

In the course of last two decades the German foreign policy has significantly changed as far as the use of military force is concerned. It can be seen that this process is a result of a rational adaptation to new circumstances. In this thesis an effect of social norms and shared beliefs on shaping the German military policy is accentuated. The concept of civil-military culture was used in order to explain why the German military policy still differs from a “normal rational policy”. This German exceptionality can be on the one hand explained by persisting influence of the culture of restraint in using military power that is still a noticeable part of the German strategic identity, on the other hand this thesis pointed out an effect of shared perceptions of German society about the military. Results of an analysis of how mass media report on Bundeswehr and its soldiers are used as evidence that the dominant image of Bundeswehr as a humanitarian organisation strongly limits the way of how soldiers can be deployed. Whereas post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian missions are seen to belong to basic tasks for Bundeswehr, according to the persistent image of the military any kind of a battle deployment is believed to be inappropriate and inadequate.