



CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC REFORM AND TRANSFORMATION
Department of Economics, Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS
Tel: 0131 451 3623 Fax: 0131 451 3498 E-Mail: R.Cameron@hw.ac.uk
World-Wide Web: <http://www.hw.ac.uk/ecoWWW/cert>

Grime and Punishment: Job Insecurity and Wage Arrears in the Russian Federation

Hartmut Lehmann,* Jonathan Wadsworth and Alessandro Acquisti*****

*Centre for Economic Reform and Transformation, Heriot-Watt University; IZA, Bonn, Germany; and WDI, Ann Arbor, Michigan. email: h.lehmann@hw.ac.uk

**Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Royal Holloway College, University of London

***School of Information Management and Systems, University of California

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Abstract

Using information from two complementary household survey datasets, we show that the dominant form of labour market adjustment in the Russian transition process has been the delayed receipt of wages. More than half the workforce is experiencing some form of disruption to their pay. Wage arrears are found across the private, state and budgetary sector. Workers in the metropolitan centre are less affected by delayed and incomplete wage payments than workers in the provinces. There is less evidence that individual characteristics contribute much toward the incidence of wage arrears, but the persistence of arrears is concentrated on a subset of the working population. We show that workers can only exercise the exit option of a job quit from a firm not paying wages in full or on time if the outside labour market is sufficiently dynamic.

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1. Introduction

‘All these new ideas, reforms, theories, have penetrated even to us in the provinces, but to see the whole picture and see it clearly, one must be in the capital.’ Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 1866.

Six years into transition, the Russian labour market is still in turmoil. Dramatic falls in output and continued uncertainty surrounding the transition process have led to a series of conflicts over enterprise funds between the tax authorities, the banks and the workforce, as well as between enterprises and their regional governments and between the regions and the centre. These conflicts have been exacerbated by liquidity crises at the federal level. Against this background of uncertainty and negative output shocks, aggregate employment levels remain relatively higher than might be expected. It may be that employment has not fallen much because firms have adjusted to contractions in sales and growing liquidity constraints in other ways.¹ Adjustments on the intensive, rather than the extensive, margin such as an involuntary unpaid leave of absence, a reduction in hours worked, or the increased use of temporary contract work are all possible explanations. Moreover, some managers may tell their workers not to report for work without making them redundant. In so doing, the enterprise avoids both salary and redundancy payments.

Another way in which firms may cope with the effects of transition is through price, rather than quantity, adjustment. Firms could adjust their cost schedules by not paying wages. Alfandari and Schaffer (1996) argue that wage arrears are used by management in some firms to extract tax concessions from the government. Clarke (1998) suggests that implicit or explicit agreements between the federal government and the banks over the seizure of enterprise bank deposits in order to meet federal tax and debt liabilities have left many firms with little cash to pay wages, irrespective of the firm’s profitability. A lack of credit facilities in the banking sector then exacerbates this cash flow problem.

Wage arrears could also be viewed as a loan from workers with few outside opportunities to firms in genuine distress. If the firm is dominated by insiders with vested interests in the continued existence of the enterprise, such loans will be more likely. If the firm is in distress, the workers’ only outlet under existing law is to sue the firm for bankruptcy. A form of implicit contract may arise, whereby the worker trades wage arrears for continued employment. This could be supported by the continued existence of fringe payments that may be unavailable if the

¹ It is of course possible that unreported activities reduce the gap between measured and actual output. See Johnson, Kaufmann and Schleifer (1997) for some evidence on the extent of the unofficial economy in Russia. Nevertheless, activities in the unofficial economy can only account partially for the disparate reductions in measured output and employment.

worker left the firm. Real wage cuts, over and above those already taking place, may not achieve the same level of commitment by the workforce.

Compounding all this is the role of central government in paying off its debts by delaying payment for state orders and refusing to release funds for the payment of wages in the budgetary sector, i.e., health, education and public administration. Consequently there may be large regional variation in the incidence of arrears, depending on the industrial structure, the extent of transformation, the regional government's response to shocks and its relationship with the centre. Certain types of workers could also be disproportionately affected. Issues of whether firms discriminate against certain workers in their application of wage arrears,² whether patronage is an important element or whether firms use efficiency wage type considerations to retain the most productive members of their workforce have not yet been examined.

This paper attempts to help fill that gap. Standing (1996) presents establishment-level evidence of large regional variations in the proportion of firms that experienced significant wage arrears. However, these data are only qualitative. In a paper subsequent to ours, Earle and Sabirianova (1999) pool individual and enterprise data to identify firm-level effects on wage arrears. Our paper provides evidence from two household survey datasets with which to analyse wage arrears across regions, industries, firm types and individuals. The first is a supplement to the March 1996 and November 1997 Russian Labour Force Survey (RLFS), in initially five and then four representative regions of the Russian Federation. The second is the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS), a smaller, but nationally sampled longitudinal survey of individuals, covering many of the same issues as in the RLFS supplement and following its sample population over the period from 1994 to 1996.³ Desai and Idson (1998) use the RLMS to focus on household characteristics of those in arrears and the likelihood that this induces bartering among those affected. We extend their analysis by introducing more establishment characteristics and exploit the panel nature of the RLMS to examine individual dynamics and the persistence of wage arrears.

While the problem of wage arrears may stem from the economic position of the firm and the institutional structure during transition, we contend that responses by individuals can shed light on some areas that would otherwise be difficult to obtain from an analysis of firms alone. Using these two complementary datasets, we examine which individuals and which sectors are most

² Layard and Richter (1995) give a cross-tabulation of the extent of 1994 wage arrears using the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (or VCIOM, its Russian acronym) survey of individuals, while Gordon (1997), using VCIOM data, shows the overall rising incidence of wage arrears between 1992 and 1996.

³ The supplement was developed by the authors, Evgeniy Gontmakher, Ingrid Leiprecht, Douglas Lippoldt, Viktor Starodubrovskiy and Ruslan Yemtsov as part of the TACIS-Ace project T94-1073-R. For a full description of the supplement, see Lehmann, Wadsworth and Acquisti (1998).

affected by arrears and begin to build up a picture of the evolution of some of these trends across time.

2. Data

The initial analysis is based on the March 1996 and November 1997 rounds of the Russian Labour Force Survey (RLFS), conducted by the national and regional offices of Goskomstat. The basic survey asks standard questions about employment, job search and related issues to a random sample of households in all regions of the Russian Federation. A supplement, tailored to our research, was added to the original survey in five Russian regions. The five regions, Moscow City, Moscow Oblast, Chuvash Republic, Chelyabinsk and Krasnoyarski Krai, were selected as representative of the diffuse labour market types throughout the Russian Federation. More than 17,000 households were interviewed in these regions, leading to around 25,000 individual records on the population of working age. Responses by military/security personnel are limited and so are excluded from the analysis. Some of the variables analysed, for example, the decomposition of ownership into new private and privatized firms, and information on the form of wage arrears could only be ascertained from questions in the RLFS supplement.

Our second data source is the second phase of the Russian Longitudinal Monitor Survey (RLMS), a longitudinal panel of around 4,000 households across the Russian Federation conducted in the Fall of each year between 1994 and 1996. The data contain a set of demographic and establishment characteristics, not always the same as those in the RLFS, together with information on the labour market activities of its sample. Despite, its relatively small size, the main advantage of this source is that it can track individuals and the incidence of wage arrears over time and control for any unobserved individual heterogeneity that may have an effect on the probability of experiencing wage arrears. For example, if patronage is an important determinant of arrears then this will be unobserved, but failure to account for this may bias the results. As with the RLFS, we restrict our sample to employees of working age and exclude the military.⁴ The survey design does not follow individuals if they move, but does sample new occupants of the same address in order to try to keep the panel balanced. We therefore treat each wave as a separate cross-section in the initial exploration of the data and then match individuals across waves in order to analyse issues related to persistence and mobility. There are around 10,000 observations in each wave, of which around 4,000 are in work in any wave.

The survey questions dealing with wage arrears are complementary across the two surveys. Both ask questions of the form, 'Does your place of work owe you any money?' The RLFS

⁴ The RLMS is ambiguous on the nature of self-employment, referring instead to the extent of self-ownership in the enterprise where the individual works. We exclude only those who say they own between 51 and 100 per cent of the enterprise.

supplement then asks for the month in which workers were last paid together with the amount owing and the type of payment made by the firm, ranging from complete and on time, to late and incomplete. The RLMS asks simply ‘How much money have they not paid you in total?’, together with the number of months since the worker was paid last. Respondents in both surveys are asked to state the amount of money received from their employers after tax in the past month. There is no distinction made between basic wages and bonus. These wage responses are then deflated by a national price deflator indexed to 100 in January 1996.⁵ There is no indication of whether wage arrears are estimated before or after tax. With no information on how and when arrears accumulated, the total amount of arrears is deflated by the inflation rate at the time of interview.

3. Job Insecurity and Wage Arrears

How have employment policies by firms adjusted to these uncertain times? One possibility is that workers may be placed on temporary contracts or short-time work by firms in trouble. The incidence of contract working and the pattern of hours worked are outlined in Table 1 using RLFS data.

The vast majority of those in work have a permanent contract, (row 1).⁶ However, fixed-term contracts are more prevalent among the stock of workers with new jobs, as measured by those with job tenure of 12 months or less, (row 2). Around 1 in 9 new jobs are temporary. Since new jobs are at the margin of adjustment, it may be that a higher incidence of temporary work among new jobs is an indication of greater insecurity in the labour market to come. These numbers are, however, still low by some Western standards.⁷ Probit estimates of the incidence of permanent contracts for those in new jobs show that workers over 55 years of age and those working either voluntarily or involuntarily less than 30 hours a week, have substantially lower probabilities of having a permanent contract. There is also a higher incidence of temporary work in the metropolitan area than in the provinces and new jobs are less likely to be permanent in the new private sector.⁸

Job insecurity may also be expressed by the chances of job separations. Using the same RLMS data, Lehmann and Wadsworth (1999) establish that separations are higher at any job tenure in Russia than they are in Poland and Britain. However, the RLMS data do not distinguish between voluntary quits and layoffs. Complementary firm-level data from the four regions in the

⁵ There are no population weights in either dataset.

⁶ More than 90 per cent of those on fixed term contracts would have preferred to have a permanent contract.

⁷ Gregg and Wadsworth (2000) show that around 1 in 6 new jobs are temporary in Britain.

⁸ These results are available from the authors on request or may be found in Lehmann, Wadsworth and Acquisti (1998).

November 1997 RLFS show that, in large and medium enterprises, the share of layoffs in separations varied from 5 per cent in the Chuvash Republic to 9 per cent in Krasnoyarsk while the share of voluntary quits was lowest in Krasnoyarsk with 72 per cent, and highest in the Chuvash Republic with 92 per cent. On the basis of these data, layoffs seem to constitute only a small part of separations.⁹

When asked about employment, respondents may think that this refers to the enterprise where they deposit their labour book, whether they actually work there or not. Nearly all those who have deposited their labour book with an enterprise will have a permanent contract. For this reason, it is useful to see how many hours those who claim to have a permanent contract actually worked in their primary employment and to compare these with the usual hours worked. Table 1 shows that the vast majority of individuals worked the same hours as usual. Around two-thirds of those not working normal hours are working fewer, rather than more, hours than usual. Nearly half of those who worked less were on zero hours. This suggests that about 3 per cent of the sample were on leave. About half of this group, or 1.5 per cent of the total sample of employed workers, had not received a wage in the month of interview, and were presumably on unpaid leave during the reference week.¹⁰ There is some variation in fewer hours worked at the regional level, with a spread of around 5 percentage points between the Chuvash Republic, where we observe the highest value, and Moscow City, where less than 5 per cent of workers worked fewer than normal hours. Despite these regional variations, it appears that in both 1996 and 1997 most employees had a permanent contract and a full workload.

According to the RLMS, around 9 per cent of the employed were on unpaid leave in 1994. The median duration for this group was 30 days, while the mean duration amounted to 43 days. In both 1995 and 1996, the median duration of unpaid leave was again 30 days, with somewhat higher values for the mean duration than in 1994 (53 and 50 days, respectively). The incidence, on the other hand, fell in 1995 to 6 per cent and rose to 7.5 per cent in 1996. Few workers are employed part-time. Around 3 per cent of the RLFS sample of employees work part-time. Part-time work does not seem to be the route by which enterprises maintain employment levels. Nor do many workers seem to hold a second job. No more than 3 per cent of employees admit to being engaged in additional work.

This evidence does not suggest that there is insecurity on the intensive margin for most of the employed workforce. Given the moderate fall of employment relative to output during the first

⁹ The high quit shares are somewhat dubious as firms might force workers to quit voluntarily to avoid responsibility for severance pay. Small changes in net employment in Russia in the face of large total separations can also be explained by simultaneous large hirings (Foley, 1997a).

¹⁰ The fractions of persons on zero hours and on unpaid leave are reported for March 1996 and not shown in Table 1. We get this low incidence of unpaid leave in our RLFS sample because the two relatively dynamic labour markets of Moscow City and Moscow Oblast dominate the sample.

years of transition¹¹ this seems remarkable. One possible explanation is that there has been wage flexibility instead (Layard and Richter, 1995). At the end of 1995, average real wages had, according to Goskomstat (1996b), fallen to around 34 per cent of the level observed before transition began (January 1992). Another price adjustment mechanism open to enterprises is to delay wage payments to workers. In March 1996, wage arrears for the entire economy averaged one month's wage bill (Goskomstat, 1996b). There is little doubt that the problem has worsened since then. Goskomstat figures put the aggregate stock of arrears at the beginning of 1997 at around 50 trillion rubles, some 138 per cent of the monthly wage bill (*Russian Economic Trends*, 1997).

The number of workers affected by arrears is huge. According to the RLMS, the wages of six out of ten workers were in arrears across the whole country in 1996, up from 40 per cent in 1994. Moreover, according to RLFS data in Table 2, there is a substantial variation in the incidence of arrears across regions. In Moscow City, more than three-quarters of all employees received a complete wage on time, while in Chelyabinsk, Krasnoyarsk and the Chuvash Republic only around one-third did so.¹² Outside Moscow, the typical form of arrears appears to have changed over time as the arrears problem worsened. In 1996, the modal form of arrears was to pay an incomplete salary but on time. By late 1997, according to the RLFS, the modal arrears payment was incomplete and late. Moreover of those with wages in arrears, the 1997 RLFS indicates that just under half of those living outside Moscow were also paid some of their arrears in-kind, with products made by their firms.¹³ On the basis of these figures it is hard to maintain the hypothesis that wage arrears are not a major problem in many parts of the Russian Federation.

One explanation for the divergent performance of regions could simply be that, as a result of political lobbying, workers in the budgetary sector receive wages complete and without delay in the centre but not in the provinces.¹⁴ The data do not support this hypothesis as the middle panel of Table 3 shows. If anything, workers in the budgetary sector in the provinces have a lower incidence of wage arrears compared to privatized firms. The worst offenders are not government agencies but state firms.¹⁵ In March 1996, the budgetary sector accounted for 35 per cent of

¹¹ According to Goskomstat (1996a), employment fell between the beginning of 1992 and the end of 1995 by about 7 per cent, while GDP fell by around 40 per cent. Production in medium and large enterprises shrank by 60 per cent over the same period (*Russian Economic Trends*, 1995).

¹² Of the 8 regions identified in the RLMS, the incidence of arrears in 1996 was 31.7 per cent Metropolitan, 69.1 per cent North West, 49.3 per cent Central, 66.3 per cent Volga, 65.6 per cent Caucasus, 65.7 per cent Urals, 65.7 per cent Western Siberia and 67.9 per cent East.

¹³ The percentage figures are 1.3 for Moscow, 44.7 for Krasnoyarsk, 35.9 for Chelyabinsk and 59.7 for the Chuvash Republic. Of those not in arrears only 3 per cent were paid in kind, although this rises to 10 per cent outside Moscow.

¹⁴ In March 1996, around 42 per cent of all employees worked in the budgetary sector. Those in state-owned firms in other services, transport, distribution and trade, health and education and finance are considered to be in the budgetary sector.

¹⁵ The production sector comprises agriculture, manufacturing, construction and mining.

employment and 30 per cent of all those with wages in arrears in our sample. In no region is this ranking reversed. This must imply that, in March 1996, differential regional transfers of government funds were not the main reason for regional divergence in wage arrears.¹⁶

The incidence of arrears is lower in the new private sector. This could be consistent with the idea that wage arrears are a means of attracting tax concessions in the state and privatized sectors. However, in the regions outside Moscow, the incidence of arrears in new private sector firms is much higher. This suggests that the regional environment can influence the behaviour of all firms irrespective of ownership. If most firms withhold pay, the lack of a decent outside option for workers makes it easier for other firms to do likewise.

The industrial composition of the regions could also be important. Certain industries were hit harder by the transformation process and the legacy of planning has left some regions with a disproportionate share of industries in distress. As Table 4 demonstrates, there are indeed certain industrial sectors that are particularly bad offenders. According to the RLMS in 1996, just 40 per cent of employees in mining, 20 per cent of those in agriculture and 33 per cent of employees in manufacturing received a wage complete and on time. For workers in distribution/trade and finance, wage arrears do not seem to pose as much of a problem. Only 31 per cent and 20 per cent of workers in these sectors have wages in arrears in 1996.

We next estimate probit regressions of the incidence of wage arrears using RLMS data. We present the results from simple pooling of each cross-section across the three waves alongside random effects estimates, which account for unobserved heterogeneity by taking account of the fact that the same worker could appear up to 3 times in the sample.¹⁷ The regressions include region, industry, firm type and individual worker controls. The marginal effects in Table 5 represent the impact of each variable on the probability of having wages in arrears holding other factors constant as percentage point deviations from the sample mean.¹⁸ The size and statistical

¹⁶ Note that the possibility that the federal government made greater efforts to pay wages in the budgetary sector before the 1996 election looks unlikely given the greater rise in the incidence of arrears among other firm types between 1996 and 1997.

¹⁷ Assuming that this heterogeneity is time invariant but unique to the individual so that the error term comprises $v_{i,t} = a_i + u_{i,t}$ $i = 1, 2, \dots, N; t = 1, 2, \dots, T.$, where a_i is the random effect, with $a_i \sim N(0, \sigma_a^2)$ independently of $u_{i,t}$. Each disturbance term thus has variance $Var(v_{i,t}) = Var(\sigma_a^2 + \sigma_u^2)$ and the correlation between error terms for the same individual is given $Corr(a_i + u_{i,t}, a_i + u_{i,s}) = \rho = \sigma_a^2 / (\sigma_a^2 + \sigma_u^2)$. The parameters of the likelihood function, which comprises this model, are estimated using the iterative techniques in the Stata statistical package. The simple pooled probit model is equivalent to assuming that $\rho = 0$. See Greene (1997) for a discussion of random effects probit estimators.

¹⁸ The marginal effect of x_i on the probability of observing wages in arrears, P , is given by $dP/dx_i = \beta_i \phi(XB)$ where $\phi(\cdot)$ is the standard normal density function, X is the vector of characteristics, including x_i , and B the vector of probit coefficients.

significance of the coefficient estimates show that industry, region and enterprise characteristics rather than individual characteristics are the main determinants of wage arrears. Workers in the largest enterprises have the highest probability of experiencing wage arrears. Private ownership reduces the incidence of wage arrears by around 3 percentage points, other things equal. The ranking of industries in the incidence of workers with wages in arrears observed in Table 4 is maintained with the addition of other controls. Workers in manufacturing are some 13 percentage points more likely to experience wage arrears than workers in agriculture, who are in turn some 28 percentage points more likely to experience wage arrears than workers in the finance sector. All occupational groups have a lower incidence of wage arrears compared to the default group of unskilled manual workers. The gap is larger and significant for managers and clerical workers.

The regressions include share ownership and job tenure dummies as potential measures of insider power and the likelihood of the workforce accepting arrears. The share ownership dummies indicate whether the individual worker has a stake in the firm and whether that stake is under 5 per cent. The coefficients are equal and opposite in sign, so that for two-thirds of workers with a stake in the firm, i.e., for those with a share less than 5 per cent, there is no protection from experiencing wage arrears. Ownership reduces the chance of arrears but a small share in the firm raises the likelihood of arrears, other things equal. The impact of job tenure is large and highly significant. Workers with longer tenures have higher probabilities of experiencing wage arrears. These results negate the idea that ownership facilitates arrears over and above the effect of long tenure. An interaction of ownership with job tenure was insignificant and is not reported.

Of the demographic factors, women are around 2.5 percentage points less likely to experience wage arrears. The youngest workers are some 12 points less likely to be in arrears than the default 35–44 year old category, although the difference between other age groups is smaller and less significant. Education seems to have little impact, with the exception of professional training, which seems to increase the chances of being in arrears by some 4.5 percentage points.

Having controlled for the demographic and skill composition of the workforce, ownership and industrial structure, the regression still points to the importance of regional location to the incidence of wage arrears. The marginal effects indicate a regional spread of 25 percentage points between Moscow or St. Petersburg and the East. There is, in addition, a significant positive rural effect on arrears of around 19 points. This may suggest that enterprises and workers living away from the main administrative centres find it harder to plead their case.

The estimated effects do not change much between the simple pooling and the random effects model. The firm/industry level effects continue to dominate, which tends to negate the idea that discrimination across individuals in the same plant is widespread. Nevertheless the probability of experiencing arrears does vary widely across the population. Taking the coefficients together, we

estimate that an unskilled, male, worker aged 35 to 44, living in the Volga region working in a manufacturing enterprise of over 1,000 workers for more than ten years has an arrears probability of 95 per cent. In contrast, a 25 year old woman graduate working in a finance company employing less than 10 workers in the metropolitan area has a 5 per cent chance of suffering wage arrears.

Separate probit regressions by industry and by region, based on RLFS data, confirm the previous results¹⁹. Within each industry, demographic characteristics play a lesser role in the determination of wage arrears than do characteristics related to the establishment. Regional location is the strongest contributing factor of arrears in all industries. The regressions by region, on the other hand, confirm that industry affiliation and firm characteristics dominate the determination of wage arrears in each region. Workers in an industry that on average has a low incidence of wage arrears experience lower risk of wage arrears in all regions. Workers in the metropolitan centre will experience wage arrears if they work in a poorly performing industry.

4. Persistence of Wage Arrears and Worker Mobility

One as yet unresolved issue is how long wage arrears persist and whether the same individuals are affected over time. If wage arrears were shared equally across the population, there may be less cause for concern than if arrears were concentrated on the same individuals. To address this issue, we simply count the number of times individuals are observed with wages in arrears across the three waves of the RLMS, restricting our sample to those continuously in employment.²⁰ While we do not observe the start of the arrears process, we can observe inflows and outflows, together with the cumulation of arrears. Table 6 shows that, over the three year observation period, a combination of rising inflow rate and a falling outflow rate contributed to a rising stock of arrears in the population. The average real level of arrears grew by around 40 per cent and the amount owed rises monotonically according to the number of years the individual is observed in arrears.

Note that these are, usually, multiple incidences of arrears and not just one continuous period of non-payment. To check this we examine the length of time since last paid for each worker with wages in arrears. The figures in brackets give the duration range within which 95 per cent of

¹⁹ The results are available from the authors upon request or may be found in Lehmann, Wadsworth, and Acquisti (1998).

²⁰ The RLMS indicates that, according to a probit estimate, those with wages in arrears were some 5 percentage points more likely to have separated from employment one year later than those with wages not in arrears. Those who drop out of the sample are some 7 points less likely to have wages in arrears, other things equal. Around 30 per cent cannot be matched across successive waves and around 10 per cent leave employment within a year. These two effects therefore work in opposite directions but the overall effect on estimates of persistence by confining the sample to those continuously in employment is more likely to overestimate the degree of persistence.

observations lie. The figures indicate that 95 per cent of those with wages in arrears say they had been last paid less than 12 months ago. The median delay is 2 months in 1994, rising to 4 months in 1996. This is consistent with the increased share of delayed payments observed in Table 2.

Arrears are also distributed unequally. By 1996, one-quarter of the sample working population had been in arrears in each of the three waves, while another quarter had yet to experience any arrears. The median level of arrears does not rise proportionately between new entrants and those in arrears previously, as the second panel in Table 6 shows. This suggests that those in arrears have some of their debt paid off during the year. The median size of arrears relative to previous wages also grows from around one month's salary to 2 months from 1995 to 1996 (panel 3, Table 6).

In order to identify the characteristics of those persistently in arrears, Table 7 presents the results of ordered probit estimates of the probability that an individual will, in wave 3, have been observed in arrears 0, 1, 2 or 3 times. This approach avoids the problem of introducing lagged dependent variables into a regression, which could otherwise deliver inconsistent estimates. The sample is confined to those in employment in all three waves. The ordered probit results mirror the simple binary probit estimates. Unskilled, male, workers between 35 and 44 years of age living in the regions furthest from the metropolitan areas, working in large scale enterprises for ten years or more are most at risk from multiple wage arrears. In addition, in order to distinguish between the extensive and intensive nature of arrears, we present Tobit estimates of the amount of arrears for all workers in employment in 1996. Those not in arrears are censored at zero. We estimate the determinants of the total stock of arrears for each worker, indexed for inflation. The Tobit estimates follow the same basic pattern regarding the incidence and persistence of arrears. The level of arrears is reduced significantly by the presence of foreign ownership at the establishment. Few of the personal characteristics retain any statistical significance. Firm size, job tenure and region dominate.

Finally, there is the question as to why, if firms don't pay wages on time, do workers not simply move elsewhere. This may be because search unemployment is not a valid outside option in all but the most dynamic labour markets. Unemployment benefits are not available to job quits and, when they are paid,²¹ they are not large relative to average wages. Moreover, alternative employment is perhaps available only in the most dynamic regions, typically Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the claim on arrears may be loosened once the worker leaves the establishment. Quits will be encouraged by a dynamic outside labour market (push effects) but discouraged by the need or ability to recoup arrears, magnified when inflation is low (pull effects).

²¹ Clarke (1998) notes that unemployment benefit arrears are now a feature in many regions.

To capture these effects, we measure mobility conditional on arrears over the course of a year using the RLMS panel. We identify three possible labour market transitions; a move from the existing firm to employment with a new establishment, a move from employment to unemployment, and a move from employment to inactivity.²² Of those moving out of employment, around one-third say that they are actively seeking new work and one-quarter say that they are retired. The rest are scattered among other home production activities. We then run a multinomial logit regression on the determinants of these discrete events in Table 8, including a variable to capture whether the worker had wages in arrears one year earlier. The base category is the sample of workers who remain with the same firm over the year. The reported coefficients are marginal effects relative to the sample mean transition probability. The arrears variable is significant and positive for job-to-job moves and also for moves from employment to unemployment or inactivity. The magnitude of these effects is small, however. Those in arrears are around one percentage point more likely to move job-to-job compared with the mean transition probability of 7.5 per cent. The push influence is not quite offset by the inducement to stay and retain employment and/or wages in arrears.

We then interact the arrears dummy with the dummy for the metropolitan areas of Moscow and St. Petersburg. This interaction term is highly significant in the job-to-job move equation, but not for the moves out of employment. In the metropolitan areas, those in arrears are an additional 4.7 points, or around 75 per cent, more likely than other workers to be found in a new job one year later. Thus the exit option to a new job is valid only in a relatively prosperous labour market. Quits may induce firms to pay wages, but this strategy can only work if there are viable outside opportunities. Indeed the RLMS dataset indicates that job-to-job movers who were initially in arrears are some 10 percentage points less likely to be in arrears in the new firm compared with other job-to-job movers. A relatively healthy labour market facilitates job-to-job moves by those in arrears.

5. Implications and Conclusions

In the context of the relatively small falls in employment since the beginning of reform, the evidence on job security in Russia is quite compelling. On the quantity side, Russian workers face relatively secure job prospects. The overwhelming majority of employees have a permanent contract and work full-time. It is also clear that temporary layoffs and unpaid leave affect only a small percentage of the workforce. In addition, short-time work seems not to be the way by which Russian firms maintain employment levels. Despite major demand shocks that have put many Russian enterprises in great financial difficulty, firms seem to try to hold on to their employees.

²² The RLMS cannot distinguish between job quits and layoffs. We believe that job-to-job moves will be dominated

Instead, adjustment to negative demand shocks seems to occur through price rather than quantity changes. Real wages fell steeply from the beginning of the reforms until 1996. The new adjustment factor is now undoubtedly the systematic withholding of wage payments from workers and this is now the dominant form of insecurity for many Russian workers. Moreover, wage arrears are a major problem for certain industrial branches of the economy and provincial regions. In agriculture, manufacturing, construction and health and education less than one-third of all employees received their wages in full in 1996. In the capital of the Russian Federation, late or incomplete wage payments affected just 13 per cent of employees in November 1997. In contrast, in many provincial regions like Chelyabinsk, the Chuvash Republic and Krasnoyarsk, nearly two-thirds of all workers had to be content with such payments.

The datasets at our disposal do not allow us to distinguish the various hypotheses offered as to why firms withhold wages. However, we have provided evidence that allows us to offer some observations. A cynical interpretation of the large regional divergence in wage arrears observed here could be that, historically, rebellion and revolution in Russia have been successful only if carried in the central, urban agglomerations. Therefore, confining the problem of wage arrears to the provinces might allow transition to proceed more smoothly. Our evidence seems to point in this direction, as regional location is a key determinant of wage arrears independent of industry and ownership. However, a closer look at the evidence establishes that the central government is not responsible directly for the high levels and large regional variation of wage arrears. Instead, our evidence implies that the presence or absence of a worker's outside options in a local labour market might best explain this variation. A dynamic local labour market can mitigate the arrears problem by providing a valid outside option with which workers can exercise the quit threat. The reform stance of regional governments, in turn, might be a crucial ingredient in the process of generating such a dynamic environment. The Moscow regional government for its part has helped generate such an environment through its reform programmes and access to the central government that allow firms to survive and even prosper.²³

The large regional variation in the incidence of wage arrears and the fact that many workers in new private firms in the provinces are affected by arrears seem to provide evidence counter to the argument that firms use wage arrears as an instrument to extract tax concessions from the government. Firm characteristics dominate individual characteristics throughout our study. As a result, there is polarization in the incidence of arrears across the working population. Some people seem never to suffer from wage arrears while others do so continuously. This may be due to the uneven incidence of wage arrears across sectors rather than some kind of extreme

by quits, as in most Western countries. Also recall the low layoff shares cited in section 3.

²³ Schleifer (1997) provides evidence on how entrepreneurs differ in their perception of the reform stance of their respective regional governments. Entrepreneurs in Moscow see their regional government as reform-friendly and supportive of private business activities, while provincial entrepreneurs complain about an administrative environment that is hostile to private business.

efficiency wage strategy pursued by firms. Observable individual characteristics do not drive the arrears problem nor do controls for unobserved heterogeneity, perhaps capturing discrimination or patronage, alter these findings.

There is an argument that workers may tolerate wage arrears in their primary employment, because most of them hold multiple jobs with income sources in secondary and tertiary employment being much more important than the income source from primary employment. Our evidence does not support this. Employees who face wage arrears exercise their quit option in the metropolitan centre only. The fact that they do not exercise this option in the provincial regions is not because they do not care about primary employment, but because they have no outside jobs to move to. Nor does it appear that workers may be taking advantage of fringe benefits that would not be available if they left the firm. Evidence from the four regions in the 1997 RLFS indicates that only health insurance and holiday pay appear to be cited by workers as additional benefits provided by their firms.²⁴ However, payments in-kind are given to around a quarter of the workforce with wage arrears outside Moscow.

Evidence provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicates that wage arrears are also a problem in the Ukraine and other countries of the former Soviet Union. Yet they appear to be less of an issue in the transition economies of Eastern and Central Europe. For example, Lehmann (1998) shows that, in Hungary, even firms in deep financial trouble consider payment of wages as the first call on funds. Perhaps, a weak legal environment in Russia and the other CIS countries makes it more difficult to enforce contracts and this explains the difference. Our evidence lends support to the notion that wage arrears are an important problem, affecting nearly two-thirds of the working population and averaging around twice the average monthly wage. This is the most apparent manifestation of insecurity currently observed in the Russian labour market.

²⁴ Foley (1997b) shows that arrears increase the probability of taking a second job. The author also establishes that, according to the RLMS, multiple job holding grew in the years 1992 to 1996, but only from 5.6 to 10.1 per cent of prime-aged workers. A much larger fraction of the workforce is affected by wage arrears. Foley shows, in addition, that the likelihood of taking a second job is significantly higher for men, urban residents and workers with higher education, i.e., for those persons who are best positioned in the labour market.

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Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Job Types and Hours Worked by Region

Contract	Year	Moscow	Moscow Oblast	Krasnoyarsk	Chuvash Republic	Chelyabinsk
Per cent with permanent job		97.6	97.4	96.8	98.1	98.5
	1997	98.3	n/a	97.2	97.7	98.4
Per cent with permanent job in new jobs	1996	84.3	86.9	86.9	91.7	93.6
	1997	89.5	n/a	83.8	91.7	92.7
Per cent with part-time job	1996	2.9	3.0	5.0	4.1	2.8
	1997	0.9	n/a	3.5	1.5	3.9
Per cent working fewer hours	1996	4.8	5.3	5.9	10.8	7.1
	1997	1.9	n/a	5.2	8.2	5.0
Per cent working same hours	1996	92.2	91.9	87.3	87.5	91.0
	1997	96.3	n/a	91.7	89.8	91.5
Per cent with second jobs	1996	2.7	1.5	2.7	1.0	2.2
	1997	0.9	n/a	1.1	1.1	2.2

Notes: 1. New jobs include all those with job tenure of 12 months or less. 2. Part-time jobs, hours and second jobs calculated as percentage of all employees.

Source: RLFS.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Wage Arrears by Region

Wages paid:	Year	Moscow	Moscow Oblast	Krasnoyarsk	Chuvash Republic	Chelyabinsk
In full, on time	1996	76.8	71.8	34.7	42.5	33.7
	1997	87.3	n/a	34.3	35.8	40.0
In full, not on time	1996	2.5	2.6	3.5	1.7	2.8
	1997	0.9	n/a	4.6	3.4	4.0
Incomplete, on time	1996	15.3	19.4	39.6	41.7	39.9
	1997	8.4	n/a	22.4	26.7	23.4
Incomplete, not on time	1996	5.4	6.2	22.1	14.2	23.5
	1997	3.4	n/a	38.7	34.0	32.6

Source: RLFS.

Table 3: Wage Arrears by Region, Ownership and Sector

	Year	Moscow	Moscow Oblast	Krasnoyarsk	Chuvash	Chelyabinsk
Privatised	1996	25.7	31.2	67.9	48.9	75.7
	1997	14.0	n/a	78.2	72.7	67.8
<i>De novo private</i>	1996	10.4	23.2	41.8	36.4	59.9
	1997	4.0	n/a	38.9	64.3	33.3
Budgetary sector	1996	20.7	20.8	63.6	50.7	58.1
	1997	12.6	n/a	68.0	51.8	51.0
State firms in production	1996	37.7	37.3	76.4	68.8	74.1
	1997	21.4	n/a	71.0	84.2	85.2

Source: RLFS.

Table 4: Wage Arrears by Industry

	Per cent of workers with wages in arrears		Employment share
	1994	1996	1996
Agriculture	68.6	80.6	10.8
Manufacturing	43.4	67.4	22.7
Construction	50.4	69.1	5.9
Mining	36.2	57.4	8.6
Transport	36.5	51.5	8.4
Distribution/Trade	23.9	31.3	8.2
Finance	17.5	19.6	1.4
Health/Education	35.2	67.7	20.4
Other Services	35.4	51.3	13.5

Source: RLMS.

Table 5: Probit and Random Effects Probit Estimates of Wage Arrears

Variable	Sample mean	Probit estimate	Marginal effects	Random effects probit estimate
Female	0.517	-0.065 (0.028)*	-0.026	-0.085 (0.045)
Children	0.633	0.049 (0.027)	0.019	0.057 (0.043)
<i>Age</i>				
16–19	0.013	-0.299 (0.116)*	-0.116	-0.389 (0.164)*
20–24	0.092	-0.083 (0.048)	-0.033	-0.081 (0.071)
25–34	0.250	-0.003 (0.033)	-0.001	-0.019 (0.051)
35–44				
45–54	0.205	0.002 (0.036)	0.001	-0.010 (0.056)
>55	0.125	-0.114 (0.043)*	-0.045	-0.128 (0.069)
<i>Education</i>				
<i>High school only</i>				
Higher education	0.212	-0.082 (0.047)	-0.032	-0.115 (0.070)
Technical school	0.239	0.061 (0.039)	0.024	0.069 (0.057)
Trade school	0.155	-0.028 (0.041)	-0.011	-0.055 (0.059)
Technical qualifications	0.082	-0.011 (0.050)	-0.004	0.001 (0.069)
Any professional course	0.127	0.118 (0.044)*	0.047	0.142 (0.061)*
<i>Occupation</i>				
<i>Operatives, unskilled manual</i>				
Managers	0.020	-0.338 (0.095)*	-0.131	-0.410 (0.133)*
Professions	0.181	-0.022 (0.049)	-0.009	-0.019 (0.071)
Technicians	0.154	-0.147 (0.044)*	-0.058	-0.183 (0.063)*
Clerical	0.067	-0.288 (0.054)*	-0.112	-0.367 (0.079)*
Personal services	0.072	-0.209 (0.057)*	-0.082	-0.292 (0.082)*
Agricultural worker	0.005	-0.498 (0.178)*	-0.187	-0.707 (0.248)*
Craft	0.181	-0.007 (0.036)	-0.003	-0.004 (0.052)
<i>Employer Size</i>				
0–9	0.073	-0.257 (0.061)*	-0.101	-0.395 (0.087)*
10–49	0.201	-0.241 (0.046)*	-0.095	-0.371 (0.068)*
50–99	0.099	-0.190 (0.053)*	-0.075	-0.265 (0.076)*
100–499	0.206	-0.107 (0.044)*	-0.042	-0.128 (0.064)*
500–999	0.056	-0.122 (0.059)*	-0.048	-0.156 (0.084)
>1000				

Table 5 (continued): Probit and Random Effects Probit Estimates of Wage Arrears

Variable	Sample mean	Probit estimate	Marginal effects	Random effects probit estimate
<i>Length of Employment</i>				
0–5 months	0.101	–0.376 (0.057)*	–0.146	–0.513 (0.081)*
6–11 months	0.064	–0.310 (0.061)*	–0.121	–0.410 (0.087)*
12–23 months	0.107	–0.242 (0.054)*	–0.095	–0.339 (0.077)*
3–5 years	0.198	–0.169 (0.047)*	–0.067	–0.213 (0.069)*
6–10 years	0.147	–0.066 (0.049)	–0.026	–0.099 (0.072)
11–20 years	0.181	–0.023 (0.045)	–0.009	0.006 (0.067)
>20 years				
<i>Ownership</i>				
<i>State</i>				
Private	0.252	–0.079 (0.032)*	–0.032	–0.092 (0.042)*
Foreign stake	0.036	–0.046 (0.066)	–0.018	–0.035 (0.088)
Share in firm	0.213	–0.101 (0.050)*	–0.043	–0.104 (0.069)
Share<5 per cent	0.145	0.111 (0.056)*	0.044	0.135 (0.076)
<i>Region</i>				
<i>Urals</i>				
North, North-West	0.078	0.192 (0.053)*	0.076	0.247 (0.084)*
Central & Central Black-Earth	0.178	–0.208 (0.041)*	–0.082	–0.286 (0.066)*
Volga	0.170	0.117 (0.041)*	0.046	0.148 (0.067)*
North Caucasus	0.119	–0.132 (0.046)*	–0.052	–0.190 (0.075)*
Moscow/St. Petersburg	0.100	–0.410 (0.051)*	–0.158	–0.602 (0.081)*
Western Siberia	0.100	0.072 (0.047)	0.029	0.077 (0.077)
East Siberia & Far East	0.102	0.227 (0.048)*	0.090	0.294 (0.076)*
<i>Location</i>				
<i>Urban</i>				
Rural	0.220	0.489 (0.036)*	0.193	0.694 (0.057)*
<i>Industry</i>				
<i>Agriculture</i>				
Manufacturing	0.209	0.326 (0.055)*	0.129	0.427 (0.079)*
Construction	0.062	0.172 (0.054)*	0.069	0.214 (0.078)*
Energy	0.069	–0.189 (0.051)*	–0.074	–0.242 (0.076)*
Transport	0.079	–0.279 (0.049)*	–0.109	–0.335 (0.073)*
Retail	0.077	–0.434 (0.059)*	–0.167	–0.491 (0.084)*
Finance	0.013	–0.807 (0.138)*	–0.282	–0.943 (0.185)
Health	0.172	–0.057 (0.043)*	–0.023	–0.079 (0.064)
Other Services	0.126	–0.187 (0.044)*	–0.074	–0.219 (0.065)*
Constant		0.707 (0.073)*		0.951 (0.111)*

Notes: $\chi^2(55) = 1194.5$; $\text{Log } L = -7416.9$; $\rho = 0.475$ (.018)*.

Table 6: Persistence of Wage Arrears

	1994	1995	1996
No. of times in arrears			
0	60.7	36.4	27.9
1	39.3	33.5	27.5
	[2 to 12 months]		
2		30.1	22.4
		[2 to 8 months]	
3			22.1
			[4 to 12 months]
Median arrears (000 Rs)			
1	539	378	593
2		559	848
3			1082
Average median	539	485	832
Ratio of arrears relative to previous monthly earnings			
at 10th arrears percentile	0.26	0.57	
at 50th arrears percentile	0.98	2.00	
at 90th arrears percentile	2.98	6.90	
Percentage of workers entering or leaving arrears over the year			
Arrears outflow		31	17
Arrears inflow		28	44

Source: RLMS. Median arrears duration and 95th percentile of duration distribution in brackets in first panel.

Table 7: Ordered Probit and Tobit Estimates of Incidence of Wage Arrears

Variable	Ordered probit estimate	Tobit estimate
Female	-0.093 (0.053)	452.8 (93.4)*
Children	0.052 (0.052)	169.5 (92.5)
<u>Age</u>		
16–19	-0.899 (0.692)	-531.2 (703.4)
20–24	-0.165 (0.114)	-268.2 (156.3)
25–34	0.022 (0.061)	3.7 (105.6)
35–44		
45–54	0.002 (0.066)	24.9 (118.3)
>55	-0.127 (0.081)	95.7 (143.8)
<u>Education</u>		
<i>High school only</i>		
Higher education	-0.083 (0.088)	-274.9 (153.3)
Technical	0.023 (0.072)	-27.8 (125.0)
Trade school	0.030 (0.079)	-80.0 (136.0)
PTU	-0.162 (0.094)	-194.3 (167.2)
Any professional course	0.154 (0.083)	87.9 (144.5)
<u>Occupation</u>		
<i>Operatives, unskilled manual</i>		
Managers	-0.351 (0.266)	807.4 (501.4)
Professions	-0.004 (0.090)	296.4 (155.5)
Technicians	-0.054 (0.081)	113.5 (138.6)
Clerical	-0.249 (0.098)*	-349.5 (178.9)
Personal services	-0.014 (0.118)	25.9 (193.4)
Agricultural worker	-0.643 (0.296)*	-323.3 (591.1)
Craft	0.077 (0.069)	195.1 (119.4)
<u>Employer Size</u>		
0–9	-0.336 (0.121)*	-1148.5 (201.7)*
10–49	-0.303 (0.087)*	-960.6 (149.4)*
50–99	-0.259 (0.097)*	-635.1 (168.0)*
100–499	-0.129 (0.081)	-306.3 (140.2)*
500–999	-0.152 (0.110)	-596.2 (201.5)*
>1000		
<u>Length of Employment</u>		
0–5 months	-0.170 (0.128)	-1011.9 (195.6)*
6–11 months	-0.058 (0.145)	-660.9 (203.8)*
12–23 months	-0.103 (0.104)	-548.2 (174.8)*
3–5 years	-0.196 (0.083)*	-440.3 (149.3)*
6–10 years	-0.078 (0.086)	-173.8 (157.4)
11–20 years	-0.059 (0.081)	-145.4 (148.2)
>20 years		

Table 7 (continued): Ordered Probit and Tobit Estimates of Incidence of Wage Arrears

Variable	Ordered probit estimate	Tobit estimate
<i>Ownership</i>		
<i>State</i>		
Private	-0.053 (0.057)	163.2 (94.3)
Foreign stake	-0.073 (0.129)	-521.8 (222.2)*
<i>Region</i>		
<i>Urals</i>		
North, North-West	0.251 (0.097)*	978.4 (166.5)*
Central & Central Black-Earth	-0.217 (0.075)*	-721.1 (134.5)*
Volga	0.178 (0.074)*	-263.9 (135.7)*
North Caucasus	-0.112 (0.089)	-236.2 (150.5)
Moscow/St. Petersburg	-0.349 (0.100)*	-1165.3 (175.7)*
Western Siberia	0.199 (0.092)*	69.7 (155.6)
East Siberia & Far East	0.286 (0.096)*	596.2 (155.7)*
<i>Location</i>		
<i>Urban</i>		
Rural	0.676(0.068)*	428.6 (115.5)*
<i>Industry</i>		
<i>Agriculture</i>		
Manufacturing	0.329 (0.103)*	138.3 (181.1)
Construction	0.120 (0.107)	757.1 (185.2)*
Energy	-0.198 (0.092)*	673.6 (159.7)*
Transport	-0.216 (0.097)*	-294.0 (172.2)
Retail	-0.710 (0.122)*	-843.6 (214.1)*
Finance	-1.136 (0.236)*	-891.2 (453.6)
Health	-0.022 (0.088)	194.5 (133.3)
Other Services	-0.294 (0.089)*	-174.9 (148.2)
Constant		1144.6 (227.5)*
Mu (1)	-1.073 (0.129)*	
Mu (2)	-0.295 (0.128)*	
Mu (3)	0.432 (0.128)*	

Notes: N = 2,493; Chi2 (51) = 555.9; Log L = -3176.1; Pseudo R² = 0.081; Regressions also include 2 wave and missing dummies for non-response in education, job tenure, occupation and industry. Default categories in italics. Robust standard errors in brackets* significant at the 5 per cent level.

Source: RLMS.

Table 8: Multinomial Logit Estimates of Effects of Wage Arrears on Mobility

Variable	Job-to-job marginal effects	Job to unemployment marginal effects.	Job to inactivity marginal effects
Arrears	0.012 (0.006)*	0.008 (0.004)*	0.011 (0.005)*
Arrears*Moscow/St.Peter.	0.047 (0.018)*	0.012 (0.015)	0.018 (0.010)
<u>Ownership</u>			
State			
Private	0.001 (0.007)	0.015 (0.004)*	0.008 (0.006)
Foreign	0.025 (0.013)*	-0.019 (0.013)	-0.007 (0.015)
<u>Region</u>			
Urals			
North, North-West	-0.020 (0.012)	-0.005 (0.008)	0.004 (0.011)
Central & Central Black-Earth	-0.015 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.006)	0.003 (0.008)
Volga	-0.024 (0.009)*	-0.014 (0.007)*	0.012 (0.008)
North Caucasus	-0.023 (0.011)*	0.006 (0.006)	0.019 (0.009)*
Moscow/St. Petersburg	-0.014 (0.013)	-0.010 (0.010)	0.006 (0.011)
Western Siberia	-0.031 (0.012)*	-0.007 (0.008)	0.010 (0.010)
East Siberia & Far East	-0.004 (0.011)	-0.009 (0.008)	0.008 (0.009)
<u>Location</u>			
Urban			
Rural	-0.030 (0.009)*	-0.001 (0.005)	0.018 (0.006)*
Constant	-0.169 (0.020)*	-0.099 (0.014)*	-0.126 (0.016)*

Notes: Log L -3647.4; Pseudo R² 0.108; Chi² (153) 947.4; Regression includes controls for age, education, gender, marital status, job tenure, establishment size, industry and occupation. Default categories in italics. Sample mean transition rates: Job-to-Job, 0.075; Work-to-Unemployment, 0.042, Work-to-Inactivity, 0.062.

* statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. Sample size: 6,246.

Source: RLMS.

The cert-tools setup script installs 2 scripts, which are described below: create_certificate_template.py. Run. Then the unsigned certificates were copied to cert-issuer for signing and issuing on the blockchain. Contact. Contact us at the Blockcerts community forum. Cert or CERT may refer to: Certificate (disambiguation), several meanings. Certiorari, a Latin legal term for a court order requiring judicial review of a case. Certiorari before judgment, a specific form of a writ of certiorari. Cert pool, shorthand term for the pool of applicants for a writ of certiorari from the United States Supreme Court. Carbon Emission Reduction Target, a United Kingdom government initiative. Correctional Emergency Response Team, a team of correction officers.