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European Neutrons from Parasitic Research to Global Strategy: Realizing Plans for a Transnational European Spallation Source in the Wake of the Cold War
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Studies of Big Science have early on focused on instrumentation and scientific co-operation in large organizations, later on to take into account symbolic values and specific research styles while more recently also involving the relevance of commercial interests and economic development as well as the assimilation of research traditions. In accordance with these transformed practices, this presentation will analyze how an organization with the purpose of realizing a Big-Science facility, The European Spallation Source, has successfully managed to present the project as relevant to different national and international policy-makers, to the community of European neutron researchers as well as to different industrial interests. All this has been achieved in a research-policy environment, which has been the subject to drastic transformations, from calls to engage researchers from the former eastern bloc in the early 1990s via competition with American and Asian researchers at the turn of the century 2000 to intensified demands on business applications. During this process, there has also been fierce competition between different potential sites in the U.K., Germany, Spain, Hungary and Sweden, not once, but twice. The project has in addition been plagued by withdrawals of key actors as well as challenging problems in the field of spallation-source construction. Nevertheless, the European Spallation Source has survived from the early 1990s until today, now initiating the construction process at Lund in southern Sweden. In this presentation, the different measures taken and arguments raised by the European Spallation Source project in order to realize the facility will be analysed. Especially the different designs of the European Spallation Source will be analysed as responses to external demands and threats.