

CMCE Showcase 23rd June: Mastering the Complexity of Client-consultant Relationships

The late and much-missed singer Ian Dury once recorded a B-side to one of his hits – I forget which – that went under the catchy title of “There Ain’t Half Been Some Clever Bastards” (although possibly your correspondent may have misheard this). That might have been a suitable intro tune for the guest speaker at CMCE’s June Showcase though as Dr Szilvia Mosonyi of Queen Mary University of London, had succeeded in condensing the entirety of academic research into management consulting – over 200 published papers in fact – into a simple framework.

Last year the judges of CMCE’s Research Awards deemed it so impressive that her paper **Management Consulting: Towards an Integrative Framework of Knowledge, Identity, and Power** (not such a catchy title, though) won the Client/Consultant Relationships category.

Category winners have the option to present their research at a Showcase but rather than a dry recitation of the paper’s key points this proved to be a highly practice-oriented session with plenty of feedback provided by attendees.

Dr Mosonyi identified the three main themes that occurred in the literature she had reviewed: knowledge, identity and power. These were often identified in relation to each other and so the framework identifies three types of processes – resourcing, controlling and influencing – that link them and show how they play out in consultants’ everyday work.

With a tightly-structured presentation, Dr Mosonyi used Mentimeter to solicit input from attendees giving real life examples of how knowledge, identity and power showed up in their current or past work. At one point, attendees were asked to share the words that they used to describe their identities. Unsurprisingly, many chose Expert or Guru and there were a couple of self-confessed Provocateurs in attendance, as well as at least one Magician, which means we’ve got our entertainment sorted for future social functions.

This Showcase was very much in CMCE’s “sweet spot” as it harnessed unique research and insights to consulting practice and I hope we’ll be able to unearth more papers that achieve a similar feat as we review the candidates for this year’s Research Awards.

This article has barely scratched the surface of a very rich showcase and those wanting more can take a look at the condensed 30-minute video version which you can find [on our Vimeo site](#).