

# **The Role of Leadership in Establishing Socially Enabling Mechanisms for Innovation and Change: The Case of Zhang Ruimin and Ren Zhengfei**

**Prof. Arie Y. Lewin**

**Duke University, Fuqua School of Business**

## **Abstract**

Recent research suggests that the leadership of Chinese companies does not seem to follow conventional western leadership theories and practice as they increasingly emerge as serious global competitors. This paper contrasts the leadership of two iconoclastic Chinese companies – Haier, and Huawei. The analysis is based on longitudinal qualitative historical analyses from founding to the end of 2015. Both companies have become global leaders in their sectors at a record time when compared with their competitors in White Good (in case of Haier) and in Telecommunications Networks and Smart Phones (in case of Huawei). Both leaders have imprinted themselves on their companies, but they differ in their basic values, vision of organization and beliefs in how to organize. Both companies have unique founding conditions, followed a different on going self-renewal growth journey and are not government owned. But each has some government affiliation. The central question of this paper is to compare and contrast the leadership of these two iconoclastic founders, the socially enabling mechanisms underlying the strategic renewal of the two companies spanning three decades.

## **Speaker Profile:**

Arie Y. Lewin is Professor of Strategy and International Business at Duke University, Fuqua School of Business and is Director of the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER). He is elected Fellow of the Academy of International Business. The Organization Management and Theory division of the Academy of Management awarded Professor Lewin the first Joanne Martin Trailblazer Award at the 2008 Annual Meeting. Professor Lewin is Visiting Research Professor at IESE (2005- 2008) and RSM Erasmus University (1998- ) where he is also ERIM Senior Fellow. He was Editor-in-Chief (2002- 2007) of Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS); founding Editor-in-Chief of Organization Science (1989-1998) and the convener of the acclaimed Organization Science Winter Conference (1994 -2010).

His current research interests center on strategic renewal and adaptation of organizations within the context of global sourcing of business services and the emerging restructuring of organizations. He is the lead Principal Investigator for the multiyear international Offshoring Research Network (ORN) project which focuses on companies in transition to globalizing their organizations, business functions, processes and services by tracking firm strategies, experiences and future plans related to global delivery of all business functions and administrative and technical work. Current active research projects focus on the globalization of innovation, new organization forms and the emergence of the global service provider industry.