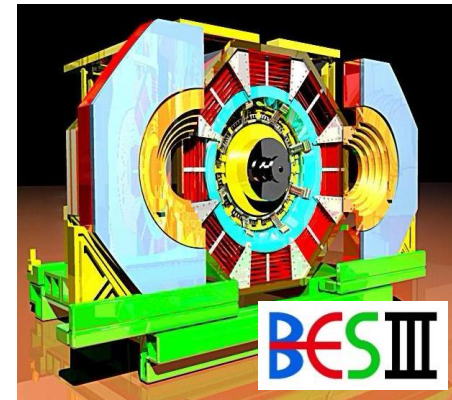
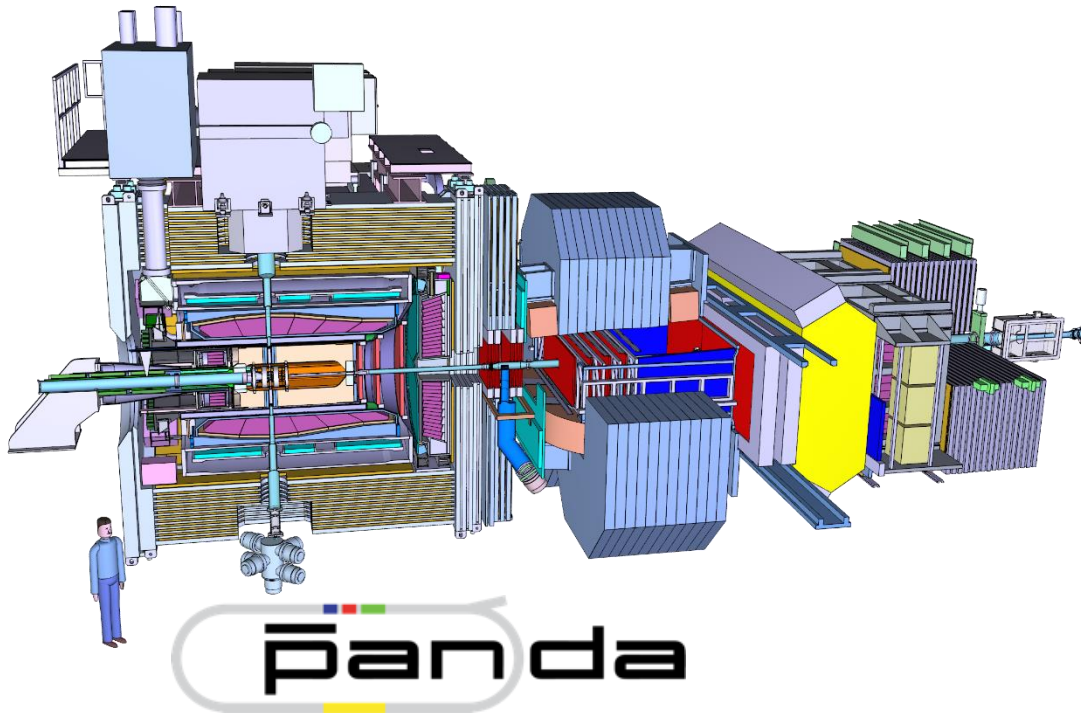




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My path to grant application success



Grants Day 2020
Prof. Karin Schönning, Uppsala University



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Outline

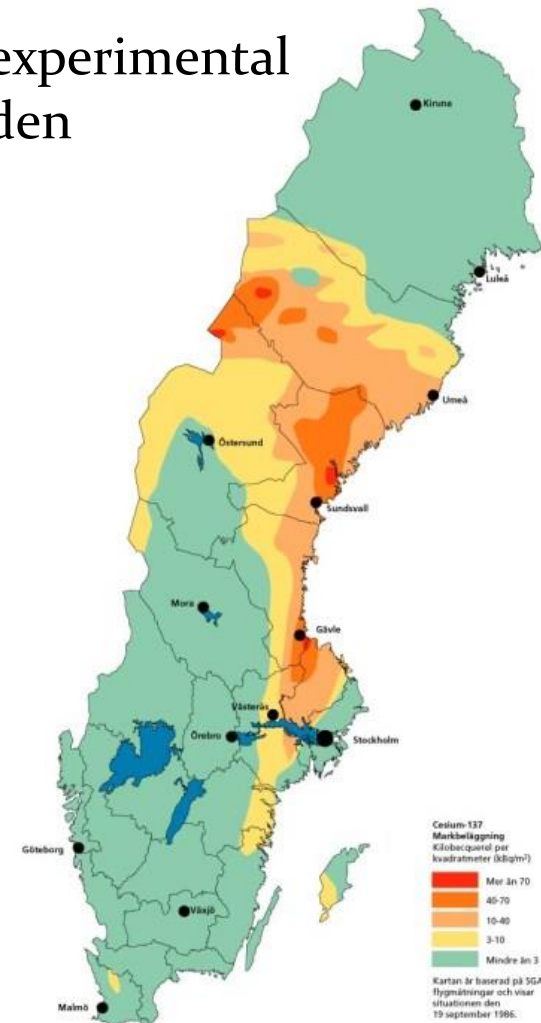
- Who am I?
- My research
- Personal reflections on grant applications



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Who am I?

- Professor of physics with specialisation in experimental hadron physics at Uppsala University, Sweden since April 2020
- Born in Lingbo, Hälsingland in 1978.

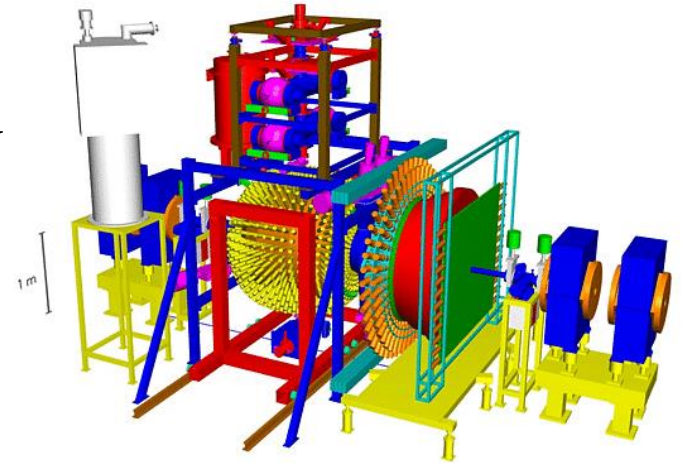




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Studies and Research

- Erasmus studies at ETH Zürich 2000-2001
- CERN summer student in CMS 2002
- Master project with COMPASS at CERN 2002-2003
- PhD with WASA, Sweden 2003-2009
- Research fellow at CERN 2010-2011
- In Uppsala since 2012.





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Approved grants

- VR post doc 2009
- CERN Research Fellowship 2009
- VR Starting Grant 2013 (PI)
- VR project grant 2016 (co-app.)
- Wallenberg Academy Fellow 2016 (PI)
- Erasmus+ Partnership Grant 2016 (co-app.)
- STINT Partnership Grant 2018 (PI)
- VR project grant 2019 (PI)



Erasmus+



Swedish
Research
Council

*Knut and Alice
Wallenberg
Foundation*



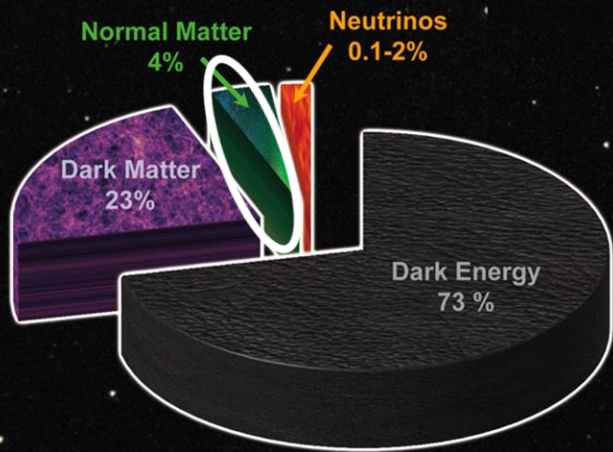
STINT

The Swedish Foundation for International
Cooperation in Research and Higher Education

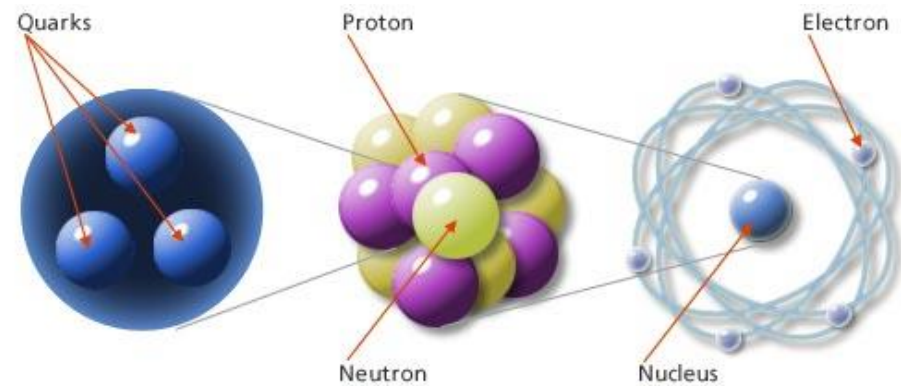


My Research

Picture credit: HAP / A. Chantelauze



Content of the Universe

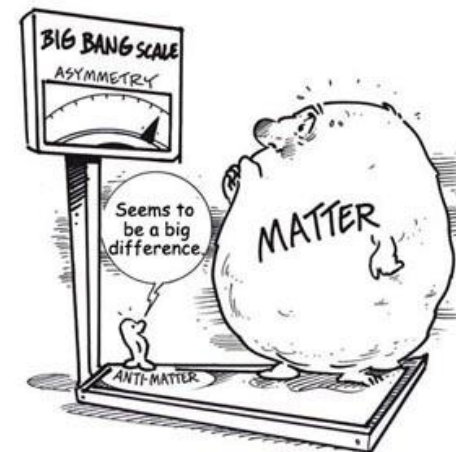
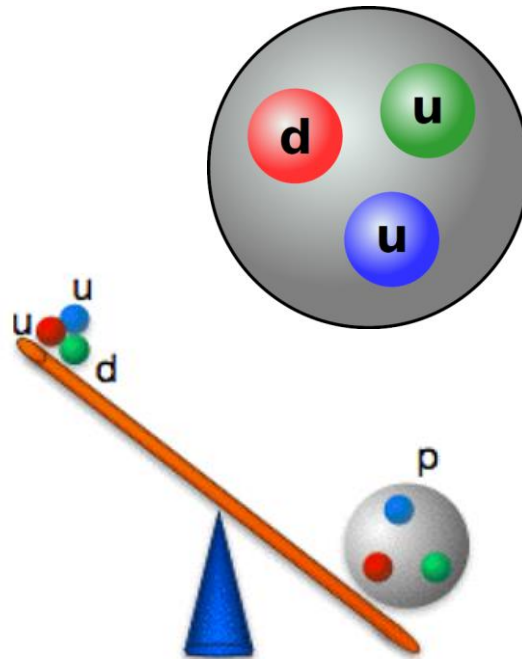




The Nucleon

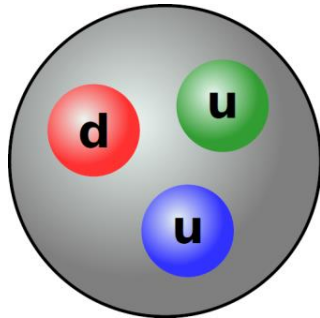
- Major part of the visible mass of the Universe.
- Consists of three quarks.
- > 100 years after its discovery, we discuss intensely its

- Mass
- Spin
- Structure
- Size
- Abundance

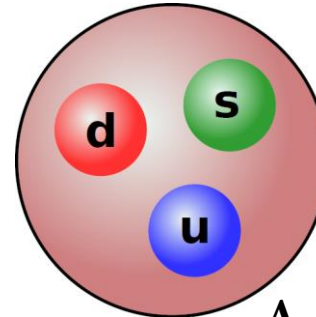




Nucleons *versus* Hyperons



proton

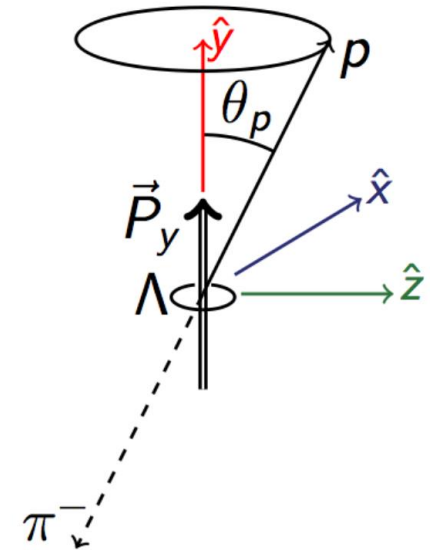


Λ

What happens if we replace one of the light quarks in the nucleon with a heavier one?

Similar but different: 3-quark states, building blocks less relativistic.

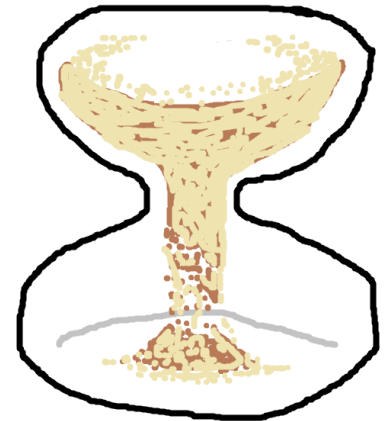
Measurable spin: Direction manifest in the emission direction of daughter particles.





Personal reflections on grant applications

- Idea
- Attitude
- Time





Idea

- Write an application because you have an idea, don't look for ideas because you need to write an application.
 - Good ideas emerge from **knowledge** and **experience**
 - Any application should start with this!
- Is it a NEW idea, or a new angle on an existing idea?
 - **Read up** on the subject.
 - **Discuss** with colleagues.
- Is it YOUR idea?
 - **Coordinate** with your colleagues.





Attitude: The funding agency

Many countries: Strict hierarchy in academia, professors search for grants to sustain a large group.

- Small dependence on grants for young researchers
- Smaller chances for young researchers to realise their ideas.

Sweden: Flatter hierarchy, individual researchers search for their own projects.

- Many researchers **depend** on grants to stay in academia
- **Opportunity** for young researchers to get means to run their own group and circumvent hierarchy.



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The funding agency can enable you and your ideas!



Attitude: The reader

You want a **favour** from the reviewers of your application:

- you want them to convince the funding agency to give you money.

If you want someone to do you a favour, you should try to **make their life** as **easy** as possible.

- your application should be clear and easy to read.
- provide all necessary information, don't expect the reviewer to search for this her/himself.



Attitude: The reader

If you want someone to do you a favour, you should try to **make their life** as **easy** as possible.

This is my main guiding principle!



Time

Good applications take time! Even if you fully master the craft!

Spend time on a well-written research plan according to the following steps:

1. Have a **draft** YOU are happy with **at least 2 weeks** before deadline.
2. Ask at least two "**critical friends**" to read your draft and give feedback.
 - Try to choose people from the same research fields as the likely reviewers.
 - Offer to return the favour!
3. **Refine** the draft according to the feedback.



Time

Good applications take time! Even if you fully master the craft!

Spend time on a well-written research plan according to the following steps:

1. Have a **draft** YOU are happy with **at least 2 weeks** before deadline.
2. Ask at **All this takes time!!!** for draft and give feedback.
 - Try to choose people from the same research fields as the likely reviewers.
 - Offer to return the favour!
3. **Refine** the draft according to the feedback.



Since it likely takes ~ 3 weeks to write a successful application, ask yourself:

Is it worth the investment?

- Do I have a serious chance? Do I match the call?
- How much time do I have to put in to have fair chance?
 - Is your supervisor OK with you spending this time?
 - Is it the optimal use of your time?





Time

How have I used my time since PhD in 2009?

- Submitted **16** larger (> 500 kSEK) grant applications
 - **8** successful
- Submitted **~10** smaller (conference support, summer school project, support for young researcher)
 - **All but one** successful

→ Have so far spent little time on applications leading nowhere.



The **best** for **your own career** may not be to **submit** as many **applications** as possible, but those which **fits YOU!**



Summary

My guiding principles are

- The **idea** is more important than anything else!
- The funding agency can **help** you and the reviewer is doing you a **favour** – make their life easy!
- Apply only when it is worth putting **time** and effort into it!





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Good luck!