**The use of the part-time working scheme in France during the Covid-19 crisis:**

**an empirical analysis between March and May 2020**

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**Summary**

The part-time working scheme (*activité partielle*) has been one of the principal responses in France to preserving jobs during the Covid-19 crisis, the country being among the greatest users of the measure in Europe. The part-time working scheme is a temporary measure that develops in a generally countercyclical manner, allowing companies to adjust the volume of hours worked to variations in activity levels while also seeking to avoid redundancies.

This study analyzes employers' use of this measure during the lockdown (*confinement*) based on comprehensive administrative data as of 22 June 2020. One of the study’s main contributions lies in its comparison of the current deployment of part-time working to that in place before the health crisis, particularly during the 2008-2009 economic recession.

In order to implement the part-time working scheme, the employer must request prior authorization from the administrative authorities. This reflects the employer’s anticipated need for part-time working, with companies often requesting in advance a much greater number of hours of part-time working than they will actually make use of. The study describes employers’ practice prior to the authorization request with regard to the hours sought and number of employees involved in relation to those companies’ characteristics and the nature of their request. It also analyses the probability determinants for submission of a prior authorization request.

Employers are subsequently able to request monthly salary reimbursement for employees affected by part-time working, something also known as a compensation claim. We thus present the practices observed in the data in terms of compensation claims, again in relation to the number of hours and employees involved, according to the companies’ particular characteristics, as well as the conversion rate of preauthorization requests into monthly compensation claims between March and May, particularly via deposit costs and part-time working take-up.

As employers have up to a year to file compensation claims, the study also estimates what the scheme will ultimately cost, based on the data and assumptions, as well as the number of employees actually put onto part-time working from March to May 2020.

**Keywords**: part-time working, Covid-19