The aim of this study is to show that the basis of any analysis of "national identity", including the Palestinian national identity, should be the nationalist discourse, not the idea of the nation itself, so that one does not examine this phenomenon using its own concepts and categories. The paper avoids assessing whether the Palestinian community may be considered a nation or not. I analyze the formation process of the Palestinian national discourse, in particular the Palestinian national practices. I focus on the study of the practical use of the nationalist discourse, not only in the course of its historical development, but also in contemporary everyday life of people, to whom it relates. The analysis is concerned with the method of creating and reproducing the sense of a "natural" Palestinian national identity within their everyday cultural and political practice. The study of national practices helps to explain how Palestinian nationalism effectively mobilizes people to act within their national discourse, despite the fact that until 1994 their discourse wasn't supported by state or quasi-state institutions. The nation is not just imaginary, as Benedict Anderson claims, but above all it is practiced. Membership in the nation has to be experienced. Relevant practices help to consolidate a sense of national identity, despite the existence of various ideas of national symbolic meanings and knowledge. The possibility of a joint participation in certain national practices allows people to organize the existing diversity of cultural phenomena and different symbolic forms so that the participants take them as part of their individual and group experience.

The paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter discusses the theoretical scope and explains such concepts as: nationalism, nationalist discourse and nation. It presents the main problems regarding the relation between culture (broadly understood) and religion with nationalism. The second chapter presents the idea of nationalism within the Arab nationalist thought. Third section shows main problems concerning researches on Palestinian nationality, including the use of biblical narrative in those studies and its impact on the Palestinian national discourse itself. It also discusses the impact of the British Mandate in Palestine on the development of Palestinian nationalism and takes into account the early Palestinian relations with the Zionist immigrants and the local Jewish community. The fourth chapter focuses on Palestinian national memory formation, their narrative about An-Nakba and their political representation after 1948. It includes also the events of the first Intifada and its impact on the development of Palestinian nationalism and the most relevant national symbols, developed by that time. These phenomena are studied primarily in the cultural context and analyze, among others, the relationship between Islam and Palestinian nationalism. The fifth chapter analyzes the political and social context of the formation of the Palestinian Authority and its impact on Palestinian national practices.