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Road Wars? The Role of Language in Perceptions of Bikes and Cars Sharing the Road: Possible Implications for Social Marketing Interventions.

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Abstract

Cycling has experienced increased popularity as a viable form of everyday transport and as a leisure or sporting activity. In the absence of segregated infrastructure, road sharing, however, has become a controversial issue. (Exaggerated) media reports describe altercations between cyclists and motorists as road wars. Rhetorical battles may only serve to feed existing perceptions. To avoid this outcome, social marketers can design interventions to increase harmony between road users and a first step is to understand the rhetorical context of the problem. The aim of the current study is to critically analyse the on-line and media rhetoric surrounding 'road wars', using Braun and Clarke's five step thematic analysis approach. Insights are offered based on the combination of 'bottom-up' coding using a grounded approach, and analyses within the frameworks of social representation theory, and theories of in/out group representations, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.

Keywords: cycling; social marketing; road wars; thematic analysis.

Track: Social Marketing