption between 2.3% - 5.0% across all time periods and price zones.

The analysis is subject to limitations, and the findings should therefore be interpreted with appropriate caution. One significant limitation is self-selection bias. The higher baseline consumption in households *With Norway Price* and difference in temperature sensitivity is accounted for by the *Difference in Difference* approach. However, unobserved exogenous factors, such as EV-ownership and heat pump adoption, cannot be accounted for. While the results suggest reduced energy-saving and load-shifting behaviour under *Norway Price*, grid tariffs may still provide incentives to redistribute consumption.

January experiences larger consumption increases, which could imply that households gradually increase their electricity use as they become accustomed to the lower electricity price associated with *Norway Price*. Over time, this adjustment could lead to a further decline of energy saving practices, potentially resulting in the near-complete removal of conservation efforts in private households.

NO2 has the highest consumption increase, compared to NO1 and NO5. As NO2 has historically experienced higher spot prices, see Figure 2, *Norway Price* might seem as an even better proposition from a private economic view, and lead to a larger increase of electricity use and decrease in energy saving behaviour. NO2 also has the highest average temperature sensitivity, see Figure 1, which might explain the larger consumption increase.

VII. Conclusion

This paper has applied the *Difference in Difference* method to analyse the possible changes in electricity consumption in Norwegian households following the implementation of *Norway Price*, with the use of a consumption dataset provided by *Elhub*. The results show that the introduction of *Norway Price* has caused the general consumption level in households to increase, with an even more pronounced effect during peak load hours, which both intensify the strain on the electricity grid. The average increase in electricity consumption for price zones NO1, NO2, and NO5 is around 3-5%. Households in NO1 in January increased their consumption with a high of 6% in the evenings peak load hours.

The hypothesised symmetry is demonstrated in the results, with the estimates lying in the same range as the most relevant literature reviewed, around 2-7%. Some literature found much larger reductions, however these are concentrated in international evidence, and not as comparable.

The results show that *Norway Price* dampens the incentives for electricity efficiency and load-shifting. The magnitude and impact of this effect can not be concluded from this paper, however it is clear that the effect is significant and moving in the wrong direction.

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