Transforming weaknesses into strengths through organisational shamans: the case of Colombian peace commissioner that signed the final agreement

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to propose a tool for organisational management based on the analysis and interpretation of shamans in organisations, defining organisational shaman as someone who perceives, predicts and manages the company’s social and environmental health. To achieve this goal, we follow a mixed sequential methodology, i.e., quantitative and qualitative, that begins with the revision of the current status of the discussion about organisational shamans through a bibliometric analysis, and ends with a content analysis that serves to propose a conceptual tool to search and select a shaman. Once define the conceptual tool, we verified it in the case of the Colombian Commissioner for Peace, one of the negotiators of the peace agreement signed between the government and the armed group FARC-EP. To finally, understand how it has been possible to transform one of the country’s weaknesses into strength, and how the consultant-shaman is jointly responsible for the results.

Keywords: organisational consultant-shaman; Colombia peace agreement; High Commissioner for Peace; bibliometric analysis.


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1 Introduction

Anthropology is defined by some authors, from the theory of resources framework, as a social space established by the concepts and practices of agents, that join and remain in it according to their available ‘capital’ for developing actions taught by other agents (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1995; Aragón Garzón, 2015). On the other hand and from the same perspective, organisations are defined as social systems that can be analysed (Ingersoll and Adams, 1986). A situation that suggests a possible link between anthropology and organisations. A link that is corroborated by Buckley (1998), who relates anthropology to the economy. Jordan (2010), who explains how appears the link between business and anthropology. And Wright (1994), who precise the relationship between anthropology and organisations, connecting for example, anthropology with: marketing components (Martin and Woodside, 2017), organisational culture issues (Jordan and Caulkins, 2013; Takeda, 2017), human resource management (Pels et al., 2018; Vihari et al., 2018; Braun, 2019), business strategy, knowledge management (Willard et al., 2018), social responsibility (Frederick and Elting, 2013; Chang et al., 2017; Pels et al., 2018) and also, corporate security (Calvão, 2017).

Proved the link between anthropology and organisations through issues like human resource management (Pels et al., 2018; Vihari et al., 2018; Braun, 2019), individuals are identified as the main point of the discussion (Chiavenato, 2008). These individuals are conceptualised and materialised through the study of language, communication, ethnicity, race, Modus Vivendi, politics, genre, family, background, marriage, religion, art, and sports (Kottak, 2015). When referring to the religious dimensions of individuals, figures such as shamans appear (Kottak, 2015), conceived as spiritual leaders with the mission of wiping an evil or solve a difficult problem. A figure that has been recently linked to corporate levels with transition processes (Schuyt and Schuijt, 2008), leadership issues (Vizzoni, 2006) and also business consultants (Gbadamosi, 2005).

In this context, the objective of this study is to propose a tool for organisational management based on the analysis and interpretation of shamans in organisations. With this purpose, we divide this paper into seven sections. Section 1 corresponds with the present introduction. Section 2 contains some definitions of shamans, as well as their function in antiquity and in modernity – where it began to connect with social organisations. In Section 3, we review the current status of the discussion about shamans in organisations through a bibliometric and content analysis, to propose possible definitions for the organisational shaman, different typologies and available tools for analysis of this figure in an organisational context. Then in Section 4, we proposed a conceptual model for the analysis of organisational shamans. This model is then verified in Section 5, where we review the role of the High Commissioner for Peace during the signing of the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP. Finally, in Sections 6 and 7 begin with the discussions with other authors, to ends with the conclusions and future recommendations.
2 Shamans

Shaman as a term has been defined by multiple scholars and researchers, that debate the scope of the term (Walsh, 1989a). Between these scholars are researchers from disciplines like theology, psychology, and anthropology, who have widened the definition of a shaman from different points of view (Peters and Price-Williams, 1980), without reaching a general consensus about the topic (Winkelman, 1989). In this sense, next, we present an overview of the term from the antiquity to the modernity.

2.1 Shamans of antiquity

To understand the role of shamans in the antiquity, it is important to question the origin of this practice. Some authors, from the temporal-space context, say that this kind of practices has existed for more than 20,000 years (Winkelman, 1990), in the four cardinal points, e.g., Siberia, North America, South America and Australia, during different historical moments (Walsh, 1989b). While other, from a functionalist perspective, focus on the analysis of these practices, finding multiple similarities between different shamans around the world. Similarities that can be explained by an innate tendency of human beings or by migration and diffusion of common ancestors (Walsh, 1989b). Hypotheses that can be tested with the occurrence of this phenomenon in different tribes with different languages, which suggest a common ancestor would be unlikely (Winkelman, 1990), and enforce the hypothesis of the innate tendency, in diverse times and cultures (Walsh, 1989b).

Religious psychology has traditionally studied shamans and their practices. However, different fields of study have recently taken an interest in the topic (Eliade, 2016). The first example is sociology, where the researchers analyse the social function of shamans, priests, and magicians, reviewing their role in the interaction of societies and their relationship with religious and political heads (Eliade, 2016). The second example is ethnology, where the researchers study shamans’ clothing and drums, to describe their sessions, collect texts and melodies (Eliade, 2016). The third example is history, where researchers summarise the research on the subject of shamans, presenting

1. a unified vision
2. a history or morphology of this complex phenomenon that they categorise as religious (Eliade, 2016).

And the fourth is archaeology, where researchers focus on prehistoric religions, especially those that are Palaeolithic (Hayden, 2003).

Within these fields of study, i.e., religion, sociology, ethnology, history, and archaeology-emerge different definitions of the shaman, like the one proposed by Hayden (2003). For whom shamans are a fundamental aspect of traditional religions because of their relation with ecology, relation common between the hunters and gatherer of periods like the Palaeolithic (Hayden, 2003). In this context, Hayden (2003) recognises shamans

1. as pioneers of the use of ecstasy or of ecstatic states with different levels of intensity (Peters and Price-Williams, 1980)
2. as actors of the Axis Mundi or the three-tiered universe (advanced, intermediate, and inferior worlds) (Walsh, 1989b)
as ambivalent actors because of their actions, that sometimes are not as good as expected (Winkelman, 1990).

In the meantime, other authors like Walsh (1989a) present a transcendental approximation about the origin of shamanism related with the application of the psychological, physiological and chemical techniques – possibly revealed by famine, states of fatigue and dehydration, in the context of tradition and specific cosmology. Finally, he defines shaman’s practices as the first process to reach a state of transcendence, where visions are embodied as sacred. Practices that have sustained and inspired humanity for thousands of years (Walsh, 1989a).

2.2 Modern shamans

When referring to modern shamans, it is pertinent to recognise the controversy generated around their study (Joralemon, 1990). A controversy, that has reached to question the existence itself of the shamans, i.e., the case of Carlos Castaneda during the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Los Angeles in 1978 (Joralemon, 1990), and also, the reliability and authenticity of the figures that represent, especially in aspects like the simulation of trances (Peters and Price-Williams, 1980).

As a result of this controversy, shamans as a research topic has captivated theoreticians, as well as empirical researchers. For example, between theoreticians some propose

1. altered states of consciousness
2. political control
3. social conflict as the basis of magical and religious practices of shamans (Winkelman, 1990).

Others like Abram (1996) define shamans by their capacity to easily slide off perceived limits, e.g., boundaries enforced by social customs, taboos, speech or common language, making contact with and learning about otherworldly powers. Naidoo (2018) who analyses the contemporary education reform, and proposes a special actor that calls ‘shaman’, responsible for the generation, the constitution and reproduction of this phenomenon. Eliade (2016) categorises the shaman’s vocation as a religious choice that is manifested through a crisis or provisional rupture of the psychic balance. Monroe (1971) analyse the shamans’ trance state, proposing it as an experience or a trip out of the material body. Peters and Price-Williams (1980) review the shamans’ ecstasy experience, dividing it into three phases

1. the voluntary entrance and control of trance duration
2. the harmony of the dissociated state
3. the communicative interaction with spectators.

Walsh (1989b, 1994), for whom shamans experience three crisis moments:

1. the initiating crisis
2. the training stage, i.e., through tools like myths, inner master, ascetic behaviour, and loneliness
And Winkelman (1989) who defines shamans from their role as healers in a social and cultural context, as shamans between hunter and gatherer, healer-shamans between farmers, and mediums in politically-stratified societies (Winkelman, 1990).

After this contemporary overview, there seems to be evidence of some human and innate tendency to enter into altered states of consciousness (Harner, 1982), generally linked with rituals that support the induction and conduction of these trance states (Walsh, 1989b). Also, it is interesting to highlight how the mentioned elements are centered on practices and experiences more than in beliefs and dogmas, a finding that suggests a distancing of shamanism from religious issues (Harner, 1982).

While, between empirical researchers, the shamans as a research field have interested, inspired, and confused many (Walsh, 1989b). To the point of produce (at least in the West) a homeopathic industry, in which literature, rituals, workshops or programs that convert advisor into shamans are marketed (Harner, 1982). An advisor-shaman that help others face the impossibility of acting for themselves in critical circumstances (Bauman, 2005). The described context eliminates the previous concern of shamans extinction in the western world, its contemporary version functions quite well (Kalweit, 1988) and proposes its review, i.e., shamanic practices and origin from theoretical lenses like neo-shamanism (Doore, 1988).

3 Shamans in organisations

After reviewing the historical and contemporary evolution of practices and definitions about shamans. And taking as a starting point shaman’s comprehension as a magical and religious practice that is founded in the states of altered consciousness, the political control and social conflict (Winkelman, 1990). We propose, in this stage, a mixed sequential methodology, i.e., quantitative and qualitative, that begins with the revision of the current status of the discussion about organisational shamans through a bibliometric analysis, and ends with content analysis. The bibliometric analysis reviewed 1,683 publications of shamans, as an indexed topic, in the principal collection of the Web of Science (WOS), the Korean Journal Database (KCI), the Russian Science Citation Index (RSCI), SciELO Citation Index and Scopus since the year 1855. This number of publications were obtained after reviewing the different search criteria shown in Table 1.

We extracted the data (the authors, the title of publication, the source, and summary) of the 1,683 publications identified and we processed it using VOSviewer® software version 1.6.4. This is a free software that supports bibliometric analysis, i.e., the application of mathematical methods and statistics, to books, articles and other communication media that measure the quantity, performance and other structural indicators that determine connections between publications, authors and areas of research through computer algorithms, developed by the centre for science and technology studies of the Leiden University of the Netherlands. Our goal with it is to review the current status of the discussion about organisational shamans through indexes (numerical results) and maps (graphical representations) (Durieux and Gevenois, 2010; De Moura and Da Silva, 2016; Giudice et al., 2018; Şenel, 2019), that results with the VosViewer. In
Figure 1, we present the knowledge map for shamans in organisations classified by year and the occurrence of terms, resulting from the search criteria that appear in Table 1.

**Table 1**  Search criteria and number of publications in WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO and Scopus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search keywords in the themes of publications</th>
<th>Record numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shaman * business</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 34–(since 2002) Scopus 60–(since 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaman * organisation</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 106–(since 2002) Scopus 84–(since 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaman * company</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 24–(since 2001) Scopus 19–(since 1926)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaman * enterprise</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 7–(since 2002) Scopus 18–(since 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healer * business</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 21–(since 2001) Scopus 147–(since 1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healer * organisation</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 231–(since 2001) Scopus 531–(since 1962)</td>
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<td>Healer * company</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 13–(since 2002) Scopus 44–(since 1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healer * enterprise</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 5–(since 2001) Scopus 20–(since 1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quack * business</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 13–(since 2002) Scopus 53–(since 1897)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quack * organisation</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 28–(since 2002) Scopus 140–(since 1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quack * company</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 13–(since 2001) Scopus 28–(since 1855)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quack * enterprise</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 5–(since 2002) Scopus 8–(since 1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorcerer * business</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 2–(since 2006) Scopus 7–(since 2003)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorcerer * organisation</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 3–(since 2007) Scopus 10–(since 1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorcerer * company</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 1–(since 2017) Scopus 5–(since 1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorcerer * enterprise</td>
<td>WOS, KCI, RSCI, SciELO 2–(since 2009) Scopus 1–(since 2000)</td>
</tr>
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*Source:* Prepared by the authors
Figure 1  Knowledge map of shamans in organisations (see online version for colours)

Source: Prepared by the authors using VOSviewer® software
After analysing the knowledge map, we highlight the terms that are repeated in studies more than ten times, i.e., concurrence indicator and the decreasing volume of publications related to the topic, i.e., see Figure 2. Reviewing the concurrent terms and the software results, we found six segments or clusters of analysis. The first one includes terms like relationship, society, process, form, life, and culture. The second one makes reference to terms like care, hospital, background, access, drugs, provider and symptom. The third one comprises terms linked with plants, products, remedies, spices, and herbs. The fourth one relates terms like ritual, law, fight, level, and phenomenon. The fifth contains terms such as dimension, journey, trauma, complexity, and exposition. And finally, the sixth refers to terms like protection, assistance, child, deity, and father. These six segments of analysis can be integrated into categories such as structure (where we find words like process, form, and culture), background (that relates to words like symptom and access), artefacts (that include words like plant, remedy, spices, and herbs), development (that includes words like ritual and law), tasks (that comprise words like journey and complexity) and benefits (where we find words like protection and assistance).

Figure 2  Publications on organisational shamans in the last five years (see online version for colours)

Once analysed the most repeated terms in each segment or cluster of analysis, and the decreasing volume of publications in the last five years. We present below, the second part of the analysis, i.e., the qualitative approach where we conduct a content analysis with significant conceptual proposals about organisational shamans. This content analysis is going to be developed in stages, in the first one we try to find a definition of the organisational shaman. In the second we establish different typologies that shamans represent in a business context. And finally, on the third, we gather diverse proposals for the analysis of organisational shamans.

The literature defines organisational shamans in a social general context and others in a business organisation context. Among the authors that define shamans in the social general context, it can be highlighted Viladrich (2007) who defined shaman as a community leader, self-assigned and with magical powers, while she studying a healer in New York. Kerman (1992) who labels social healers as ministerial clowns, promoted by some North American churches that combine religion and art. Van Blerkom (1995), who compares the clowns that entertain sick children with non-western shamans, finding superficial similarities, related to the costumes, puppets, and sleight of hand.
functional similarities, when both help the patient and family manage illnesses.

symbolic similarities, evident when they manipulate diverse medical signs to
understand how to treat and alleviate their patient’s suffering.

Parker (2008), who analysed the interaction of technologies among electronic urban
tribes or neo-tribal [Adams and Smith, (2008), p.16], identifying the presence of grant
shamans or chiefs, as those self-assign roles or technical experts. Naughton (2008), who
creates and defines what is known as techno-shamans, as those leads others to ecstasies
states. Abram (1996) for whom workshops of personal discovery and revelations are the
modern shamans. Dean (2018), who, while reviewing the shaman’s identity suggested
that shamans are dominating the spiritual marketplace. Waddock et al. (2016, 2018) who
defined the intellectual shamans as persons that have a calling to do the work that they
do. Vangkilde (2017) for whom fashion designers are forced to have shamanic practices
by means of which they turn into prophetic agents with a particular vision of the future.
Gomes (2017) who explain the socio-political organisation based on the importance of
ritual and shaman in the Santarém. Willard et al. (2018) who relate shamanism to
knowledge distribution within societies, to make further predictions about how shamanism could change and collapse. And others like Hagen (2018), Moeran and
de Waal Malefyt (2018) and Wallis (2009) for whom architects, designers, and media,
respectively, can be seen as powerful shamans of the public or private spheres.

While in the business organisational context are fewer proposals than in social
general context. Frost and Egri (1994), for example, talked about organisational
development specialists as shamans. But they are not alone, other experts like Schuyt and
Schuit (2008) qualify as magicians the business consultants, who guide the transactions
between the old and the new through rituals of passage and operational procedures.
Nizamidou and Vouzas (2018) proposed a new mentor-healer-renaissance man while
referring to the crisis management,

1 as a mentor in the pre-crisis stage
2 as a healer during the crisis itself
3 as a renaissance man during the post-crisis stage.

Waddock (2019), who defined the leader as a shaman, that has three central roles as
healer, connector, and sense-maker in the service of a better world (Hicks and Waddock,
2016). Meanwhile, Vizzoni (2006), defines the shaman’s sensibility, i.e., understand the
self and the world while proposing tools for sustainable leadership. This author, also
recognise shamans’ capabilities to perceive, predict and manage illness and
social-environmental health of the organisation, widening the reach of the business
shaman to other fields like leadership development, organisational design, a collaboration
between organisations, human resource services and disruptive innovation (Vizzoni,
2006). In contrast, Gbadamosi (2005) proposed organisational consultants as modern
shamans, dedicated to diagnosing problems and implementing solutions through their
between advisor and shaman, warning about their usefulness in difficult situations, and
their co-responsibility in the obtained results (Adamson, 2000).

Once review the definitions of the organisational shaman, in this second stage we
establish different typologies of shamans in a business context. Where we find matches
among some professionals and the formerly shamans (Hayden, 2003). In this regard,
authors like Hayden (2003) classify psychotherapists, that fight against the demons of the sub-conscience, and, in general, those roles who induce ecstasy states, through songs, symbols, costumes, drugs, and alcohol, as modern shamans (Hayden, 2003). Doore (1988) that suggests the rediscovery of the traditional shaman’s methods amongst doctors, therapists, and spiritual guides, who appeal to percussion, dreaminess, and narration of stories as tools to heal and transform. Schuyt and Schuijt (2008), who categorise the magic-consultants from the techniques they apply to obtain results (Kottak, 2015). Sharma and Khokle (2017) who propose nine types of organisational transformations, i.e., quick-fixer, extender, healer, evolver, peripheral, recurrent, methodical, internal and cultivator, one of them related to the healers. And finally, Kaarst-Brown (1999) who does not define shamans in organisations, but assign them a symbolic role based on power and transformation, the characteristics of this role are

1. the future change
2. the modification of norms and values
3. the redistribution of power
4. the ability to wish correctly
5. the organisational empowerment.

Now, we present the third stage where we gather diverse proposals for the analysis of organisational shamans. Among them is Gbadamosi (2005), who proposes its review from the qualitative focus of science with an interpretive focus that encodes the symbolic acts as

1. ritual and symbolic practices
2. magical solutions
3. processes of initiation
4. impressed clients
5. cooperation during the application
6. client involvement in the solution (Gbadamosi, 2005).

Schuyt and Schuijt (2008) who review the ritual practice of magicians or business-consultants through an adaptation of the traditional steps proposed by van Gennep (2008), i.e., content, process, and procedures. These steps include the first contact between managers and consultants, the transition toward a new frame of mind, the pattern of the change and the inclusion of adjustments. And finally, Wheeler (2007) who analyses organisational shamans through the healer archetype, proposed by Jung (1973), while examining the supervision of the therapist in the psychoanalysis.

In this sense, we complete the overview of different conceptual proposals on organisational shamans to call them as a consultant-shaman (Gbadamosi, 2005), similar to the former shamans, from a functional and symbolic perspective (Van Blerkom, 1995). This shaman-consultant can be viewed as a fortuitous or self-assigned role (Viladrich, 2007; Parker, 2008), which will be in charge of perceiving, predicting and managing illness, and social-environmental health of the organisation (Vizzoni, 2006), and at the
same time guide the transactions from the old and the obsolete (Schuyt and Schuijt, 2008).

The described consultant-shamans can be categorised according to
1 the techniques that they apply to obtain results (Schuyt and Schuijt, 2008)
2 the tools they use during their interventions, e.g., percussion, dreaminess, and narration of stories (Doore, 1988)
3 or by their symbolic role, e.g., the future change, the modification of norms and values, the redistribution of power, the ability to wish correctly, and the organisational empowerment (Kaarst-Brown, 1999).

While when referring to the proposals for the analysis of consultant-shamans, it is important to highlight the qualitative focus of science, that supports codification (Gbadamosi, 2005), models (Schuyt and Schuijt, 2008), phases (van Gennep, 2008) and archetypes (Wheeler, 2007).

Finally, we try to analyse the possible causes of a decrease in the study of organisational shamans, finding
1 A lack of literature that deals with the consultancy practices under the theoretical lenses of cultural anthropology (Schuyt and Schuijt, 2008).
2 The tricky connection between the actual resolution of problems and ancestral wisdom (Vizzoni, 2006).
3 The controversy around the shamanism studies (Joralemon, 1990).
4 The fear of including the magic, symbolism, and rituals in the literature about consultancy (Kaarst-Brown, 1999).
5 The growing interest for other applications of organisational anthropology, such as the analysis of consumer behaviour (Marrewijk, 2010; Jordan and Caulkins, 2013).

4 Proposed tool to transform weaknesses into strengths through organisational shamans

Besides the suggested definition, the characterised typologies and the approaches reviewed for the analysis of shamans in a business context, we propose the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ as a possible protagonist of the internal transformation of company weaknesses into strengths (Humphrey, 2005). In this conceptualisation process of the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’, additional terms emerge that should be clearly specified. Within these, are terms like the current weaknesses of the organisation, the desired strengths for the future and the gaps between weaknesses and strengths. At the same time other terms like the ‘consultant-shaman of referenced’, understood as the actual guru or manager of the organisation, arise. Accompanied by others like the ‘management of the consultant-shaman’, related to the process of search and select the suitable ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ for the company. In this context, the managers or ‘consultants-shamans of referenced’ should recognise the current weaknesses of the organisation and the strengths it wishes, to search and select, i.e., management of the consultant-shaman the company internal or external
Transforming weaknesses into strengths through organisational shamans

“organisational consultant-shaman”, that guides the transformation of weaknesses into strengths.

**Figure 3** Proposed tool to transform weaknesses into strengths through ‘organisational shamans’
(see online version for colours)

1 **Past**: In this phase, it is important to define the current weaknesses of the organisation, the effects that they have over different components of the company and the root cause that contributes to its materialisation.

2 **Future**: In this second phase, we define the strengths that the company desires and the gap between the previously identified weaknesses and future strengths.

3 **Present**: Once identified the gap between weaknesses and strengths, the next phase corresponds with the search and selection of an ‘organisational consultant-shaman’, which contribute to the transformation of weaknesses into strengths. For that purpose, we propose the following sequence of activities:

- Identify the different ‘organisational consultant-shamans’ that are available in the organisational context, trying to specify the scope of their intervention.
- Once identified, the ‘organisational consultants-shamans’ whose job can solve the gap between strengths and weaknesses, it is important to gather the managers and the consultants-shamans. During this meeting, the manager should
  a specify the weaknesses identified and the desired strengths
  b request details to each consultant-shaman about of his intervention, specifically the processes and procedures that will apply.
- After understanding the intervention details of the ‘organisational consultant-shamans’, the manager of the organisation should evaluate, according the expectations, the level of importance (with a scale of 1–10 points) of the following categories: ritual and symbolic practices, magical solutions, processes of initiation, impressed clients, cooperation during the application and client involvement in the solution.
Once the evaluation of the received proposal is complete, we suggested that each of the criteria is weighed (category score/importance level assigned), to select the proposal that receives the best score. With the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ election begins the transformation process of weaknesses into strengths. During this phase, the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ should persuade the manager for the actions that need to be taken. And the manager should be prepared and believe in the change to incorporate new responsibilities and procedures.

4 Future: Finally, we advise practitioners to restart the proposed cycle, previously explained, as an improvement strategy.

In this context, we propose the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ as one of the tools available for organisational management. For the application of this tool, we suggest that the manager or ‘consultant-shaman of referenced’ identify the weaknesses of the organisation and the strengths that they desire, to search and select an ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ that adjust to company expectations. Accordingly, it is important to highlight the importance of the manager’s role during the implementation of the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’. A period of intervention where the manager, besides of being prepared, should believe and incorporate this strategy of change, to guarantee that the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ can contribute to the transformation of the organisation’s internal weaknesses into strengths.

5 Implementation of the proposed tool in the case of the Colombian peace commissioner that signed the final agreement

To verify the applicability of the proposed tool to transform weaknesses into strengths through ‘organisational shamans’, we decide to apply it in the case of the Colombian peace commissioner that signed the final agreement, following the research protocol presented below. In this research protocol, we define the research question, the research strategy, the unit of analysis, the sample of the study, the involved categories, the data gathering, and selected analysis techniques.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Research data sheet</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research question</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Research strategy</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unit of analysis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sample</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Categories</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gathering of secondary data</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Result analysis</strong></td>
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*Source: Prepared by the authors*
Once the character has been contextualised and the research plan defined, the secondary data is gathered as follow.

1. The National Liberation Army (known as ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known as FARC-EP) have been in an armed struggle with the Colombian government since 1965 (Conciliation Resources, 2016).

2. Sergio Jaramillo Caro was born into an elite family of Bogotá-Colombia. He is the great-great-grandson of the conservative President Miguel Antonio Caro, grandson of the journalist Luis Eduardo Nieto Caballero and a distant cousin of the ex-president Juan Manuel Santos Calderón. From an early age, he opted to isolate himself from the social world and immerse himself in books outside the country (León, 2012). He studied at Anglo Colombiano School in Bogotá, finished his Bachelor’s in Canada and went on to study philosophy, philology and ancient Greek at universities in Toronto, Oxford, Cambridge, and Heidelberg respectively (Arias, 2017).

3. Throughout history, there have been various governments, that wanted to begin peace talks with the illegal armed groups, i.e., FARC-EP and ELN (El Heraldo, 2016). Amongst the presidents that have attempted it are:
   a. Alfonso López Michelsen in 1974
   b. Belisario Betancur Cuartas in 1984
   c. Virgilio Barco in 1986
   d. César Gaviria in 1990
   e. Ernesto Samper in 1994
   f. Andrés Pastrana in 1998
   g. Álvaro Uribe Vélez in 2005
   h. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón in 2010 (El Heraldo, 2016).

4. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, i.e., OACP for its Spanish acronym, was created in 1994. Amongst the functions of the OACP are: advise the president in the peace politics, verify the real willingness of the armed rebels, convene the sectors of civil society, facilitate the representative participation of different sectors, address and sign agreements with the armed groups, define the terms of the negotiation agenda, establish the mechanisms that allow the development of their functions in a managerial way, be the spokesman of the National Government, prepare the implementation of the peace agreements, coordinate the implementation of peace agreements with departmental and municipal authorities, follow-up of the execution of the peace agreements and obtain international cooperation for peace, amongst other functions granted in the Decree 1959 of 1994, 2107 of 1994, 127 of 2001, 3445 of 2010, 394 of 2012, 1649 of 2014 and 672 of 2017 and in law 434 of 1998 (Oficina Alto Comisionado para la Paz, 2018).

5. The President of the Republic, by the authority granted in Article 189-14 of the Political Constitution of Colombia (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente and Presidencia de la República, 1991) can: “Create, merge or eliminate, according to the law, employees that the central administration demands, indicate their special function and determine their allocations and salaries. The government cannot create,
due to the treasury, obligations that exceed the fixed global amount for the respective service in the initial appropriation of the law.”

6 Juan Manuel Santos bet for one of the most atypical officials of his government, Sergio Jaramillo, to lead the peace negotiation with the FARC-EP. The selection of Jaramillo as High Commissioner of Peace was based on

a His low public profile, which is perfect for managing a confidential agenda.

b The intellectual, technocratic and strategist capacity that makes him think carefully his decisions.

c The confidence that the President has in him, who knows him and has worked with him previously.

d His double identity, because he knows the strategy of war and, at the same time, the mechanisms to create peace.

e His personality because he is a deep, and patient person, not much inclined to enthusiasms, with an unusual ability to remain silent and be careful with the details (León, 2012).

7 Colombian government started peace talks with the armed group FARC-EP on 4th September 2012. The peace agreement was finally signed on 24 August 2016 (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz and FARC-EP, 2016).

8 La Silla Vacia (2017), i.e., a Colombian web portal devoted to the analysis and opinion of the public power reviewed the history of Sergio Jaramillo. Indicating that he lived abroad and returned to Colombia in 2000 to work at the chancellery in the program of diplomacy for peace. Then he became the political counsellor for the Colombian Embassy in France, and with Álvaro Uribe’s rise to power, he became the legal adviser of Human Rights issues. In this role, Jaramillo began working on security topics and was the editor of democratic security document, i.e., an integral strategy for winning the war (Revista Semana, 2005). Then in 2004, he left the government to be the director of the foundation ‘Ideas para la paz’, a tank of ideas for peace. Between 2006 and 2009, he worked with Juan Manuel Santos (Minister of Defence for the Uribe’s administration) as Vice-Minister for Human Rights and International Affairs, being an essential bridge with the international community. His work was key for the discovery and cessation of the ‘false-positive’, i.e., extrajudicial executions (Revista Semana, 2013). On 2010 during the government of Juan Manuel Santos, Jaramillo became the High Counsellor of National Security, a new post inspired by the ‘National Security Advisor’ for the USA (Lowi et al., 2017). In this position, he led the exploratory contacts for a peace process with the FARC-EP and wrote the agreement framework. Finally, along with Humberto de la Calle, chief negotiator, he led the peace negotiations and was responsible for all the conceptual strategies of the process (La Silla Vacia, 2017).

9 For many, Sergio Jaramillo will be remembered in Colombian history, for his achievements

a Convincing the FARC-EP for the first contact.

b Seeking peace without impunity.

c Debating with the opposition (represented by Álvaro Uribe).
Adjusting the peace agreement.

Negotiating with the persons that represent no in the plebiscite, i.e., a popular consultation where the Colombians said no to the peace agreements between the Government and the FARC (Taborda Herrera, 2016; Zamudio Palma, 2017).

According to research by ElNodo.com (2016), i.e., a digital newspaper for democracy and observatory of information flows of Colombia, Sergio Jaramillo, the peace commissioner, is the main beneficiary contractor with the peace process. He, as director of the foundation ‘Ideas para la paz’, signed contracts with the government of up to 11,500 million pesos, i.e., more than USD3,620,660. For example, the FP-104 hiring process of 2016.

In 2016, President Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the agreement signed with the FARC-EP (BBC, 2016). And later the High Commissioner for Peace, Sergio Jaramillo, presented his waiver (Noticias RCN News, 2017).

On 7 February 2017, the public phase of peace talks began with the ELN armed group (Noticiascaracol.com/AFP, 2017).

Next, we apply the proposed tool to transform weaknesses into strengths through ‘organisational shamans’, according to the step by step presented in Section 3 and with the secondary data that was collected beforehand.

Past: The objective of this phase is to identify the current weaknesses of the organisation. For the selected case study, where the analysed organisation is the Colombian State, the armed conflict of the last 50 years is recognised as one of the greatest weaknesses of the country point i. During this period the ELN and the FARC-EP have maintained an armed conflict with the Colombian Government since 1965 (Conciliation Resources, 2016) point i.

Future: During this phase, we define the desired strengths of the organisation. In this case, and with multiple attempts for a peace agreement (since 1974 point iii), the desired strength between different presidents, i.e., organisation managers is the peace in Colombia. So, the gap between armed conflict and peace is the goal of the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’.

Present: Once identified the gap between weaknesses and strengths, the next step is the search and selection of the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’. In this case, President Santos, in accordance with the law point v and supported in the government agencies devoted to peace issues point iv, initiated a new dialogue with FARC-EP. For this task Santos looks for his nearer team, finding and selecting Sergio Jaramillo, his old companion in the ministry point viii and distant relative point ii, as High Commissioner for Peace point viii.

Amongst the criteria that guided the selection of Jaramillo point vi, besides the proximity previously described, it can be highlighted

a. His ritual and symbolic practices, related with his low public profile point vi and the care with the details point vi.

b. His magical solutions, evident with the edition of the democratic security document point viii, his advises about Human Rights issues point viii, and the discovery and cessation of the ‘false-positive’ point viii.
His processes of initiation, that began with his multiple studies around the world point ii, his experience in different public offices point viii, and nurturing his intellectual and technocratic skills point vi.

His impressed clients, by the effects of the democratic security point viii and with the discovery and cessation of the ‘false-positive’ point viii.

With cooperation during the negotiations, where he connected actors like the international community point viii, and the State agencies point viii.

With the client or stakeholder involvement in the solution, where he included the international community point viii, his foundation ‘Ideas para la paz’ point viii and also the opponents of the agreement point viii, based on his personal equanimity point vii.

Once Jaramillo was selected as ‘organisational consultant-shaman’, the public negotiation phase with the FARC-EP started on 4 September 2012 until 24 August 2016 when the final agreement signature point vii. After this hard negotiation process, the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ Sergio Jaramillo has been recognised as the author of conceptual strategy of the peace process point viii, the leader of negotiations with the opponents of the agreement point ix, and a co-author of the final agreement point viii. While he receives harsh criticism for his participation as a contractor of the State during the agreement negotiations point x.

After the signing of the peace agreements with the FARC-EP, the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’, Sergio Jaramillo, resigned his position as High Commissioner for Peace, while President Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize point xi.

Future: Finally, we propose to restart the proposed cycle, as an improvement strategy to transform weaknesses into strengths through ‘organisational shamans’. In this context, and once signed the peace agreement, the Colombian government began the public phase of peace talks with the ELN armed group point xii.

6 Discussion with other authors

The conceptualisation of the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ as a actor that can transform weaknesses into strengths, besides recognising the proposed link by Gbadamosi (2005) between current consultants and old shamans, accept the contributions of: Adamson (2000), who co-responsabilise the shamans for the company results. Schuyt and Schuijt (2008), who relate shamans with the transition of the old to the new. Vizzoni (2006), who defines shamans as those in charge of perceiving, predicting and managing illnesses and the social-environmental health of the organisation. Parker (2008), who places it in a coincidental or self-assigned role and Harner (1982), who suggests a distancing of shamanism from religious issues, while ignoring the magical powers (Viladrich, 2007), the social healing (Kerman, 1992), the similarities with western clowns (Van Blerkom, 1995) and the ecstatic states (Naughton, 2008) that other authors included in their suggestions.

On the other hand, when referring to an interpretive tool to search and select consultant-shamans in organisations, besides corroborating the current controversy around the role of the shaman, i.e., where one inquires about its very existence
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(Joralemon, 1990), their authenticity (Peters and Price-Williams, 1980), and the ambivalence of their actions, which may not be as good as expected (Winkelman, 1990). We complement the previous findings of some authors that categorised, i.e., according to the techniques that shaman’s use (Schuyt and Schuijt, 2008), their symbolic roles (Kaarst-Brown, 1999) and the tools they apply (Doore, 1988), and apply specific analysis techniques to understand shamans, i.e., from the qualitative focus of science (Gbadamosi, 2005), models (Schuyt and Schuijt, 2008; Thomas et al., 2018), phases (van Gennep, 2008) and archetypes (Wheeler, 2007) that serve as supports.

7 Conclusions and future recommendations

After a mixed sequential methodology, i.e., quantitative and qualitative, that begins with the revision of the current status of the discussion about organisational shamans through a bibliometric analysis and ends with a content analysis, we propose a conceptual tool to search and select the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’. A role that can support the transformation of the internal weaknesses of the organisation into strengths through content, processes, and procedures. The proposed tool suggests a systematic process where once identify the present gap between actual weakness and desired strength, we present an orderly procedure to typify, analyse and select the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ that meets the requirements and achieves the long-awaited transformation.

Recognise the origin of shamans’ practices as an innate tendency, discovered and rediscovered in different times and cultures, legitimises their study from different disciplinary fields, e.g., religious, ethnological, historical and archaeological. Disciplinary fields that allow us to generalise the role of the shaman of antiquity from

1 the use of ecstatic states with different levels of intensity
2 the importance that they give to elements as the Axis Mundi or the universe of three levels
3 the ambivalence of their actions, that may not be as good as expected.

These first approximations of the antiquity to the role of shamans were replaced by new proposals that emphasise the altered states of consciousness, political control and social conflict as the basis of the magical and religious practices of shamans. Under this approach, in addition to recognising the practices of shamans as an innate trend, a generalised human tendency to enter altered states of consciousness is suggested. In this context, we notice the enormous controversies that surrounded the role of shamans in modernity. A period in which the existence of the figure has been questioned, the reliability and authenticity of its interventions, and the possible misinterpretation of its actions, which may not be as good as expected.

The proposed tool to search and select ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ follows the next step by step:

1 Identify the different consulting shamans that are available in the context in which the organisation works.
2 Socialise the identified gap, i.e., between weakness and desired strengths with the consulting shamans to understand the type of intervention they propose.

3 Evaluate the proposed interventions in light of the defined expectations of the manager, i.e., ritual and symbolic practices, magical solutions, processes of initiation, impressed clients, cooperation during the application and client involvement in the solutions.

4 Select the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ that accumulates the best-weighted score in the evaluation of the proposals.

In this study, through secondary information and the knowledge that the authors have about the transformation experienced with the peace agreement. We show the ‘organisational consultant-shamans’ as a managerial tool that would support the transformation of internal weaknesses into strengths. In the case study, it is evident how the judicious search and selection of ‘organisational consultant-shaman’ and play a transforming role in organisations. In the Colombian case the ‘organisational consultant-shaman’, Sergio Jaramillo, supported peace talks with the FARC-EP, articulating the peace framework agreement and coordinating the conceptual strategy of the process.

For future studies, we recommend for the search and selection of ‘organisational consultant-shamans’ the empirical verification of the proposed tool, from the identification of the organisation’s weaknesses and desired strengths, the different shaman’s typologies and the interpretive process of analysis. Likewise, we warn about the possible ambivalence around the actions of the selected ‘organisational consultant-shamans’, remarking the decisive role of the manager, who must be involved as part of the change. Finally, we suggest deeper studies about business anthropology from the review of issues such as cultural change, diversity and intercultural cooperation both theoretical and empirically.

References


