WORKERS’ HEALTH AND SAFETY: INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE AND THE ITALIAN CASE

Paolo Pinotti
Fondazione Rodolfo Debenedetti and Bocconi University
The international evidence

- ambiguous relationship between work accidents and economic development: richer countries exhibit more non-fatal accidents but less fatal accidents ... *under-reporting*?
  - fatal accidents seem a more reliable measure (more difficult to hide)
  - economic development positively correlated with workers’ safety
The international evidence

Inequality (Gini index)

% vulnerable employees

Union Density

Judicial efficiency
Long-run trends in Italy

- since the 1960s, constant reduction in work accidents over population (about -75%)
also in Italy, economic development accompanied by greater safety at work
Regional divides, 2011-2013

non-fatal accidents

fatal accidents
Regional divides, 2011-2013

- further evidence of under-reporting: shadow economy correlated
  - negatively with non-fatal accidents
  - positively with fatal accidents
The contribution of the two reports

1. ‘Workplace Accidents in Europe’ (A. Palali, M. Picchio & J. C. van Ours)
   - vulnerability of different categories of workers: younger vs. older, temporary vs. permanent contracts
   - analysis for most European countries, focus on Italy, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden

2. ‘Trade-Induced Mortality’ (J. Adda & Y. Fawaz)
   - impact of International competition from emerging economies on workers’ mortality in Italy and the US
   - longitudinal microdata on large sample of workers
Comparison with other causes of death

 voluntary homicides

- with the exception of the mid-70s to early 90s, more fatal work accidents than homicides
Comparison with other causes of death

car accidents

- less deaths but more injured from work accidents than from car accidents
Media coverage

- 5/6 December 2007: Major accidents at ThyssenKrupp
- 14 April 2007: 4 deaths cause major debate
- 1 August 2007: The Chamber approves decree on workers’ safety
- 16 July 1999: CENSIS conference
Media coverage

- 5/6 December 2007: Major accidents at ThyssenKrupp
- 14 April 2007: 4 deaths cause major debate
- 1 August 2007: The Chamber approves decree on workers’ safety
- 16 July 1999: CENSIS conference
5/6 December 2007
major accidents at ThyssenKrupp

14 April 2007
4 deaths cause major debate

1 August 2007
the Chamber approves decree on workers’ safety
Media coverage

- generally less attention towards work accidents than towards other causes of death with similar victimization rates
- peaks of attention after major events (e.g. Thyssenkrupp) followed by prolonged periods of neglect
- basically no relationship with actual dynamics of accidents
Media coverage and trends in accident rates

today: contribution to an informed debate on this theme

- presentation and discussion of the reports
- panel discussion