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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>NEOCLASSICAL REALISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY: SEARCHING FOR ITS OWN PATH</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	Neoclassical realism emerged as part of the neorealists' response to the criticism of their core theoretical provisions, intended to adapt the latter to the challenges of post-bipolar international relations. However, with further elucidation and formalization of the key ideas and premises of neoclassical realism it started to assert itself as an independent research approach, and even more so, as a special, metasynthetic theory. In order to assess the validity of these claims and, in general, to better understand the place of neoclassical realism in the theory of international relations, this paper considers it within the context of the evolutionary logic of the realist paradigm and neorealism, in particular. The first section identifies the origins and main theoretical provisions of neoclassical realism. The second section covers modern theoretical debates on the essence of and prospects for further development of analytical and methodological aspects of this approach. In order to provide a better understanding of the epistemological potential of the neoclassical realism, the third section examines empirical researches carried out within its framework. The author concludes that at the moment neoclassical realism can hardly qualify for the status of an independent theoretical position, let alone a meta-theory. It is more appropriate to consider it as a peculiar form, specific research model within the framework of the (neo)realist paradigm. As such, it allows putting forward verifiable hypotheses based on the analysis of the relationships between the independent, dependent and interfering variables, and also opens up new opportunities for conducting empirical research on a wide range of subject matters. At the same time, there is still a lot of work to be done to overcome the eclecticism inherent to neoclassical realism and to better define its ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations.
<b>KEY WORDS</b>	realism, neoclassical realism, neorealism, system approach, foreign policy, theory of international relations
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	_____
<b>FOR CITATION</b>	Levchenko A.V. 2023. Neoclassical realism in international relations theory: Searching for its own path. <i>Lomonosov World Politics Journal</i> , vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 84–106. DOI: 10.48015/2076-7404-2023-15-4-84-106. (In Russ.)