In order to make a comparative analysis of the tourism public agendas in both Argentina and Brazil from 1999 to 2009, theoretical references and methodological procedures that could provide a foundation for building tests that allow determining the question were used. Regarding the theoretical framework, the discussion about the state sought to enable an understanding of its functions and its historic role in the development of tourism in relation to society and the market. The debate over public policies aimed to support this analysis of public policies on tourism because, despite the voluminous discussions of the Brazilian public policy, tourism public policy is relatively recent and its impact assessments and evaluation poorly studied. As a research method the documental analysis was used. 26 Brazilian tourism public policies and 28 Argentine were selected. The categories considered for analysis were purposes and expected effects of these policies. During the analysis two identical periods in both countries where tourism policies take different characteristics from 1999 to 2002 and from 2003 to 2009 were identified. It was observed that even during different periods, goals and expectations of tourist policies in Argentina and Brazil are very similar. This similarity may be related to the positions sometimes less, sometimes more intervening governments, as well as the periods of lesser and greater economic instability, matching between the countries over the period studied.

KEY WORDS: public policy, tourism, Brazil, Argentina.