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# THE RACE FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE SUPREMACY: WHO WILL LEAD THE FUTURE OF MOBILITY?

**Ph.D. Iulian Gole**
**PhD student Stefan Radu Oprea,**
**PhD Madalina-Ioana Moncea,**
**PhD student Ion Mihai Troaca**
*Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania*

iuliangole@yahoo.com

## Abstract

In 2025, the "battle for supremacy" in the electric vehicle (EV) market has reached a definitive turning point, characterized by a fundamental shift in global leadership and technological standards. As of January 2026, BYD has officially ended Tesla's long-standing dominance, delivering 2.26 million battery-electric vehicles (BEVs) in 2025 compared to Tesla's 1.64 million (Writer, 2026). This milestone signifies more than just a change in sales rankings; it represents a broader industrial conflict where Chinese vertical integration, and affordable mass-market strategies are challenging Western innovation and premium-market positioning. This era marks the transition from early EV adoption to a mature global industry where survival depends on balancing software-driven innovation with massive manufacturing scale. Recently, some important politically geostrategic events happened in Venezuela brought new lights in the economic landscape of technologies and it may allow us to see a different strategy in the EV competition.

Key words: *electric vehicle, fair competition, trade and investments, policy strategy*

**Introduction**

The global race for electric vehicle (EV) supremacy reached a turning point in 2026, marked by a major shift in leadership and escalating geopolitical tensions. In January 2026, Chinese manufacturer BYD officially overtook Tesla as the world's leading seller of battery electric vehicles (BEVs), with 2.25 million units delivered in 2025 compared to Tesla's 1.64 million but this is a trend that was perceived months ago.

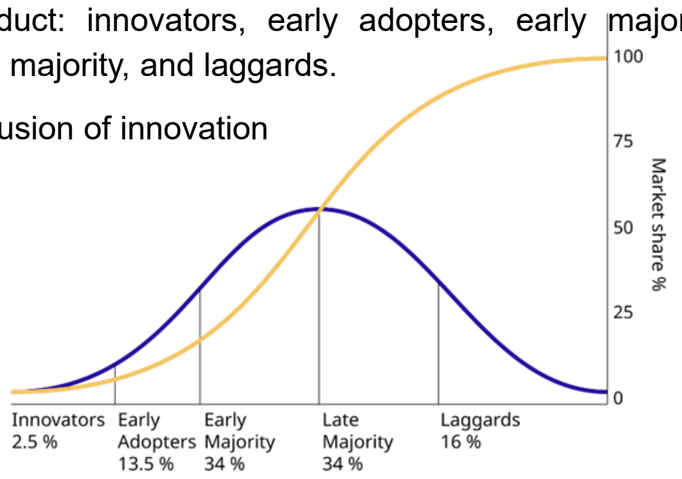
The rivalry between the two leaders has shifted in favour of Chinese manufacturers thanks to an aggressive pricing strategy and a diverse range of affordable models such as the Seagull and the Dolphin which brought BYD in a position to benefit from a 28% increase in sales in 2025.

**RESULTS**

**Market saturation**

If we investigate into details probably the Rogers curve, also known as the **Innovation Adoption Curve**, which is a model that illustrates how new ideas, products, or technologies spread through a social system over time, can also be adapted concerning the EVs buyers. The adoption of the new product followed an "S" curve over time. The percentage of users progresses slowly, then accelerates rapidly, before finally slowing down as it approaches 100%. To better understand this, he identified five types of actors adopting the new product: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

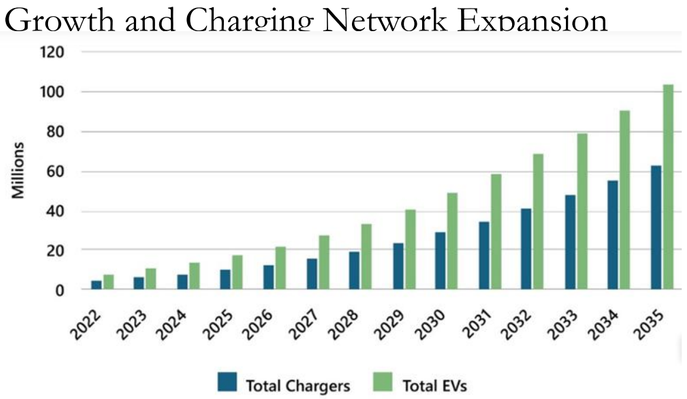
Diffusion of innovation




It can be said that today's potential electric car buyer has access to all the information regarding price, environmental impact, embedded technology, charging network accessibility, tariffs, subsidies and taxes, etc., therefore, the purchasing decision is more appropriate and complex. As the initial expenses for Chinese cars that are allowed to enter the European and Canadian markets are decreasing, and efficiency and affordability are always important factors to consider, it is no wonder why Tesla cars are less preferred by customers in general.

The massive, anticipated increase in the number of electric vehicles, from around 2 million cars, light commercial vehicles and heavy vehicles today, will have an impact on the grid, and the distribution system operators (DSOs) play a critical role in the success clean mobility programs and the charging infrastructure needed to support it.

EV Growth and Charging Network Expansion




**Strategic political shift**

On January 3, 2026, U.S. forces apprehended Venezuela's contested president, Nicolás Maduro, and transported him to the United States to face legal proceedings for alleged drug offenses. During a subsequent press conference, President Donald Trump stated that the U.S. would oversee Venezuelan administration for an interim period to ensure national stability.

While mass protests against the remaining Maduro government have not materialized, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is exerting pressure on Maduro's successor and former deputy, Delcy Rodríguez. Rubio has threatened further intervention unless Rodríguez complies with U.S. demands to sever ties with Iran, China, and Russia, and to open Venezuela's oil reserves to exploitation by American firms (Bianco & Okun, Politico 2026). If this is happening, U.S. will be by far in a position of accessing the largest oil reserves in the world, even bigger than Saudi Arabia, which will allow to flow the market with cheap oil so electric cars will be no longer economically sustainable.

Therefore, considering the geopolitical situation and access to cheap fossil energy, it could lead to the idea that the US interest in electric vehicles is no longer as great as in the past.

**Conclusions**

Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) have evolved from a mere budget option into a serious competitive threat, moving beyond price to dominate in quality and technology. While "cheap Chinese cars" were once easily dismissed, their current standards for performance and innovation have significantly shifted the global landscape.

This shift is reflected in recent policy changes. Following a period of high trade tensions and the imposition of a 100% tariff in 2024, the Canadian government recently announced a "trade reset" in January 2026. Chinese manufacturers were invited into the market under a new quota system, allowing up to 49,000 vehicles annually at a reduced 6.1% tariff.

Key factors driving this transition include quality over cost (industry experts now view Chinese EV quality as a bigger "threat" than their low-price points), strategic partnerships (Canada's new deal requires Chinese automakers to establish joint ventures within three years, aiming to boost domestic manufacturing) and market adaptation (global governments and industry players are rewriting legislation and adjusting fleet strategies to account for the superior performance and affordability of these vehicles).

It is very difficult to predict what will happen next, but it is obviously that BYD is the new EVs leader, according to the official selling numbers. The company benefits from technological and scale advantages, from vertical integration, including the easiness of access to the lithium mines for battery production. It is also true that recently Elon Musk focused more on political domain while regarding the business his attention was diverted to the social media, AI, Robotaxis and humanoid robots. This is equivalent with an abandonment of a traditional competition on mass production race in favour of an upper end technology product.