

Table 1 shows the distribution of local public-owned and private-owned companies for the road transport way in terms of number of buses, service workers and passengers during the years 1985-1995. The evolution of the traffic data during this period certainly highlights a progressively greater relevance of the private sector; nevertheless, the weight of the local public-owned companies goes on being decisive, specially in terms of number of passengers (85% public versus 15% private during 1995). We will go back at the end of this study to the issue of the importance of taking seriously the privatization policy in the sector, if one wishes that the liberalization of the LPT services, a guideline of the reform process in progress (see below), actually manifests oneself in the introduction of the widest admissible degree of competition and in a resultant efficiency recovery on the side of service supply.

2.3. The planning and the financing of the services: the framework before the reform

The Italian Constitution gives the Regional authorities the power to legislate about some areas of regional interest (art. 117). Included among these are “regional tramways and roadways”. For the same subjects indicated in the article n. 117, the Constitution also gives the regions administrative powers (art. 118); however, there is always the possibility for the subjects of exclusive local interest, that the Government is giving some administrative functions to Provincial, Council and other local bodies.

The transfer of these responsibilities to the Regions has become realistic, even if with delay, following some orders of decentralization of administrative functions of the Government promulgated in 1972 and lately collected in an organic text with the D.P.R. (Republic President’s Decree) n. 616/77⁹. As far as the transport sector is concerned, article 84 transfers the functions concerning the tramways and roadways of regional interest to the regions; it concerns public transport services for people and goods (with the exclusion of post services) by using tramways, metropolitan lines and roadways. However, it is only with the law defining the order, the structure and the re-enforcement of local public transport (law n. 151/81) that we arrive at the definition of an organic and in some measure definitive framework of this sector.

⁹ The global order that the DPR 616 intend to realise has been defined as follows: “for each subject the Government carry on the role of legislation and general planning, the region of legislation and specific planning, the minor territorial authorities (province and council) a role of administration organically defined” (Bobo e Pastori 1994).