Three Targets of the Energy Transition: Analysis

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Looking at these three targets together, we can state the following:

- The three targets are not ends in themselves; they are pursued in order to achieve *superordinate goals* that we refer to as *motives* in this book to differentiate them on a conceptual level. We will describe these motives in the next chapter.
- The three targets of the *Energiewende* are mutually *independent*. Setting only two, or only just one, out of the three targets would certainly constitute a sensible energy policy.
- The crucial aspect of these targets is their *quantitative dimension*. This is what makes the *Energiewende* an ambitious and, so far, globally unique project. This is what largely defines the costs, policy tools and social conflicts associated with the implementation of the *Energiewende*.

In More Concrete Terms: An energy policy with the same targets *in terms of direction* but less ambitious quantitative design such as

- Shutdown of nuclear power plants by 2030
- Expansion of RE to 35% by 2030 and to 80% by 2050
- Increase in electricity efficiency by 1.0% per year

would satisfy the underlying motives just as well (only more slowly), but would definitely be much cheaper and easier.

In other words, we have to distinguish between the basic concept—i.e. *target directions*—of the *Energiewende* and its concrete design, i.e. its specific quantitative targets and milestones. One can advocate for the former and consider the latter as being unnecessarily difficult and expensive.

T. Unnerstall, *The German Energy Transition*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-54329-0_3

Conversely,
the *Energiewende* would be conceivable with an even more ambitious design:

- Shutdown of nuclear power plants by 2018
- Expansion of RE to 80% by 2035
- Increase in electricity efficiency as before by 1.6% per year

Technically even these shorter-term targets are achievable—but this in turn would also have a significant impact on costs and policies of the *Energiewende*.