

NATIONAL PARKS ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS:
NATURE AND NATION IN THE ALPS

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If modern nature reserves are to be understood in their full diversity, any approach must make use of historical science and must duly respect the categories, space and time. This contribution examines national parks throughout the Alps in order to demonstrate what kind of results this approach yields and what kind of difficulties it encounters. After a few preliminary deliberations concerning methodology, the author goes on to examine the history of the national parks which are situated in or at the Alpine range, using an approach that makes chronological as well as regional comparisons. Finally, the author takes a look at the trans-Alpine level of transfers and interactions. Not only does this trans-national perspective allow to adequately historicise and contextualize individual national parks, this approach also generates new insights into the history both of the Alps and of nature conservation and environment protection.