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### **Abstract**

The inability or unwillingness of economic actors to pay their debts in a timely fashion has contributed to the bumpy road of economic transition in Russia. The popular media, as well as much of the scholarly literature, have dismissed the relevance of courts to resolving non-payments. But field research on industrial enterprises has revealed that the courts are not as irrelevant as the literature would have us believe. A 1997 survey of over 300 enterprises found that over 70% of the respondent enterprises had initiated lawsuits in the past year, and official caseload statistics show a steady increase in filings over the past decade. What is less clear from the available data is how and why economic actors are using the courts and what sort of experience they have in court. This report aims to fill this gap by exploring what sorts of cases are brought, what sorts of enterprises are involved, and how the cases proceed through the system.