Hardship
Leadership in hardship contexts
Abstract

When difficulties appear concerning the environment and the social relationships in teams, leading others become very interesting as well as challenging. I am sharing in this research an understanding of the concept of hardship in order to point out a main leadership issue, which is to lead others in extreme situations. It is a new and innovative approach of leadership within the business area based on the literature and completed by sailors’ experiences of hardship.

Offshore sailors have the use to handle hardship situations alone as well as in crews, and they cannot avoid it when they are far away from the coasts. Thus when a problem occurs they must fix it themselves. During offshore races and expeditions, sailors have to deal with teams issues and cannot quit for going back home. Thereby, a boat, which is going to sail for few months without stop, is a real laboratory of leadership and social relationships.

The starting point of this approach concerns the art of leading oneself, which represents a prerogative for a great leadership in extreme conditions. Indeed when a leader loses his or her self-control in extremes situations, he or she will probably not be able to lead others. Thus, in order to illustrate the literature approach to this concept, this thesis has been completed with an auto-ethnographical approach. I as a sailor have experimented hardship alone on my boat during some offshore sailing trips. I present an analysis of these experiences to explain the issues of leading oneself in such conditions. Thanks to the participation of some sailors experts in hardship, I illustrate the possibility to lead others in hardship context with the inspiration of their experiences. It is possible to lead others in very extremes conditions, and offshore sailors that I called hardship experts could represent a real inspiration to leaders, for a real and great leadership.

Key Words

This master thesis represents a very meaningful step within my self-development, and I address this oeuvre especially to

Pascale and Jean-Louis, my parents,

Albane and Emmanuelle, my sisters

Professor Philippe Daudi, my tutor teacher and mentor

The tutors team and the teachers team

Sweden, for this opportunity,

My international classmates,

Danièle Benezech and the University of Rennes 1,

Hervé Bourmaud, Benoit Marie, Yann Claverie and Quentin Vlamynck, and Tara expedition, for sharing their experiences,

And all my family and friends,

For having made it possible, I express my gratitude.
Preface

I believe that a great master thesis has to be written with passion and fascination. An author must be concerned by his or her thoughts in order build a credible oeuvre that will inspire readers, “It is not an exaggeration to say that the personality of the author ought to be evident in the text” (Daudi, 1986, p. 115). I am pointing out that I am authentic in this master thesis by being myself in the whole pages, in all my words. My passion as well as my fascination for this dimension, which is *leading hardship*, drove my reasoning and my researches during this six-month’s project. With the *Book of Hardship* and this academic report, the goal is to add a new value within the management literature area, which could be represented by a bridge between social sciences and philosophical approaches. The dimension of hardship has been very often developed in philosophical approaches during the history, and is “one of the least researched areas in the leadership field” (Hannah et al., 2009, p. 897). Thereby this approach is very challenging for me as a master's student, whatever it is exciting.

I want to share a new and fresh vision through an understanding of this very important aspect for the all-days life of every reader. I am twenty-three years old and I do not pretend to change the world with this oeuvre; however, I wish to stimulate reader’s thoughts and help one to understand and to reflect upon hardship contexts. Thereby, I chose to use an empirical approach, which could not be seen as ordinary thanks to the use of original but relevant examples. Thus and as I said above, the manner of creating a book is not as important as the *why* one created it. As for a piece of art, passion and fascination must represent the pillars of the whole creation process. The empirical dimension of this study deals with the sea, and more specifically with offshore sailors. Indeed this sailing world represents an almost perfect laboratory of social sciences where hardship meet with work, pleasure, team work, management, leadership, all-days life, and adventure. Sailing is also my passion and I am experiencing hardship within my own sailing project, which is about offshore races alone on a very small boat of 21 foot. I lead obviously an hardship experience, in order to know more about myself. I do not know what and either why, but I feel the positive consequences out of it on my self-development.

The second main dimension of my master thesis represents also an exaltation to my mind within the social science and philosophical areas. Indeed my intense interest as well as my curiosity to leadership and the relationship between leaders and followers drove this project in a specific way.
The art of leading others come from the art of leading oneself, so how a leader could lead others when he or she cannot control oneself, when he or she cannot lead oneself? I understand in this previous sentence a paradox since everyone sometimes or often cannot control oneself. A right or unique answer cannot come out but the reflection process and the shared thoughts could help individuals for making their own understanding of this paradigm; the desired consequences are to improve relationships between leaders and followers with a better understanding and analysis of hardship situations.

This topic passionate me also because hardship is a key step for the process of seeking happiness. The Book of Hardship represents a significant step in my self-development and it is the start of the rest of my life. I pushed the boundaries of my frames of references and opened up more my minds on the world. This six-month’s life experience could be characterized by thoughts, readings and discoveries. Human brains are created by an union between two parts, which make one clever; the left part, which represents the rational dimension of the personality, and the right part, which is the emotional aspect. Nowadays the world is very focusing on rational elements and people, companies, states are looking for figures and logical approaches which are of course very relevant. However I believe that the emotional dimension must be more important in our life and especially in hardship situations, when people are not able to control themselves.

The Why I studied this topic is de facto very important to my mind. The answer drove my researches, and gave sense of what I am doing and writing as such. I believe that something is missing in the approaches of leadership and I am convinced that in a simple and clear way I can complete it with a new vision and some ways to tackle a dimension of leadership, hardship. This book shows awesome experiences and tries to generate a new thought to readers with new ideas and approaches.

It is a very challenge of my life of course full of hardship, I enjoyed this writing and research experience, which I lead for my self-development. I do not expect people to like it, a contrario I expect from people to read it as well as to criticize it, and de facto to help the accomplishment of my self-development.
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An Innovative Thesis

The business context has mutated during the last twenty years. The consequences of the globalization and for example the crisis that is now permanent are significant. Everything around people is running faster and faster in this new world, there is less time to think and de facto just the minimum attributed time for doing things. A consequence of this new ways of life is to multiply hardship situations in organizations, institutions, at home, and everywhere else. The pressure in relationships between leaders and followers is more and more intense as well as the expectations in a business context but not only. By the time and with the accumulation of those factors, the society effects generate hardship situations. Very often and in everybody life, that happens in every kind of environment, and somehow human individuals are not able to control themselves anymore. Indeed, Hannah characterized an extreme situation as a situation which “have potential for massive physical, psychological, or material consequences that occur in physical or psycho-social proximity to organization members” (2009, p. 898). That is said, leaders as well as everybody else must adapt themselves by developing new skills to thrive in this new environment (Sackmann & Phillips, 2004). In order to catch up this topic, I wrote this thesis and I lead this research in an innovative way. This study is made in a creative and new way in order to tackle this subject, which is also creative and new. Two distinctive parts are presented with an academic report completed by the Book of Hardship.

The purpose of my study is very up to date, and this master thesis will be important as well as complete. The academic report is created as a study addressed to the left part of the brain, which is the rational part. Indeed, the goal is to show how Leaders can develop new skills in order to handle hardship well justified in an academic way. The idea is to understand the concept of leadership in extreme situations, which represent a bridge between philosophical issues and social sciences. This report will discuss and combine the literature with empirical illustrations and point out some good practices for handling hardship. To achieve these goals, I will develop and analyze practical examples of Hardship situations/contexts in addition to the existed literature. The expected outcomes are to generalize the different issues founded according to the empirical approach, which is also innovative. Indeed, the empirical approach is not only made by dialogues and interviews but also by an auto ethnographical and reflexive approach of my experiences of hardship.

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The purpose of the Book of Hardship (second part) is to illustrate the thesis and to help readers to understand the concept of hardship and indirectly for handling hardship in this kind of contexts. I do believe that hardship represents a critical barrier in leadership relationships and, in order to overcome this obstacle, one must understand it deeply. Thus and to give sense for readers, the main goal of the book is to multiply their thoughts. That’s why this second part of my master thesis catches the attention of readers by targeting the emotional side of their brains. It is the story of hardship narrated in a simple and clear way with pictures, metaphors and some appropriate phrases which should generate reflections. Since that oeuvre represents a self-development support, it is also a new tool for leadership development.
At every levels of self-development, a barrier to the art of leading oneself is generated by hardship; unfortunately, on the Earth planet, people who are not living are able to control themselves in every situations. Another step to answer the question *Who am I?*
I. Introduction

Hardship generates turbulences in everybody life, and historically it has been used a lot in religions literature as well as in philosophical thoughts and behaviors. Somehow they defended that it is necessary to live hardship in order to understand what happiness is as it has been developed by Dante with the *Purgatoire*. He has advanced that Individuals must live the worst experience in order to find happiness (Dante, 2013). In 2010 in Sweden Eurostat registered 12.4 suicide out of 100.000 inhabitant but in parallel 3.3 also out of 100.000 inhabitant for Greece (Eurostat, 2014). The problem is that this suicide rate is often higher in wealthy or happy countries like in Scandinavia than in poor ones because people are busy all the time (Daly, et al., 2011). In poor countries as an illustration the majority of inhabitants are all the time busy since they are living daily hardship to thrive, however the rate of suicide in Nepal or even in Haiti is about 0.0.

Thereby, for some authors it means that hardship is a key step of human self-development. Those approaches are very important for this thesis because hardship is a very issue within leadership. Indeed, it refers to the consequences of *black swan* for example (Taleb, 2007), when one does not expect the worst or even what is happening. This is hardship, and when extreme conditions appear one must be prepare for it even in the case of black swan (Hannah, et al., 2009) (Taleb, 2007). Indeed, an experimented reaction will support a confident relationship between team players and help a lot to overcome difficulties in an efficient way, and finally it will also strengthens the leadership. If *a contrario* a leader is not ready to overcome this kind of situation, the hardship phenomena could grows. This is a snowball effect if the control is lost, a team could panic and the atmosphere will not be trustful anymore and team outcomes will pay the price. That’s why hardship represents a crucial issue within a team and for a leader it is significant (Hannah, et al., 2009). Thus, for some people it is harder than for other to face extreme situations.

This introduction will be devoted for grasping the subject and making sense out of it for finding a precise research problem and the better methodology relatively to the approach of the study. Thus it will be divided in three parts with a conceptualization of hardship combined with some existing practices, and the focus of the study with the research problem. Finally, I will expose the structure of this master’s thesis.
1.1. Hardship: assumptions

Before introducing the research question of this study, it is relevant to know and to understand the concept of hardship. That’s why a first step will be devoted to conceptualize hardship according to leadership. The following step will focus on the good practices in term of leadership within hardship context in order to make sense out of the purpose of this study.

1.1.1. Conceptualization

It is not an easy task to conceptualize hardship, which can appear every time and everywhere in different forms. In this part consecrated to the conceptualization the answer to the question what is hardship will be completed by a contextualization of hardship according to the management area. My approach deals with contextual theories of leadership, meaning that leadership and the ways of leading others depend on the context in which one leads others: “leadership and its effectiveness, in large part, are dependent upon the context. Change the context and leadership changes” (Osborn, et al., 2002, p. 797).

Hardship represents a time, which could be characterized by difficulties. Hardship generates a barrier in the process of leading others because in some situations humans are not able to control themselves anymore. Hardship can take the form of a black swan event which is something not predictable ex-ante (Taleb, 2007). The issue of hardship within leadership is about to lead in an unknown context without doing management mistakes in a context which could be stressful, panic, or also unstable. It is an important failure source in leadership, and there is two ways to handle it. Some people but very few are able innately to stay calm and to manage very bad situations with an hindsight view. However that does not mean that others are not able to learn to react. Thereby the second way to handle deal with the experience, and it is crucial to be ready for facing those situations. Indeed, one could be able to learn how to react when he or she is not innately a great leader (Hannah, et al., 2009).

The outcome of hardship is often represented by a bad effect in a team. They are not only due to very hard conditions as for example when an organization is going to bankruptcy but these effects could also come from softer situation. As an illustration, I have been working in a restaurant two months three years ago; my colleagues and I were all very good friends. A team spirit was very active around, it has driven the quality of the work during the summer and customers felt it, so they were enjoying the place with a great atmosphere. When the place was very crowded in the middle of the summer, we were all very busy and somehow when a very small problem was
appearing like a mistakes of a colleagues, our answers or talks were very unpleasant and the consequences were: a bad atmosphere with stress panic, and some tensions between each other’s. That was an illustration of a soft hardship effect and the danger appear if these consequences get worse. The main dimension of this concept of hardship concerns the effect of it for teams and leaders.

The concept of hardship could also be translated as a process made up by few important steps. The first step is the one before hardship appears. This step is characterized by a great situation without problem, or very few since it is about a positive context. Then, the second one is about the feeling that something will happen, it can be illustrated as bad forecasts for example. The third step is represented by some signals of hardship like small discomforts, or sometimes very strong hardship directly like a black swan (Taleb, 2007). The fourth phase is the one when concerned people try to understand the problem and they get conscious of it. Finally yet importantly concern more the issue of how could one overcome the obstacle, it is about to react. During all this process hardship is like an oak-tree seed somehow which is growing in the middle of a road. If nobody cares about this seed, a tree will grow in the middle of the road and the road might be broken, drivers might have some problems since they will not have access to this road anymore. It could have been easier to take the seed and to put it in another place when it was a seed than to wait the start of the growing process. Indeed, after the start of this growing process, it will be much harder to overcome it since many roots will have grown under the road even if one cut the tree, it will grow repeatedly. The concept hardship is lead with the risk of a potential snowball effect, which must be controlled as soon as it is possible: “As magnitude and probability increase there is a concomitant need for capable leaders” (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 906).

In order to conclude on this understanding chapter, hardship is a very general concept, which can occur in every situations whatever is the intensity of the problem. The origin of hardship could be external as well as internal and sometimes surprising in case of a black swan (Taleb, 2007). As Hervé Bourmaud said during the interview, hardship is constituted by three distinct phases on an actor’s view, which are the surprise, the reaction, and the action. So finally, hardship represents a dynamic process in the time from the moment when it appears to the resolution of it, which could have been very easy if the actors reacted well quickly. Thus, a main aspect of this hardship approach deal with the practices adopted by the actors of the situation. It is indeed indirectly a consequence of hardship, which is helping itself. That’s why it is very relevant to have a look on those practices before determining the research problem deeply.
1.1.2. Practices in hardship context

The goal within this chapter is to understand the frames of this study and to build the research question, and so to understand the nature of this hardship issue for leadership. As it has been explained above, the core of hardship could grow thanks to the actors reactions, thereby it is important to understand this very aspect. The report will describe here those general practices with the help of a first paragraph about the right practices before the second part in which some wrong ones will be introduced.

In case if one is in a such hardship situation, the idea is to handle the three steps introduced by Bourmaud above from the surprise to the reaction and to the action. In 2007, Howitt defended also that the effectiveness of leadership will change during an extreme situation between these three steps: preparation, response, and recovery (Leonard & Howitt, 2007). Keep calm and relax will help to think in a proper way and to overcome the two firsts steps. In a leadership position this reaction will also provide a sort of confidence to the followers and that’s will help them to stay positive. In order to feel secure and safety without any panic or stress, followers are looking for a charismatic leader who will respond quickly with an authoritative answer (Mulder, et al., 1986). However and in order to solve the problem, followers must notice that there is definitely a problem. That’s why the dialogue dimension is also very relevant to handle hardship. Indeed solving a problem in a team without dialogue looks very hard because dialogues represent at least the most efficient way to solve conflicts and to find common agreements (Lindgren, 2012). The assumptions here is that in order to overcome hardship the actors must adopt more an attitude relax, calm, and positive to face problems, completed with a permanent dialogue between the team players.

In order to complete this understanding process of hardship, it is also relevant to introduce the wrong practices, which could intensify the bad consequences of hardship as a snowball effect. Unfortunately the world is not either pink or perfect, and as written above hardship can be qualified as such as a situation in which people are not able to control themselves. Thereby, the suggestion of right practices often does not represent how people react in such contexts. To illustrate Hervé Bourmaud explained during an interview, with an hindsight view that he made many management mistakes during his experience. When one is confronted with hardship situations, he or she is in a specific psychological move and makes wrong judgments, adopts not appropriate behaviors and reactions (irritation, annoyance, angry). When it happens within a team, the consequences might be the creation of a stressful atmosphere or even a panic
movement. Depending on individual’s personality, those réactions à chaud (immediate reactions) produce a very dangerous issue within hardship for a team, a company, a society, or even for the whole world (Hannah, et al., 2009).

Thereby it is now possible to point out quite a clear vision of the main issues within this study, how could one act with right practices, instead of wrong practices? This is all about the richness of social science’s issues in which one try to manipulate oneself in order to become better, and to make the world better. Who am I? Who I would like to be? How I react? How I would like to react?

1.2. The focus of the study and research question

After this accumulation of basic understandings upon hardship and extreme situations, the report is able to define deeply and clearly the nature of the subject and the research problem, which is How do leaders, manage hardship, what could they improve? “The art of leading other come from the art of leading oneself” (Daudi, 2013-2014). Based on the deep understanding of the concept of hardship, the focus of the study is made on two main pillars in a leadership-development point of view. No matter the context in which one is, first of all one must lead his or her self when an hardship situation appears, and it is only in a second time that it is conceivable to think about the possibility to lead others. It is the only way for leading in hardship contexts and to avoid team disasters, which represent a probable consequences of wrong practices (Hannah, et al., 2009).

1.2.1. Leading oneself & hardship

The ability to lead oneself comes directly from one self-development, which represents the main aspect of this study. The previous understandings of the concept of hardship suggested an issue for leaders, which deals with self-control. As described above, leaders sometimes do not control themselves in such situations. However, it is necessary to control oneself in order to lead others and to avoid bad consequences within the relationship between a leader and his or her followers. Some authors believe that leaders are the result of their own life-stories at some extents. For example, Shamir and Eliam studied “life stories as a source of self-knowledge and self concept clarity […] as self justification” (Shamir & Eliam, 2005, p. 395). Obviously it makes sense in a leadership-development approach; this transcribes the way to become an authentic leader. Since leaders are the result of their own life-story, their abilities to handle hardship situations depend on
their own experiences. Thereby, leading oneself come also from one’s own self-development and story.

Some particular school of thoughts had developed the idea that hardship represents an unavoidable step within one self-development (Bennis & Nanus, 2004). Hardship has always been used as an input of the formation of the spirit, of the character. This report could illustrate this idea by referencing to religion spirits such as Catholicism for example. Indeed priests believe that one must face hardship in order to forge one identity, one spirit. A very innovative MBA program from HEC in France developed an interesting way to teach leadership which is exactly about hardship. The students follow a two days intensive leadership workshop in a military area organized by soldiers. Days start at 5:30 with the military dress after a night in the dormitory. The idea is to affect their own self-developments by confronted them to hardship situation; it is a very efficient way to teach how one could multiply a team and how one could lead others. Some extreme exercises lead those creative workshops, and that’s an efficient way to teach leadership since managing hardship represents a main barrier to lead others (Janin, 2014).

By the way, training represents a way to learn to lead oneself in many situations. If one is used to face unpredictable situations (as black swans events) (Taleb, 2007), he or she will probably adopt a more relax, calm and positive approach to handle hardship, indeed it is out of unknown. As an illustration, the Légion Etrangère (French foreign Legion) could attest of the relevant impact of training. This Legion, made up by foreigners who want to get the French nationality, is overtrained and de facto ready to face any hardship situation. By purpose those people confront themselves to extremely hard situations and they are programmed to thrive in the worst hardship situations. The soldiers are in some ways masochist, because they enjoy it. For example when Jaime Salazar an American recruit signed up, he said “I felt an indescribable release” (Hastings, 2010). Indeed, they know what the stakes are, and this explains at some points why they like it. This is a key aspect of the approach that one adopts to handle an extreme situation: being motivated and self-confident is very important as Jervis stated: the “predisposition to perceive a threat varies with the person’s beliefs about his ability to take effective counteraction […] whether they are vigilant or defensive depends in large part on whether they can act effectively on the undesired information” (Jervis, 1976, pp. 374-375). Another example concern airplane pilots and astronauts who have to follow some mental trainings for being ready to handle those hardship situations. Indeed in this context one must be able to control his or her self in hardship situations (Hadfield, 2014). Chris Hadfield has experienced an hardship situation in space. He became blind outside of the international station in space thereby moving at five miles a second
so eighteen thousand miles per hour. An average person would certainly react by getting insane, panic, scary or maybe petrified. A contrario and of course it wasn’t the case for Chris, and he reacted well because he has been in this kind of situation during his long years of training before he took off. He is an expert of the emergency procedures in this kind of situation forasmuch as he was able to go back to the station by using his other senses. As in the French foreign legion in such situations people do not improvise but they are repeating what they have learned in their training programs. In these specifically areas people know how to control themselves because they are trained for it.

That’s why, this report tends to point out this previous ideas dealing with training of leaders. In many extreme domains the actors are effectively trained for facing the worst situations. Thereby that represents an efficient way for learning to face hardship and the question is now, how could one apply it in the leadership area.

1.2.2. The possibility to lead others

One can think about the possibility to lead others only after this previous step since “The art of leading other come from the art of leading oneself” (Daudi, 2013-2014). Within the frame of this study the goal is clearly to understand and to frame hardship for facing it in a leadership context. Another crucial dimension of this previous quotation is that it makes sense only in this way; it does not mean that if one is able to lead oneself then he or she is able to lead other. That’s why the accent must be made on the title, which is the possibility to lead other.

Some authors talk about innate leadership, however most of the great historical leaders learned it by the time and with their experiences as it has been exposed by Gardner and Laskin in their book Leading Minds (2011). Some people do not have the personality or the character for leading others, and they do not want to. Bennis and Nanus have defended that a lot of people are managing and very few are leading, they suggested some ways to move a step forward from management to leadership. The lever to a great leadership is mainly constituted by self-development “Leading others, managing yourself” (Bennis & Nanus, 2004). Leaders and managers do not work and neither thinks in the same ways. Leaders try to drive their teams for multiplying the work when managers try to make good profits. Furthermore a team driven by a multiplayer effect is much more productive as well as efficient than could be another one. This very interesting approach of leadership development introduced by Bennis and Nanus showed how difficult it is to be a great leader. In order to lead others four pillars must be acquired which
concern mainly one self-development. First, one must have a clear vision of the future and the objective based on the present as well as the experience. Leaders have to be also sensegiver, by that the authors mean that one should be able to share his or her previous objectives to the followers in order to help them to believe on it. The third prerogative represents the “glue” of leadership; it is the trust, which maintains the organization integrity and the relationship between a leader and followers. Finally, the fourth one concerned hardship since a leader must develop a positive insight view even during a bad period. This one is also maintaining a certain equilibrium between the firsts three ones. In addition, those four pillars represent the distinction between a manager and a leader (Bennis & Nanus, 2004).

Thereby it is possible to lead others and to develop those pillars. The two authors completed their model with six important steps to become a leader. First one must develop a personality and a leadership style, which is usually the outcome of the experience for a part and innate for the other. The second key is to create a team spirit with an efficient social architecture to get the best of team players. The following step claimed that, as a leader, the determination is crucial in order make the followers comfortable since they feel that leaders believe in their goals. The trust is very relevant as a fourth step to make up all those phases, and to create a strong spirit and background. This permit also to create and to develop a group identity, which is strongly necessary to face extreme situations (Strachan, et al., 2007). Back to Bennis & Nannus, the fifth step is about leaders vision of the world, which should be a bit strange: The leader should be always optimistic even during crises. Indeed that helps a lot the followers to believe in things and to give their best to multiply the work in every situations. The sixth and last step concerned leaders acts: they are the example or the idol of followers so they must react in a proper way with a respect of their values and beliefs (Bennis & Nanus, 2004).

That’s said, hardship represent another barrier to lead others because it can be the straw that breaks the camel's back in term of respect of the previous rules about leadership. Furthermore it has been explained by Bennis & Nanus with their fourth strategy presented. It is possible to lead people and to overcome obstacles like hardship, but everyone is not able to do it, a certain experience and a high level of self-development looks to be required. Finally yet importantly, an important dimension for overcoming extreme situation is the role of sensegiver of a leader. Indeed every things is based on the sense given by a leader to followers in extreme situation, which represents a required ability that one must develop (Smircich & Morgan, 1982) (Weick, 2001) (Weick, 1995).
1.3. The structure of the thesis

The next chapter of this study will develop the methodological dimension relatively to my approach of hardship. In order to answer to the research question and to give sense to the research, it is indeed necessary to adopt an appropriate methodology. The idea belong this master’s thesis is to mix and to analyze three types of data. The first source of data is the literature upon leadership in extreme contexts. The second source is the outcomes of the dialogues and interviews which I have lead for this study. And last but not least the outcomes of my experiences of hardship as an auto-ethnographical approach. The methodological chapter is devoted to make sense out of these data and to this study.

Thirdly the theoretical framework is presented thanks to the existing literature around the subject of leadership in hardship conditions. It is a crucial step in a scholar work since it will give a credibility to the approach. This key chapter is divided in two main parts: A first section is dedicated to a literature review of leadership in extreme conditions which is completed by a second one discussing the outcome of it with some relevant theories of leadership.

Then, a fourth part will focus on the empirical approach dealing with some examples of hardship situations in comparison to the outcome of the theoretical framework. My choice has been to use extreme illustrations in order to show, in an understandable way, the issues of this kind of situations in a leadership context. They will deal with offshore sailing experiences. Thus, when fifteen people stay on a boat for few months, they meet a lot of problems, hardship situations, and conflicts, and all in a very intensive way. Indeed, this will help to understand the solutions, and how to handle hardship. An example of it is a North-Pole expedition of two years. A Scientific Team beached a boat (TARA) on the Ice of the North Pole, and drifted with the ice during two long winters. The Human Relations were very important and Intensive during this expedition (Tara Expedition, Vienne B., 2007). They met a lot of very stressful and dangerous situations, which can be called hardship. How did they overcome obstacles? In addition, what are the lessons from those experiences within a leader view? Thanks to this approach, the report will identify and generalize ways to handle hardship situations in the real life. I lived myself an experience: An offshore sailing trip, alone on a 21-foot boat in order to demonstrate and to generalize some issues of leading oneself in hardship situations. The idea is to go deeper through the understanding of hardship by living this experience physically for complementing others experiences which are not reflected perfectly since they are due to interviews. Indeed this is one
of the most efficient way to convince myself with my thoughts, and to understand the concept as well as possible before explaining it.

Thanks to this empirical approach, the link with the literature is made during the whole study in order to confirm or also to infirm my findings. The idea through this thesis is to understand this concept deeply, and so to open a new discussion for further researches upon leadership in extreme conditions. Indeed, even doing a PhD around this subject would not be enough to tackle its huge dimensions of consequences and characteristics, which varied from all the contexts. To conclude this approach, a last section is devoted to express the limitations of this study before the conclusion of my research.
II. Methodology

I will now discuss the methodological approach, which has been used in order to field this concept of hardship. I will start by explaining how did I lead this study, what is the methodological approach and then I will specify the chosen ways for collecting data as well as the nature of these data. The last part of this presentation of my methodological will focus on the use of my own experiences as data, which is an auto ethnographical approach.

2.1. A personal & phenomenological approach

Another relevant aspect of leadership deal with authenticity, and being authentic. It has been a major reflection issue within my own self-development as well as a source of progress. Myself is translated within this research approach since I believe that an author is a person who has feelings, intuitions, and a certain view based on one’ frames of references. As Weick explained the process of sensemaking is based on one’ experiences and culture (Weick, 1995). I do not pretend to be objective, and I will not because I am not able to say what objectivity is, if it exists. After explaining my approach to this study in a very personal aspect, I will explain how I leaded it. This oeuvre is credible and as Dr. Daudi would say “It is not an exaggeration to say that the personality of the author ought to be evident in the text” (Daudi, 1986).

There are different ways to learn as well as to understand things or phenomena as for example readings, learning, listening, watching, or experimenting. I do prefer to learn by experimenting things since I have to do mistakes in order to understand and it is a very important dimension of the empirical part of this thesis. I am authentic in the way I write this thesis, and I am not objective, my personality can be understood through this oeuvre. I believe that it is a proof of the quality my thesis, it is a very important step for my personal reflection and self-development. I have been fascinated by this project and I have written it with passion.

This master thesis is a real project and the research had to be lead as one could lead a team or a company for example. I lead this project by all the time referring to the following interrogations: WHY, HOW, and WHAT. It has been very important for me to make sense out of this subject which is very new and my approach has been driven by the very interesting “golden circle” (Sinek, 2009). Indeed, this approach helped me to build as well as to understand and to respect the frame of the project. I started by defining the why of this research, which represents the core
of the project: I believe that hardship generates a barrier in the process of leading oneself and thus in the process of leading others. “It is apparent that the impact of organization context on leadership is an under-researched area” (Porter & McLaughlin, 2006, p. 573), thereby this theme must be explored in order to improve leadership approaches. Then concerning the how, the idea is to show and to demonstrate the importance of the concept by creating a complete understanding of it. For this, the research is based on real experiences and experiments of hardship related to leadership, which show its relevance. Finally the last question concern more the form of the study: What? Since it is an approach about new concerns to leadership, the outcome of this research is very innovative and creative in order to affect the research area. The original book of hardship is a tool for leaders and for every human in order to get better thanks to a great understanding of how hardship works, and how one could overcome it. It is an efficient tool because it used very hardship illustrations that I experimented alone on a boat during some days. It is extreme and efficient in order to make a striking and lasting statement.

Another dimensions of my approach deal with my vision of the social reality and about the perspective I have concerning sciences. My approach of it is very focused on the fact that the reality is an interpretation of what one could see. There is not a truth or even a false but a lot of different visions of the reality which are generated thanks to each one’ frames of references (Weick, 1995). Those frames represent the outcome of an experience, an education and a culture, thus that generates how people are able to make sense out of what they see, feel, or listen everywhere. The social reality is a mix between the subjective reality (interpretation) and the objective one (The very day reality). Obviously this process is unconscious and as an example, it is not easy to think outside the box because people don’t know what they don’t know (Weick, 1995). That is the starting point of my reflection; it is not because something does not exist that it could not exist. In this study I would prefer to use a phenomenological approach (Schutz, 1970) completed by an Actors view (Bjerke, 2007) in order to shape an understanding of the concept of leadership in hardship situations. Business reality does not exist without participants who created it so researches concerning it should be aware of these participants. The idea through this study is to understand the meanings of those actors by analyzing their acts, and the language they use (Bjerke, 2007).

2.2. An actor’s view to create business knowledge

Previously I explained the phenomenological dimension of my approach to leadership that represents the roots of this project. Furthermore the core of my research is based on an Actors
view because the purpose of this study is to understand this phenomenon of hardship. Firstly I will present why this approach of the actor views and then what is this approach about.

The methodology to be chosen depends mainly on the nature of the subject and on the objective pursued within the research (Daudi, 1986). It also concerns the context and the domain of it, and that’s why I decided to start this thesis by some very general aspects of hardship as a concept. The actors view is very adapted to this approach since the purpose of it is about to understand a phenomenon. The idea is to accumulate knowledge in order to understand, and to interpret hardship based on the sense given by the actors themselves (Bjerke, 2007). The asset of this approach is that it is very connected to the reality since the idea of this master’s thesis is to create a useful tool for leaders in the real life.

My research process followed the actors approach within four main steps (Bjerke, 2007). First of all I defined (above) a conception of the reality meaning that everyone is concerned by hardship which is a social constructed concept. The start of the research has been driven by my own pre-understandings of hardship, which was powered with my experience as a sailor, as a student, and as a reader. It has been completed by the thoughts and advices from the tutor team composed by Philippe Daudi my tutor, Björn Bjerke my examiner, Mikael Lundgren and MaxMikael Björling. From this basic acknowledgement concerning hardship and its consequences I developed a theoretical framework before I entered in a third step to generate a deeper understanding by introducing dialogues with people who experimented it and by analyzing my own sailing experience. Thus the next part will be devoted to the collection of data and to which is the pillar of the approach. Finally the last step of my reasoning concern the expected results which is about to sum up the different aspects of hardship in term of understandings a language and a phenomena (Bjerke, 2007).

2.3. Qualitative Data: A mix between dialogue and experience

In the process of leading a research it exists in addition to the literature two main kinds of data: the qualitative one versus the quantitative one. I will first explain my choice, which has been made, on favor to primary qualitative data completed by secondary data represented by a theoretical framework. Then I will explain the innovation of this study, which concern the phenomenological approach driven by the use of personal experiences as data (auto ethnography).
In order to understand deeply the concept of hardship and its consequences for leadership, it has been important to talk with people who experienced it with a dialogue form. Indeed quantitative data would not have been adapted here because the nature of the subject concerns more an explorative approach, which is de facto subjective. The purpose of quantitative data is to converge to an objective view by generating as much as possible data for taking into consideration as much as possible aspects of a defined topic. Thereby I chose to prepare some interviews (annex) for collecting qualitative data which is very adapted to the purpose of this study dealing with social sciences and somehow a subjective approach. That was the plan, however I would like to be honest within this project of master’s thesis, and the plan has not been respected hundred percent. Very quickly I understood that this interview approach is not the best to understand the deep particularities of this complex concept of hardship. And at least this approach was not enough to understand well how leadership works and could work in an hardship context, thus I decided to orient my interviews to a dialogue form, which helped me to collect more impressions and data for supporting the analysis part. This is also the advice given through Björn Bjerk’s book concerning the actor view, the direct observations as well as dialogues represent the best approach. Thus during all this project the idea was to take into account as many ideas as possible in order to draw and to make sense out of hardship. Since the point was to endorse as many views as possible and as many hardship experiences as possible I preferred to use the dialogue form with people which is a very efficient way to understand a phenomena with the acts of concerned people (Lindgren, 2012).

I completed these external data by my own experience and I believe that it helped me a lot in order to achieve my understanding process of hardship. That’s said this approach match very well with the nature of my research problem since the study concern a phenomenological research. It is quite different from classical approaches, but it is pertinent to share a lived experience in order to explain and to understand hardship. The vision of things is very different if one lives the experience than if one collects the experiences of others. I had the possibility to experiment it myself within a sailing project, and I did it. I did an offshore sailing trip of 5 days alone a years ago which has been about 700 miles on a 21-foot sailing vessel. I completed it by another one of 350 miles within a race in April this year and the difference between both is very high because of the acquired experience. I will share it within the empirical approach in order to explain and to illustrate the effects of hardship and some ways to handle it. This is a crucial step of this research because it shows how one progress cans and learn how to overcome obstacles and to lead oneself.
This is an auto-ethnographical approach which is the subject of discussion as well as oppositions when it is used in an academic way.

2.4. **Creating knowledge with reflexivity & autoethnography**

This is the crucial methodological justification of this master’s thesis because it concerns now the very interesting and innovative dimension of this study. For the half of the empirical data I, the author, am the subject of the data by making an analysis of my experiments of leading myself in extreme conditions as I described above. The analysis of lived experiences corresponds to a specific methodological approach which is called reflexive study or also auto-ethnographical approach. The definitions of these approaches are huge and authors points of views are divergent, so it is not an easy task to share one of those. However, I could advance that an auto-ethnographical approach use author’ experiences in a social environment as a primary data in order to construct “emerging practical theories” (Cunliffe, 2003, p. 991). This kind of approach is a source of divergent discussions within the literature, concerning the credibility of the analysis as well as the validity of the project because it concerns an academic master’s thesis. However, with the bellow discussion I will develop why it is pertinent to theorize self-experiments in my approach.

A credible approach to this study: Auto-ethnographical approaches are not always recognized as such when there are used in academic texts, indeed for some authors it is “at the boundaries of disciplinary practices” (Sparkes, 2000, p. 21). Thereby, the reviewers or readers who criticize these methodology agree that “the proper voice is no voice at all” (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997, p. 194). I am claiming here that within the social science research area and also the organizational context, reflexive approach could be adapted. Cunliffe said that “a crisis of truth has emerged” concerning the psychological, the philosophical, and also the management research area (Cunliffe, 2003, p. 983). By the way this could be explained by the fact that nowadays many individuals are trying to defend some objective views of the world. In such contexts as the one I am studding which concerns social sciences, obviously any objective approach is possible because the aim subject of this research area concern the study of human behaviors which could not be approach objectively since every one act differently (Cunliffe, 2003, p. 986) (Bjerke, 2007). The researchers within the leadership research area do not find the right truths with a total objectivity because leadership is a social phenomenon and the right truth may not exist. Radical-reflexivity which represents an auto-ethnographical approach is a relevant methodological approach for the social science because “we need to go further than questioning the truth claims.

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of others” (Cunliffe, 2003, p. 985). This reflection concerning the critics of reflexive approaches leads me to think about the gap between others, and me and if there is any what are my limitations? And what are their limitations?

**The approach:** In order to generate knowledge with an auto-ethnographical approach it is very important to make sense out of the results as well as to frame strongly the approach. Within this study, my idea is to theorize the findings of my auto-ethnographical approach by using a process of sensemaking (Weick, 1995). The auto-ethnographical data in this study are characterized with an historical dimension. I will explain some past experiences meaning that I choose the adapted ones in order to illustrate the research. These personal stories have been extracted from logbooks which I had written during my sailing experiences. Thanks to this approach I am able to share it with an hindsight view generated by this historical perspective (Maunders, 2002, p. 128). In addition, I followed the method introduced by Clandinin and Connelly concerning story-telling approaches. They introduced four main dimensions which should be respected: **inward and outward; backward and forward.** The **inward** dimension concern insight feelings of the actors, the **outward** is about the description of the context and the environment, and the two others (**backward and forward**) are referring to the past and to the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 417). In order to give a story as complete as possible in a specific context, during all my auto-ethnographical approach I have carefully respected these four dimensions. My approach is also inspired from the postmodern theory which allows me to tackle the subject this way because “the problem is that there are too many meanings, not too few” (Weick, 1995, p. 27). So the postmodern dimension of my approach justify it with the nature of my research question which is unanswered and flexible (Hassard, 1993, p. 115) and also it allows me to lead it with a “fragmentation to try and interpret, understand” (Vickers, 2007, p. 225).

**Analysis:** By using my the logbooks from my sailing experiences, and framing for each story the context as well as the environment, I illustrate the theoretical framework with the support of these experiences. The analysis followed a process of sensemaking as it has been conceptualized by Weick (1995). I explained stories in small boxes as it was written in my logbooks, and commented each boxes behind to analyze and interpret what happened with the support of the theoretical framework. It is a retrospective process which is sensemaking. Indeed I am trying with this way to make sense and to give sense out of what happened (Weick, 1995). The stories represents the cues of in a process of sensemaking. The analysis or the sensemaking is then allowed thanks to the comments in which I linked these cues to the frames of references. Thus with my auto-ethnographical approach I am not pretending to theorize the truth but a truth. To
illustrate this approach of sensemaking, I like to compare a cue as a seed of an oak tree, meaning that my experiences described in the boxes represent the seed of the oak tree. The seed (cue) grows depending on the environment which is the sun, and the water (frames of references). Thereby, the size and the aesthetical form of the oak tree depend on this environment, and of course the seed of an oak tree won’t become a banana tree or a tomato (Weick, 1995, p. 51). So thanks to this approach of sensemaking, I can say that the quality as well as the core of my analysis depend on my frames of references. Thus, the process of sensemaking in the analysis of my own experiences is not wrong but subjective and it could be better when my frames of references will be better.

Finally as it is described above, the research is constituted by two main sources of primary data collection, one very personal constituted by my own experiences of hardship in an adapted context. The second one concern external views build by dialogues with people who lived hardship situations also in the domain of offshore sailing and expeditions. Thereby, my methodological approach is pertinent by combining the auto-ethnographical data with the dialogues and the theoretical framework which is the subject of the following chapter.
III. Hardship: barriers to leadership?

In the introduction I explained what is hardship, and at some extends I referred to some consequences of extremes situations. The idea is now to go deeper in the understanding of leadership in hardship contexts through the literature as a first step. In a second section, these findings will be confronted to the approach of emotional intelligence that I have been studying during this master program. The fourth chapter with the empirical approach will thereby illustrate these discussions and confirm or infirm these theoretical findings.

3.1. A theoretical framework of leadership in hardship contexts

My approach of leadership consist in studying this phenomenon by referring to a specific context which is hardship. I claim in this master’s thesis that leadership is “socially constructed in and from a context” (Osborn, et al., 2002, p. 798). Thus this literature approach is mainly based on contextual theories of leadership. The foundation of these theories is that “leadership and its effectiveness, in large part, are dependent upon the context” (Osborn, et al., 2002, p. 797). Firstly, I will focus on the idea that the consequences of hardship are not similar for every organizations because if some are used to handle extreme contexts, some are not. Secondly, I will explain the three keys steps of an hardship which are crucial in order to understand how leaders could manage it. The third section will be devoted to the leadership responses in such situations. This is a very theoretical approach using “the truth claim of others” (Cunliffe, 2003, p. 985).

3.1.1. Organizations are not equal against hardship

Hannah et al. defined four mains categories of organizations in their study of leadership in extreme contexts: Trauma organizations, Critical action organizations, high reliability organizations, and naïve organizations. The differences between all these four categories concern mainly their abilities to overcome hardship (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 901). After having explained the three firsts types of organizations, I will make a zoom on the last category which unfortunately represents the majority of the companies.

Unusual organizations – Trauma organizations are the ones which are confronted to extreme situations daily, and for some hourly. It concerns for example ambulances, or emergency within hospitals structures. In these contexts the particularity is that “over time ‘extreme’ can become
In order to lead in such contexts with a stable very high probability of hardship, three values are constantly in actors minds: “high levels of vigilance, situational awareness, and preparedness” (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 900). Critical action organizations are characterized by Hannah et al. as organizations with a lower regularity of extreme contexts and a higher intensity of hardship. For instance it is mainly military organizations which are targeted in this category. I won’t develop deeply this kind of organizations, because they are quite far from the focus of this study; they have a very high and strong tolerance/resistance to inhuman events such as when team members are killed (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 901). Fortunately within the business context, team members are not often killed or injured.

The third category has been called by Hannah et al. as high reliability organizations which refers to organizations such as “normal police and fire operations” (2009, p. 901). These two kinds of organizations share a similar approach to extreme situations. Indeed it is unusual for the “normal police to fight” extreme context as for fire: it is “safety first” (Useem, et al., 2005, p. 466). Another example of this category of organizations is the nuclear power plants. The probability of hardship is lower than it was for the previous categories. Extreme events are not part of the ‘normal’ anymore; they are continuously looking for eventual threats. In this areas, they care a lot on prevention, risk management, and on indicators to detect risks if any. They try to avoid extreme contexts by being aware of what could happen.

Other organizations and leadership failure – The last but not least category of organizations is represented by the Naïve organizations. They have a low probability to encounter an hardship. Hannah et al. claimed that “the number of naïve organizations that may be thrust into an extreme context is growing” (2009, p. 901). My study is focusing mainly on these organizations in which leaders face difficulties to handle hardship when it occurred. Indeed within these organizations if a black swan event occurred (Taleb, 2007), the leadership reaction often fail because leaders and teams are not trained to handle it and the necessary time to react may be too long. This human behaviors are inductive. For example in a farm the chickens have the use to the farmer who comes every morning at 10 o’clock to feed them. Thanks to their inductive reasoning, they run every morning at 10 o’clock to the farmer in order to eat. But one time, when they come to the farmer at 10 o’clock he or she kill them. Thus, some authors found that in extreme contexts with a low probability of hardship, leaders often fail in the process of preparing for these hardship (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). Even when teams are ready to face hardship it could represent an hard task, thereby when one is not prepared with some defense mechanism for example, the probability for a leadership failure is higher. The paradox which can be extracted here is that...
some approaches claimed that “leadership will require new skills tailored to an environment of urgency, high stakes, and uncertainty” (Heifetz, et al., 2009, p. 64). That is confirming the “truth claim of” (Cunliffe, 2003, p. 985) Hannah et al.; It is crucial nowadays for these leaders to prepared for eventual troubles, and to make organizations “crisis prepared” (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992) (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). From the idea that “extreme events may come in the form of a crisis, but are not necessary in that form” (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 899), leaders should make organizations and teams hardship prepared. This could take the form of a strategy which will probably become a competitive advantage.

I am not considering that these categories of organizations are representing every companies, because there are always exceptions within organizational approaches. However the firms which are the subject of this thesis are mainly represented in this categorization. The next step is about to divide hardship in different “phases” which will permit to understand in a deeper way some available levers to handle extreme situations.

### 3.1.2. Hardship as a process

An hardship situation can be approached as an assemblage of three distinct time periods: the preparation, the response, and the recovery (Leonard & Howitt, 2007) (Bruning, 1964). This distinction is relevant for my approach because the efficiency of the art of leading other vary within each of those three-time period.

**Preparation** – As I introduced in the last part concerning the naïve organizations, there is a need in a crisis context for firms to be ‘crisis prepared’ (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992) (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Crisis are hardship contexts, but the idea of this thesis is to go deeper within leadership in extreme contexts so I will talk about being ‘hardship prepared’. As it has been explained within the previous section, every organizations are not ‘hardship prepared’. Thus this represents an issue in the business area because a lack of preparation often leads organizations to failures when they encounter such events (Heifetz, et al., 2009). Being ‘hardship prepared’ has a psychological dimension to avoid eventual breakdowns, and physically organization’ members must be fine with enough energy to handle such situations. At the meta-level, the preparation should take the form of risk management (training) and also on the creation of indicators to prevent extreme contexts. So the leadership should prepare the organization with for example the communication systems within a firm which can generate failure (Turner, 1976).
Response – In this phase, organizations need a different leadership than for the previous one. A great help to generate a good response; however it is still probable to fail in this second step (Quarantelli, 1988). Indeed the behaviors of team players have completely changed from the last step. In the response phase the actors feel directly the danger or the threat which is occurring, thereby it can provoke a real motivation to handle the extreme event (to react), and in this case team-members work together to overcome the threat (Kolditz, 2007) (McKean, 1994). Furthermore another approach which concerns followership claimed that in such hardship, a charismatic leadership is the more appropriate response. For instance Mulder et al. said a rapid and authoritative response to extreme events is appropriate because it helps followers to feel confident (Mulder, et al., 1986). Leaders as sensegiver (Weick, 2001), are driving organizations and in an hardship context they have to give a direction to followers (Foldy, et al., 2008). From an authoritative response the unconscious process of sensemaking launch by the followers will be very fast after being generated by the leader (Weick, 1995). In 1988 Weick claimed that “the less adequate the sense-making process directed at a crisis, the more likely it is that the crisis will get out of control” (Weick, 1988, p. 305). When hardship appears a team can also tend to be prettified by the event. People could feel frozen by the degree of terror of a disaster, or people can be tired, for example and it leads often to breakdown for team members (Arndt, et al., 1997). These effects can be handled if with a strong authoritative rapid response from the leadership (Fodor, 1978). This phase can be very long depending on the situation, and a trustful atmosphere is a great way to thrive into an hardship event (Sweeney, et al., 2009). This idea of trust within the relationship between leaders and followers is crucial to handle an hardship because “A lack of trust in the integrity of the leader’s decisions, even during a relatively short crisis, can result in the destruction of a unit’s level of cohesion and commitment, or at the extreme, munity may occur” (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 904). To sum up this response phase, I explored three main aspects which are crucial for leadership work with the dimension of trust within the relationship, the sensegiving role of leaders, and finally the authoritative leadership. Mulder et al. conclude from their laboratory studies that in order to support followers in their process of sensemaking and to overcome hardship, the most effective leadership response is authoritative, direct, and rapid (Mulder, et al., 1986).

Recovery – This represent the long-term consequences of an hardship. When the disaster had occurred, an organization has to rebuild itself all the procedure which has been omitted or forgot in the hardship situation (Porfiiriev, 1996). For instance, after black swan event (Taleb, 2007) it takes a lot of time to come back to a normal situation. I like to compare this “after war” period to
nuclear catastrophes because this metaphor is very pertinent to describe this phenomenon. Indeed it takes centuries to remove every consequences of a nuclear disaster. Hannah et al. talked about “withdrawal and atrophy” to describe eventual bad outcome of hardship (2009, p. 905). This third time-step depends a lot on the act which had been lead by leaders in the previous one and also on the preparation to these events. The outcome of the literature upon this topic is that most of the consequences are psychological within the members of organizations. People are not sure anymore of the future, and think about a lot of unanswered questions concerning the security, the safety, or even the efficiency of the team to overcome hardship (Hannah, et al., 2009). As for the previous steps the leader has to be a sensegiver. Thus by helping team members to make sense out of what happened and to learn from what happened give them a certain serenity. And, therefore this is a way to handle the bad psychological consequences (Tredeschi & Calhoun, 2004). And finally, the last approach to implement some new energy during the recovery period, leaders could try to persuade followers that there is no lack of efficiency and they are not powerless (Foldy, et al., 2008) (Hannah, et al., 2009).

3.1.3. Responses of leadership

In an hardship context when a charismatic leader interfere, followers “have higher levels of personal identification […] they are more willing to engage to support the leader’s mission and vision and tend to align their self concepts more closely to what the leader represents” (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 907). After having understood the main aspects of leadership in hardship situations thanks to “the truth claim of others” (Cunliffe, 2003), I will develop the main response of leadership to these situation as described in the literature. Most of authors claim that this response in such context could be characterized as an adaptive. Obviously a unique right response does not exist because of the multidimensional dimensions of hardship.

As I found above, an efficient leadership response could be authoritative and active (Mulder, et al., 1986). This finding come mostly from studies of military leadership as Flanagan et al. for example developed their approach (Flanagan, et al., 1952). This leadership answer make the followers confident, and they follow because they believe on leaders decisions when they are rapid and direct. However these approaches admit some limits when organizations are often confronted to hardship because followers tend to challenge less leaders anymore due to an high level of trust and a lack of determination (Staw, et al., 1981). Indeed the organization could lose some efficiency.
The few studies which developed the issues of leadership in stressful contexts also conclude that leaders who are able to create a group identity overcome hardship efficiently. Followers should feel that the leader is authentic and that represent a great support to build a group identity (Avolio & Luthans, 2006). For instance leaders should likely “provides competence support, structure, priorities, role clarity, effective communication, coordination, maintain cohesion, focus, calm, a sense of humor” (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 912). These main dimensions should represent an efficient way to maintain a group identity. Thus, this group identity will be helpful in handling hardship events because team-members will work efficiently together to solve problems.

The group identity is crucial whatever the level of intensity of an hardship is. As described in the previous sections there are different levels of hardship with higher or lower consequences. Leaders must then adapt their leadership style to the level of extremity of the context. Obviously a military response to a very soft hardship might not be adapted to most of organizational contexts. Another study defended that leaders could adapt another leadership style based on transactional leadership, and transformational leadership, which referrers to the characteristics that I have just exposed (Bass, 2008). So basically, a leader who mix an adaptive form of leadership with an administrative dimension might get from his or her team an efficiency for facing a threat of hardship.

Finally, the response of leadership could also be improvised. Some authors suggested that improvising is relevant in many situations, and I also believe that in a lot of organizations leadership missions are improvised (Rego & Garau, 2007). “What made then successful ‘was improvisation’” (Hannah, et al., 2009, p. 913).

After this exposition of different existing approaches concerning leadership and hardship from the literature, I believe that I framed the concept and the ideas behind this study. Now within a next section, I will draw a deeper link from these findings with some important theories extracted from the master’s program of Leadership & Management in international context in which I have been part of.


3.2. **Theoretical suggestions to handle hardship**

This second section relates two main theories of leadership which are crucial in the art of leading others within hardship contexts. It has been introduced in the last section that leaders must give sense to their followers in such situations, but they also have to control followers emotions in such situations. Thus, if a leader cannot emotionally control his or her self in such situations, it will be hard to control the others. That’s why I will explain the concept of emotional intelligence completed with some relevant ways to improve the emotional intelligence of leaders. Then I will focus on leaders’ role of sensegiver. Finally, I will sum up the theoretical findings of this literature approach to leadership in hardship context.

3.2.1. **Emotional intelligence**

Leaders should be emotional intelligent in order to lead other and themselves in hardship contexts. Being emotional intelligent means controlling one own emotions and some authors talk about regulating feelings (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). Emotional intelligence represents a very huge theory which has been developing a lot in the literature with discussions as well as oppositions (Koman & Wolff, 2007).

The main issue concerning emotional intelligence (EI) within the literature is How to measure if someone is emotional intelligent (Mayer & Salovey, 1995)? My approach to it is not about measuring it because I will focus on a description of the characteristics of EI, in order to find some levers for improving leadership within extreme contexts. Two main theories exist concerning EI at the individual level. Salovey and Mayer suggested in their theories the emotional abilities (Mayer & Salovey, 1995), and on the other hand Boyatzis and Goleman focused on the social dimension of emotional competencies (Boyatzis, et al., 2000). These two approaches are complementary. Indeed, I can point out four main dimensions of EI: Self-awareness, Self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The level of individual EI could depend on the experiences of a leader as well as on one personal identity (Koman & Wolff, 2007). In the literature, authors are now exploring the group dimension of emotional intelligence to understand how is it possible to make a group able to influence its feelings and emotions. The firsts results tend to conclude that emotionally intelligent leaders influence on the emotional intelligence of a group (Koman & Wolff, 2007). Thus related to the last section it is obvious that if leaders create a certain level of emotional intelligence within an
organization, it will be easier to face hardship context thanks to adapted responses from the followers.

There are many possible actions to become *emotionally intelligent*, and all require trainings and experience. I will extract the suggestions made by Salovey and Mayer concerning how one could acquire emotional abilities (1995). They claimed first that the regulation of the emotions is correlated to the level of one’s consciousness of these emotions. Thus, they suggested a three dimensional approach to study the ways for becoming *emotionally intelligent* by isolating people in three categories: the unconscious, the ones with a low level of consciousness, and those with a high level of consciousness (Mayer & Salovey, 1995, p. 200). The more interesting level is when people have a high level of consciousness. Indeed, for non-conscious individuals, the objectives are to become conscious of the emotions in order to at least being able to chose between internalize an emotion or not. At the higher level of consciousness the authors talk about meta-experiences (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). This is clearly the objective that leaders should have: high level of consciousness concerning their emotions in order to be able to manipulate their emotion and eventually followers emotions in hardship situations as well as to make them feeling confident. Mayer and Salovey suggested five main levers to work on for being ‘emotional intelligent’ at this level: Clarity, attention, emotional ambivalence, acceptance typicality and influence, self-efficacy of regulation, and meta-regulation of mood (Mayer & Salovey, 1995, p. 203). In order to improve one emotional intelligence level, first it is crucial to be clear or at least to show it. A apparent feeling or mood can help followers to feel the authenticity of the leader. In their approach it could be dangerous to have a high attention to own emotions. Indeed, in case of hardship a vicious effect could be launched: Thinking too much around emotions or feelings could end in a depression or a breakdown. Leaders should also avoid being emotional ambivalent because it is a signal of none emotional intelligence, followers could feel insecure. It is also important to respect the mood and emotions of the others as Mayer and Salovey suggested with the acceptance, the typicality, and the influence. A leader could inspire his or her self from the fourth dimension of Mayer and Salovey which is called self-efficacy of regulation. That means that when something is going wrong in a bad situation, as an hardship context, people are able to change a bad mood in a good one because they believe that they can do something to feel better. Finally, they introduced a concept called meta-regulation of mood which mean controlling one own mood following three distinct levels: repair, maintenance, and dampening. The idea here is to use these three effect to affect positively the one’s mood, and to sum-up a leader should stay optimistic (Isen, 1984) (Mayer & Steven, 1994).
Thanks to this approach of emotional intelligence this report continue to go through the concept of leadership in extreme context. Indeed, here again the theoretical approach found out an crucial aspect for leading others in hardship: It is possible to improve one self-control by becoming *emotionally intelligent*. However, without a great sensegiving role the leadership is still concerned by a high probability of failure in extreme contexts.

### 3.2.2. The role of sensegiving: Followers and sensemaking

As suggested by the approach of Hannah et al., the process of sensemaking has a crucial importance within leadership and even more in hardship contexts. In this last theoretical approach I study deeper the role and the stakes of sensegiving for leadership. Thus, an *emotionally intelligent* leader must also give senses to his or her followers in order to thrive through hardship events (Weick, 1995) (Weick, 1988) (Weick, 2001).

In the business context, the most important attribute of leaders is to give sense to the organization and to the followers (Weick, 2001). I referred above to authoritative responses into crisis management which are likely for followers and so they are, because these direct, rapid and authoritative answers are ‘full of sensegiving’. However, the process of sense giving does not have to be directed within military answers. Indeed followers need to know why they are doing things, and even more in hardship contexts because they must find a motivation to fight against the situation (Hannah, et al., 2009) (Weick, 1988).

The consequences are that when followers are able to make sense out of hardship contexts they will unconsciously react and probably win against hardship (Weick, 1995). However they need to get some help from their leader for achieving it. When a black swan event appears (Taleb, 2007), people need firstly to understand and to make sense of the situation. Unconsciously they have to extract one or more cue(s), and then by linking it to their frames of references they become able to make sense of the situation (Weick, 1995). As an illustration given by Mikael Lundgren during the course of *management as a contraction of meaning* in this master program: Few years ago a military group got lost in the mountains with the threat of a storm. They did not have any map or references because the purpose of this training was the orientation. This exercise took place in the Alpes and became out of control. They lost the motivation to find their way back until when, a member found a map in his bag. They took the map and found their way back thanks to the motivation due to the sense generated by this map which represents an extracted cue. When they were back, one saw the map and it was a map of the Pyrenees. Thus, the act of sense-making is
crucial because even if people are going in the wrong direction they are going and they have a probability to overcome an hardship event. However if they don’t move there is no probability to thrive. The role of a leader is to give-sense to followers and he or she has to make them confident in order to generate actions. When followers are confidents and able to make sense of the situation, they will put all their energy together in order to find the way back, to save the organization (Weick, 1995) (Weick, 1988). Finally, the approach of Simon Sinek confirms that when leaders are great sense givers they are able to “inspire action” (Sinek, 2009). He illustrated this dimension with a “golden circle” which has for core the Why surrounded by the How which is also surrounded by the What. The most important dimension is the why because “people do not buy what you do but they buy why you do it” meaning that followers are searching for sense, and the core of sense making is the Why (Sinek, 2009). When individuals are doing things for their own they don’t have one know why, but when one is asking to somebody else to do things then this somebody else needs to know Why in order to make sense of it.

3.2.3. Summarize of the theoretical findings

This theoretical framework represents a strong foundation to build my empirical approach. I am persuaded that some others literature approaches and theories would have been very well adapted to my approach, and I think that it would be interesting to go more through philosophical concepts in further studies. This subject is not very developed within the literature field and the boundaries of it could be compared as a circle: The papers and books which I have had described above are all refereeing to each other’s, the circle of references is rapidly closed. However I believe that a lot of other external inputs and links could be made with other theories and research areas as I did with the approaches of emotional intelligence and sense-giving.

Leadership in hardship contexts is not an issue for every organizations, but most of the normal organizations tend to be naïve (Hannah, et al., 2009) somehow and are not hardship-prepared. The consequence is that a soft hardship event could become quickly a disaster if a panic effect take over the situation. Three key phases characterize hardship with the preparation, the response and the recovery. The response depends in part of the preparation because obviously an organization which is not hardship-prepared will probably have more troubles than others will. Concerning the response, sense-making processes must be quick because the consequences of the event depends on the time to react against it; the longer it is the worst might be the consequences. Then, the recovery is also a critic phase mainly with a psychological dimension concerning team
members. The future of organizations depend on this phase so again a real and controlled sensemaking process is necessary.

The response of leadership should be adaptive because all extreme events are different, that is the charm of social sciences. Many approaches claimed that the most efficient response could be an authoritative, direct, precise and rapid reaction. At this stage of an extreme situation, the group identity is also considered as crucial in order to allow a rapid and efficient reaction of organizations. Finally, I pointed out that some other approaches claimed that improvisation could also be an efficient solution to lead others.

All those responses are based on two main theories with first a real need for self-control emotionally speaking. Leaders should be *emotionally intelligent* in order to make the group confident in every situations, and also likely to generate rapid sensemaking processes. To my mind, the most important approach is to focus on the sensegiving role of a leader. Indeed, I claimed that authoritative answer, which looks to be the most efficient responses, are not. My idea is that the authoritative forms of answers are efficient because they generate a quick and efficient sensemaking process for the followers. To conclude with this theoretical approach, I can say that in order to overcome an hardship contexts, the priority could be made on sensemaking, emotional self-control, and preparation, which acquirable with trainings and experimentations.
IV. Empirical approach

This part is devoted to the results of the empirical approach of hardship. In order to answer to my research question which is *How do leaders manage hardship, what could they improve*, I will present to you, the reader, an analyze of my own experiences of hardship with an auto-ethnographical and reflexive approach. This idea is to share the impacts concerning the art of leading oneself which could be generated by hardship. Then I will explain the results extracted from the dialogues, and it will concern the consequences of hardship in the art of leading others.

4.1. The art of leading oneself: A lived experience

The manner to react within an hardship context depend on how one is affected by it, and also on the motivations as such of the participants (Hannah, et al., 2009). Indeed, it is easier to react well in a situation that one like than in a situation that one dislike. In my approach to this phenomena I do like it since it concerns sailing, my passion. However that does not mean that it is not about hardship because of course when I face hardship situations I do not like it, but I like the global context and it was my choice to be alone on the sea. It concerns the general context which must be liked by the actors. A leader could not overcome an hardship situations or I prefer to say could not handle it if he or she does not like his or her job. The motivation around the situation is then very important. Many leaders are driven by the will to power, and that’s their choice, it means that they like the global context. With my experiences I found that this process is characterized by few steps from the genesis of hardship to the resolutions of the problem as it has been described in the theoretical framework. For each step I will introduce the consequences of it on the process of leading oneself by referring to my own experimentation of hardship.

4.1.1. The genesis of hardship in the process of leading oneself

The starting point concern a very calm and enjoyed situation which could be represented by the success of a team. One could get used to it and sometime forget about what the future could be as for naïve organizations (Hannah, et al., 2009). That happens when the weather is perfect during a sailing trip, there are some amazing situations where I did be euphoric at the beginning and after few hours I got used to it. Two weeks ago during a race I have been within the 10th firsts for two full days, at the beginning I was very proud of me and euphoric but after I got used to it. I became psychologically stable on a very high level of comfort or happiness. This is the step where one
could forget that this time is a very good time. Back to leadership, it means that when one is living a very good situation during a certain amount of time, he or she could get used to this very high level of positivity in the atmosphere. However, this is not under control it is crucial to lead oneself in such situation otherwise it could be dangerous in a very quick future, even if there is a low probability to face hardship.

In this context, it is when a soft problem appears that one is waking up. Depending on the level of self-development, two reactions are possible. When I did my sailing trip a year ago I had not yet a lot of experience in offshore alone sailing. After one full day of sun and surfs downwind (a very comfortable position) within the Irish sea my personal level of satisfaction was very high. However when the wind turned about 100 degrees, then I was up-wind with around 25/30 knots of apparent wind. On a very small boat, this is the most uncomfortable sailing conditions. Indeed, the boat is facing the waves and hit on every waves, and of course I was completely wet. I do have the use to it, so usually it is not a problem however since I was sailing in a very good condition for three days before, it has been hard to adapt myself and it has been an hardship situation with an high level of stress as well as a depressed feeling. Now, thank to my self-experience I am all the time trying to reflect upon that something could happen, and I am always ready for accepting it, I am hardship-prepared. A perfect situation could turn out to a real hardship for a very small thing if one is not able to lead his or her self. This is extremely important to lead oneself in such simple circumstances otherwise when a real hardship appears it would be even worse. All is about being conscious that something can occur, and also being confident about one ability to overcome problems.
When a very soft hardship appears in great circumstances, one should psychologically reacts immediately: staying positive and calm in order to be ready for facing other hardships which could occur, as it has been suggested by Salovey and Meyer one should be Emotionally intelligent (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). The issue of hardship within the art of leading oneself is represented by the famous Murphy’s law “Anything that can, could have, or will go wrong, is going wrong, all at once” (Dickson, 1981). On a boat hardship always happens in the worst context, and all the sense made by the previous quotation become very fast the reality. In the two stories from my experiences that I presented in the box before, it is clear that one must react quickly to a very light hardship, and also one must be conscious that something can go wrong. In the second story, if I had reacted to my lack of sleep nothing would have happened. In the first one, the outcome is that when an hardship situation occurs, it is usually in bad circumstances and it can become very quickly dangerous. So it is very important to stay calm and positive in order
to handle these situation for not having a conclusion like I had in the second illustration. This is possible only if one is prepared to face hardship or at least if one is conscious of the possibility that something bad can occurs even if the context was very positive and full of happiness. A soft hardship can become a real disaster (Hannah, et al., 2009).

During the genesis of hardship, it is crucial to be conscious that an hardship phenomena will not appear alone, and in the best conditions. This issue of Murphy’s law is very important since the experience help oneself for overcoming hardship situations. Whatever is the situation about, it is very important to be conscious that something could happens in order to be less surprised if it happens. By having the use to face hardship in the every days life and more in my sailing adventure, I react very differently now thanks to these very bad experiences which forged my identity and my personality. The conclusion concerning the art of leading oneself is that with these experimentations of hardship I can lead myself, I am always prepared to face hardship because I do not forget it even in very good situations.

On the figure 1, I represented the evolution of my level of mood during one day of alone sailing in 2012, and one day in 2014. Obviously my acquired experience permitted me to become almost
perfectly psychologically stable. In 2012 I was not really controlling my feeling and we can see that within two hours I was able to move from a very happy feeling to a very bad feeling (panic, stress and so on). The progress made are very important and I can see now with an hindsight view that I am becoming much more stable, I am leading myself better. The consequences of this evolution are very important as for example if an hardship situation like a black swan appears (Taleb, 2007), I won’t panic as in 2012, and I will work out in order to resolve the problem quickly, and to stop the hemorrhage before having to face the consequences of Murphy’s law. Training as well as acquiring experience is very important in the process of leadership development because it helps me to improve my level of emotional intelligence (Koman & Wolff, 2007). It is possible to lead oneself and also to progress by facing hardship.

4.1.2. **Hardship caused by forecasts of hardship (threats)**

From my experiences, I can divide two different natures of hardship, and in most of the case one occurs before the other. The first dimension of hardship can be called pre-hardship or also ex-ante hardship, and the second is the real hardship which physically existing.

When I am alone on the boat for a sailing trip, sometimes I heard about very bad forecast as for example a front (the part of a depression in which there is very strong wind) which I will have to overcome few hours later. This situation is characterized by some stress and also some apprehensions. It is when one knows ex-ante that an hardship situation will appear, and he or she will have to manage it in order to overcome it. It is at least as hard to manage it than to manage a real hardship, because in these situations one can only wait, and maybe prepare his or her self. It is a period of time in which one has time to reflect upon those bad forecasts. In this situation, I lived also an experience which shows that the experience within the art of leading oneself is the key to pass well this pre-hardship situation. The risk of this phenomena is to lose the control of oneself concerning the emotions, which could be translated by a feeling of apprehension instead of taking over the preparation or the reflection in order to handle this hardship situation.
– Forecasts generate hardship –

08/19/2012 – In the Irish sea I was about to sail back in France after a five days alone sailing trip when I received quite bad weather forecasts. I did not have much experience in strong wind with the boat, and it has been an hardship situation before the storm. Indeed, I was quite stressed about what would happen since it was my first sailing in this area. I took some times to calm down and also to take it positively. Finally, when the storm appeared I was not ready with any reef in the main sail and in the genoas. It has been very difficult then to prepare it within the strong wind completed by big waves. I have been very tired and very wet, and this time I just suffered pacifically to the situation.

With the stress generated by the forecast, I took some times in order to make sense out of the situation and to lead myself. Then the preparation to face this hardship situation occurred too late. Fortunately Murphy’s law did not affect a lot the consequences and I did not have very bad consequences. However it could have been very worst if some problems would have occurred in the same time.

– The outcome of the experience –

04/16/2014 – Just before going for a sailing trip of 100 miles, the forecasts indicated again a very strong wind about force seven. This is of course an hardship situation alone on my 21 foots boat, however I took it as a very good training and I prepared directly everything on-board to face these conditions. I did this trip very fast since everything was well prepared to front this hardship. It has been a very good sail.
In this second experience it is obviously a complete evolution from the first one. The point here is that when one is trained to face some hardship situation, or also had lived already these hardships, the apprehension is very different as it has been developed by the theories of emotional intelligence (Koman & Wolff, 2007) (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). The questions asked are not the same anymore; in the first situation the point was to be psychologically ready, and in the second one the idea is to be physically ready for facing it (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). In a leadership context it is crucial to be confident in these situations with bad forecasts which could be about the market or even about the arriving of a new competitor for example. There are two consequences: the first one concern the team (followers) who could feel that the leader is not confident, and if they do the degree of trust might be diminished and followers could stress or even panic (lack of sensegiving (Weick, 1995)). The consequences within the team could be worst since it can generate also some tension between team-players. The second consequences concern the time necessary to react; if a leader is prepared to this situation and can lead his or her self well, the reaction will come very quickly before the bad consequences forecasted. A contrario, if a leader takes more times to be psychologically ready, it might be too late and the forecasted consequences may occur.

Thereby the forecast itself of hardship can generate an hardship situation before the one forecasted. It is a key phase within the process of leading oneself and this dimension is very important. Indeed if one could not control his or her self in this pre-hardship context, it could be very hard to face the physically hardship one. When a real hardship situation appears, the immediate reactions depend on the experience as well as the level of one self-development (mainly on the emotional intelligence).

4.1.3. Immediate reaction

In this reflexive approach of hardship within the process of leading oneself supported by my sailing experience, I found out two opposites immediate reaction. The difference between both is represented by the consequences of the experience.

Without experience of hardship – In this situation, there are emotionnally intelligent people who will react in a proper way by keeping calm, and trying to resolve the problem. However the majority will not react in this way, and might live it quite differently.
In this situation characterized by a high level of hardship, my firsts reactions had been very bad, and very dangerous. Obviously the consequences could have been worst since my life was a stake. Of course it is a extreme example, but at a different level it is working the same manner, for the majority of humans. I was not hardship-prepared and it happens, so I had to deal with it. It is a sort of black swan (Taleb, 2007). The process of leading myself took some times to take over this hardship situation. I was very scared and I was not able to control myself: I was not able to control my feelings, my emotions, and also my attitude physically speaking. When this hardship appeared, my brain has switched to a kind of autopilot mode with any control of it. If I would have been during this experience the skipper of crew onboard the consequences could have been even worst since without controlling myself I would have had no possibility to lead others in order to organize a rescue process. The crew would have probably panicked maybe even more than I did, and the consequences could have been dramatic. A leader is also human and such a very hardship situation can appear within a company with the form of a black swan for example. The consequences can be also huge in an organization as well as for a relationship between a leader and his or her followers in a micro-level. How could a leader fulfill his or her role of sensegiver in such situations?

**With experience** – In this second scenario, it is easier to handle hardship in a better way. Indeed, the lessons learned from past bad experiences helped me to overcome such obstacles. All is about learning from the past: the panic moment become a time period in which one execute an under controlled procedure, I was more hardship-prepared.
This experience is very grateful in order make the unknown hardship less unknown. This is relevant within two very important dimensions of managing hardship. The first one is about being conscious that something could happen everywhere and every when. Therefore, when an hardship situation occur, one might not be as surprised as before, or at least less since he or she knows that it is possible. The second dimension is to think about what one should have to do in such situations. Of course it is not possible to be trained for everything, but somehow it is possible to do it in a global way. In my sailing example the training concerned the safety equipment, in a leadership case it could be about conflict resolution. With this consciousness of hardship the progress within leading oneself is already very high, and one will not lose a lot of time in the first phase which concerned the emotion but will quickly switch to the second step which is about finding a solution. De facto a team might not feel any discomfort from the leader who knows what he or she is doing (Hannah, et al., 2009). Without panic, stress, entrust feelings, the team could be able to find solutions to a problem within a very efficient way. All the stakes are in leaders heads; the outcome of an hardship situation depend on his or her behaviors. Leading oneself in the every-days life looks like easy or at least acquired for most, however within an hardship context it becomes very quickly different as well as harder.

Thereby, the ways to react against hardship events might not be innate for the majority of people and it has to be improved in order to lead oneself. It represents a very important issue within the art of leading oneself which can be manage thanks to one’s experience and trainings. However
the key step to overcome an hardship phenomena is the phase in which one become conscious of the situation and its stakes.

4.1.4. Being conscious of the stakes

For everyone it is an unavoidable step which could happen more or less quickly. Indeed it depends on one’s level of emotional intelligence. That is the key phase to handle hardship because it is the beginning of the resolution of the problem. It is from this step of sensemaking that will be influenced the way to overcome this hardship context.

Before reacting to a problem, a very psychological phenomena could be represented as the moment when one become conscious of the issues. It is an under controlled step since one understand the hardship. Indeed it means that he or she lead oneself.

Just before reacting, this step is when one takes over the control of oneself. It must happen as fast as possible in order to make as less as possible of mistakes. In my first experience of hardship and because of my immediate reactions, it took me sometimes to come to this step. In a leadership point of view a snow ball effect within a team could generate an exponential growth of bad consequences. Therefore one should lead his or her self in this contexts. Once again after having faced hardship, the consciousness phase could come faster when the critical phase generated by the firsts reaction is shorter.

Back to leadership, the holding of an hardship event could start with the forecast of an hardship within a very good context which can generate troubles in one’s self-control. Then when the
hardship phenomenon sprang up, one has a first reaction which could be dangerous when it deals with surprised or scared feelings. Thus after this step, one become conscious of the issues and he or she can understand and control oneself. During all these previous, I experimented that hardship could be handled thanks to training and the acquired experience. The pillars to lead oneself are to improve an emotional intelligence for being able to make sense of situations (Mayer & Salovey, 1995) (Weick, 1995). Indeed the dangerous steps are the two firsts (forecasted hardship and firsts reactions) in which soft hardship can be transformed in disasters.

4.1.5. Reactions

Finally yet importantly, the reaction is the outcome of all this process of handling hardship (Hannah, et al., 2009). Thus as we found out above, the reaction might depend on the level of self-development as well as the level emotional intelligence of the participants. This is the art of leading oneself and it is only in such hardship contexts that one can see how he or she is able to lead oneself. The reaction represents the action that is lead to handle the situation and to come back to a normal one. The important is to make the period between the black swan and the reaction rapid and direct. One must control oneself since it could be about saving one life but also about saving a company. In order to react well, the experience is very important and makes all this process shorter; indeed the sensemaking process might more efficient.

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The art of leading oneself takes over the hardship

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08/22/2012 – After having understood the stakes of the situation, and made a clear check of the boat, I acted in order to save my life within this situation. I hauled down the sails in order to keep the boat stable because I lost the keel. I decided then to step aside of the rocks by my own with the small engine. However it did not work so I decided later to switch on the rescue procedure.

In this very hardship situation at Scilly’s Islands, I did react very late because I took a lot of time to take over the control of myself. When I started again to lead myself, I decided to elaborate a plan. I am very lucky that the boat has not overturned without the keel during this period of panic. The second lesson that I have learned concern the time to react: I am sure that if I would
have react earlier to the problem then I would have been able to step aside of the island alone. So in this case the consequences are already very dramatic, but it also could have been worst. My level of self-development was obviously not high enough to handle this hardship since it takes too much time for me to lead myself. Now with the experience and also thanks to this hardship experiment, my reactions are more controlled.

– A reaction with a better experience –

05/02/2014 – (I broke a rudder last week on my boat, it happens when I was very close to some rocks, it was a very bad weather with around 30 knots of wind, I was sailing alone with the big spinnaker. The engine did not work to go back to the harbor, and in the same time the auto pilot turned off.) The reaction within this situation has been very fast, I hauled down the spinnaker to take the control back, and I did a jibe in order to move apart to the rocks by the using the second rudder on the other board.

In this second approach of hardship, and thanks to my past experiences I managed the situation more quickly by reacting directly to it. There are almost no consequences to this black swan event for the boat and for myself. I lead myself in a unconscious way to secure everything. This could be compare as a procedure that I followed in my mind.

In such hardship contexts the time is very important and there is one way to avoid a waste of it which is leading oneself (sensemaking & emotional intelligence). As a leader, it is very important to control oneself because the stakes are very high when it concerns an organization. This auto-ethnographical approach and the literature approach pointed out that the consequences can of an hardship contexts could be crucial and even worst if there is a lack of self-control. The first step in a leadership development concerns the art of leading oneself. It is possible as well as very important to be able to lead oneself in an hardship context. Training and acquiring experiences are the keys to handle these situations as Chris Hadfield explained: before going into space, astronauts are trained to face the worst situations. He actually faced an hardship situation by getting blind outside of the international station in the space. He had no experience of such hardship before, however he was trained for it and able to go back inside the station without

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seeing or hearing; he did it without panic. This is also a consequence of others’ trainings which improved his level of emotional intelligence. Thereby one does not have to wait for experiences coming or to face real hardship. Training could represent an efficient way to overcome hardship or to avoid it (Hannah, et al., 2009). It is crucial and it could permit to avoid very bad and dangerous situations as the one I lived during this night of the twenty-second of August two thousand twelve.
4.2. *Hardship in a team: Leadership issues*

In the previous section I pointed out that leading oneself and being *emotional intelligent* is a complex and a challenging task. Hardship represents a way to learn how to overcome it (by controlling oneself), and in the same time it represents a barrier. The question is who should come first: the chicken or the egg? Now when an hardship situation happens within a team, the consequences are quite different because one must deal with his or her self and with the others; and that is the art of leading oneself. In order to illustrate this leadership issue, I will now make an analysis of the dialogues that I have led through my empirical approach to this thesis.

4.2.1. *The participants: Hardship experts*

Four sailors participated to this study with one common thing for all: they experimented hardship in teams within an offshore sailing context. First, I will explain the particularity of Hervé Bourmaud who participated to an hardship scientific expedition. Then I will present the three other participants who experimented hardship within a more traditional context.

From two thousand six to two thousand eight, a boat called Tara staid aground he ice of the North Pole. The purpose of this experience was to be as close to the North Pole, which has never been done before. This scientific experience was about to understand the unknown arctic thanks to a two years adventure. The crew was constituted with eleven members, and Hervé Bourmaud was the captain of Tara. During the long winters of the North Pole, it was not possible for a boat or even for a plan come with refueling staff. Thereby it is very interesting since those crewmembers have lived with any extern help during at least one year. Indeed, half of the crew changed during the second summer, before spending the second winter on the boat. Hervé Bourmaud stayed on board during all the expedition, leading his self and the others within hardship situations was part of his daily life during two years. This experience generated the richness of this master thesis thanks to a very experimentation of hardship. Together with the crew, they lived catastrophic situations, but also very good ones, and the relationship between them has been very intense during this experience. The idea to use this experience as an empirical data because in such situations, feelings of people are multiplied with the loneliness dimension; they must support each other’s all the time. The other dimension deals with the fact that in this case nobody can benefit to any external assistance when a problem occur. Life becomes a stake, so the tensions between humans if any are much more visible, more intensive and so analyzable than in the real
life. Within this situation all the ingredient of leadership are united: Leading others for multiplying the work of a team with an important dimension of leading oneself.

About the others participants to this research, it is different since they gave some example of leadership issue due to hardship situation on a boat. It is all about offshore sailing race so at least few days alone with a crew on a boat. This dimension is also very interesting since the job is to win the race, and to power the sailing vessel as fast as possible. There is much more action than in Tara expedition because in this case everything must be done as fast as possible. I call it a laboratory of human relation; Indeed it is a bit like if I would have taken a boat, put few crew members on it with one objective of speed average on a defined trip and observed what is it happening. Hardship situations are recurrent on sailing vessels during offshore trip and that’s why this approach is relevant. It is an unknown context for the majority of people, however these sailors face hardship all the time and become very good at leading oneself. Thereby, let's see how it works for inspiring one's self-development.

4.2.2. Tara expedition: An hardship experience of leading others

The outcomes of the dialogue with Hervé Bourmaud made the twenty sixth of February two thousand fourteen, can be mainly devoted within two parts. Indeed, he introduced another distinction within my approach of hardship dealing with the time. In one hand there are usual hardship situations as explained before, and in the other hand the long term ones. The worst leadership issues within the team took place during these long term hardship. This chapter will thereby explain in a first part the consequences of a long term hardship effect within a team. The second part will be devoted to the effect of punctual hardship situations which correspond to black swan events (Taleb, 2007). Finally within a third part I will discuss the effect of an acquired experience in the expedition.

Long term effect – During the first winter the social context was characterized with some tensions due to the stress. Hervé Bourmaud explained that the team issues took place a lot within the periods of inactivity. During these times, crewmembers had a lot of time to think about the situation and since they were alone very far away and always together, the tensions and also the feelings of stress are very fast transmitted between each other’s. The team was losing its efficiency because some people was not following anymore; This idea has been suggested by McKeans that when people get use to hardship, they could lose in efficiency (1994). Hervé was trying then to generate an impulsion within the group in order to maintain this team efficiency.
when it was going down. That was a source of conflict and they lived some confrontations in order to get the group moving. In this situation it is very important for a leader to lead his or herself for overcoming this social hardship. Indeed Hervé had to try to not going down with the team and to keep an hindsight view of the experience in this hardship situation. This could be explained by his experience as a captain on a fishing boat of fifteen years in which he always had to impulse the crew for having good results. However, on the fishing boat the leadership style was more authoritative and direct. In the expedition with the lack of activity it would have been hard to justify an authoritative act. The only levers to lead other was then to give sense; why should they do it?

During the second winter it has been quite different with a new crew, the atmosphere was very up and people did not have as much conflicts between each other’s. Hervé explained this better atmosphere thanks to the experience acquired within the first winter, and also by a very interesting dimension which is the new feminine part within the crew. During the first period the crew was only masculine, and the woman input a certain stability within the team. Their very efficient way to solve conflicts was to meet each other’s every mornings around the table and to talk. This social event took over teams issue since they kept a dialogue during all the adventure. The process of sensemaking by talking together has been efficient (Weick, 2001). However, Hervé had also some difficulties to overcome difficulties because he lost the dialogue with the two Russians members during two months in the first winter. The routine in a stable hardship environment is a source of social conflict mainly.

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**Controlling oneself**

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By generating some impulsions within the group in order to move forward, Hervé explained that he did not control his self in every situation. When he pushed the crew to move, he created confrontations: He did some wrong judgments, with sometimes very bad reaction like getting angry against the members of the team.
One is able to understand this because of the context of the expedition which is extreme, however within a team in a company the same situation can happen and it does. When a leaders feel that a team is going in the wrong direction in his or her point of view, one can become angry within some confrontation with a team. Furthermore it can come from wrong judgments from a leader, and the way to handle it is to control oneself and to improve dialogues between the team players (Lindgren, 2012).

**Short term effect** – During this adventure, the crew also faced very dangerous short term situations. For Hervé the worst was the first hardship of their experience, which happened very quickly. However the consequences of this hardship experience has been positive for the team.

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<th>A positive hardship on the ice</th>
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When the ice broke, all the scientific material as well as the gas and other needed things were moving around on small blocks of ice on the sea. They were wondering if they will continue or not the adventure; it was the first month out there. After what they began to find and put onboard as much material as they could, their life was depending on these equipments. “Three keys words to sum up the situation could be surprising, reaction, and action” (Bourmaud, 2014)

The reaction has been the harder step to overcome for the team since it is the only time where the following question has been asked “Do we continue or do we give up the project?” But quickly they decided to continue, and the action went very well. During few days it was a real rush to save as much material as possible for thriving during the long and dark winter close to the north pole. Hervé Bourmaud claimed that “Before this experience we were 11 crew members, and after we were one group”. This time forged a group spirit and by the way the pressure and the rush made everybody busy and so motivated. In such situation there is not time for social conflicts. It has been very positive in order to create a strong team, and also that’s help to create a good social atmosphere in which everyone was supported each other for doing things. The problem generated

*Sébastien Pébelier – Leadership in hardship contexts*
by this situation occurred after they saved the major part of the equipment; the team was a bit petrified and maybe scared about the unpredictable environment. This is an issue of recovering after an extreme context and as we found in the theoretical framework, this step is very important because the actors have to make sense out of the situation in order to get the energy to continue (Leonard & Howitt, 2007). They don’t feel secure anymore, and they might feel less efficient (Hannah, et al., 2009).

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When the second summer came it was again possible for a plane to land close to the boat on the ice, with food and material for thriving the second winter. Except Hervé and the scientific responsible, the crew left the experience and a new team arrived. However before any landing, the crew must build an airstrip on the ice. It took two months for them to build it since they met many difficulties, for example they have lost their tractor, and had to do prepare all the area with their hand. The tensions between crew members were very high because they wanted to go home and was not even sure that it was possible. It has been a very hard work, and the stability of team had been completely lost. It was not a team anymore people were tired of this experience.

This hardship situation has been generated by human comportments and also amplified because of an unknown future. For Hervé Bourmaud it has been the harder situation to manage within this adventure because crew members were not able to control themselves anymore. In this context, the reaction to any problem was very complex for the group because of some confrontations which had been amplified by the unknown dimension of the future. Thus, leading other within an hardship context is very difficult and complex since people team player can react very badly to some situations. The art of leading others come from the art of leading oneself give a lot of sense; How could one lead other who do not lead themselves if one is not able to lead oneself?

**The experience effect** – The analyze of Tara expedition showed also a very important impact due to acquired experience of the first winter, during the second one. Indeed Hervé Bourmaud explained that there was no big tensions within the group since they got use to live in such a strange area. The environment was less unknown and people were much more confident about
the experience. Hardship was still present and became the daily life. So the experience of hardship forge the self-development and represents a pillar of the art of leading oneself. The new crew members felt the confidence of Hervé Bourmaud as a leader, so they were also confident about the situation, and they felt secure. The consequences of this social context are obviously less tensions and almost no stress, so very few conflicts within followers. Handling black swans events and so hardship situation was an easier task than before; Thanks to better reactions, the time between bad events and the action was much more shorter without any panic or conflict between the team. And also, the leaders of the team found out how to lead others “softly”, in giving sense. Indeed, when they faced the short-term hardship, the lead reacted with an authoritative answer which was adapted and efficient in the context (Hannah, et al., 2009). However when the hardship became more stable as in the winter the team needed another leadership style, based of psychology, on sensegiving (Weick, 1995).

4.2.3. Generalization with the other participants

With his experience of offshore sailing, Benoit Marie characterized hardship within crews as a social issue: “A current barrier is to deal with others”. It is also about la gestion d’avaries (damage management) which generates usually problems since it is a mechanical sport. Benoit Marie qualified these situations with three words: Etonnement, Réaction, Action (Surprised, Reaction and Action). Hervé Bourmaud used exactly the same words for describing the process of resolving hardship with three steps. Benoit explained that the critical phase was the reaction one. Indeed usually it is very hard to react to a problem and it can be dangerous if some members of a crew start to panic or stress. He justified also this comportment within two phases; the first concerns the ascension physiologically speaking. It means that the level of mood is going up slowly due to the pleasure of sailing. And then, when an hardship situation occur, it is an descente brutale (abrupt descent). Psychologically one’s brain take some times in order to become conscious and to understand this opposite situation. The experience of each team members confirm the issue of this psychological phenomenon. With his acquired experience, Benoit has now a very different approach of sailing, his brain is adapting quickly to these big changes. And on a racing boat he is conscious that every days he will have at least a problem to fix. He is ready for it, hardship-prepared, and the abrupt descent is not anymore because he is always ready to face problems. It is usually very highly dangerous because the life is a stakes in the middle of an ocean, and even it such situation human get use to it. “During my Mini Transat when I have no problem for a whole day I was waiting for it”.

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To conclude this empirical approach of leading other’s in hardship contexts, the global issue is about leading oneself and especially being *emotionally intelligent*. It seems to be a paradox; however a leader in such situation must help his or her followers to control themselves by giving-sense. They have to feel comfortable and secure in order to continue their jobs and to overcome obstacles. Otherwise they will not control themselves and by being stressed and uncomfortable. They might make wrong judgments which will make the level of tension growing within teams. The first consequence could be conflicts, and the second ones will be bad outcomes of a team due to these conflicts.
V. Limitations – The reality of my approach

During this whole project, I tried to justify my approach of leadership by explaining the concept of hardship which represents at my point of view one of the most important ideas behind leadership issues; How could one lead people who do not lead themselves? On the content of this study there are some limitations concerning the literature approach which, in further research could focus more on philosophical approaches. This approach to leadership could be criticized at some points because of the motivations behind participants and behind my experience. Another idea of refutation could concern the extreme dimension of this empirical approach as well as its subjective character due to a certain vision of the world which is my.

Participants motivations – Within my empirical approach, one could remarks that in each cases the motivations of participants are very strong concerning what they are doing. Often they are sailing because it represents a passion for them and one might think that in the “real” life and at work for example it is working a bit differently. Most of my thoughts about followers which could be compared to workers had been forged thanks to the analyze of the dialogues that I had with Hervé Bourmaud. In this experience especially, which was a scientific expedition, crew members were there because it is their jobs, their work. They were more or less motivated in, and as I explained the first crew was not here because they were passionate of this kind of experience. However concerning leaders I believe that in all my examples people and also I, were fascinated and passionate in sailing. But this is not different from the “real” life because leaders are also very passionate within their positions, otherwise they would not be leaders. And often their passion is driven by the will to power which represents a very important leadership objective. Thereby I believe that these empirical data are completely matching with real good leadership and so there is no limits or divergences around the motivations of leaders whatever is the context.

An extreme approach – This empirical approach is extreme since it has used very hardship experience which might not be comparable to “real” life hardship. I believe that obviously it is not working exactly the same within a working context. However the idea within my thoughts was to use it for having a new perception of this leadership issue. The extreme dimension of this approach permitted to generate a good understanding of hardship and to add new elements to this new concept. My approach helped to understand this concept because the consequences of actions in such contexts are quite more important than in usual context. I observed those picks of consequences and it was easier to analyze and also to understand the main issues within hardship situations; Results are more obvious than it would have been with an analysis of more stable
situation. And again since it is a new approach, the idea was to add something new within the leadership research area. These extreme illustrations are relevant for leaders because many sailors know and got used to face hardship situation, so why not inspired oneself with the knowledge of others.

**A subjective approach** – As I said, I do not pretend to change the world, and I am conscious that my vision of the world is not shared by everyone. This work has also been driven by my experiences with auto-ethnographical data, and so by my frames of references which generated this vision that I have on things. I am twenty three years old, and I led this project alone, so my visions my thoughts and my frames are limited. I have never led a team within a company, and my working experience is limited. However, all the described thoughts have been justify with relevant field of literature. That’s why I guess the results of this project are relevant. Therefore my hindsight and new view about leadership combine with the leadership field is an asset for this study, and I added new elements or dimensions to leadership and the dimension of the art of leading oneself in hardship situations. This subjectivity completed with my crazy life and my new and fresh vision to the world, generated a relevant as well as interested approach. The world is so huge that there is a place for each ideas of each individuals, unfortunately I am not able to generalize an objective view of it. My results and thoughts are not wrong, furthermore the outcomes represent a truth but not the truth.
Conclusion

Thanks to the empirical approach that I have led in this research the doubts if some concerning the relevance of the concept of hardship within relationships between leaders and followers are now inexistent. In order to lead individuals in an hardship context a leader must lead oneself *ex-ante*. Indeed, if a leader lose his or her self-control in such situations, followers will probably also lose their selves-controls. Depending on the situation the consequences could be catastrophic for the team and so for the company. That’s obviously why the first results of this study concerned the art of leading one self. In order to answer to my research question which is *How do leaders manage hardship, what could they improve*, I will first of all sum up the results concerning the art of leading oneself, and then I will combine my findings about the art of leading others in such hardship situations with the response of leadership. And finally I will conclude by opening the discussion about a generalization of these results.

**Emotional intelligence** - Leading oneself is not an easy task and represents the results of a long experience of life which start when one born. Leading oneself in hardship situations represents the most difficult part of one self-development because it is going against normal reactions. Panic, stress, tension, loose of self-control represent the easiest ways to react in hardship situation. Furthermore the consequences of these human behaviors could be dramatics depending on the context and also on the stakes. A leader is an example for followers, and if they feel something wrong as for example some panic or uncomfortable position in a certain context, they will not feel comfortable. This could end in two ways: a general panic, or the end of the followership. For both situations, the conclusion is a disaster within a leadership point of view. That’s why; a leader should be emotionally intelligent (Mayer & Salovey, 1995).

**Experience, training and self-development** - Therefore the art of leading oneself in every contexts is crucial for a leader. A relevant way to learn it is to live it, to make mistakes and of course to learn from these mistakes. Thanks to my finding within the empirical approach, it is showed that the impact of an experiences of hardship could be positive in the process of overcoming hardship. In this contexts one learn how to behave in such situations and the most important is the reflection upon what happened. Hardship has been characterized with three keys words which are surprised, reaction, and action. Thanks to the findings of this report I also proved that being psychologically and physically *hardship-prepared* to face complex situations is...
an asset when it happens. The “surprising” step could be shorter when one is conscious that something can always happen. A leader must go through to the next phase; from surprise to the reaction. It is crucial because followers will have probably less bad feelings about leaders behaviors; they will stay confident and stable to overcome a problem. It is not necessary to face very hardship situation as I did in my sailings trips, indeed it would be an extreme approach. However, leaders and future leaders should be trained to hardship in order to adopt appropriate behaviors. This training could also deals with professional experiences as followers within a team, and the analysis of one reactions must be important. Hardship is present in the everyday life in a softer way but most of the people are not conscious of their lack of control. A simple example could be a mother who softly slap her wild child because he broke (again) his glass of water on the rug of the great-grandmother. A leader must be conscious that he or she can have a lack of self-control when an hardship context occur. The consciousness is the first step of improving one reactions. Self development will be done when one will be an hardship expert as had been Chris Hadfield when he got blind into the space. When one is rained to every possible hardship situation, acting wrong become impossible. Thanks to the second part of my empirical approach full of dialogues, I also conclude with the crucial character of the experience of hardship. The consequences are so serious that no leaders can ignore it. At a certain level it is not possible to emit wrong judgments, to get angry, or to lose the control. Being trained and well prepare to face hardship represent the key for great leadership. The new dimension within leading others is the fact that these others are followers and the majority will lose their selves-control in an hardship situation. A way to handle it in a leader position is to share a feeling of confidence. Finally and as I said above, being conscious of hardship stakes and having a great understanding of it represents already a good step in self-development; It helps to lead oneself when such situation will appear.

Leadership response to hardship – The literature mostly pointed out some leadership styles which could be adapted or efficient to lead other’s in extreme situations as an authoritative style, or even an improvisation style. The background of these styles, in order to be efficient in these situations is their abilities to give sense to followers. Indeed with a focus on group identity completed by a high level of emotional intelligence and an efficient sense-giving, the probability to fail in facing an hardship would be much lower.

Suggestions for further researches – My study as well as my findings focused on leadership issue by generated an understanding of the concept of leadership in hardship contexts, and its consequences on one’s behaviors as well as teams behaviors. Through hardship I insisted on the
need for leaders to be *hardship-prepared* in order to handle it, and to keep a great mood within the team. Nietzsche described hardship as necessary step to be happy, and it is an unavoidable step to forge one’s identity, and spirit. My approach of hardship has also been shared by some religions and by Dante in *Le Purgatoire* with a completely different context: One needs to go in the very bottom before feeling better (Dante, 2013). I think it would be relevant to tackle this subject with a focus to more psychological aspects concerning the literature as well as the empirical approaches. Indeed, approaches of extreme contexts could defend many other parameters as the intensity of hardship, the organizational context, the culture, the size of a team, the size of an organization etcetera. Finally in further research it would be relevant to approach the evolution of hardship, are organizations more often confronted to it? Do leaders mostly fail or succeed to handle hardship?

"The consequences of our actions take hold of us, quite indifferent to our claim that meanwhile we have improved." (Nietzsche, 1966).
Part 2 – The Book of Hardship –

The key to real leadership

At every levels of self-development, a main barrier to the art of leading oneself is generated by hardship; Unfortunately, on the Earth planet, people who are not living are able to control themselves in every situations. Another step to answer the question Who am I?

Sébastien Pébelier – Leadership in hardship contexts
Introduction

I would like to share a new and pertinent approach to real leadership within this book, inspired by some historic institutional thought. Hardship represents a fundamental step in self-development as well as in the every-days life, it has been developed a lot within religion thoughts like Catholicism for example. How could one explain the suicide phenomena in developed country since it does not exist in poor states? I do characterize hardship by a situation when somehow one could not control his or her self anymore. In this case how is it possible to lead other? The answer is in this sentence from Philippe Daudi, who has been my mentor during this project: “The art of leading others come from the art of leading oneself”. That’s why; I am presenting this book as a tool to lead oneself by a reflection upon this dimension of hardship as such.

The project of the book of hardship represents a whole step of my self-development within my leadership development. Since I am twenty three years I do not pretend to change business rules and also to give lessons for experimented individuals. However I suggest a new approach that I am reflecting upon to. I do share it within a leadership approach because I believe that hardship is a very important dimension for every leaders and followers of this world. It has been developed a lot in completely different contexts without clear references to leadership. My own vision of leadership which is completely linked to my readings and as such to my self-development, mutated with this hardship study. Hardship drive one’s everyday life, and also drive relationships within a leadership context. Usually leadership approaches focus on how could one lead others in a great way, or I would say by using the best way. Well this approach include a lot of reflections upon historical examples with some good leaders as for example Gandhi and so we try to introduced some comparisons, and to influence one thoughts and ways of acting. The problem of this approach is how human are made because everybody are different. The point is that an historical leader might not be adapted as an example of acting for someone. Educational systems met many problems for resolving the very issue how one could teach leadership. Another approach to leadership could be to understand hardship. Indeed if one know how to face hardship he or she will avoid many mistakes which could be dangerous within a leadership relationship. This approach of self-development would help for developing leadership skills as it helped me. Leadership is full of hardship so before expecting being a great leader, one could become a good leader by managing and experimenting hardship as great historical leaders did.
This book will deal with the concept of hardship, in comparison with real hardship situation that I did experiment in addition of other empirical and theoretical sources. It takes the form of an illustrated story from the calm to the storm. From an *softship* introduction to a very *hardship* conclusion.
– Why? –

I do believe that hardship represents an unavoidable dimension of leadership even if it has not been developed directly in the leadership research area. Facing hardship is very formative and represents a necessary step in one self-development. Thanks to this concept within the process of leading oneself, one could jump from being a leader to being a great leader. I believe in hardship as an obstacle of leadership which only great leaders know how overcoming it. And de facto, I also believe that hardship is required for answering the question *Who am I?* And finally I would like to generalize this concept for everybody since everybody are concerned by hardship not only in leadership contexts, but in all-day life.

– How? –

An innovative approach to this concept is helpful to understand it in an efficient way. Indeed I do have some suggestions to learn how to handle it by using some example and historical studies; however the idea is to answer to the needs of the readers. Since this book is addressed to leaders, managers in every areas and also to team players, it has to be easy to read in a short time to match in one busy life and to be remembered. That’s why, I tried to stimulate the right part of reader's brains which represents the creativity and the emotional aspect of human individuals. It is an efficient way to learn because my thoughts and the approach of hardship will have a direct positive impact for leaders and readers.

– What? –

The book of hardship call the creativity of leaders with free interpretations of some key sentences brighten up with the use of illustrations and comparisons to real hardship situations. I do suggest the relevant approach to handle hardship but the first step is to understand the high stakes of the concept. By being aware of it, one is already getting a step closer to a great leadership. The main metaphor of this book deal with offshore sailing alone as well as in teams. In this area sailors are all the time facing very hardship situation which combine team issues and external problems; it represents my laboratory of hardship. In this book, I do generalize those examples to the business world. Another dimension of this metaphor has been experimented by myself with an alone sailing trip of eight days without assistance and contact in order to find how could one help his or her own self-development dealing with self-control. A new way for coming up to leadership.
– The beginning –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier - Bay of Biscay 2013 (Race - Transgascogne 2013)
The horizon is clear and beautiful, business is going very well and so the atmosphere is very positive peaceful and relax. It is not possible to think about a black swan since everything is a kind of perfect. It is a time where one focus on great things, without any bad expectations for the future. Psychologically, many people would feel bored of this perfect situation after some times. People get used to these good situations. Why should one change something since everything is perfect and going well? Indeed, there is no reason to change, human brain is up to wait for problems to reflect upon change.
– The very small discomfort –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier- Bay of Biscay 2013 (Race - Transgascogne 2013)
In a global way the external environment is still very close to the perfection. One is floating in happiness, and some soft obstacles appear. Those obstacles are not enough important to create any reaction. This illustration has been taken the first day of an offshore race. A competitor is going faster than I do and he represents the obstacle. Since it is the first day of a one week sail, the focus could be made on a long-term reasoning without reaction. The leader do not react to very small resistance or questions within followers. It looks like negligible. Actors do not feel that the obstacle exists.
– One react often too late –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier- Bay of Biscay 2013 (Race - Transgascogne 2013)
It is the example of political actions or I would say political reaction. By neglecting problems, or even diagnostics one will face hardship even if he or she could have avoided it before. I did not catch again this boat which was faster than I the first day. At the scale of a top management, or of a government, the consequences will be to face very hardship situations for all the subordinates; In a leadership context followers might not follow anymore, And that’s what I, unfortunately have discovered. As an illustration, French government waited a very high level of pollution level to implement some rules even if they saw the grows of pollutions rates for few years. A lot of avoidable hardship are faced since one could be blind at some extend.
– First hardship signals –

Source: Observatoire Photographique de l’Arctique
Within a team when the environment is still very nice and enjoyable, some discrete hardship can occur and so it could be dangerous even if it does not look like this. It is a kind of discomfort between some team members who do not have a very good feeling together. They won't fight together but some light consequences will appear in the short term. For example it can be about the efficiency or the quality of the work which could be diminished. This could be dangerous because when the issue could not be seen, then one cannot react since he or she do not know the problem. The team effect could be diminished for a long time very discreetly.
The atmosphere

Source: Sébastien Pébelier - 2014
The atmosphere degrades slowly when a team can smell or feel some external issues which are growing. It is represented in the offshore sailing area by forecasts issues, when one could not avoid it. When the weather is quite calm and one know the very bad forecasts. What could be the reactions? First of all a feeling of stress, or also a feeling of apprehension. The consequences for teams are quite obvious; indeed the relatives will feel the discomfort of the leader. So the stress and the apprehension will be generalized if a leader does not look unfazed or unworried. It is a snowball effect of feelings.
– First form of hardship –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier - Bay of Biscay 2013 (Race - Transgascogne 2013)
Both team effect or I would say team issues, and bad forecast are now reunited together. The environment is still sustainably calm however conflicts generated by team issues are amplified with the forecast. When one knows that hardship might appear, that generates a stress, and depending on individual’s characters one might leap out of his or her chair. Team intensity is growing and by the way the focus of the team is not enough made on the creation of a plan for handling future issues.
– Limited hardship –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier- Qualification trip 2012 (Isles of Scilly)
The picture is representing the result of an hardship situation which I did not control. Two years ago in the English Channel, it was the middle of the night and I get very tired after four days of sailing. In this kind of circumstances the brain is not working as it does usually, and people does not react as usually and one can do by purpose very bad mistakes because the brain is not under control anymore. This night, I did a mistake between two GPS waypoints, and I followed the wrong direction until I grounded on the rocks of the Isles of Scilly. The consequences have been terrible for me as well as for the boat, and we (Mademoiselle Iodée and I) had been rescued by the coast guards who came with a boat and an helicopter.
– Snowballs effect & Wrong practices –

Source: Nautorius Unpublicus
Unfortunately the world is not either pink or perfect, and somehow many management mistakes appear. When one is confronted with hardship situations, he or she is in a specific psychological move and could make wrong judgments, or adopts none appropriate behaviors as well as reactions (irritation, annoyance, angry). When it happens within a team, the consequences might be the creation of a stressful atmosphere or even a panic movement. Depending on individual’s personality, those réactions à chaud (immediate reactions) produce a very dangerous issue within hardship for a team, a company, a society, or even for the whole world. When my boat grounded on the rocks in the Scilly Islands my reaction has been very panic. Indeed, I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, screaming alone in the middle of the night around the rocks. I was in a situation of distress with the boat, so a very high level of hardship.
– The danger of being surprised –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier- Qualification trip 2012 (English Channel)
Human brains get used to great situations, and people become bored sometimes even in a life full of happiness. That’s explaining for the example why people living in developed country suicide more than people who live in poor countries. When an hardship situation occurs a feeling of surprised take place when one was not conscious before that something could happen. For a leader, being surprised is dangerous because if the followers feel it they will lose their confidence, and the game of leadership will become difficult.
– Reaction takes time –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier- Qualification trip 2012 (In the boat)
Within this distress situation in Scilly’s Islands, I took some times before generated an hindsight view and taking over the control of the situation. After around thirty minutes of panic, I came inside the boat for checking the damages onboard and understood the stakes of the situation. I understood that this trip was over, and I calmed down myself. At this moment I took my logbook for writing my position and summing up what was going on. It took a lot of time for me to react and it is only after thirty minutes that I started to move. I hauled down the sails in order to keep the boat stable because I lost the keel. I decided then to step aside of the rocks by my own with the small engine. However it did not work so I decided later to switch on the rescue procedure with the EPIRBE which is on the picture.
– Being conscious: a way to handle hardship –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier - Bay of Biscay 2013 (Race - Transgascogne 2013)
When the situation is calm with a very positive and comfortable atmosphere, a leader must stay aware that something bad can happen. Being conscious that a black swan can appear helps to make shorten the time between the surprise and the action if it is not eliminating it. Thanks to my experience of hardship on my boat, I am always psychologically ready to face hardship even when all is going perfectly. When a black swan appears my reactions as well as my actions to fix it are coming very fast because I don’t have a surprised feeling.
– Consequences of ignoring –

Source: Christophe Breschi (Race - Transgascogne 2013)
The surprised will be completed by an accumulation of problems which will make it grow in the majority of hardship situations. This is about Murphy’s law and I did verify it a few times. An hardship event never come alone “Anything that can, could have, or will go wrong, is going wrong, all at once.” (Dickson, 1981). Black swan events appears always in the worst times, in my sailing experience the things that can go wrong always goes wrong and of course it happens when the weather is very bad with strong wind big waves, or even when I am close to the rocks. Ignoring it, make it worst.
Leading oneself: a crucial step

Source: Christophe Breschi (Race – Select 6.50 2014)
In a hardship situation, a leader must lead his or her self, in order to avoid the catastrophe. It does not mean that he or she will be able to handle it; however it is a first and curtail step to lead others. When one is alone to face hardship, if he or she adopts wrong reactions and wrong action the consequences will be bad for this individual. However if one is leading a team these consequences will be true for each members of the team as well as for the lead who will lose his or her credibility.
– A team multiplies hardship phenomena –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier- Bay of Biscay 2013 (Race - Transgascogne 2013)
The consequences of an hardship situation are growing exponentially with the number of concerned people, or team players. A multiplier effect intervenes within a team concerning stress and panic. It is very challenging for a leader to generate a stable atmosphere in such situations because he or she has to act against natural reactions when a dram or a very bad things occur.
– Leadership issues –

Source: Observatoire Photographique de l’Arctique
In such hardship situation, a leader must operate in order to drive the group through the obstacle, and to overcome problems. The issue is not about how a leader should overcome an obstacle because it depends specifically on the situations. The issue concern the attitude of the leader which is seen as an example for all the followers. One should give a direction and stay confident, believing in it. That is possible only if there is no panic, no surprise, and no stress into leaders minds.
– Training as a source of self-control –

Source: Sébastien Pébelier- Stage ISAF 2013
I attended an obligatory formation for offshore races called ISAF workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to learn about managing hardship situation as a distress. I learnt how to use a life raft, a life suit, rockets, and how to organize the rescue procedure. Within these two days I also practiced these procedures in order to be ready and to react well without losing time if it happens. It is a training to know more about all the safety equipment and also about the psychological approach within such situations. In order to lead oneself in such hardship context, the only way is to be trained for it. When one is trained to the worst situation then the stress upon eventual hardship is diminished and almost inexisten.
– Hardship context –

Source: Volvo Ocean Race
An hardship situation can also be a long time period in which the difficulties represents the daily life. It is the case during offshore races; boats are crossing the oceans for few months without stop. The crew has to live together 24/7 in very hardship context. No kitchen, no toilets, no bathroom, no beds, problems to solve every days and working 24/7 to be as fast as possible. Life and relationships become very interesting, people cannot quit and go home if they want to, and they have to stay. Human as well as social issues have to be solved all the time.
– Hardship during periods of inactivity –

Source: Observatoire Photographique de l’Arctique
Few years ago, a scientific expedition to the North Pole has been led by grounded a boat called Tare on the ice. During two years, the boat staid grounded with an international crew of eleven people. They had to live together in an unknown environment, with hardship conditions. The team issues took place a lot within the periods of inactivity. During this times, crews members had a lot of time to think about the situation and since they were alone very far away and always together the tensions and also the feelings of stress are transmitted as a virus between each other's.
– Confrontations due to psychological move –

Source: Observatoire Photographique de l’Arctique
By generating some impulsions within the group in order to move forward, Hervé the captain explained that he did not control himself in every situation. When he pushed the crew to move, he created confrontations: He did some wrong judgments, with sometimes very bad reaction like getting angry against the members of the team. As a leader the consequences has been very important in the team. He justified it by saying that he was at this moment in a such psychological move that it was very difficult for him as leader, to keep his nerve.
– The Impact of the experience –

Source: Observatoire Photographique de l’Arctique
Still on Tara’s board, the impact of hardship during the second winter in the Arctic has been much softer. The unknown environment was less unknown so the stress and the tensions between crew were also diminished. The captain Hervé Bourmaud as a leader also acquired experience which helped him to manage the team with less mistakes. The background of this life experience was still the same and they were still living in very hardship condition. However the life was easier and human conflicts softer as well as fewer.
– The positive consequences of hardship –

*Source: Observatoire Photographique de l’Arctique*
In the beginning of their adventure in the Arctic only one month after they had grounded the boat on the ice, a black swan event occurred: The ice had broke in thousand pieces around them and their materials and equipment were moving out alone on small ice-cubes. It has been a very hardship situation since they had to bring back as much things as possible in order to thrive with the boat in the winter. They were wondering if they will continue or not the adventure and they quickly started to find and put onboard as much material as they could because their life was depending on these equipments. Hervé Bourmaud explained that “Three keys words to sum up the situation could be surprising, reaction, and action”. The outcome of this hardship situation is that before there were eleven crew members, and after they were forming a group. Hardship is then a way to create a group spirit and identity.
– Taking over hardship & Creating a team identity –

Source: Race Bretagne Sud Mini 2014 (finish line)
A great leader trained to face hardship situation will generate a great synergy as well as a multiplying effect within a team in such situations. By keeping calm, and making the team players confident, the leader and the hardship context will generate a solidarity move within the team. The outcome is a creation of a team identity and a social code which will drive the future of the group and make it better. Hardship represents a way to forge a team and to create the spirit which will make it stronger. It is as the picture shows, when I crossed the finish line of my last race after having overcome a lot of hardship which made me stronger.
Conclusion: The atomic bomb effect of hardship

Source: Arts WallPaper
In the worst case of hardship, the lack of control of a team player is enough to generate a general panic move. A lack of self-control of a leader during few seconds is also enough to generate the general panic. When the atomic bomb explode it kills every things on its way and nobody can come back to the target area for years without being contaminated. A social panic move is exactly the same and the results are socially even worst since it will be almost impossible to re-create an environment for the team. The team spirit and identity can burn so quickly that it will take so long to re-build it with the same leader. A leader must lead oneself each seconds before thinking about being a great leader. The art of leading others come only from the art of leading oneself.
References


Dante, A., 2013, La Divine Comédie, s.l.:Edition JM.


Appendix

Skype conference with Hervé Bourmaud the 26\textsuperscript{th} of February 2014

1. Pourriez-vous me résumer votre expérience avant Tara ? A quel type d’aventure avez-vous participé ?
   *Can you sum up your experience before Tara Arctic expedition? In which kind of adventure have you been part of?*

2. Quel était votre rôle dans l’équipage TARA ?
   *What was your role in Tara crew?*

3. Quelle a été la situation la plus difficile ?
   *Which situation has been the worst?*

4. Pouvez-vous me donner 3 mots clefs qui résumerait cette situation?
   *Could you give me three keys world to sum up this hardship situation?*

5. En termes de relation humaine au sein de l’équipe, comment décririez-vous la situation ?
   *In term of human relationship within the team, how could you describe the situation?*

6. Quelle actions ont été entreprises pour gérer cette situation ?
   *What have been your actions to manage this hardship situation?*

7. Quelles sont les erreurs, s’il y en a, qui ont été commises ?
   *If some mistakes has been made, could you explain them?*

8. Avec le recul, est-ce que vous agiriez différemment aujourd’hui ?
   *With the hindsight now, would you act as you did?*

9. Avez-vous réussi à vous contrôler en toute situation ?
   *Did you control yourself in every situations?*