

Irish Social Policy in Recession and Recovery

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Planning for Recovery

Key questions:

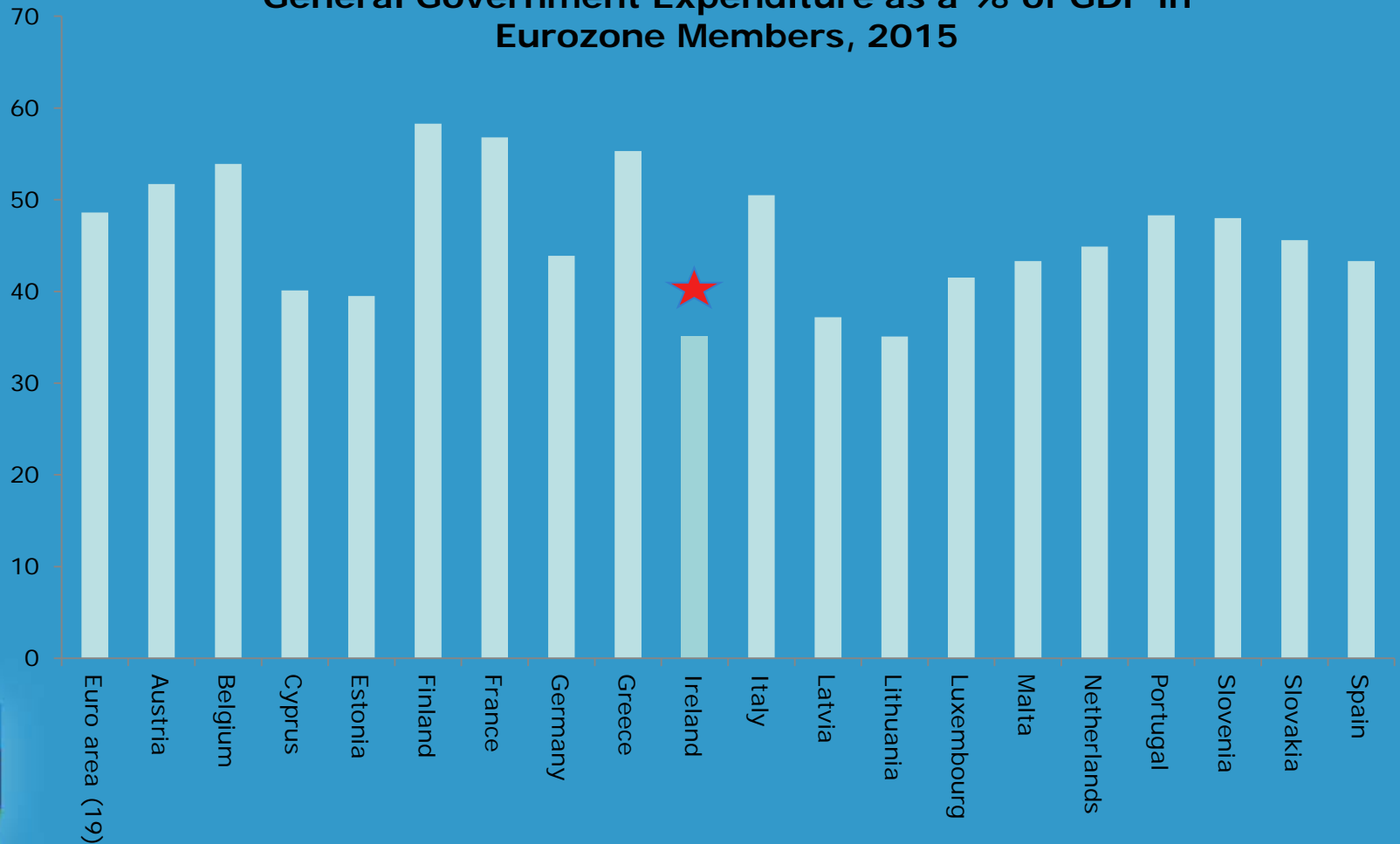
- Macro
 - Scale of spending on social policies
 - Source of funds for spending on social policies
- Micro:
 - Focus of investment
 - Benefits vs services
 - Capital vs current
- Management
 - Moving beyond boom and bust
 - Enabling planning and countercyclical investment
 - Balancing legacy commitments and emerging needs
 - Managing complex services and programmes



These are explored using historical and comparative evidence and some examples from housing policy.

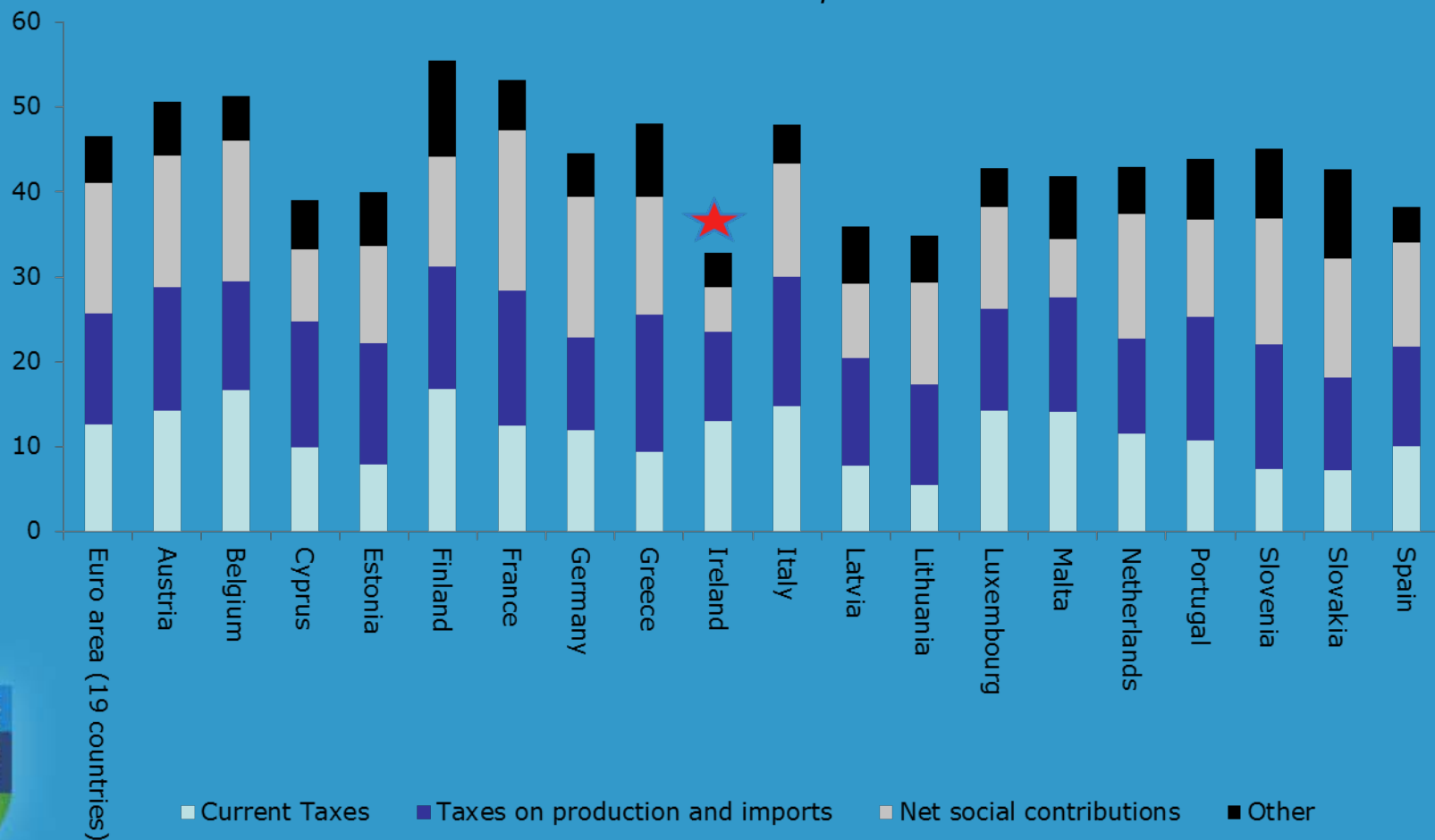
Macro Issue #1: Scale of Social Policy Spending

General Government Expenditure as a % of GDP in Eurozone Members, 2015

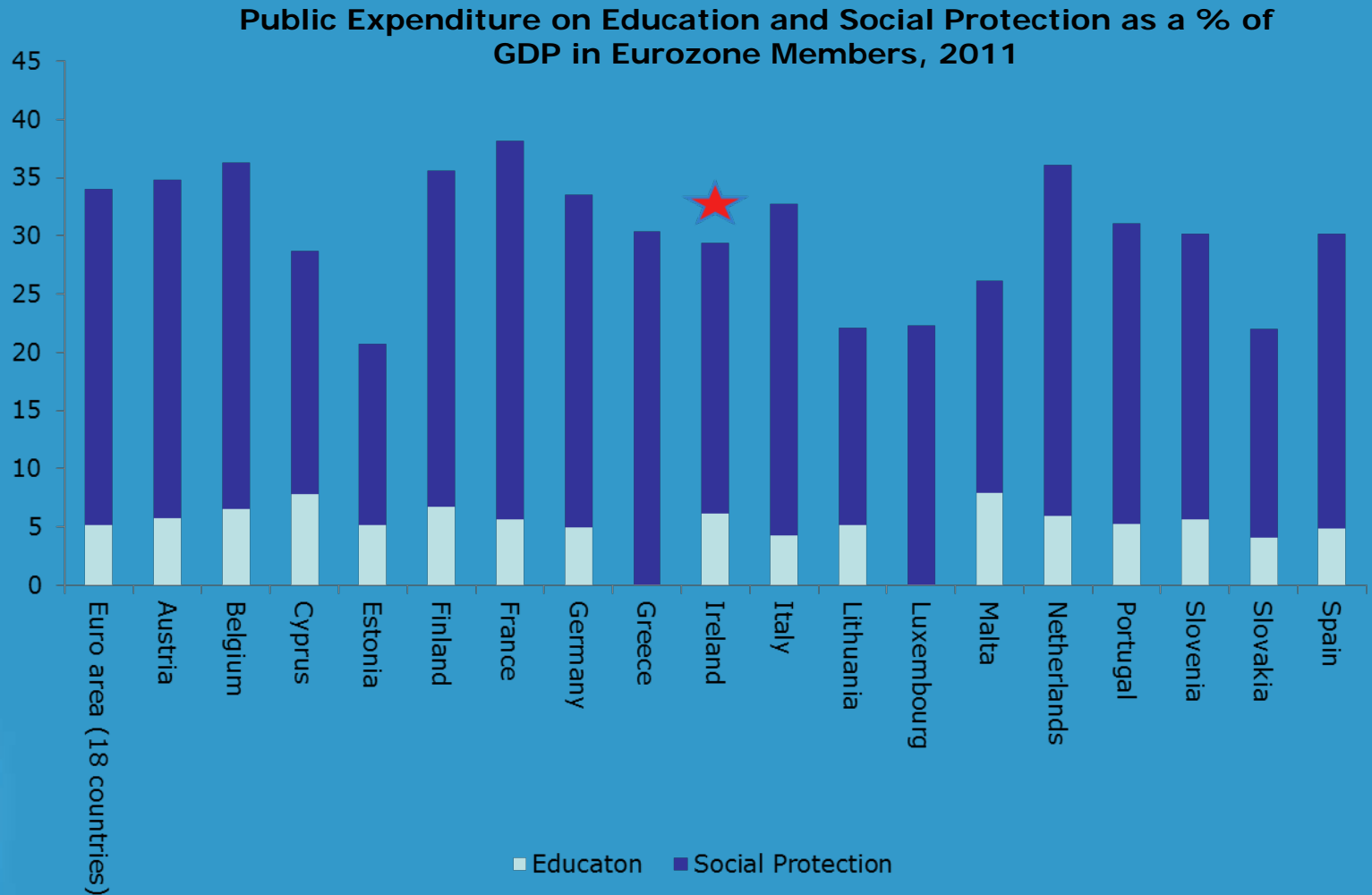


Macro Issue #2: Sources of Revenue for Social Policy Spending

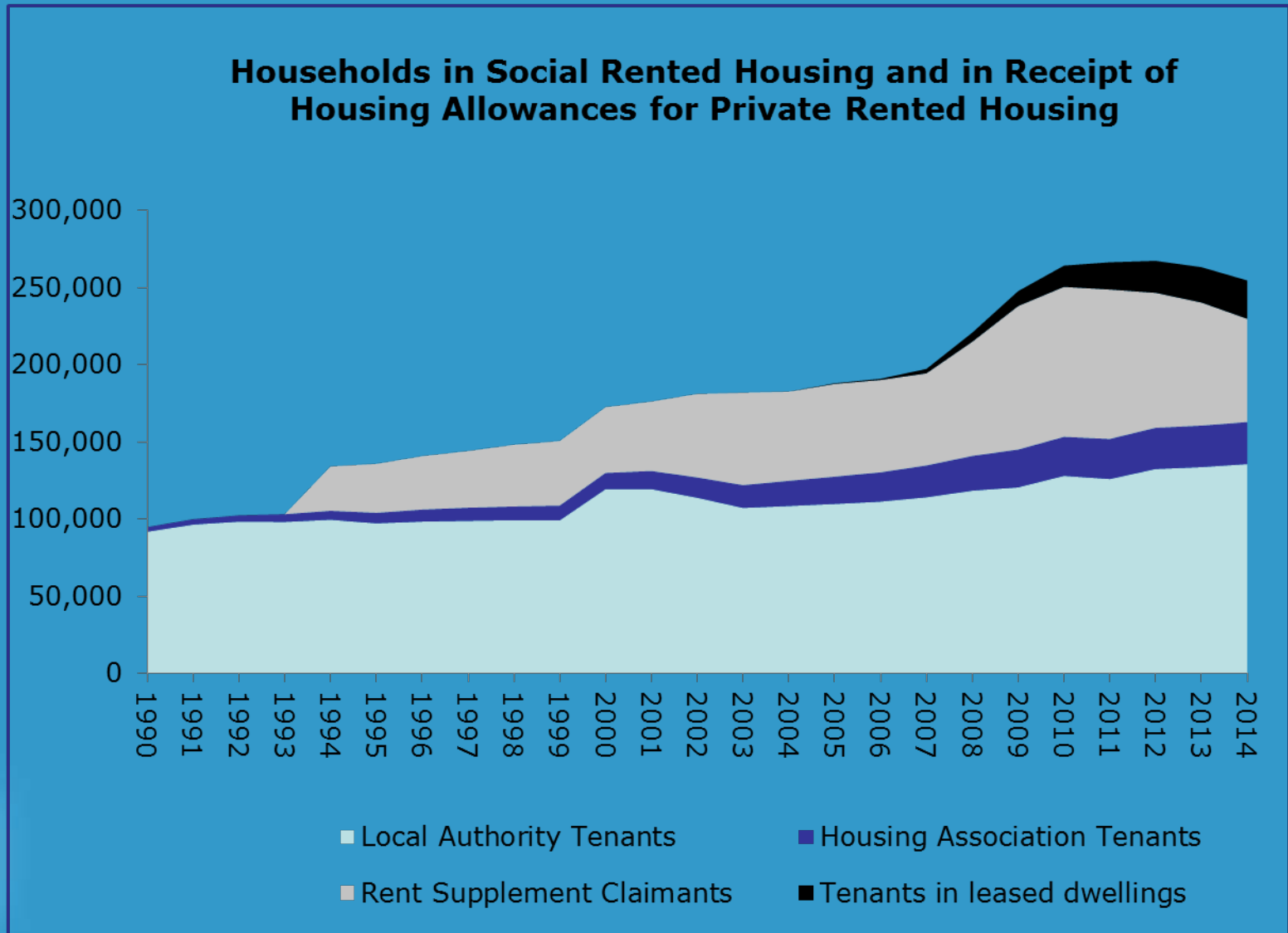
General Government Revenue as a % of GDP in Eurozone Members, 2015



Micro Issue #1: Benefits vs Services



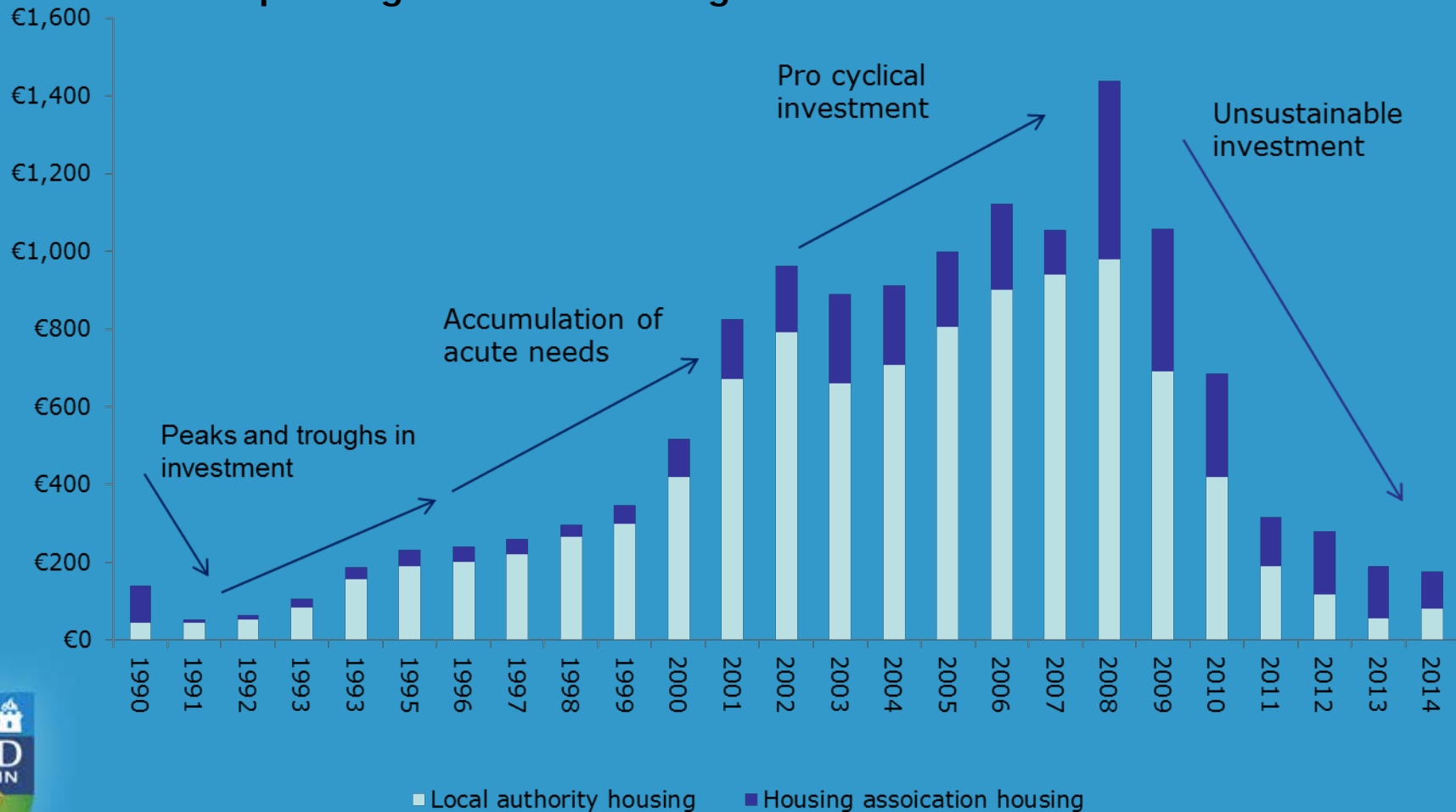
Micro Issue #2: Capital Vs Current



Management Issue #1: Beyond Boom and Bust

Millions

Spending on Social Housing Provision in Ireland 1990-2014



Management Issue #2: Balancing Legacy Commitments and Emerging Needs

- Poor record of reforming legacy commitments:
 - Land reform versus investment in industry
 - Social protection versus activation
 - General hospitals versus regional hospitals/centres of excellence
- This record limits the potential for spending on emerging needs such as:
 - Childcare
 - Child protection
 - Old age pensions and home care



Management Issue #3: Managing Complex Services and Programmes

- Poor record in this regard may explain our preference for:
 - low taxes rather than high taxes
 - benefits rather than services
 - Central government rather than local government services.
- Need to value and train managers and enable them implement reforms
- Historically poor record of policy evaluation and monitoring:
 - More analysis of administrative data and the establishment of the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service has definitely improved the situation and NESC does superb work.
 - But the generalist civil service recruitment model is outmoded
 - Why is the evaluation service only economically focussed?
 - Why is little or no independent academic policy research commissioned?
- Weak record of managing contracted out services such as:
 - PPPs
 - Regulation of “voluntary” sector service providers

