

American policy towards European integration process has always seemed equivocal: on one hand it actively supported and encouraged the process, but on the other hand it tried to contain some specific European ambitions and steer the process in a desirable direction. The objective of the thesis is to offer a possible explanation of the long-term US policy towards the European integration and European region in general. The dissertation presents a hypothesis that the American policy towards Europe since the Second World War until current times can be explained within the theoretical concept of „regional hegemony strategy“. The concept builds on neorealist and neoliberal interpretations of hegemony, which are applied to the process of formulation of American grand strategy. It identifies a set of independent variables effecting the resulting strategy and operationalizes the expected strategy into particular goals. The empirical part of the dissertation then tests the established hypothesis in two ways. In the first part it analyzes the identified independent variables and tests the causality between their historical evolution and evolution of the American grand strategy, especially in relation to the European region. In the consequent parts, it focuses on the American policy towards the European integration process, considered to be a component of the identified strategy. Six historical case studies test coherency of the American policy pretensions in relation to the identified goals of the regional hegemony strategy. Both testings prove the concept to be valid for explanation of the American policy towards Europe and the integration process. Based on the analysis the thesis also point out, however, that as the objective variables change since the beginning of the 21st century, so the American strategy should be expected to be shifting away from the regional hegemony logic.