ISSUE ADVOCACY TO COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS:
A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL OF POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT:

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Issue Advocacy to Community Stakeholders: A Structural Equation Model of Potential Outcomes

(Under the direction of Dr. Lois A. Boynton)

The purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate how community stakeholder attitudes are influenced by marketplace advocacy, a type of issue advocacy that focuses on building acceptance for a product or service while addressing public concerns toward the product or service or the manufacturing processes associated with it. Specifically, the dissertation examines attitudes toward a coal industry-sponsored marketplace advocacy campaign seeking to gain acceptance for the coal industry and policies associated with coal mining within a resource community. Given their increased exposure to physical, environmental, and social risks, resource community stakeholders are an especially target audience for these campaigns since they live where the business or resource is located.

The dissertation uses survey data and structural equation modeling to test a model of outcomes of issue advocacy examining how attitudes toward the coal industry are mediated by perceptions of trust in the industry, agenda building, and environmental concern. The dissertation suggests that campaign awareness heightens the salience of industry-promulgated issues among community stakeholders and directly influences perceptions of trust in the industry, including perceptions of corporate trustworthiness and public accountability. Both perceptions of trust in the industry and the salience of the
campaign issues among community stakeholders mediate approval for the industry. Environmental concern moderates this relationship by lowering levels of trust in the industry. Secondary analyses also examine the strength of the three dimensions of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) and the four agenda-building issues (economy, energy, environment, and community identity) in garnering approval for the industry. The results offer insight for researchers, professionals, and educators interested in understanding the persuasive potential of issue advocacy.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A subset of corporate image advertising is organizational issue advocacy. Often considered a particularly controversial form of corporate communication, issue advocacy moves beyond the traditional consumer realm of marketing products and services to consumers into efforts to influence a legislative or regulatory outcome or a public policy debate (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2005; Cutler & Muehling, 1989; Nelson, 1994; Sinclair & Irani, 2005). Marketplace advocacy, a specific type of issue advocacy, further seeks to protect a company’s market by influencing public policy, such as the American Plastics Council’s “Plastics Make it Possible” campaign, which includes efforts to support legislation increasing supplies of natural gas used in the production of plastics, paints, adhesives, and other products (American Plastics Council, 2006). Many of these campaigns are initiated by organizations promoting risk-related products such as coal, oil, gas, alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceuticals.

These campaigns, however, are not limited to intermittent public service efforts to promote a public good. Rather, changes in commercial speech laws and the refinement of marketing techniques have resulted in widespread use of corporate advocacy and a blurred line between editorial content, PSAs, and paid advocacy (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994; Sinclair & Irani, 2005). Furthermore, the identity of the advocacy sponsor is often omitted by the use of vague or misleading pseudonyms that conceal their identities, such as Americans for Balanced Energy Choices, a coalition of mining companies, coal transporters, and electricity producers.
According to an ongoing Annenberg Public Policy Center study involving more than 5,000 print and television issue ads in the Washington, D.C. area, more than $105 million was spent on this form of advertising by more than 670 different organizations and coalitions during the 2001 and 2002 legislative periods coinciding with the 107th Congress (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2003). During the 2003 and 2004 legislative periods coinciding with the 108th Congress, the amount spent on issue advertising increased to more than $404 million. Yet, despite the sizeable number of organizations engaged in issue advertising, the Annenberg study found that, overwhelmingly, business interests were represented over citizen-based advocacy groups. Between 72% and 79% of issue advertising involved business interests rather than citizen-based advocacy groups throughout both study periods (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2005).

During the 107th Congressional study period, the primary issues addressed in issue advertising involved energy and the environment, with approximately 94% of the spending by energy/business interests, and the remaining 6% by environmental interests. Energy/environmental issues addressed in the ads included a national energy policy, coal and nuclear energy, natural gas, clean air and greenhouse gases, and drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), to name just a few. The focus shifted only slightly during the 108th Congress as business and economic issues received greater attention. Nevertheless, the top three issues (business/economy, health care, and energy/environment) accounted for almost 60% of legislative issue advertising (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2003; Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2005).

Despite the proliferation of issue advocacy campaigns, particularly among wealthy corporate interests, there has been little professional or academic research
evaluating potential outcomes of this form of communication (Burgoon, Pfau, & Birk, 1995; Fox, 1986; Haley, 1996; Sinclair & Irani, 2005). Surprisingly, many corporations involved in issue advocacy have made minimal or no efforts to pretest or measure the impact of their campaign efforts (Burgoon et al., 1995). Much of what is known about campaign effectiveness is descriptive in nature, coming from case studies, interview research, and response rates for requests for information (Schumann, Hathcote, & West, 1991). Meanwhile, from an academic perspective, relatively little research has evaluated these strategies and how audiences may respond to them (Burgoon et al., 1995; Haley, 1996; Sinclair & Irani, 2005). Given the political nature of issue advocacy and the potential ramifications on public policy, a quantitative assessment of stakeholder perceptions of issue advocacy, including perceptions of trust in the advertiser and the promulgated issues, would serve as a significant contribution to both professional and academic researchers interested in understanding the persuasive potential of issue advocacy.

Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to evaluate potential outcomes of a specific form of issue advocacy, known as marketplace advocacy, or advocacy that focuses on building acceptance for a particular product or service by addressing consumer concerns. The dissertation involved a multi-level research approach, including testing a model of potential advocacy outcomes (See Figure 1.1 – Theoretical Model of Issue Advocacy Outcomes) as well as evaluating specific outcomes within the model. In most advocacy campaigns, image building and industry approval are identified as fundamental goals of advocacy efforts (Arens, 2004; Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994; Schumann et al., 1991). This dissertation examined the mediating relationship of
perceptions of trust in the advocated industry and awareness of the campaign’s industry-advanced issues with regard to the public’s attitude toward the sponsoring industry. In other words, do perceptions of trust and a campaign agenda-building influence mediate approval for the industry?

Figure 1.1. Theoretical Model of Issue Advocacy Outcomes

In addition, the dissertation provided a closer examination of specific outcomes contained within the proposed model. First, the dissertation evaluated whether general awareness of an advocacy campaign influenced perceptions of trust in the industry, including issues relating to advertiser credibility and accountability, each of which may be key factors in the effectiveness of marketplace advocacy. According to David Ogilvy (1983), “corporations have been using advertising in attempts to influence public opinion on issues such as energy, nationalization, and foreign imports. The trouble is that few readers believe what corporations say” (p. 121-122). Understanding stakeholder perceptions of the believability, or trustworthiness, of the advertiser may help both
professionals and researchers evaluate advocacy campaigns. Second, this dissertation examined whether the issues promulgated within the campaign were more salient with the general public. In other words, this dissertation assessed the agenda-building influence of issue advocacy among the campaign’s audience.

Given the various potential outcomes of issue advocacy under investigation, multiple analytic techniques were applied. For the first phase of the dissertation, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the strength of the hypothesized model of issue advocacy outcomes. Correlation and multiple regression analyses were then used to assess the plausibility and strength of particular outcomes contained within the model but not directly ascertainable from the model output or that warranted further investigation. Specifically, the dissertation evaluated the following relationships: 1) awareness of the issue advocacy campaign and perceptions of industry credibility and accountability, and 2) industry credibility and accountability and the overall attitude toward the advocacy sponsor, a coal industry-supported organization seeking to increase the acceptance of coal as an energy resource and coal industry-related public policies within a particular resource community. The relative contribution of each of the components of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) and agenda-building issues (economy, energy, environment, and community identity) in predicting overall attitude toward the industry was also assessed.

This dissertation sheds new light on how campaign awareness predicts perceptions of the sponsoring industry, including industry credibility and accountability, and how these variables mediate overall attitude toward the industry. Also, despite the growing body of literature on agenda-setting influences, the agendas of issue advocacy
campaigns, or advertising used to convey information regarding social issues and an organization’s position on those issues (Sethi, 1979), have received little or no attention as a potential influence on either the media or the public’s agenda. This dissertation advances both agenda-setting and agenda-building literature by examining the ability of issue advocacy campaigns to heighten the salience of industry-promulgated issues among the general public.

The dissertation may also be of interest to the field of environmental communication and rhetoric. The results of this dissertation suggest how issue advocacy can emphasize the role of business in society, while indirectly reducing the potential for public and/or government investigations in high-risk, environmentally questionable industries. Also, by incorporating environmental concern as a measure of statistical control in both the model and correlation analyses, the dissertation provides some evidence of the moderating influence of heightened levels of environmental concern on issue advocacy outcomes.

In the following section, issue advocacy is defined and described with regard to its history, legal status, purpose, and functions, as well as its various forms of delivery. Since issue advocacy typically involves more than one communication tactic, this dissertation draws on existing literature in advertising and public relations to accomplish this explication. Following an overview of issue advocacy, the focus of the literature summary then shifts to the specific type of advocacy and target audiences evaluated in the dissertation, namely marketplace advocacy to community stakeholders. Potential outcomes under investigation are subsequently defined, including credibility and accountability, concepts that have been developed from previous research in advertising
credibility and social-psychological theory. Agenda building, another potential outcome evaluated in the dissertation, is then delineated from its historical roots in public relations, political communication, and mass communication. Finally, the chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary of the marketplace campaign under investigation and its sponsoring industry followed by the dissertation’s hypotheses and research questions.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Issue Advocacy

For a variety of reasons, many businesses and organizations routinely engage in a form of communication known as issue advocacy. From a general perspective, issue advocacy involves informing, educating, and persuading the general public and specific stakeholder groups about the contributions of business to society (Sethi, 1979). These communication functions typically occur in the form of advocacy advertising (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994; Cutler & Muehling, 1989; Haley, 1996; Schumann et al., 1991; Sethi, 1979; Sinclair & Irani, 2005) or public relations via issues management and efforts to promote an image of corporate social responsibility (Daugherty, 2001; Gandy, 1982; L’Etang, 1996; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Toth, 1986). Since advocacy campaigns usually involve a combination of paid advertising and various forms of public relations, the line between advocacy advertising and advocacy in the form of public relations is often blurred (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994). Based on literature in both advertising and public relations, it appears that although the communication strategy is different, the goal is often the same. It is therefore important to first define issue advocacy from a broad perspective before delineating advocacy advertising from public relations and issues management.

Historical Perspectives on Issue Advocacy

Despite its recent proliferation, this form of communication is not a recent phenomenon. Issue advocacy has existed, in some form or another, since the initiation of
corporate institutional advertising in the early 1900s (Sethi, 1977). One of the earliest examples involved efforts by German textile interests to recover property seized during World War I. Textile Mills Corporation was retained on behalf of German interests to gain public support for the return of property lost by Germans during the war. Initiated shortly after the war, the campaign included speeches, news items, and editorial comment regarding international relations, treaty rights, and issues of respect for alien property during times of war (Textile Mills Corporation v. Commissioner, 1941). In addition to shaping public sentiment, the campaign is also regarded as having been influential in shaping legislative policy matters, namely the passage of the Settlement of War Claims Act of 1928 (Sethi, 1977).

While other examples of issue advocacy can be traced back to the 1930s, including advocacy advertising in newspapers and magazines (Burgoon et al., 1995), the political and social changes of the 1970s are often credited with the rise of advocacy campaigns among many industries (Sethi, 1977). As public and media criticism regarding issues such as the environment and energy gained a foothold in mainstream America, industries began looking for ways to defend themselves. Subsequently, issue advocacy became commonplace in corporate communication endeavors (Haley, 1996).

Meanwhile, Bostdorff and Vibbert (1994) and Crable and Vibbert (1983) suggested that the ancestral roots of advocacy can be traced back much further than the industrialization of the Americas. In particular, advocacy that directly praises accepted societal values is fundamentally associated with “epideictic,” or ceremonial, rhetoric. Epideictic oratory is primarily concerned with praise or blame, and in ancient times, usually involved deliberative speech on topics that were apparently uncontroversial.
(Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969). By praising shared values, epideictic rhetoric creates a social consensus that forms the basis for judgments that audiences bring to bear in evaluating organizational messages. Epideictic oratory may intensify adherence to values that may not be challenged on their own, but may nevertheless not prevail against other conflicting values (Perelman, 1982). Thus, epideictic oratory is advocacy for selected values.

**Legal Classification – Commercial vs. Political Speech**

Although rhetorical advocacy has existed for thousands of years, the rise in corporate advocacy has been shrouded in uncertainty and controversy, primarily with regard to its classification as either commercial or political speech. This distinction is important because commercial speech is subject to Federal Trade Commission regulations for deceptiveness while political speech is protected from libel under the First Amendment regardless of whether it is true or misleading (Federal Trade Commission Act, 1914).

Nevertheless, the distinction between commercial and political speech is not always obvious. Historically, all advertising was regarded as commercial speech under the law and was unprotected by the First Amendment for false statements due to the perceived profit motive associated with paying for public speech (*Valentine v. Chrestensen*, 1942). Gradually, however, the U.S. Supreme Court began to concede that some commercial speech may also be worthy of First Amendment protection when the content of the speech contributes to the political debate (*New York Times v. Sullivan*, 1964), including issues relating to business interests sponsored by corporations (*First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti*, 1978). Despite the creation of narrow guidelines for
defining commercial speech and when and how it can be regulated (*Central Hudson Gas and Electric v. Public Service Commission*, 1980), the classification between these two types of speech continues to be a matter of contention. Throughout the last 30 years, the Court has repeatedly recognized that some ads contain elements of both commercial and political speech (*Bigelow v. Virginia*, 1975; *Bolger v. Youngs Drug Production Corporation*, 1983; *Virginia State Board of Pharmacy v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council*, 1976). Most recently, the Court dismissed a case involving issue advertising by Nike, which was sued for making false claims in a public relations campaign that it did not use sweatshop labor (*Nike, Inc. v. Kasky*, 2003). A decision in this case may have provided additional clarification on when commercial speech with political content can be regulated for false or misleading statements (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2005).

Central to the debate over the federal regulation of issue advocacy is how to define the communication from a legal perspective. Sethi (1979) developed a typology for the legal classification of issue advocacy that remains in use today. The Annenberg Public Policy Center, for example, currently applies Sethi’s operational definition of issue advertising in its ongoing study tracking legislative issue ads in the Washington, D.C. area (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2005). Sethi argued that the advertiser’s intentions relating to the communication is irrelevant; if a potential audience is likely to view the content as relevant in deciding on a particular issue, messages must be considered persuasive. Therefore, if an ad mentions a public policy, even if it was designed to sell a product or improve an organization’s image, the ad can be considered an issue advertisement.
Sethi’s (1979) typology also addresses the varying degrees of free speech protections as well as the tax treatment for commercial (tax deductible) versus political (non tax deductible) speech. To begin, both advocacy and issue advertising would fall under the general heading of corporate advertising. Corporate advertising can then be further divided into image/institutional advertising and idea/issue advertising. While institutional advertising involves such communicative efforts as goodwill, name recognition, and activity recognition, issue advertising is concerned with advocacy of issues or ideas. This typology is beneficial for corporations in differentiating whether an ad is (1) subject to FTC review for false and misleading content and tax deductible, or (2) protected by the First Amendment for false and misleading content and non-deductible.

*Issue Advocacy Purpose and Functions*

Issue advocacy campaigns often arise in response to burgeoning societal concerns, such as those faced by many energy-related industries, that may result in low credibility and trust among various segments of an organization’s audience, or public. Issue advocacy, therefore, often involves the communication of an organization’s stance on an issue or policy in an effort to sway public sentiment or generate support (Cutler & Muehling, 1989).

Generally speaking, the purpose of issue advocacy is to emphasize the role of business in society and its contribution to the economic health and prosperity of the community, while indirectly reducing the potential for future government intervention in corporate activities resulting from public calls for investigations of, or protection from, industry (Cutler & Muehling, 1989; Sethi, 1979). This promotion of business interests may occur in a number of ways, including promoting an organization’s image, deflecting
criticism, laying the groundwork for future policy debates, fostering the values of the free enterprise system, and counteracting inadequate access to the news media (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994; Cutler & Muehling, 1989; Sethi, 1977).

**Promoting an Image.** To begin, issue advocacy may serve as an image enhancer by heightening organizational identification, guiding audiences’ attitudes toward an organization, and encouraging publics to act in certain ways. Many advocacy campaigns praise societal values, condemn oppositional values, discuss philanthropic efforts, and/or associate an organization’s products with worthwhile societal goals and/or individuals who represent those goals (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994). General Dynamics’ campaign for Project Literacy, for example, emphasized adult literacy and voter registration but made no reference to its role in the defense industry. The assumption was that audiences would naturally agree with its charitable work and the underlying values of that work – literacy and democracy (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994).

**Deflecting Criticism.** In addition to helping build and maintain a positive public image, issue advocacy may also help to deflect criticism or counteract public hostility (Sethi, 1977). According to Bostdorff and Vibbert (1994), advocacy helps build a positive image that provides credibility to weather future criticisms, or help establish a “reservoir of credibility” to sustain future threats (p. 150). Organizations may focus on advocating issues and values on which there is widespread agreement while detracting attention from organizational activities. For example, some people may agree with values promulgated by General Dynamics, such as security and American pride, but disagree with the manufacturing of military weapons and the company’s opposition to defense cuts in the federal budget (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994).
Preparing for Future Policy Debates. While issue advocacy shuns controversy, a third function of issue campaigns involves efforts to lay the groundwork for future contentious legal or policy arguments by increasing audience adherence to certain values that may conflict with other values in a debate. In the 1970s, for example, American Electric Power (AEP) initiated a campaign to promote the use of coal mining and reduce a number of regulations imposed on mining, including strip mining and pollution codes. In reference to the United States’ reliance on foreign sources of oil, the campaign was titled “We have more coal than they have oil – Let’s use it” (Sethi, 1977). The campaign emphasized the national economy while avoiding litigious discussions related to the environment. Other campaigns have been used by Mobil Oil to prevent legislative passage of an excess profits tax directed at oil companies, by the Chrysler Corporation to slow down the implementation of automotive pollution controls, and by Bethlehem Steel to restrict steel imports (Cutler & Muehling, 1989).

Fostering Free Enterprise Values. Similarly, issue advocacy may also be used to educate the public regarding the free enterprise system, which many businesses perceive as having been “eroded by the welfare state, the sapping of individual initiative, freedom, and the work ethic” (Sethi, 1977, p. 67). Such educational endeavors suggest the public lacks knowledge regarding businesses’ “profit motive,” therefore, businesses should seek to aggressively demonstrate their contributions to society rather than being defensive about their activities. Oftentimes, the advocacy messages will attempt to downgrade the role of government in economic activities, as demonstrated by AEP’s campaign to reduce mining regulations (Sethi, 1977, p. 61). This rationale is often criticized, however, as an effort to defend the status quo rather than to constructively modernize business practices.
Although this function of issue advocacy has seemingly received less attention in recent academic literature on advocacy, current studies of issue advertising messages suggest it may be one of the key issues advanced by corporate issue spenders. According to an Annenberg Public Policy study of issue advertising in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, more than 90% of spending on issue ads relating to business and the economy during the 2003–2004 legislative period emphasized the specific issue of oversight for government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs). Critics of GSEs have charged that these companies were too large, failed to provide fair service to minorities, controlled too much of the mortgage charter, and were afforded unfair advantages by the government. In 2003, GSEs became the target of heightened criticism after Freddie Mac, a private shareholder-owned company that buys mortgages from lenders, repackages them as securities, and sells them to investors, announced it had understated its earnings by $5 billion. These revelations resulted in calls for greater oversight of GSEs. In response, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Homeownership Alliance (an organization co-founded by both companies to promote mutual interests) spent $96 million in issue advertising to promote the idea that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac help stimulate the economy by helping citizens buy homes (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2005).

**Countering Inadequate Media Access.** Organizations have also initiated advocacy campaigns in response to a perceived lack of objectivity by the media and an anti-business media climate (Fox, 1986). According to Cutler and Muehling (1989), “Extensive attacks by the media, unbalanced by recognition of business’ contribution to

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the American standard of living, have contributed to what might be referred to as business’ persecution complex” (p. 41-42). In particular, oil, gas, and other energy companies have used advocacy campaigns to respond to media criticism on issues such as the environment and energy conservation. Sethi (1977), however, pointed out that these attempts downplay industry’s adverse effects on the environment by exaggerating the often-miniscule efforts of industries to control pollution, while publicizing adverse effects to the economy that may result from various pollution control efforts. Rather, corporate messages suggest individual action can help solve environmental problems, thereby absolving the industry of responsibility. Moreover, the campaigns depict industry’s response as voluntary while, in fact, environmental changes in corporate policy may have been initiated under threat of governmental prosecution (Sethi, 1977).

_Proliferation of Advocacy_

Increasingly, more and more businesses have come to recognize the importance of establishing and maintaining a positive image (Hon, 1997; Kim, 2001), particularly with regard to organizational effectiveness, reducing the costs of responding to pressure from activist groups, litigation, regulation, and boycotts (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Grunig et al., 1992). Issue advocacy provides an avenue for an organization to commend itself to the public and maintain a positive image, regardless of business type. Advocacy that emphasizes values, rather than trying to influence public policies, also tends to be non-confrontational, providing a “safer” alternative to engage audiences (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994). For example, during the 1970s oil embargo, Phillips Petroleum engaged in an advocacy strategy to search for positive areas of agreement with the public without focusing on consumer-available products. Phillips focused on the company’s
“performance” and company contributions to the common good, including the development of a blood filter beneficial for kidney patients and a fuel additive that helped make a helicopter rescue possible from a snowy mountain (p. 144).

Furthermore, the popularity and perceived effectiveness of advocacy campaigns has encouraged imitation. Many industries engaged in advocacy campaigns have publicized positive public response results. Phillips’ research following the aforementioned campaign, for example, identified a 90% increase in brand recall. Following Phillips’ lead, Mobil instituted its “Observations” campaign and also showed improvement in public standing (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994). Despite the apparent media and public success other high-profile communicators have enjoyed from advocacy campaigns emphasizing personal values over public policy positions, such as Ronald Reagan’s “It’s Morning in America” and Bill Clinton’s “A Man From Hope” (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994), Schumann et al. (1991) observed that methodological flaws regarding campaign measurement suggest that results should be interpreted cautiously. In particular, the authors found that a number of corporations failed to employ a point of comparison for the success of their campaign, without which “it is difficult to determine the significance of the finding” (p. 52).

Types of Advocacy

Just as there are several intermediate functions of issue advocacy in achieving its overall goal of promoting a range of business interests, issue advocacy may also occur in a variety of forms. Classification of issue advocacy types may be based on the communication tactic used to convey advocacy messages, such as paid advertising versus public relations and issues management. Meanwhile, other typologies focus on the nature
of the advocacy message and its functional purpose, including marketplace, political, and values-oriented communication.

**Advocacy Advertising.** Advocacy in the form of advertising is often regarded as gaining momentum as a result of heightened political and social concerns of the 1970s (Cutler & Muehling, 1989). Recognizing the media’s role in generating public support, yet viewing the media as innately biased against corporations, industries retaliated via purchased media coverage. By paying for advertising space, industries and corporations were assured that their viewpoints were disseminated in a way that was consistent with their views (Cutler & Muehling, 1989).

Within advertising literature, advocacy advertising, or issue advertising, has primarily been identified as a subset of corporate advertising (Schumann et al., 1991). According to Schumann et al. (1991), corporate advertising has been defined consistently since the 1950s but has more recently also been expanded to include advocacy advertising. In the 1960s textbook, *Fundamentals of Marketing* (Stanton, 1964), goodwill was associated with public relations; by the 1970s, however, goodwill was associated with image advertising, which included aspects of advocacy and issue advertising (Schumann et al., 1991). Advocacy advertising has also been categorized as an indirect form of grassroots lobbying. Given that lobbying involves efforts to influence the legislative process, either through direct communication with lawmakers or efforts to mobilize public constituencies, Sethi (1979) suggested that advocacy advertising should also be considered a form of grassroots lobbying.

**Public Relations Advocacy and Issues Management.** Oftentimes, there is not a clear distinction between paid advocacy advertising and advocacy in the form of public
relations (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994). Based on literature in both advertising and public relations, it appears that although the objectives are analogous between the disciplines, the communication strategy to achieve objectives is often different. According to Gandy (1989), public relations involves purposeful communication on behalf of certain interests. When that purpose involves efforts to influence the general public and/or policy-makers regarding public policy issues, the advocacy in the form of public relations is known as issues management (Gandy, 1989).

Toth (1986) suggested that issues management involved two primary functions: (1) government affairs, or efforts to enhance or protect business’ interests regarding issues that will be decided within the judicial process, and (2) strategic communication, or organizational efforts to coordinate all messages to emphasize a business’ position regarding public policy issues. More specifically, issues management, a practice often associated with the concept of corporate social responsibility, involves efforts to identify public issues, often of a social nature, and developing coordinated communications efforts to address those issues. This strategic communication may come in the form of advocacy advertising, public relations, or other corporate social programs (L’Etang, 1996).

While advocacy advertising generally utilizes paid advertising space, public relations advocacy typically occurs in the form of information subsidies (Gandy, 1989). Information subsidies provide policy makers with relevant and valuable information that result in a cost savings (including time savings) for the policy maker, such as news releases, fact sheets, congressional testimony by experts on a given issue (affiliated with the business’ position), etc.
Functional Classifications. Functional categorizations of issue advocacy often
depend on the nature of the threat the organization faces and the deflection strategies
employed. Arens (2004) identified advocacy advertising as a category of public relations
advertising that combines the controllability of mass communication via advertising with
the greater credibility of public relations. Arens recognized three functions of advocacy
advertising: to communicate an organization’s views on issues relative to its business, to
protect marketplace position, and/or to promote an organization’s philosophy.

Arens (2004) suggested advocacy advertising typically involved (at least) one of
three different strategies: marketplace advocacy, political advocacy, and values
advocacy. Marketplace advocacy involves business’ efforts to promote a product or
service while addressing public concerns toward the product or service or the
manufacturing processes used to create it. Political advocacy, meanwhile, includes the
promotion of a political candidate or policy issue via favorable arguments in response to
criticism. Finally, values advocacy usually involves efforts to equate a business product
or service with accepted societal values or individuals who represent those values.

Most often, these categorizations are not mutually exclusive, and one form of
advocacy frequently appears in conjunction with another. Political advocacy, for
example, may include aspects of values advocacy by associating a candidate with values
such as pride and/or hard work. Ronald Reagan’s “It’s Morning in America” and Bill
Clinton’s “A Man from Hope” are two examples of such an intersection between
advocacy categories. Similarly, an industry may use values advocacy to build a
“reservoir of credibility” regarding future issues (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994, p. 150) for
the dual purpose of trying to protect a marketplace position (generally considered
marketplace advocacy) while laying the groundwork for political policies (political advocacy). For example, a General Dynamics’ campaign focusing on the values issues of American safety and pride is a safer, less-confrontational approach to opposing military defense cuts than specifically calling on the public to do so.

Marketplace Advocacy

The focus of this dissertation is on marketplace advocacy, which seek acceptance for a product or service by communicating its benefits and often addressing concerns about risks. Although the advocacy sponsor may be a single company, industry associations initiate most marketplace advocacy campaigns. Industry campaigns have emphasized the benefits of cotton (Cotton Board: “The Fabric of Our Lives”), plastics (American Plastics Council: “Plastics make it Possible”), beef (National Cattlemen’s Beef Association: “It’s What’s for Dinner”), and crops produced through biotechnology (Council for Biotechnology: “Good Ideas are Growing”). In marketplace advocacy, perceptions of potential risks of the product category for one’s health, society, or the environment may be more salient than for general brand advertising, when consumers’ perceptions of risks are likely limited to the risk of wasting money on a brand that does not serve their needs (Sinclair & Irani, 2005).

Target Audiences for Marketplace Advocacy Campaigns. Corporate advocacy may target a variety of stakeholders ranging from the general public to more narrowly defined audiences, such as customers, current or future employees, or investors and the financial community (Arens, 2004; Schumann et al., 1991). Stakeholders may include “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by” the organization’s activities (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Advocacy campaigns in particular have been described as
targeting the general public (Culter & Muehling, 1989) and, more specifically, those individuals who support the company’s position (Burgoon et al., 1995). It seems marketplace advocacy campaigns may often be designed to generate more favorable attitudes among end-users, or audience members who purchase and use the advocated product. A particularly important audience for marketplace advocacy messages, however, may be community stakeholders, or those individuals who live where a business is located (Duncan, 2005).

Community Stakeholders. While any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the realization of an organization’s objectives may be considered a stakeholder (Freeman, 1984), certain stakeholders may be affected more than others. Community stakeholders, for example, have been identified as key audiences for “green alliances,” or cooperative relationships between environmental, non-government organizations (NGOs), and marketers (Stafford & Hartman, 2000, p. 170). Stafford and Hartman (2000) identified the primary interests of community stakeholders as environmental issues, including health hazards; noise; odors; discharges to the land, water, and air; and knowledge of business activities.

In addition to physical and environmental problems, community stakeholders may also face social, psychological, and cultural harm when a company’s production processes are perceived to be risky or undesirable. Gregory and Satterfield (2002) studied communities that are the sites of potentially damaging industries such as forestry, fishing, mining, hazardous waste storage, nuclear power, or genetic engineering of food, and they identified social stigma as a significant risk for both the community as a whole and for individual members. According to the authors, social stigmatization involves a
realized or feared adverse psychological experience associated with living in a resource community. As a result of resource extraction manufacturing and processing initiatives, certain industrial activities that were once revered are now seen as shortsighted, even evil among some groups. According to the authors, “In many cases, even though responsibility may properly rest with the companies themselves, those individuals who are (or were) dependent on these systems for an economic livelihood have been blamed or socially stigmatized for realized or feared adverse impacts” (Gregory & Satterfield, 2002, p. 348).

Many marketplace advocacy campaigns involve industries or products that are perceived as risky, particularly with regard to the manufacturing processes required to produce or extract the advocated product, such as nuclear power facilities and the extraction of natural resources. Stakeholders who reside in the communities where production takes place, known as resource community stakeholders, are an important target given their increased exposure to physical, environmental, and social risks (Gregory & Satterfield, 2002; Miller & Sinclair, 2005). From an alternative perspective, despite numerous risks, community stakeholders are also a unique audience for this type of campaign because of the economic and psychological benefits they may potentially gain from the organization’s activities, such as employment opportunities, community pride, a positive identity, and for long-standing industries, a sense of heritage (Miller & Sinclair, 2005). Nevertheless, although communities may enjoy immediate economic benefits in terms of employment, most community stakeholders face an inequitable distribution of costs and benefits, in which a range of users share the benefits and the costs are primarily felt locally (Gregory & Satterfield, 2002).
In addition to addressing stakeholder concerns, marketplace advocacy campaigns might seek to foster goodwill by emphasizing a positive sense of community. Past research has found that corporate image ads using a nationalistic appeal generated favorable attitudes toward the advertiser among a nationalistic audience (Pedic, 1989; 1990). In experimental research, Pedic found that corporate image advertising designed to generate a positive attitude toward the people, objects, and concepts identified as belonging to a nation “protected” the social self-esteem (SSE) of nationalistic subjects from a decline in SSE which typically follows advertising exposure (Pedic, 1989, p. 70). Nationalistic corporate image ads were also found to be more persuasive than non-nationalistic ads (Pedic, 1990). Marketplace advocacy campaigns might similarly build on the regional pride of community stakeholders.

Potential Outcomes of Issue Advocacy

In order to effectively communicate the economic and psychological benefits of an industry, a marketplace advocacy campaign should be considered believable within its community stakeholder audience. Moreover, the effectiveness of a marketplace advocacy campaign may also depend on whether the issues addressed in the campaign are gaining salience with community members. The following section outlines existing research in these potential outcomes of issue advocacy, including perceptions of industry trust, namely credibility and accountability, as well as agenda building. Each of these concepts is identified as a potential mediating variable for overall attitude toward the industry within the hypothesized model.
Perceptions of Industry Trust and Advocacy Campaigns

In addition to perceptions of the risks and benefits of the advocated product, trust in the message source, or the believability of the advertiser, may also be an important determinant of attitudes toward an advocacy sponsor. Trust has been found to play a role in advertising, for example, by lowering perceptions of the risk of purchase (Grewal, Gottlieb, & Marmorstein, 1994). As the salience of risk increases, which may often be the case in marketplace advocacy campaigns, trust could be expected to play an increasingly important role (Cvetkovich, Siegrist, Murray, & Tragesser, 2002; Gaskell, Bauer, Durant, & Allum, 1999; Siegrist & Cvetkovich, 2000; Sjoberg, 2004). For community stakeholders, trust may have a significant impact on attitudes toward the corporation not only because these stakeholders are especially exposed to industry risks, but also because the power differential may favor the company, so that stakeholders are generally vulnerable to its actions (Bhattachaharya, Devinney, & Pillutla, 1998).

Corporate Credibility. Within advertising literature, trust in an advertiser has been defined in terms of corporate credibility. Some studies have conceptualized corporate credibility as consisting of two factors: trustworthiness and expertise (Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000; Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). Newell and Goldsmith (2001), for example, suggested that corporate credibility involved the “extent to which consumers feel that the firm has the knowledge or ability to fulfill its claims and whether the firm can be trusted to tell the truth” (p. 235). Research applying this two dimensional conceptualization of corporate credibility has indicated that corporate credibility is positively correlated with attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001).
Specifically within the context of advocacy advertising, Haley (1996) used qualitative research to examine consumer perceptions of advocacy messages and developed a model that provided insight into dimensions of trust, including perceptions related to expertise. Haley found that a logical association with the advocated position and the advertiser amplified perceptions of expertise. A condom company’s campaign promoting AIDS prevention would involve an assumption of expertise given the logical connection between condom use and AIDS prevention; a Nike campaign promoting AIDS awareness, however, may be perceived as lacking an obvious connection between the advertiser and the issue. Subsequently, the expertise of the advertiser regarding the advocated issue may be called into question (Haley, 1996). From a marketplace advocacy perspective, a coal industry-sponsored campaign promoting policies associated with coal mining would be perceived as having a logical association between the advertiser and the message. Likewise, the coal industry would also be perceived as having expertise in the advocated issue (Miller & Sinclair, 2005). Although, generally, research in consumer advertising examines both expertise and trustworthiness as dimensions of credibility, perhaps corporate credibility may also be conceptualized unidimensionally as corporate trustworthiness when a fundamental perception of expertise already exists.

**Public Accountability**

Sinclair and Irani (2005) similarly used a model of public accountability to predict attitudes toward a marketplace advocacy campaign. Sinclair and Irani’s (2005) study on advocacy advertising, and other research on trust and corporate credibility, indicate there may be three key components to advertiser trust in the context of marketplace advocacy.
advertising: audience perceptions of advertiser intent, rule-based trust, and transparency. Each of these dimensions is defined below applying research from advertising, marketing, and social psychology.

Advertiser Intent. Intent has been defined as perceptions of whose interests will be served: only the good of the organization, or also the good of consumers and society (Haley, 1996; Javalgi, Traylor, Gross, & Lampman, 1994; Stafford & Hartman, 2000). In their environmental marketing study of alliances between marketers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Stafford and Hartman (2000) defined intent as “genuineness of the organization’s commitment and devotion to its environmental mission” (p. 180). The authors suggested that intent is most likely to be called into question when an organization stands to gain from the advocated position, which is the case in marketplace advocacy advertising. Other marketing research has also emphasized the importance of communicating the organization’s “character” and responsiveness to perceived societal obligations (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), for example, stated that consumers’ trust in the organization depends on “attributions they make about the company’s intentions and actions from available data” (p. 81).

Rule-based Trust. Perceptions that there are prescriptions, rules, or laws that apply to the industry that produces the advocated products may also affect trust regarding the organization’s activities, specifically in terms of rule-based trust. Perceptions that the government is adequately regulating the industry could be expected to enhance trust, while perceptions that regulation is inadequate could be expected to undermine trust. Within the field of social psychology, Kramer (1999) examined rule-based trust in
organizational contexts and concluded that understanding of transaction norms, interactional routines, and exchange practices could be a basis for perceptions of the trustworthiness of an organization. In other words, the perceived trustworthiness of an organization was related to organizational members’ trust in the rules governing individual members and organizational routines. Within groups, rule-based trust is expected to be most significant for new members who do not yet personally know the individuals in the group (Fine & Holyfield, 1996). In the context of advertising, audiences are unlikely to have personal knowledge of an organization’s decision makers, and therefore they may be likely to base their trust on perceptions of the adequacy of existing regulations.

*Transparency.* Perceptions of *transparency* involve the belief that the organization’s activities are open to public scrutiny. A key transparency issue in marketplace advocacy campaigns involves the identity of the message source. Marketplace advocacy campaigns are often sponsored by an industry organization, and audiences could be unsure about the identity of these organizations, or they might suspect companies are attempting to hide their identities. Stafford and Hartman (2000) defined transparency in the context of “green alliances” as having all activities between a marketer and an environmental group open to stakeholder scrutiny and feedback. Literature focusing on the environment has identified transparency as a factor in credibility, both in terms of partnerships between corporations and NGOs (Dutton, 1996; Fowler & Heap, 1998) as well as in government and NGO-led restoration efforts (Michaelidou, Decker, & Lassoie, 2002; Press, Doak, & Steinberg, 1996). Within the
context of marketplace advocacy campaigns, transparency may be similarly important to consumers’ perceptions of organizational credibility.

**Agenda-Building**

Another potential outcome of issue advocacy involves its (potential) ability to shape the media and/or the public’s agenda. Within academic literature, agenda building has been discussed according to several different research disciplines, including mass communication, political communication, and public relations. Generally speaking, the overarching concept of agenda-building research involves the examination into how **agendas** are constructed, including both media and public agendas. And although there is some consensus between disciplines regarding the overall conceptualization of agenda building, the process and objectives for agenda-building efforts are somewhat divergent between these theoretical frameworks. Therefore, the following paragraphs discuss agenda building from a broad theoretical lens in order to encompass various disciplines.

**Agenda Building and Agenda Setting.** Within much of the mass communication literature, the concept of agenda building is often regarded as having evolved from the theory of agenda setting, or the concept that media play a role in influencing what the public perceives are the important issues of the day (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). While the news media have long been studied with regard to their ability to transmit issue salience from the news media to the public, thereby “setting” the public’s agenda, the question of who sets the media’s agenda has also become a subject of increased interest. McCombs (1992) identified this shift in focus as the fourth phase of agenda-setting research. In contrast to agenda setting, which focuses on the media’s ability to influence
what the public thinks about, this area of research, known as agenda building, explores how sources influence media agendas (Cassara, 1998).

*Agenda Building and Media Content.* In addition to unmanipulated factual information, the media also disseminate prejudices of the sources upon which they rely (Turk, 1986), and the diversity of potential sources may be quite vast. Interactions between media sources may play a role in influencing the media’s agenda (Cassara, 1998), such as existing competition between news organizations, news-handling practices and routines, government controls, and the influence of issue interest groups (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Purposive communication tactics, such as public relations and advertising, have also been identified as having a potential agenda-building influence. Information subsidies in the form of issue advertising and public relations efforts, for example, may serve as sources of news content (Gandy, 1982; Turk, 1986). These information subsidies are made available quickly and inexpensively, often with the objective of generating “‘goodwill in the community about its corporate neighbors” (p. 68). According to Gandy (1982), the rise in public relations activities such as news releases and news conferences has resulted in journalistic dependence on the incoming flow of news from public relations-generated information. Similarly, political advertising has also been shown to influence news content (Roberts & McCombs, 1994).

Much of the research in agenda building has emphasized how various sources interact with news media to influence news content (Cassara, 1998; Curtin, 2000; Curtin & Rhodenbaugh, 2001; Fürsich, 2002; Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, & Harrison, 1995). In a study of the success of state government public information officers involved in information subsidy activities among a group of daily newspapers, Turk (1986) provided
empirical evidence that public relations practitioners and the information they provide the media do influence the media agenda. The study suggested that the perceived newsworthiness of the subsidized information was fundamental to the journalist’s decision whether to use a particular information subsidy. Similarly, Curtin’s (2000) study of editors’ perceptions of the use of public relations information subsidies suggested that if subsidized information served a public information function (namely if it was provided by a nonprofit or government agency), the material could potentially pass unimpeded through gatekeepers providing it contained news value and was written in news style. By passing unaltered through media gatekeepers, “these materials help build the media agenda and thus potentially affect the public agenda in the manner intended by the originating organization” (p. 86).

Other academic literature has demonstrated the agenda-building influence of public relations on the news media regarding such subjects as corporate takeovers (Ohl et al., 1995) and the Daimler-Benz and Chrysler merger, which emphasized a marriage discourse between the two equal partners (Fürsich, 2002). According to Fürsich (2002), this concept was easily accepted and adopted by journalists because it was consistent with traditional American journalistic values of objectivity and equilibrium.

_Agenda Building and Public Agendas._ In addition to influencing the media agenda, agenda building via information subsidies may also play a significant role in establishing those issues most salient with targeted segments of the public. Turk (1986) suggested that this influence occurs in a linear fashion. She explained that public relations practitioners “attempt to influence the media’s agenda, so that they may in turn influence the public opinion upon which their organizations depend for survival” (p. 4).
Ku, Kaid, and Pfau (2003), for example, demonstrated an agenda-building interaction between political websites, news content, and public opinion. Their study suggested that although citizens may not necessarily access their political information via the Internet, media outlets have access to this information and often conduct background research and fact checking on candidates’ websites. Working in concert, press releases disseminated via websites directly to journalists and news organizations may therefore indirectly set the agenda for the traditional news media. Moreover, the authors also demonstrated the significant agenda-building function of the Internet in shaping and determining the issues most salient to the public. In addition to studies of public influence, within the field of political science, agenda-building research has also examined aspects of political mobilization, such as how ecological parties, international organizations, and citizen groups have shaped environmental policy (Kamieniecki, 1991).

Agenda Building and Persuasion. Research in public relations has defined agenda building as the acceptance of information subsidies and their frames (Cameron, Sallot, & Curtin, 1997). According to Gamson (1989), facts have no intrinsic meaning without being embedded in a context. Frames, therefore, serve as the central organizing thought that provides coherence for a set of facts (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). In essence, frames construct reality for audiences (Graber, 1989) through the selection, emphasis, elaboration, and exclusion of certain facts within a story (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, & Ghanem, 1991), or an information subsidy. Given that public relations often involves efforts to affect public opinion for the benefit of a particular organization (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992), the frames contained in organization-sponsored information subsidies are undoubtedly partisan in nature. In
other words, agenda building as a public relations strategy involves more than an effort to influence what issues the public thinks about; rather, this theory of agenda building suggests an enhanced and somewhat more circuitous understanding of how public opinion may be influenced by how issues are presented in information subsidies. Although biased information may be widely disseminated to the public, an agenda has not effectively been built unless the public accepts the frame advanced in the information subsidy.

Political communication research further supports the supposition that persuasion may be an integral component of agenda-building efforts. The content of political agendas, which are comprised of political issues, are necessarily biased to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others (Cobb & Elder, 1972). Political groups, which form a basic source for public issues, serve as filtering devices for “screening out information detrimental to its cause or for reinterpreting that material to provide a different conclusion” (p. 31). It follows that, in the context of a political interest or issue advocacy group, information presented to the public on behalf of the group would directly support their special interests.

Summary of Potential Outcomes of Advocacy

In summary, despite scarce existing literature on likely outcomes of issue advocacy, there are several plausible outcomes that warrant further investigation. As outlined above, these include issues relating to building trust with stakeholder audiences and the agenda-building impact of campaign-promulgated issues. Although there is apparently no research to support the hypothesis that these constructs may be direct outcomes of awareness of an issue advocacy campaign, research in consumer and issue
advertising suggests that perceptions of trust may be an antecedent to attitude toward an advertiser (e.g., MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Newell & Goldsmith, 2001; Sinclair & Irani, 2005). Likewise, there is also support for the concept that public acceptance of agenda-building issues may influence public opinion (e.g., Cameron, Sallot, & Curtin, 1997; Cobb & Elder, 1972; Gandy, 1982). Since most advocacy efforts are designed to build or improve an organization’s image and/or gain industry approval (e.g., Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994; Cutler & Muehling, 1989; Sethi, 1977), it is logical to question how this influence may be accomplished, if indeed it is. Based on past research, it seems that two possible outcomes of issue advocacy that may mediate approval for the industry include perceptions of trust in the industry and an agenda-building influence among stakeholder audiences. This dissertation expands existing research into these potential outcomes of issue advocacy, specifically marketplace advocacy, by focusing on the impact of a particular case study of an issue advocacy campaign to community stakeholders.

The Case Study: Marketplace Advocacy by the Coal Industry

In order to assess the potential outcomes of marketplace advocacy and their effect on attitudes toward the advocacy sponsor, this dissertation examined a particular example of a marketplace advocacy campaign by a high-risk industry. Specifically, this dissertation examined a coal industry-sponsored campaign designed to influence public opinion among community stakeholder audiences in a region intrinsically linked to coal mining, both economically and culturally. The following section outlines the role of the coal industry in West Virginia and the specifics relating to the marketplace advocacy campaign, known as Friends of Coal.
Coal Industry Facts and West Virginia

Coal mining is an industry in which marketplace advocacy may be particularly important due to heightened environmental awareness regarding its impact on the environment. Yet, despite its environmental implications, coal mining continues to serve as the nation’s primary source of energy, with more than 56% of the nation’s energy coming from coal mining. Looking to the future, coal production is expected to increase over the next 20 years as the world attempts to meet its expanding energy needs (World Coal Institute, 2002). In coal-producing states, such as West Virginia, the percentage of energy attributable to coal mining is much higher, with more than 99% of the state’s energy coming from coal mining. Further, the industry accounts for approximately 40,000 direct jobs, 60% of business taxes paid within the state, and over $3.5 billion annually in the gross state product. Nationally, West Virginia coal mining is responsible for approximately 15% of total U.S. coal production and 50% of U.S. coal exports (West Virginia Office of Miners’ Health Safety and Training, 2003).

Yet, in West Virginia, which has 4% of all coal reserves, coal mining has not only played a pivotal role in the state’s economy, but has also literally shaped the state through human efforts to extract the resource. In recent years, for example, a new mining process known as mountaintop removal, which involves clearing the tops of mountains to expose coal seams, has affected thousands of acres of mountains in West Virginia and resulted in more than 700 miles of buried streams from deposited overfill (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2003). According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Mid-Atlantic Mountaintop Mining (2003), even when inaccessible to fish, these streams are
often “largely responsible for maintaining the quality of downstream riverine processes and habitat for considerable distances” (p. III. C-12). Other environmental ramifications of the coal industry include, but are not limited to, water pollution caused by runoff from disturbed lands, disruption of land and aquifers, loss of wildlife habitat, air pollutant emissions, and waste streams (Chartock, Devine, Cines, Gilliland, & Ballard, 1982). Coal miners and local communities face additional risks including slurry spills,1 mine fires, gas ignitions, inundations and subsidence,2 personal injury, and mining-related illnesses, such as black lung, a lung disease associated with breathing underground coal dust that kills approximately 1,500 people per year (Harris & Dunlop, 1998; United Mine Workers of America, 2005).

**Marketplace Advocacy for Coal**

“Friends of Coal” (FOC) is an organization based in West Virginia and sponsored by the West Virginia Coal Association. Established in 2002, its members include coal companies and other coal-related businesses, as well as small business owners operating in areas where the local economy is dependent on coal mining, and other interested citizens. FOC has sought to promote and gain support for the coal industry and public policies that affect the industry in general (Friends of Coal, 2006). In addition to traditional advertising, including statewide television, radio, and outdoor advertising, the organization has used direct mail, Internet, and word-of-mouth promotion. The FOC campaign is indicative of the recent emphasis the industry has placed on improving its

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1 A slurry spill occurs when a sediment pond breaks releasing water discharges containing by-products of coal preparation.

2 Subsidence involves movement of the ground surface due to the collapse or failure of underground mine workings. This may occur concurrently with a mining operation or over time involving an abandoned mine.
public image via the media, especially in light of increased environmental awareness. Other campaigns have included such themes as “Coal keeps the lights on” and “Rediscover coal: The modern energy miracle that’s old as the hills,” which have attempted to position the industry as a vital component of the nation’s economy and infrastructure (Dougherty, 1982).

In summary, the FOC campaign epitomizes marketplace advocacy by emphasizing the role of coal mining in both the employment and economic development of the region, as well as the value of coal in meeting the constantly growing energy demands of an expanding nation without relying on foreign energy sources. Given the magnitude of the coal industry within West Virginia and the potential pervasiveness of the FOC campaign, this campaign provided a valuable case for examining the outcomes of this form of communication, particularly in relation to dimensions of industry trust (including credibility and accountability) and its potential agenda-building influence among community stakeholders. The success of this campaign may, in all likelihood, depend on stakeholder perceptions relating to these two variables and their mediating role in shaping attitudes toward the industry, a primary goal of the campaign.

**Hypotheses and Research Questions**

In recent years, there has been some academic research examining consumer perceptions of trust for issue advocacy messages (Haley, 1996; Miller & Sinclair, 2005; Sinclair & Irani, 2005). On the other hand, despite the growing body of literature on potential agenda-building influences, the agendas of issue advocacy campaigns have received little attention as a potential influence on either media content or the issues deemed important by campaign audiences. This is surprising, given that the very nature
of issue advocacy campaigns involves the communication of often-controversial opinions usually in an effort to sway public sentiment or generate support (Cutler & Muehling, 1989). A preliminary investigation of the agenda-building influence of the FOC campaign and the West Virginia news media, however, did reveal a relationship between the campaign and regional television news content (Miller, 2006). More specifically, the study involved a pilot examination of the convergence of television issue ads and the television news content between two separate time periods. A moderate correlation was identified (+.536), thereby suggesting issue advertising may be added to the growing list of possible agenda-building influences for television news.

This dissertation was designed to expand on previous research in both agenda building and consumer perceptions of trust in the coal industry, focusing specifically on marketplace advocacy messages, a context in which perceptions of risk may be particularly salient and trust may be crucial, since the organization involved in advocacy efforts stands to gain from advocating its own product. The goal of this dissertation was to examine several potential outcomes for marketplace advocacy among community stakeholders, particularly members of a resource community, or those individuals who live where a resource is located. Community stakeholders are an important audience to consider for marketplace advocacy campaigns because they are intrinsically linked to many of the risks and benefits associated with the advocated product. As outlined in the literature review, existing research into advocacy seemingly has failed to elucidate how issue advocacy may shape attitudes towards the communicator. Therefore, from an overall perspective, the dissertation assessed a proposed model of outcomes for issue advocacy (See Figure 2.1 – Structural Model of Issue Advocacy Outcomes and
Measures). Through a process of model testing and model building, a revised model was developed and validated which addresses existing gaps in the literature regarding issue advocacy as a tool for building trust and influencing the public’s agenda. Specifically, the model evaluates the role of 1) perceptions of trust, including industry credibility and accountability, and 2) agenda building, in mediating the public’s overall attitude toward the sponsoring industry.
Figure 2.1. Structural Model of Issue Advocacy Outcomes and Measures

*Note:* The model contains errors and disturbance terms associated with measured variables (depicted as rectangles), which are used to measure unobserved latent constructs (depicted as ovals). This accounts for measurement error, which can lead to bias in the estimation of the regression coefficients.
While testing the overall model provides a better understanding of how issue advocacy influences audience perceptions, the second phase of the dissertation examines specific hypotheses and research questions not directly addressed through model testing. In order to accomplish this, specific parameters within the model were explored with regard to their strength and plausibility to potentially advance knowledge of existing advertising and public relations research constructs, including industry credibility and accountability, and the agenda-building capacity of issue advocacy.

Previous research has suggested that issue advocacy has the potential to influence perceptions of credibility, which may improve perceptions of the organization and deflect future criticism (Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994). Nevertheless, this influence has not been empirically demonstrated within the context of marketplace advocacy campaigns to community stakeholders. Previous research indicated that corporate credibility influenced consumer perceptions of the advertiser (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). Hence, the following hypotheses were proposed:

**H1:** Campaign awareness will have a positive correlation with perceptions of industry credibility.

**H2:** Perceptions of industry credibility will have a positive correlation with overall attitude toward the industry.

Previous research has also found perceptions of accountability, including intent, rule-based trust, and transparency, to be components of advertiser trust within the context of marketplace advocacy (Haley, 1996; Kramer, 1999; Sinclair & Irani, 2005). This
dissertation examined whether awareness of the issue advocacy campaign influenced stakeholder perceptions of accountability.

**H3:** Campaign awareness will have a positive correlation with perceptions of industry accountability.

**H4:** Perceptions of industry accountability will have a positive correlation with overall attitude toward the industry.

Given the controversial nature of issue advocacy in general and the negative image of many industrial activities, it is likely that certain characteristics of the respondent will influence approval/disapproval of the industry with or without awareness of this campaign. From a rhetorical perspective, while discourses vis-à-vis industry and the environment are often associated with traditional American values and themes, the values are often in direct opposition (Cox, 2005). While environmental advocates and cultural critics have decoded the American experience as one to retain a state of natural innocence (Brown & Crable, 1973), American business and corporate interests have continued to advocate the efficient use of natural resources for growth and economic development (Cox, 2005). Regarding this dissertation in particular, individuals with high levels of environmental concern may be especially anesthetized to issue advocacy messages regarding coal mining in lieu of its numerous environmental ramifications, thus logically suggesting the following hypotheses:

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4 There is some evidence at the national level that mining in general suffers from a negative public image. In an October 1992 study, mining ranked among the least favorably viewed by the public among 22 other U.S. industries (Panos, 1994). Within a resource community such as West Virginia, however, perceptions of the coal industry may depend on a variety of other factors, such as perceptions of trust and accountability, risks and benefits, and/or attitudes toward the environment.
H5: Environmental concern will have a negative correlation with campaign awareness.

H6: Environmental concern will have a negative correlation with perceptions of industry credibility.

H7: Environmental concern will have a negative correlation with perceptions of industry accountability.

H8: Environmental concern will have a negative correlation with the overall attitude toward the industry.

Although the proposed model currently controls for environmental concern (See Figure 2.1), the proposed hypotheses do not. The following hypotheses were also posed to evaluate the general influence of environmental concern as a control variable on the relationships addressed in hypotheses one through four:

H9: The correlation between campaign awareness and perceptions of industry credibility (H1) will be attenuated by environmental concern.

H10: The correlation between perceptions of industry credibility and overall attitude toward the industry (H2) will be attenuated by environmental concern.

H11: The correlation between campaign awareness and perceptions of industry accountability (H3) will be attenuated by environmental concern.

H12: The correlation between perceptions of industry accountability and overall attitude toward the industry (H4) will be attenuated by environmental concern.

Additionally, the relative contribution of each of the components of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) in predicting overall attitude toward the industry may also be of interest. Although intent and rule-based trust were found to be
significant predictors of corporate trustworthiness in a new industry-sponsored marketplace advocacy campaign, specifically plant biotechnology (Sinclair & Irani, 2005), qualitative research focusing on perceptions of the coal industry found that perceptions of transparency and intent were especially salient with resource community stakeholders regarding the coal industry (Miller & Sinclair, 2005). Specifically, stakeholders perceived the coal industry as lacking transparency and questioned its motivations for an advocacy campaign. Thus, following research question addressed the relative strength of each of the components of accountability and its relationship with attitude toward the coal industry:

**RQ1:** How well does each of the components of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) predict the overall attitude toward the industry, after controlling for the contributions of the other two components?

Issue advocacy has also been identified as having a potential agenda-building influence on the media and public’s agenda (Gandy, 1982; Turk, 1986). While previous research has identified interactions between information subsidies and news content (Turk, 1986), political advertising and news content (Roberts & McCombs, 1994), and political websites and both the news content and the public’s agenda (Ku et al., 2003), the specific relationship between issue advocacy and the public’s agenda, particularly the public’s acceptance of industry-advanced issues and their frames, has apparently not be examined empirically.

Although some of the language used in the FOC campaign is somewhat specific to the coal industry, the majority of the promulgated issues (energy, economy, and environment) are found in most other industry-sponsored issue advocacy messages (See
Annenberg Public Policy Center’s “Top Ten Advocated Issues,” 2005). The remaining issue, community identity, which emphasizes the industry’s heritage and traditions, was identified as a key issue in previous research examining stakeholder perceptions of marketplace advocacy messages within a resource community (Miller & Sinclair, 2005). Therefore, the following research question addressed the relative contribution of each of the promulgated issues in shaping the overall attitude toward the advocated industry:

**RQ2:** How well does each of the issues promulgated by the advocacy campaign (economy, energy, environment, and community identity) predict the overall attitude toward the advocated industry, after controlling for the contributions of the other components?

Through a combination of model testing and traditional correlation and regression analyses, this dissertation elucidates on a form of communication that, despite recent proliferation and the potential to shape public policy, has received little academic interest. Focusing specifically on marketplace advocacy messages to resource community stakeholders, this dissertation used structural equation modeling to first test a model of how perceptions of trust and the campaign’s agenda-building influence mediate overall attitude toward the industry. Subsequently, traditional correlation and multiple regression analyses were applied to more closely examine specific relationships contained in the model but not directly ascertainable from the model output in an effort to advance existing literature in issue advocacy, trust, and agenda building.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This dissertation employed various quantitative approaches, each of which addressed the overall goal of examining potential outcomes of issue advocacy. While qualitative research has been previously applied to perceptions of marketplace advocacy (Haley, 1996; Miller & Sinclair, 2005), there appears to be a lack of quantitative evidence regarding perceptions of this form of communication (Sinclair & Irani, 2005). The first approach utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) with latent variables to examine the hypothesized model of how issue advocacy may influence community stakeholder attitudes toward the advocacy sponsor, in this case, the coal industry. The second approach then used the more conventional analytic techniques of regression and correlation to address the dissertation’s specific hypotheses and research questions previously identified. All analyses were computed with SPSS 11.5, Amos 5.0, EQS 6.1, and Systat 11.0.

Structural Equation Modeling with Latent Variables

SEM is one of the newer statistical techniques, representing a blending of the more traditional methods of multiple regression and factor analysis. Despite its newness, there appears to be an evolving consensus on the procedures involved in conducting SEM (e.g., Kaplan, 2000; Kline, 2005). These procedures include developing the model, checking the identification status of the model, deciding how to measure the variables included in the model, estimating the model, assessing the goodness of the model, revising the model, re-estimating the model, and interpreting the results.
Specifying the Model of Advocacy Outcomes

The first phase of the proposed dissertation involved testing a model of potential outcomes associated with advocacy campaigns using SEM (refer to Figure 2.1). In SEM with latent variables, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to examine the links between observed indicators and unobserved (latent) variables, or the degree to which observed indicators are capable of measuring the unobserved variable. SEM also allows the researcher to use regression to examine the relationships among these unobserved (latent) variables. In this dissertation, the latent variables are: campaign awareness, perceptions of trust in industry, agenda building, overall attitude toward the industry, and environmental concern. Each of these latent constructs and how they were measured with observed indicators are discussed in greater detail in “Survey Instrument and Operationalization of Variables.”

Checking Model Identification. In order to use SEM, however, the model must be theoretically testable. This process involves several matters, in particular, the complicated issue of model identification – whether or not there is sufficient variance and covariance information available from the observed variables to estimate the unknown coefficients. In other words, since SEM may be considered a system of simultaneous equations, as in basic algebra, there needs to be sufficient information available to solve for the unknowns. It is not possible, for example, to solve two equations for three unknowns. The initially hypothesized model had 66 observed sample moments (known variances and covariances) and 25 parameters (unknowns) to estimate. Since the number
of observations (66) exceeded the number of parameters to estimate (25), there was sufficient information available.\textsuperscript{5}

Yet, the issue of model identification also involves additional concerns. Among these concerns is the need to set the metric for the latent variables, which may be accomplished in one of two ways. One option is to fix one path (regression coefficient) to an observed variable at 1.0, thus setting the metric of the latent variable to be the same as that of the observed variable. A second option is to set the variance of the latent variable to 1.0. This second approach establishes a standardized (z-score) metric. Most often, the metric is established by setting one of the paths to 1.0, which was applied in this dissertation (as depicted in Figure 2.1).

For structural regression models, such as the model proposed by this dissertation, Bollen (1989) has recommended a two-step process for determining model identification, beginning with respecifying the theoretical model as a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and assessing identification using rules for CFA. If the measurement model (CFA) is identified, then the structural portion of the model may be assessed using the identification rules for path analysis. Providing that the structural model is recursive (contains no feedback loops between constructs or correlated disturbance terms), the model is identified, as is the case in this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{5} Subsequent model testing and model building resulted in the elimination of one measure from the model ("environment") as discussed in the "Results" chapter. The revised model resulted in 55 observed sample moments and 23 parameters to estimate. As was the case with the initial model testing, the number of observations (55) exceeded the number of parameters to estimate (23), so there was sufficient information available.
**Source of Data**

Data for this dissertation were obtained from a telephone survey conducted in West Virginia during the first week of June 2005. The survey measures were developed by the researcher, and the telephone survey was generated and paid for by the advertising agency responsible for the FOC campaign. A reputable research firm in West Virginia completed the actual telephone calls; therefore, no Institutional Review Board approval was required. No identifying information was required of respondents and participation was voluntary. In order to ensure demographics were representative of the state’s population, the survey population included a stratified random sample of all West Virginia residents with regional quotas based on the state’s population and a 45% male/55% female split. A total of 610 responses were obtained, and demographics were sufficiently representative of the true state population. (See Appendix A – Survey Demographics).

**Survey Instrument and Operationalization of Variables**

The telephone survey contained a total of 70 questions, many of which were not applicable for the purposes of this dissertation but were mandated by the campaign’s sponsor. (See Appendix B – Friends of Coal Survey.) The survey consisted of several scale measures, all of which utilized a 1 to 5 Likert-type format, and required approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Whenever possible, the questions were ordered in such a way that scale items did not appear contiguously. Also, several questions were reverse coded to eliminate response bias. Due to time constraints imposed by the advertiser, pre-testing of the scale items was not possible; however, each of the scale items was assessed for internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha following
data collection. The following scales were included in the survey: 1) awareness, 2) credibility, 3) accountability, 4) four agenda-building influence indicators (including economy, energy, environment, and community identity scales), 5) attitude toward the industry, and 6) environmental concern. Each of these scales is identified in the hypothesized model as measured variables and depicted with rectangles (refer to Figure 2.1). Subscales for the accountability measure (including scales for intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) were also assessed for internal consistency. (See Table 3.1 for a synopsis of latent constructs and how they were measured.)

Campaign Awareness

The unobserved (latent) construct “Campaign Awareness” was assessed with one observed indicator, identified in the model as “Awareness Measure” (refer to Figure 2.1). Nine questions were used to evaluate awareness of the campaign, which served as the primary independent variable for the model. Based on previous research, it was proposed that high levels of campaign awareness would influence perceptions of credibility, accountability, agenda building, and overall attitude toward the industry. Campaign awareness was assessed in questions 31 through 40 of the survey, preceded by two filter questions determining overall awareness of the FOC campaign. The mean for the “Awareness Measure” scale was 15.74 (SD = 8.43, alpha = .85).

Perceptions of Trust in Industry

Two indicators were used to evaluate the unobserved (latent) construct “Perceptions of Trust in Industry.” These observed scale measures included “Credibility” and “Accountability” as identified in the model (refer to Figure 2.1).
**Perceptions of Industry Credibility.** Typically, measures of organizational source credibility include components of both trustworthiness and expertise, as explained earlier in the literature review. *Expertise* was not measured, however, as it was apparent from previous research on community stakeholder perceptions of the coal industry in West Virginia that the coal industry is perceived as having (and requiring) significant expertise (Miller & Sinclair, 2005). This distinguishes the FOC campaign from many other advocacy campaigns in which levels of expertise of the advocacy sponsor are not generally well known. For example, expertise may be called into question in some advocacy campaigns, such as a Proctor & Gamble campaign on AIDS awareness. (Consumers may question Proctor & Gamble’s knowledge regarding AIDS-related information.) This is not the case with a longstanding, established industry such as coal mining; therefore, only *corporate trustworthiness* measures were included in the survey (17 through 20). For this dissertation, corporate credibility was measured unidimensionally, as corporate trustworthiness since previous research suggests a fundamental perception of expertise already exists. The mean for the credibility scale was 13.37 (SD = 4.17, alpha = .81).

**Perceptions of Industry Accountability.** As outlined in the literature review, previous research in consumer perceptions of advocacy messages has indicated perceptions of accountability in the context of marketplace advocacy may involve three underlying dimensions (Sinclair & Irani, 2005). Eight questions (12 and 21 through 28) were used to evaluate perceptions of accountability. The mean for the overall accountability scale, which included subscales for intent, rule-based trust, and
transparency, was 25.35 (SD = 7.69, alpha = .88). The internal consistency for each of the subscales is discussed below.

**Intent** examined whether the industry is perceived to be concerned with a) the public, and b) the environment. Although some public relations literature on organization-public relationships (Bruning & Galloway, 2003) has used a similar professional benefit/expectation dimension (or the perception that an organization engages in actions that are responsible and provide benefit to the public served), Miller and Sinclair (2005) found that West Virginia residents were primarily concerned about two key issues related to coal mining – individual citizens and the environment. Other activities of the coal industry were seen as less important to the public; thus it was deemed more appropriate to study perceptions of intentions toward the public and the environment rather than an overall organization-public relationship. Three questions were included on the survey to evaluate perceptions of intent (12, 24, and 25). One question, however, was found to reduce the internal consistency of the subscale, perhaps due to reverse coding of the question, and was subsequently removed from the analyses.6 The mean for the revised intent subscale (12 and 24) was 6.20 (SD = 2.56, alpha .80).

**Rule-based trust** (questions 21 through 23) examined respondents’ perceptions of government regulations of the industry and perceptions of industry compliance with governmental regulations. This is consistent with Miller and Sinclair’s (2005) findings that many resource community stakeholders questioned whether penalties associated with

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6 The decision to remove this item from this subscale is supported by past research that has suggested negatively worded items can decrease the internal consistency of scale measures, particularly when mixed with positively worded items (e.g., Barnette, 2000; Chamberlain & Cummings, 1984; Schriesheim & Hill, 1981).
governmental regulations were strict enough to affect coal companies’ activities. The mean for the rule-based trust subscale was 9.37 (SD = 3.01, alpha = .67).

Transparency (questions 26 through 28) evaluated whether the public perceived the coal industry as transparent in its activities. Transparency measures were based on the “openness” construct in both interpersonal communication literature (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford & Canary, 1991) and public relations literature (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Bruning & Ledingham, 1998; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Kelleher & Miller, 2006; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). For example, Kelleher and Miller (2006) evaluated consumer perceptions of the “openness” of an organization including its willingness to disclose the nature of the organization and other important information. For this survey, Kelleher and Miller’s (2006) questions were modified slightly to focus specifically on stakeholder perceptions of the coal industry’s transparency. Questions 26 and 27 of the present survey focused specifically on important coal company proceedings and disclosure of this information in a timely manner. An additional question (question 28) was used to evaluate whether the respondent felt the organization was willing to share plans for the future with audiences (Bruning & Galloway, 2003). This is consistent with Miller and Sinclair’s (2005) finding that resource community stakeholders were concerned about the future of the coal industry in the state. The mean for the transparency subscale was 9.77 (SD = 3.15, alpha .80).

Agenda Building

Although much of the academic research in agenda building focuses primarily on message dissemination via assorted information subsidy vehicles (e.g., Cassara, 1998; Curtin, 2000; Fürsich, 2002; Ku, Kaid, & Pfau, 2003; Ohl et al., 1995; Roberts &
McCombs, 1994; Turk, 1986), there is some peripheral support for researching the
direction of the treatment regarding issues presented within a public relations campaign.
Zhang and Cameron (2003), for example, used content analysis and an interrupted time-
series design to evaluate the effectiveness of an agenda-building campaign aimed at
improving China’s image among the American people. In addition to examining topic
categories in newspaper coverage, the authors also evaluated the “favorableness” in the
topics and themes attributed to the campaign. Further, according to Cameron, Sallot, and
Curtin (1997), agenda building involves more than simply heightening issue salience.
Rather, agenda building involves the acceptance of information subsidies and their frame,
or in this context, public acceptance of industry-promulgated benefits regarding coal-
related issues. Therefore, the four indicators used to evaluate the unobserved (latent)
construct “Agenda-Building Influence” measured acceptance of the industry-advocated
position on issues promulgated by the FOC campaign, or its agenda-building-influence,
rather than simply evaluating awareness of a given issue topic. The indicators included:
*economy, energy, environment,* and *community identity* (refer to Figure 2.1). 7

_**Economy.**_ The economy scale involved questions directly related to economic
issues and personal finance. This scale originally consisted of three questions (6, 8, and
11), however, one question was found to reduce the internal consistency of the scale. The
mean for the revised economy scale was 8.34 (SD = 2.25, alpha .67).

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7 Although “Agenda Building” is identified as a latent construct in the model, given the seemingly
disparate nature of the issues used as indicators, a reliability assessment was conducted to examine the
association between the four observed indicators (acceptance of the four industry-promulgated issues) and
the unobserved “Agenda Building” construct. The mean for the four-item agenda building scale was 35.97
(SD = 7.40, alpha = .77), thus supporting its application as an overall construct.
**Energy.** The energy scale included issues related to modern conveniences and supply and demand for state and national electricity. Four questions (9, 14, 15, and 16) were used to evaluate awareness of energy issues and yielded a mean score of 15.99 (SD = 3.42, alpha = .77).

**Environment.** The environment scale involved questions pertaining to environmental issues and reclamation. The scale originally consisted of two questions, however, the scale was found to have a low internal consistency. In addition to being reverse coded, one of the items was found to be potentially misleading and was removed from the analyses. Since awareness of environmental issues was evaluated with one question, no reliability assessment of this scale was possible.

**Community Identity.** Community identity was identified as the campaign’s efforts to highlight the industry’s heritage, tradition, and family values, often using emotional appeals. The mean for the community identity scale, which included two questions (7 and 10), was 8.52 (SD = 2.05, alpha = .71).

**Overall Attitude Toward the Industry**

Three indicators were used to evaluate the unobserved (latent) construct “Overall Attitude toward Industry.” Each of these indicators included one question per measure; therefore no reliability assessment of the individual indicators was possible (refer to Figure 2.1). In order to address the dissertation’s hypotheses and research questions, however, an overall attitude toward the industry scale was required. Estimates of attitude toward the industry were derived using factor score coefficients obtained in a

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8 The question asked respondents level of agreement regarding whether coal companies could do more to restore mine sites to their original condition. This conjecture was deemed potentially misleading since oftentimes the stated goal of coal mining reclamation is not to restore the land to its original condition but to make the land suitable for economic development. (See also footnote 6.)
confirmatory factor analysis used to examine the association between the observed indicators of attitude toward the industry and the unobserved construct. The mean for the three-item scale was 5.00 (SD = 1.19, alpha = .81).

**Approval Measures 1 through 3.** Three questions (3 through 5) were used to evaluate attitude toward the coal industry. Past research in advertising literature has measured attitude toward a brand, while public relations and management literature has focused on relational and image-building strategies that affect the public’s assessment of an organization. Within public relations research, for example, the Corporate Social Performance Scale (CSP) measures response to contributions, community involvement, etc. (Clark, 2000), and the Corporate Reputation Management (CRM) scale evaluates what an organization *does* that influences how it is perceived (Nakra, 2000).

While there is apparently no pre-existing scale of attitude specifically toward industry, advertising-based brand attitude measures were deemed most applicable for assessing attitude toward FOC given that such an organization has positioned itself as a brand. This survey converted Till and Busler’s (2000) brand attitude scale to an agree/disagree format more appropriate for a telephone survey. Also included in this scale was the question used by Winters (1988) to assess attitudes toward the oil industry in a study evaluating the impact of Chevron’s “Yes” campaign, further substantiating its appropriateness for examining attitudes toward an energy-related industry. Both Winters’ study and the FOC survey used in this dissertation used a five-point agree/disagree measure of favorable/unfavorable attitudes.
The unobserved (latent) construct “Environmental Concern” was assessed with one observed indicator, identified in the model as “Environmental Concern Measure” (refer to Figure 2.1). Specifically, a revised version of the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) scale was used to evaluate environmental concern, a measure of statistical control in the hypothesized model and hypotheses 9 through 12. Originally developed as the New Environmental Paradigm Scale in 1978, the scale was recently revised by Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, and Jones (2000) to incorporate a wide range of facets regarding ecological worldview and includes updated terminologies. The previous version, as well as its more recent descendent, has become the most widely used measure of environmental concern, often used to measure “environmental attitudes, beliefs, and even values” (p. 427). Although the authors discussed a variety of components of the scale (including limits to growth, anti-anthropocentrism,\(^9\) fragility of nature’s balance, rejection of exemptionalism,\(^10\) and the possibility of an eco-crisis), the results of Dunlap et al.’s study suggested that all 15 questions load heavily onto one factor. Due to time and cost constraints, all 15 questions could not be included in this survey; therefore, the six questions that loaded most heavily on the first factor and were most logically associated according to Dunlap et al.’s factor analysis were used in this survey. These are: two questions on the fragility of nature’s balance, two questions on eco-crisis, and two

\(^9\) Anti-anthropocentrism involves the rejection of the notion that nature exists primarily for human use and has no inherent value of its own.

\(^10\) Rejection of exemptionalism involves the rejection of the notion that human ingenuity will insure that humans do not make the earth unlivable.
questions on the rejection of exemptionalism (questions 57 through 62). The mean for the condensed scale used in this dissertation was 21.40 (SD = 5.09, alpha = .75).

Table 3.1  *Latent Constructs, Construct Indicators (Measures), and Corresponding Survey Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Construct Indicators (Measures)</th>
<th>Survey Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Awareness</td>
<td>Awareness Measure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Trust in Industry</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>17 – 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intent (subconstruct)</td>
<td>12, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rule-based trust (subconstruct)</td>
<td>21, 22, 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency (subconstruct)</td>
<td>26 – 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda-Building Influence</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>8, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>9, 14 – 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Identity</td>
<td>7, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Attitude toward the Industry</td>
<td>Approval Measure 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approval Measure 2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approval Measure 3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Concern</td>
<td>New Ecological Paradigm Scale (condensed)</td>
<td>57 – 62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data Analysis*

To begin, the data were examined for missing data and potential data loss patterns. Since this dissertation examined the relationships between 14 measured variables (11 scale measures and 3 accountability subscales), only cases that had 9 of the 14 variables complete were included in the analysis, resulting in the deletion of 30 cases missing values on more than five of the variables. This decision was made in order to ensure that cases that were incomplete on more than one-third of the variables under investigation were eliminated. Under the assumption that data were considered missing
at random (MAR), missing values were imputed using an expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm using EQS 6.1. To verify that imputation had no effect on changing values of the dataset, the descriptive statistics from the original file of 610 cases were compared with those from the imputed file of 580 cases on the 14 measured variables. An examination of these values indicated that the differences in means and standard deviations between the original file and the file with imputed data for missing values were of little consequence (see Table 3.2).
Table 3.2. *Means and Standard Deviations of Original Data Set Versus File with Imputed Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Std. Deviations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imputed Data (580)</td>
<td>Original Data (610)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness Measure</td>
<td>15.74</td>
<td>15.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>13.37</td>
<td>13.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>25.35</td>
<td>25.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule-based trust</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>9.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>6.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>9.77</td>
<td>9.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>15.99</td>
<td>16.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community identity</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>8.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Concern Measure</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>21.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward industry (approval 1)</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward industry (approval 2)</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward industry (approval 3)</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following missing value imputation, the data were screened to verify that assumptions associated with SEM and multiple regression were met. Data were first examined with particular attention to means, standard deviations, out-of-range values, and outliers. The results indicated that standard deviations were reasonable and that the minimum and maximum values were within range. Bivariate scatterplots indicated sufficiently linear relationships between the variables. An evaluation of outliers in the data file identified 15 of 580 cases with large Mahalanobis distance values on the 11 measured variables used in the model. A closer inspection of these cases in the data file revealed that, in addition to exceeding the critical value for Mahalanobis distance, there is a distinct gap in the distance between these values and the next case, suggesting they should be considered outliers and were therefore removed from the data file.

Assumptions associated with the estimation method utilized in the SEM analysis include independence of observations and disturbances, multivariate normality of the endogenous variables, and correct specification of the model (Kline, 2005). The random sampling of participants was deemed sufficient to support independence assumptions. Since the data were identified as non-normal (Mardia’s coefficient of multivariate kurtosis = 19.327), the results of the validated model were verified using bootstrapping in Amos 5.0 and robust estimation in EQS 6.1. The output of both estimation methods substantiated the results of the final model assessment discussed under “Final Model Testing” in Chapter 4. Finally, since campaign awareness and environmental concern

\[ \text{Mardia’s coefficient of multivariate kurtosis can be interpreted as a z-score. The data were approximately 19 standard deviations away from the expected value, whereas, generally, no more than three standard deviations is considered normal. However, given that this is an absolute value (as is the case with standardized z-scores), the large sample size actually magnified the problem by virtue of statistical power. Nevertheless, the data were examined using various estimation techniques that account for non-normal data as a precautionary measure.} \]
were latent variables with only one indicator, the error variance for each indicator had to be fixed in order for the model to be identified. The error variance for *campaign awareness* was set to 10.95, and the error variance for *environmental concern* was set to 6.4.  

*Model Assessment*

The data file of 565 (580 cases less 15 outliers) was separated into two subfiles using a random number generator. Since little explicit information about potential advocacy outcomes (and the underlying covariance structure) has been modeled, the first subfile was used for exploratory analyses, including model trimming and building based on modification indices obtained in the Amos 5.0 output. As these tests are purely empirical, only model specifications that were theoretically and logically justified were made. According to Boomsma (2000), “It cannot be emphasized enough that purely data-driven decisions to model modifications are indefensible” (p. 475). The second subfile was withheld to test the re-specified model that emerged from the initial exploratory analyses. This analysis was confirmatory in nature.

To assess model fit, a variety of fit indexes as well as the magnitude, direction, and significance level of coefficients were examined. To begin, the model chi-square statistic was obtained. In SEM, the null hypothesis proposes that the observed covariance matrix and the implied covariance matrix are from the same population, thus, the chi-square statistic is actually a “badness-of-fit” index. The higher its value, the worse the

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12 The error variance was obtained by subtracting the alpha reliability from 1 and multiplying the product by the variable’s variance according to the following equation: \((1 - r_{xx}) s^2\). For *campaign awareness*, Cronbach’s alpha was .8458, and the variance for *campaign awareness* was 71.044. Therefore, the error variance was found according to the following: \((1 - .8458) \times 71.044 = 10.95\) error variance. For *environmental concern*, Cronbach’s alpha was .7351, and the variance for *environmental concern* was 25.929. Therefore, the error variance was found according to the following: \((1 - .7351) \times 25.929 = 6.4\) error variance.
model corresponds with the data; the failure to reject the null hypothesis supports the proposed model (Kline, 2005). In addition to the model chi-square, Hu and Bentler (1999) have recommended using various combinations of indexes, such as the Maximum Likelihood-based SRMR (standardized root mean squared residuals) supplemented by other indexes such as the RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) with estimates of p-close, CFI (comparative fit index), and TLI (Tucker Lewis index). These indexes were also used to evaluate model fit.

**Construct and Parameter Assessments**

In order to evaluate the 12 proposed hypotheses, correlation coefficients were computed. The first hypothesis examined the correlation between the campaign awareness scale and the credibility scale, and the second hypothesis evaluated the correlation between the credibility scale and overall attitude toward the industry. The third hypothesis examined the correlation between the campaign awareness scale and the accountability scale, and the fourth hypothesis evaluated the correlation between the accountability scale and overall attitude toward the industry. Hypotheses five through eight then evaluated the correlations between each of these variables and environmental concern. As a follow-up to these correlation analyses, hypotheses nine through twelve assessed the strength of correlations between campaign awareness, credibility, accountability, and attitude toward the industry when levels of environmental concern were included in the analyses. In other words, hypotheses one through four were recomputed using partial correlations (controlling for environmental concern) rather than zero-order correlations.
Research questions one and two were evaluated using multiple regression analyses. Specifically, estimates of overall attitude toward the industry were regressed on the three subscales of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) and the four campaign issues associated with agenda building (economy, energy, environment, and community identity). Estimates of attitude toward the industry were derived using factor score coefficients obtained in a confirmatory factor analysis used to examine the association between the observed indicators of attitude toward the industry and the unobserved construct. Finally, commonality analyses were performed for each regression to more fully describe the interrelationships among the variables.

*Summary of Methods and Procedures*

The dissertation involved a combination of quantitative methods to address the dissertation’s primary goal of examining potential outcomes of issue advocacy, specifically marketplace advocacy. Given the lack of quantitative research regarding issue advocacy efforts, the multi-faceted research approach provides several perspectives for evaluating how this form of communication may influence audiences. Structural equation modeling (SEM), which allows the researcher to not only examine the links between observed indicators and unobserved constructs, but also the relationship between these variables, was first used to provide an overall assessment of how awareness of how a marketplace advocacy campaign influences attitude toward the industry. Specifically, the model testing examined audience perceptions of industry credibility and accountability as well as the campaign’s agenda-building influence. The more conventional analytic techniques of correlation and regression were then used to more fully explicate relationships not directly addressed in the model.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In order to provide a better understanding of how issue advocacy may influence audience perceptions, the first phase of this dissertation evaluated a proposed model of outcomes for issue advocacy using SEM (refer to Figure 2.1). The data file of 580 (less the 15 outlier cases removed during data screening) was randomly divided into two subfiles. The first subfile was used for exploration of the model, model trimming, and model building. The second subfile was used to validate the re-specified model that emerged from the initial model exploration. To assess model fit, a variety of fit indexes as well as the magnitude, direction, and significance level of coefficients were examined.

The second phase of the dissertation evaluated specific hypotheses and research questions not directly specified in the model. These include the correlations between campaign awareness, the two indicators for perceptions of trust (credibility and accountability), and attitude toward the industry. Research questions one and two then used multiple regression to evaluate the relative contribution of the dimensions of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) and the issues contained in the agenda-building scale (economy, energy, environment, and community identity) in predicting attitude toward the industry.
Phase One – Model Assessment

Initial Model Testing

The hypothesized model (refer to Figure 2.1) was examined with the data from the exploratory subfile. Satisfactory fit is indicated by a nonsignificant $\chi^2$, CFI and TLI $\geq .95$, RMSEA $\leq .06$ with a p-close $\geq .05$, and SRMR $\leq .08$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The results from the initial analysis, however, indicated a bad fit to the exploratory data file $[\chi^2 (41, N = 283) = 449.193, p < .001; CFI = .76; TLI = .68; RMSEA = .186, p$-close $< .001; SRMR = .231]$. According to model fit indices, the hypothesized model is apparently not an accurate representation of the data under investigation.

Model Exploration

While the overall model was clearly an unacceptable fit with the data, two observations from the analysis output were particularly noteworthy: the location of environmental concern within the model and the relationship between the two intermediate outcomes – perceptions of trust and agenda building. To begin, each of the regression weights for the model’s structure (or the paths within the model) were significant, except for the path leading from environmental concern to attitude toward the industry. In other words, environmental concern apparently did not have a direct effect on attitude toward the industry in the context of this study. Although one option would have been to remove the environmental concern construct from the model, an alternative hypothesis was proposed suggesting that higher levels of environmental concern might have a direct effect on perceptions of trust in the industry. This revision to the model seemed more logical than removing the construct altogether given the environmental ramifications associated with coal mining and the often-oppositional perspectives
associated with discourses surrounding industry and the environment (Cox, 2005). Stated simply, it did not seem plausible that higher levels of environmental concern would not have some moderating influence on audience perceptions regarding an industry-sponsored advocacy campaign. The alternative hypothesis for the revised model suggested that, rather than a direct relationship on attitude toward the industry, environmental concern may have a more significant direct effect on perceptions of trust in the industry. In other words, it was hypothesized that higher levels of environmental concern would result in reduced perceptions of trust in the industry.

Also noteworthy in the initial model testing output was the obvious relationship between perceptions of trust and agenda building. As hypothesized, perceptions of trust and agenda building were not related (as indicated by the fact that there were no arrows directly connecting the constructs). The modification indices in the computer output, however, suggested that there was a strong relationship between the constructs, both from perceptions of trust to agenda building and vice versa. Based on the output, the strongest path was that from perceptions of trust to agenda building. Although there is apparently no existing literature discussing the relationship between these constructs, the relationship is seemingly a logical one. The greater the perceptions of trust in the industry, the more susceptible an individual may be to the industry’s agenda-building influence.

Based on both the computer output and the face validity of the modifications, the model was then re-specified as follows: 1) environmental concern was hypothesized to have a direct effect on perceptions of trust, and 2) perceptions of trust was hypothesized to have a direct effect on agenda building rather than attitude toward the industry. The
revised model appeared to be a substantial improvement over the initial hypothesized model, although it was still judged to be an unacceptable fit [$\chi^2 (41, N = 283) = 237.958, p < .001; \text{CFI} = .88; \text{TLI} = .84; \text{RMSEA} = .131, p\text{-close} < .001; \text{SRMR} = .067]$. Modification indices were again examined to consider the possibility of correlated measurement errors. Although the computer output suggested many possibilities, careful review of the output identified two modifications of substantive merit. First, the measurement errors associated with “economy” and “approval 3” were moderately correlated. This was likely a measurement artifact given that each of the items in these measures were reverse coded.

Second, the measurement errors associated with “environment” and “accountability” were very strongly correlated. This finding was due to the fact that the item evaluating “environment” was repeated in the accountability scale, specifically in the “intent” subscale of accountability. Given the artificial correlation created as a result, “environment” as an indicator for the unobserved construct “agenda building” was removed from the model.

The model was refit with these additional revisions, and the results indicated a reasonably close fit with the data. Although the test statistic was significant [$\chi^2 (31, N = 283) = 233.624, p < .001; \text{CFI} = .90; \text{TLI} = .87; \text{RMSEA} = .126, p\text{-close} < .001; \text{SRMR} = .058]$.

---

13 Environment, one of the issues contained in the agenda building scale, was originally proposed as a scale itself. A reliability analysis, however, showed that the subscale lacked internal consistency. One of the items (which also decreased the reliability of the overall agenda building scale) was deemed misleading and inappropriate and was subsequently removed. (See footnote 8.)

14 The item questioned participants’ perceptions of industry’s intent toward the environment.

15 As discussed in footnote 7, although agenda building was identified as a latent construct in the model, a reliability assessment was conducted to support its inclusion in the model given the disparate nature of the issues identified as indicators of an agenda-building influence. The reliability assessment of the agenda-building scale decreased only slightly with the removal of this item. (The alpha for the overall agenda-building scale including environment was .77; the alpha for agenda building without environment was .76.)
all other model fit indices demonstrated a close model fit (CFI = .98; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .056, p-close = .29; SRMR = .0311]. Moreover, all standardized regression weights in the model were significant, and the model accounted for 82% of the variance associated with the dependent variable, attitude toward the industry. The revised model is depicted in Figure 4.1.
Figure 4.1. Validated Model of Issue Advocacy Outcomes (displaying standardized regression coefficients)
**Final Model Testing**

Given the apparent fit identified with the exploratory data file, the model was retested on the withheld sample of 282. The results indicated that the model (as shown in Figure 4.1) was also an appropriate representation of the second withheld data file \[ \chi^2 (31, N = 282) = 70.088, p < .001; \text{CFI} = .97; \text{TLI} = .96; \text{RMSEA} = .067, p\text{-close} = .087; \text{SRMR} = .044 \]. To further validate the model, which was a good fit with both the exploratory and validation data files, the model was re-estimated with the complete sample of 565 cases. An examination of the results suggested that the model was an acceptable representation of the data \[ \chi^2 (31, N = 565) = 96.20, p < .001; \text{CFI} = .98; \text{TLI} = .97; \text{RMSEA} = .061, p\text{-close} = .088; \text{SRMR} = .033 \]. Again, all standardized regression weights in the model were significant as shown in Table 4.1, and the model accounted for 83% of the variance associated with the dependent variable, attitude toward the industry. Table 4.2 shows the direct and indirect results of each of latent constructs in relation to the other constructs in the model. (Appendix C identifies the intercorrelations between model variables.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Unstandardized Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Standardized Estimate</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign awareness → Perceptions of trust</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental concern → Perceptions of trust</td>
<td>-.357</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>-.437</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign awareness → Agenda building</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of trust → Agenda building</td>
<td>.352</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda building → Attitude toward the industry</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign awareness → Awareness measure</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.917</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of trust → Accountability measure</td>
<td>1.861</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of trust → Credibility measure</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda building → Community identity measure</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.858</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda building → Economy measure</td>
<td>.810</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda building → Energy measure</td>
<td>1.472</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.751</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward the industry → Approval measure 1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.871</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward the industry → Approval measure 2</td>
<td>.993</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward the industry → Approval measure 3</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental concern → Environmental concern measure</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .001.
* p < .01.
Table 4.2. *Table of Direct and Indirect Effects*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct Effect</th>
<th>Indirect Effect</th>
<th>Total Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign awareness → Perceptions of trust</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign awareness → Agenda building</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign awareness → Attitude toward the industry</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.236</td>
<td>.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of trust → Agenda building</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of trust → Attitude toward the Industry</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.680</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda building → Attitude toward the industry</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental concern → Perceptions of trust</td>
<td>-.437</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental concern → Agenda building</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.326</td>
<td>-.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental concern → Attitude toward industry</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.297</td>
<td>-.297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* The table shows the direct, indirect (mediated), and total effects the first variable has on the second variable in each row. For example, the direct effect of campaign awareness on agenda building is .109. Campaign awareness also has an indirect (mediated) effect on agenda building of .150. When combined, the total effect of campaign awareness on agenda building is .259. For each standard deviation change in campaign awareness, agenda building goes up by .259 (.109 due to the direct effects of campaign awareness, and .150 due to the indirect effects of campaign awareness).
As a final step in validating the model, potential issues associated with the identification of the data as non-normal\textsuperscript{16} were addressed in two ways. First, the bootstrapped results from Amos 5.0 were compared with the Maximum Likelihood results from Amos. The results indicate that there was no substantial difference in parameter estimates. Second, robust elliptical estimates with robust fit indices were obtained in EQS 6.1. Likewise, there were no substantial differences between the fit indices obtained in robust estimation and Maximum Likelihood. Therefore, the Maximum Likelihood results have been presented. (See Figure 4.1.)

\textit{Summary of Model Testing}

The results of the model testing provide a possible explanation of how attitudes toward the industry – one of the fundamental goals of issue advocacy identified by most advocacy researchers – are influenced by awareness of an issue campaign. As demonstrated in the validated model (see Figure 4.1), awareness of the issue campaign had a direct effect on both perceptions of trust and agenda building. Subsequently, agenda building also had a direct effect on attitude toward the industry. Although perceptions of trust did ultimately influence attitude toward the industry, it was first mediated by agenda building. In other words, community stakeholders with higher levels of trust in the industry were more susceptible to the campaign’s agenda-building influence. Likewise, environmental concern also ultimately influenced attitude toward the industry, but it was first mediated by perceptions of trust and agenda building. Based on the validated model, environmental concern had a stronger, more direct influence on

\textsuperscript{16} Mardia’s coefficient of multivariate kurtosis = 19.327. Refer to footnote 11 for a detailed explanation of this finding and its implications.
perceptions of trust in the industry. From an overall perspective, this model demonstrates how awareness of a marketplace advocacy campaign, perceptions of trust, agenda building, and concern for the environment interact to influence approval of the sponsoring industry.

Phase Two – Parameter/Construct Assessments

Hypothesis 1

To test the first hypothesis, which evaluated the relationship between campaign awareness and perceptions of the industry’s credibility, a correlation coefficient was computed between the campaign awareness and credibility scales. In support of hypothesis 1, the results of the correlational analysis indicate that campaign awareness is significantly correlated with credibility ($r = .157, p < .001$), suggesting that higher levels of campaign awareness are related to higher perceptions of the industry’s credibility among community stakeholders (see Table 4.3).

Hypothesis 2

To test the second hypothesis, which evaluated the relationship between perceptions of the industry’s credibility and overall attitude toward the industry, a correlation coefficient was computed between the scales for credibility and attitude toward the industry. The results indicate that the credibility scale is positively correlated with attitude toward the industry ($r = .602, p < .001$). The findings suggest higher perceptions of industry credibility are related to greater approval of the coal industry, thus supporting hypothesis 2 (see Table 4.3).
Hypothesis 3

To test the third hypothesis, which evaluated the relationship between campaign awareness and perceptions of the industry’s accountability, a correlation coefficient was computed between the campaign awareness and accountability scales. The results of the correlational analysis indicate that campaign awareness is positively correlated with accountability ($r = .227, p < .001$), suggesting that higher levels of campaign awareness are related to higher perceptions of the industry’s accountability among community stakeholders (see Table 4.3). Thus, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypothesis 4

To test the fourth hypothesis, which examined the relationship between perceptions of the industry’s accountability and overall attitude toward the industry, a correlation coefficient was computed between the scales for accountability and attitude toward the industry. The results indicate that the accountability scale is positively correlated with attitude toward the industry ($r = .573, p < .001$). The findings suggest higher perceptions of industry accountability are related to greater approval of the coal industry (see Table 4.3). Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypotheses 5 through 8

Hypotheses five through eight proposed that environmental concern would have a negative correlation with each of the following scales: campaign awareness, credibility, accountability, and overall attitude toward the coal industry. As expected, the findings suggest that higher levels of environmental concern are significantly related to lower levels of campaign awareness ($r = -.108, p < .01$), credibility ($r = -.336, p < .001$),

76
accountability \( (r = -.356, p < .001) \), and approval of the coal industry \( (r = -.251, p < .001) \). (See Table 4.3)

**Hypotheses 9 through 12**

Hypotheses 9 through 12 were used to evaluate the general influence of environmental concern as a control variable on the relationships addressed in hypotheses one through four. Specifically, the hypotheses proposed that environmental concern would attenuate the relationships between each of the following scales: 1) campaign awareness and perceptions of industry credibility; 2) perceptions of industry credibility and overall attitude toward the industry; 3) campaign awareness and perceptions of industry accountability; and 4) perceptions of industry accountability and overall attitude toward the industry.

To evaluate hypotheses 9 through 12, partial correlation coefficients were computed between the campaign awareness scale, the credibility scale, the accountability scale, and the attitude toward industry scale, controlling for environmental concern. Each of the four correlations was significant and moderately large in magnitude, although smaller than the zero-order correlations. If higher levels of environmental concern were the sole determinant of each of these variables, all the partial correlations should be equal to zero (Green & Salkind, 2003). The results, however, suggest that while environmental concern does attenuate the strength of the correlations between campaign awareness, perceptions of credibility, perceptions of accountability, and attitude toward the industry, there are positive and significant relationships between the variables above and beyond that which might be explained by environmental concern (see Table 4.3).
Table 4.3  *Correlation Matrix of Campaign Awareness, Credibility, Accountability, Attitude Toward the Industry, and Environmental Concern* (N = 565)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Campaign Awareness</th>
<th>Credibility</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Attitude toward the Industry</th>
<th>Environmental Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Awareness</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.157**</td>
<td>.227**</td>
<td>.200**</td>
<td>-.108*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.757**</td>
<td>.602**</td>
<td>-.336**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.573**</td>
<td>-.356**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward the</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Partial correlations controlling for Environmental Concern*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Campaign Awareness</th>
<th>Credibility</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Attitude toward the industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Awareness</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.129**</td>
<td>.204**</td>
<td>.180**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.724**</td>
<td>.568**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.535**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward the</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry</td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at the .001 level.
Research Question 1

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the influence of each of the dimensions of the accountability scale (including intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) in predicting attitude toward the industry, after controlling for the contributions of the other dimensions. The results for the full regression model indicate that the linear combination of the subscales for accountability significantly predict attitude toward the industry $[R^2 = .35, F(3, 561) = 98.56, p < .001]$. As demonstrated in Table 4.3, both the intent and rule-based trust subscales for accountability make a unique contribution to the overall regression model. The transparency subscale, however, does not.

Table 4.4 Regression Model for Accountability Dimensions Predicting Attitude Toward the Industry (N = 565)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t-statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.372</td>
<td>6.80, p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule-based trust</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>4.60, p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>1.22, p = .221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A commonality analysis was completed to more fully evaluate the inter-relationships among the variables. Table 4.5 suggests that intent explains a total of 31.5% of the variation in attitude toward the industry with a unique contribution of 5.4%, making intent the strongest predictor in the overall model. Rule-based trust explains 24.9% of the variation in attitude toward the industry with a unique contribution of 2.5%. Transparency explains 21.6% of the variation in the dependent variable, but only makes a
unique contribution of 0.02%. Although it would seem that the most parsimonious model for explaining variation in how dimensions of accountability influence attitude toward the coal industry may be a model containing only intent and rule-based trust, transparency does contribute to the model in combination with the other variables. In other words, transparency is not essential to the overall regression model, but it cannot be dismissed given its contribution in conjunction with the other accountability dimensions.

Table 4.5. *Commonality Analysis for Full Accountability Model with Three Predictor Variables (R² values)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intent</th>
<th>Rule-based trust</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique to Intent</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique to Rule-based trust (RBT)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique to Transparency</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Intent &amp; RBT</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Intent &amp; Transparency</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to RBT &amp; Transparency</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to all</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>.216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 2**

Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between each of the promulgated issues of the marketplace advocacy campaign (economy, energy, environment, and community) and attitude toward the coal industry, after controlling for the contributions of the other components. The results for the full regression model
indicate that the linear combination of promulgated issues significantly predicts attitude toward the coal industry \[R^2 = .63, F (4, 560) = 237.12, p< .001\]. As demonstrated in Table 4.6, each of the promulgated issues contributes uniquely to the overall regression model.

Table 4.6. *Regression Model for Agenda-Building Issues Predicting Attitude Toward the Industry* (N = 565)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t-statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>7.22, p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>2.58, p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>4.93, p&lt;.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Identity</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td>12.80, p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A commonality analysis was completed to more fully describe the interrelationships among the variables. Table 4.7 suggests that *community identity* explains a total of 60.8% of the variation in attitude toward the coal industry with a unique contribution of 10.9%, making community identity the strongest predictor in the overall model. *Economy* explains 40.1% of the variation in attitude toward the coal industry with a unique contribution of 3.5%. *Energy* explains 34.9% of the variation in the dependent variable, but only makes a unique contribution of 0.5%. Similarly, *environment* explains 33.6% of the variation in the overall model with a unique contribution of only 1.6%.
Table 4.7. *Commonality Analysis for Full Agenda-Building Model with Four Predictor Variables (R² values)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Economy (Econ)</th>
<th>Energy (Env)</th>
<th>Environment (Env)</th>
<th>Community Identity (Comm_Id)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique to Econ</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique to Energy</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique to Environment</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique to Comm_Id</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Econ &amp; Energy</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Econ &amp; Env</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Econ &amp; Comm_Id</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Energy &amp; Env</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Energy &amp; Comm_Id</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Env &amp; Comm_Id</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Econ, Energy &amp; Env</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Econ, Energy &amp; Comm_Id</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Econ, Env &amp; Comm_Id</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to Energy, Env &amp; Comm_Id</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common to all</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>.135</td>
<td>.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>.349</td>
<td>.336</td>
<td>.608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to note that in analyses for both research questions one and two, regression residuals were identified as negatively skewed, particularly at higher values. In addition, the assumption of homoscedasticity appeared to be violated in both cases. Therefore, both regression analyses were re-evaluated using bootstrapping in Systat 11.0 according to the method outlined by Karakostas (2004). Two thousand bootstrapped samples with replacement were requested from the data file. As demonstrated by Table 4.8, the parameter estimates and standard errors were sufficiently close to the bootstrapped results, suggesting regression results are appropriate for interpretation.

Table 4.8. Parameter Estimates and Standard Errors of Actual Data Set versus Bootstrapped Data Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Actual Data Set</th>
<th></th>
<th>Bootstrapped Data Set</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>Standard Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability dimensions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.836</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>1.836</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule-based</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agenda-Building Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Identity</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Parameter/Construct Assessments

The results of the parameter and construct assessments support each of the proposed hypotheses. The analyses identified a positive correlation between each of the following relationships: 1) awareness of the FOC campaign and perceptions of the industry’s credibility; 2) perceptions of the industry’s credibility and attitude toward the coal industry; 3) awareness of the FOC campaign and perceptions of the industry’s accountability, and 4) perceptions of the industry’s accountability and attitude toward the coal industry. Although environmental concern had a negative correlation with each of these variables, when it was used as a measure of control in the aforementioned relationships, it did little to diminish their level of significance. The correlation coefficient decreased, but the relationships were still ultimately positive and significant. Finally, the results of the regression analyses to address research questions one and two identified perceptions of industry intent as having the greatest incremental strength among the accountability dimensions in influencing attitude toward the industry, and issue benefits related to community identity as having the greatest incremental strength among the agenda-building issues in influencing attitude toward the industry. The following chapter provides a more in-depth explanation of these results and their theoretical implications.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this dissertation was to evaluate potential outcomes of a specific form of issue advocacy, known as marketplace advocacy, from a multi-level research approach. From an overall perspective, the dissertation evaluated how different intermediate outcomes, including perceptions of trust and agenda building, work together to influence community stakeholders’ approval for the coal industry. The dissertation also provides a closer examination between and among relationships contained in a proposed model but not obviously discernable from the model testing or that warranted further investigation. These relationships are the correlations between campaign awareness and the two indicators for perceptions of trust (credibility and accountability), and the correlations between the two indicators of trust and attitude toward the industry. Also, the relative contribution of the dimensions of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) and the agenda-building issues (economy, energy, environment, and community) in shaping overall attitudes toward the coal industry was assessed.

The first section of this chapter discusses conclusions and implications regarding the model of how the attitudes of resource community stakeholders may be influenced by awareness of a marketplace advocacy campaign. Next, specific constructs within the model are discussed in greater detail, particularly how the results of this dissertation advance their respective theoretical lineages. Strengths and limitations of this dissertation and directions for future research are also outlined.
Implications of the Model of Issue Advocacy Outcomes

Most advocacy researchers have identified image building, industry support, and industry approval as fundamental goals of issue advocacy campaigns (e.g., Bostdorff & Vibbert, 1994; Cutler & Muehling, 1989; Sethi, 1977). Seemingly absent from the research, however, is a discussion of how approval of industry might be achieved as a result of this form of communication. This dissertation addresses this gap in research by providing one possible explanation of how attitudes toward the issue advocacy sponsor, in this case the coal industry, may be influenced by awareness of the issue campaign. This model demonstrates how perceptions of trust, agenda building, and concern for the environment interact to influence approval of the coal industry in the context of a marketplace advocacy campaign (refer to Figure 4.1).

Direct Outcomes of Campaign Awareness

To begin, the model suggests that levels of campaign awareness have a direct effect on both perceptions of trust in the industry and the campaign’s agenda-building influence among resource community stakeholders. Regarding perceptions of trust, higher levels of awareness of the issue advocacy campaign resulted in higher levels of trust in the industry, including perceptions of the industry’s credibility and accountability. Although previous research has suggested that trust in the advertiser has been found to lower perceptions of the risk of purchase (Grewal et al., 1994), the direct relationship between awareness of the issue campaign and perceptions of trust identified in this dissertation are important given that it is within a marketplace advocacy context. By design, marketplace advocacy is used to seek acceptance for a product and address concerns about the risks associated with the manufacturing or extraction of the product.
Friends of Coal (FOC), for example, discusses safety and environmental concerns associated with mining coal and coal as a source of energy. For community stakeholders exposed to industry risks, higher levels of trust in the industry should (and ultimately do, as discussed below) affect attitudes toward the industry itself. And, as evidenced by this dissertation, perceptions of trust were first influenced by awareness of the campaign.

Likewise, higher levels of campaign awareness resulted in a heightened agenda-building influence among survey respondents. In other words, higher levels of awareness of an issue advocacy campaign resulted in a greater agenda-building influence among community stakeholders, suggesting that marketplace advocacy campaigns may influence the public’s agenda regarding issues related to the industry itself. Previous research in agenda building has identified a number of purposive communicative tactics that serve as influences on media content and in establishing those issues most salient with targeted segments of the public, including public relations information subsidies (Curtin, 2000; Curtin & Rhodenbaugh, 2001; Turk, 1986), political advertising (Roberts & McCombs, 1994), and political websites (Ku, Kaid, & Pfau, 2003), to name just a few. The findings from this dissertation take that theory a step further, suggesting that issue advocacy campaigns, specifically marketplace advocacy campaigns, may also play a role in influencing the salience of industry-related issues among the public. In the context of this campaign, those issues promulgated by FOC, namely the benefits of coal mining and efforts of the industry to address coal mining risks, were highly salient among survey respondents. Community stakeholders were not only highly aware of industry-related issues, such as energy and the economy, but it seems community stakeholders were also accepting and supportive of industry-advanced benefits regarding these issues, such as
coal mining’s proud heritage, the contribution of coal mining to the state and national economy, and the ability of coal to generate electricity for homes and modern conveniences. This finding is a significant contribution to the theoretical discussion surrounding agenda building and should be pursued further through studies with other industries and issues, such as nuclear power and stem cell research. Agenda building, it seems, may involve more than the agenda-setting notion of telling the public what issues to think about; agenda building via issue advocacy may also include the ability to influence how stakeholders perceive and respond to those issues.

The Relationship between Agenda Building and Attitude toward the Industry

As discussed, a key implication of this dissertation is that higher levels of awareness of the issue advocacy campaign had a direct agenda-building influence among survey respondents. The dissertation also suggests that this agenda-building influence is subsequently related to greater approval of the coal industry. From a theoretical standpoint, these findings suggest that marketplace advocacy campaigns may influence the public’s agenda, first resulting in heightened acceptance of the promulgated issues followed by heightened approval of the industry responsible for the advocacy. From a professional standpoint, this dissertation provides some initial support for the assertion that marketplace advocacy efforts, such as those used by FOC, Chevron, and the American Plastic’s Council, may be an effective means of influencing public perceptions toward propagated issues, and ultimately, attitudes toward the industry itself. Given that most research in agenda setting and agenda building concludes after an agenda-setting influence has been determined, future research should further explicate the relationship between an agenda-building influence and approval for the advocacy sponsor. For
example, future research may evaluate whether agenda building influences approval of
the organization engaged in the agenda-building efforts, the image of that organization,
and/or support for organizational issues.

*The Relationship between Perceptions of Trust and Attitude toward the Industry*

Initially, the hypothesized model proposed that perceptions of trust would have a
direct effect on attitudes toward the sponsoring industry (refer to Figure 2.1). The results
of the exploratory model testing, however, suggest that perceptions of trust had a
stronger, more direct effect on the agenda-building construct than on attitude toward the
industry (refer to Figure 4.1). Perceptions of trust did influence attitude toward the
industry, but this influence was first mediated by agenda building. These findings
suggest that the greater the perceptions of trust in the industry, the more susceptible an
individual may be to the industry’s agenda-building influence. Although there is
apparently no existing literature discussing this relationship directly, there is some
research that peripherally supports this finding.

First, Gitlin’s (1980) analysis of media coverage of the U.S. student movement of
the 1960s suggested that protest activities and organizers were often portrayed in a
manner that was consistent with what reporters believed would appeal to their mass
audience, thereby supporting the status quo rather than delving into the specific policy
concerns underlying the protests. The media agenda underscored values currently held
by the general public in order to appeal to a mass audience. In the context of this
dissertation, the FOC campaign was able to capitalize on the collective trust in the
industry among community stakeholders through campaign messages that supported the
shared values of those stakeholders. This dissertation suggests that those individuals with
greater trust in the industry were more receptive to the industry-promulgated position on the status quo issues associated with coal mining. The question remains whether the inverse is also true, i.e. whether lower levels of trust in the industry would render stakeholders less receptive to industry-advanced issues. Future research pertaining to this question is addressed in more detail later in the “Strengths and Limitations” section of this chapter.

Also, case study research in citizen peace-building activities in Cyprus, including efforts to implement an agenda for the peace-building movement, identified three existing favorable conditions that aided in consensus-building efforts (Broome, 2002). These conditions are a commitment among individuals to the ideals of peace building, a basic sense of trust in the parties involved, and established credibility of the program facilitator. It seems trust in the organization and the credibility of the source improved the agenda-building capacity of the peace-building efforts. Likewise, in this dissertation, the greater the trust in the organizational party and the source of the message (both of which would be the coal industry in general in this context), the greater the agenda-building influence. From a theoretical standpoint, it seems trust in the advocacy sponsor may serve as an important building block to the advocacy sponsor’s ability to influence the salience of advocated issues.

*Environmental Concern as a Moderating Influence on Attitude toward the Industry*

The hypothesized model initially proposed that environmental concern would have a direct effect on attitude toward the industry (refer to Figure 2.1). Given the environmental ramifications of coal mining, the inclusion of this construct as a measure of statistical control was based on the logical assumption that individuals with high levels
of environmental concern would have lower levels of approval of the coal industry. Exploratory model testing, however, suggested that environmental concern had a stronger, more direct effect on perceptions of industry trust. In other words, individuals with higher levels of environmental concern had lower levels of trust in the industry, thus pointing to fundamental differences in the concepts of trust and approval. Environmental concern did influence stakeholder attitudes toward the coal industry, but it accomplished this influence indirectly – first by lowering perceptions of trust in the industry followed by reducing the agenda-building influence of the campaign. Given the scale measures included in the perceptions of trust construct, including credibility and accountability, this finding is not surprising. These questions addressed such topics as the industry’s adherence to governmental and industry regulations, the industry’s openness to public scrutiny, and the industry’s intentions regarding the environment and the state’s citizens. Ultimately, environmental concern influenced attitude toward industry, however, this influence was first mediated by perceptions related to these more specific trust concepts that evaluate the industry’s truthfulness and that hold the industry accountable for their actions.

**Summary of Model Implications**

Among the most important implications of the model of issue advocacy outcomes is that it provides a panoramic perspective from which to view how awareness of a marketplace advocacy campaign may influence attitude toward the industry. Considering that most advocacy researchers have identified image building and industry approval as fundamental goals of issue advocacy efforts, it is important to understand how this goal of influencing community stakeholder attitudes might be realized. In the case of FOC, it
appears that approval of the coal industry was ultimately influenced by awareness of the campaign; however, perceptions of trust in the industry, in addition to the campaign’s ability to build the public’s agenda, preceded this final outcome. The final validated model from this dissertation elucidates on how these intermediate outcomes function together to achieve industry approval, suggesting that campaign awareness directly influences both trust and agenda building, and that higher levels of trust in the industry increase the salience of agenda-building issues. Consequently, both perceptions of trust in the coal industry and the salience of the campaign issues among community stakeholders influenced attitude toward the coal industry. Stated simply, this dissertation provides evidence for the supposition that issue advocacy campaigns have the potential to impact perceptions of trust, build public agendas, and garner approval for the issue advocacy sponsor. Yet, the importance of the validated model is that it provides a theoretical framework for how these concepts are interrelated within the context of marketplace advocacy, namely that trust in the industry and awareness of campaign-promulgated issues seemingly play a significant role in garnering approval for the sponsoring industry, as was the case with the FOC campaign.

By linking the theoretical constructs of trust and agenda building, this model adds a new dimension to research in both of these areas. From an agenda-building perspective, rather than assuming that public agendas can be built and shaped simply through dissemination of information subsidies in the form of public relations and advertising, reminiscent of magic bullet and hypodermic needle theories of mass communication effects (e.g., Laswell, 1948), the identification of this direct relationship between trust and an agenda-building influence suggests a more complex understanding.
of how the salience of issues with stakeholders may be heightened given a fundamental sense of trust in an industry or organization. Most agenda-setting and agenda-building research focuses primarily on information outputs and message dissemination (i.e., whether a media source has used information provided in a news release). In actuality, it is the subsequent elements of persuasion that the organization engaged in agenda building seeks to achieve, persuasive outcomes such as stakeholder acceptance of the message and approval for the communicator. In other words, agenda building does not occur simply through message outputs; persuasive outcomes are necessary for an agenda to have effectively been built. This dissertation underscores the value of relationship building with stakeholders prior to the initiation of an issue-oriented campaign in order to achieve those persuasive outcomes. This dissertation also demonstrates the necessity for a thorough evaluation of the stakeholder-organization relationship prior to an issue campaign, followed by relationship-building strategies with stakeholders. These strategies may include demonstrating an organization’s commitment to communicating its mission, operating principles, activities, and values to stakeholders.

Moreover, the identification of the direct link between trust and agenda building may be of particular interest to research in advertising, especially research in advertiser trust. The dissertation suggests that the existence of trust in an advertiser and/or an organization, may directly predict the ability to develop and craft public agendas. Previous consumer advertising research has focused on the existence of advertiser trust and its ability to predict attitudes toward the advertised brand, attitudes toward the advertiser, and purchase intention (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). This dissertation suggests that the potential to build
and shape public agendas may also be predicted by higher levels of trust in an advertiser among audiences. Although there are certainly differences between consumer advertising and issue advertising, and agenda building is not a typical goal of consumer advertising, certain occasions may arise when image building or image restoration is necessary for consumer advertisers. For example, among consumer audiences the salience of Coca-Cola’s campaign to promote its improved energy efficiency and recycling efforts (The Coca-Cola Company, 2005) and Nike’s campaign to promote its corporate social responsibility following charges it used sweatshop labor in China, Vietnam, and Indonesia (Nike, Inc., 2003) may be influenced to some extent by consumer perceptions of trust in the advertiser. The ability to influence the salience of issues associated with an organization, such as corporate citizenship and social responsibility, may be enhanced by a basic sense of trust in the organization.

Implications of Parameter/Construct Assessments

While the model provides an overall explanation of how attitudes are influenced by specific mediating constructs, the second phase of this dissertation focused on specific parameters within the model that were not directly ascertainable from the model output or on relationships that warranted further investigation, such as the relative contribution of the subconstructs of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) in influencing attitude toward the industry. The following section discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the analyses used to address the dissertation’s hypotheses and research questions, including the correlations between campaign awareness, the two indicators for perceptions of trust (credibility and accountability), and attitude toward the industry. Likewise, the implications involving the relative contribution of the dimensions
of accountability (intent, rule-based trust, and transparency) and the agenda-building issues (economy, energy, environment, and community) in shaping overall attitude toward the coal industry are also discussed.

*Issue Advocacy and Indicators of Trust – Credibility and Accountability*

As identified in the model (Figure 4.1), two indicators were used to evaluate the trust construct: perceptions of the industry’s credibility and accountability. The credibility measure is delineated from advertising literature that has conceptualized trust in an advertiser in terms of source and organizational credibility (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Lafferty & Goldsmith 1999; Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). The accountability measure was based on research in advocacy advertising which has suggested the appropriateness of a model of public accountability in evaluating advertiser trust in the context of marketplace advocacy (Haley, 1996; Kramer, 1999; Miller & Sinclair, 2005; Sinclair & Irani, 2005). Although the validated model clearly situates the overall trust construct as an intermediary between campaign awareness and attitude toward the industry, it is also important to discuss how the two indicators of trust (credibility and accountability) are related to awareness of the campaign and attitude toward the industry.

*Perceptions of Credibility.* As predicted in hypotheses one and two, campaign awareness was positively correlated with perceptions of credibility, and perceptions of credibility were positively correlated with attitude toward the industry. This latter finding is consistent with consumer advertising research that has demonstrated a positive correlation between perceptions of advertiser credibility, attitude toward the advertised brand, and attitude toward the advertiser (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). In this dissertation, as the sponsor of the FOC
campaign, the coal industry in general, would correspond with a consumer advertiser. Consistent with consumer advertising research, perceptions of the industry’s credibility were positively correlated with attitude toward the coal industry. Also, to some extent, the FOC campaign might be equated with a consumer advertised brand. By attempting to unite coal industry supporters under the “Friends of Coal” banner, particularly through grassroots visual displays such as bumper stickers, yard signs, and event sponsorships where the FOC logo can be showcased, the FOC campaign has developed an easily recognized symbolic brand. The credibility of this brand, in addition to the perceived credibility of the coal industry, may have influenced stakeholders’ approval of the coal industry in general. This finding provides some initial evidence that existing consumer advertising research in corporate credibility may also have applications in a marketplace advocacy setting, namely how perceptions of credibility may influence attitudes toward the marketplace advocacy sponsor – in this case, an industry association.

Within consumer advertising research, perceptions of advertiser credibility have also been shown to influence purchase intention (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). One explanation for this influence is that higher perceptions of credibility lower the perceptions of risk associated with purchasing a consumer product (Grewal et al., 1994). Correspondingly, it seems that in the context of marketplace advocacy, perceptions of credibility are associated with approval of the industry, despite the risks associated with the sponsoring industry. Just as credibility lowers perceptions associated with purchasing a product (a consumer behavior), perceptions of industry credibility may also lower perceptions of risk associated with the industry. Meanwhile, from a public policy perspective, although the FOC campaign does not ask community
stakeholders to purchase a product, it does call on stakeholders to take action in the form of supporting policies associated with the coal industry (an audience behavior). Visitors to the FOC website, for example, can volunteer to make phone calls, go door-to-door, or send emails to generate membership in the organization. They may also volunteer to contact elected officials, attend rallies, and place signs in their yard on behalf of FOC (Friends of Coal, 2006). Heightened perceptions of industry credibility may lead to a greater propensity for political action in these (and other) forms of grassroots campaigning and lobbying by resource community stakeholders. Expanding on this theory, marketplace advocacy efforts, and widespread awareness of these efforts, may indeed influence the political regulatory and legislative processes, thereby gaining support for industry policies.

Perceptions of Accountability. Just as the industry’s perceived credibility was positively correlated with awareness of the FOC campaign and attitude toward the industry, so were perceptions of accountability, as predicted in hypotheses three and four. These findings are consistent with previous research investigating a similar marketplace advocacy campaign for plant biotechnology that identified perceptions of accountability as predictors of corporate trustworthiness, which subsequently predicted attitude toward the advertiser, attitude toward the biotechnology industry, and purchase intention (Sinclair & Irani, 2005).

Although both credibility and accountability were identified as indicators of trust, and both had positive correlations with campaign awareness and attitude toward the industry, certain implications specific to accountability are important to address. Whereas credibility emphasizes whether a firm “can be trusted to tell the truth” (Newell
& Goldsmith, 2001, p. 235), accountability involves “the relation between three key elements: the organization, the issue, and rules” (Sinclair & Irani, 2005). The link between these elements has been conceptualized as intent (perception of the link between rules and the advocacy sponsor), rule-based trust (perception of the link between the rules and the issue), and transparency (perception of the link between the issue and the advocacy sponsor). Although credibility evaluates the perceived truthfulness of the industry, accountability assesses to what extent stakeholders hold the industry accountable for their actions, their governance, and their openness. In applied terms, the results of this dissertation support the contention of Sinclair and Irani (2005) that attitude toward the marketplace advocacy sponsor may be based, in part, on the degree to which stakeholders find the industry to be accountable for their actions. If the goal of a marketplace advocacy campaign is to generate approval for the industry, which is typically the case with issue advocacy campaigns, communication messages should emphasize the three components of accountability – intent, rule-based trust, and transparency – with respect to the industry’s efforts to meet community stakeholder expectations. The relative contribution of each of these dimensions in influencing attitude toward the industry is discussed in greater detail below.

*The Moderating Influence of Environmental Concern on Perceptions of Credibility and Accountability*

Although this dissertation suggests that awareness of marketplace advocacy campaigns are positively correlated with perceptions of both credibility and accountability, and that perceptions of these dimensions of trust are also positively correlated with attitude toward the advocated industry, this dissertation also provides
some preliminary support for the notion that higher levels of environmental concern may attenuate these relationships. Hypotheses five through eight demonstrated a negative correlation between environmental concern and each of the following: campaign awareness, perceptions of credibility, perceptions of accountability, and attitude toward the industry. However, when examining the relationships among these three variables controlling for environmental concern (hypotheses 9 through 12), their correlations were still positive and significant, albeit slightly less. In other words, higher levels of environmental concern did attenuate the relationships, but not to the extent that it had any mitigating effect on their level of significance. These findings likely come as welcome news for industries engaging in issue campaigns to obfuscate environmentally questionable practices.

Environmental advocates, however, should not be overly dismayed. Although controlling for environmental concern in the context of perceptions of trust in the industry did not diminish significance levels associated with trust, the fact that environmental concern had a negative correlation with campaign awareness, attitude toward the coal industry, and each of the trust constructs is promising for environmental advocacy efforts. These findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of environmental awareness are less aware of marketplace advocacy efforts, are less inclined to trust the industry, and have lower levels of industry approval. It follows logically to suggest that efforts to increase environmental awareness may consequently decrease these industry-favorable outcomes. As identified in the validated model (refer to Figure 4.1), the most direct outcome of environmental concern was decreased perceptions of trust in the industry. Given this identified relationship, environmental
advocates’ efforts to counter marketplace advocacy should include (1) traditional efforts
to increase general environmental awareness, and (2) probing deeper into issues
associated with trust in the industry in an effort to increase skepticism among community
stakeholders.

*Dimensions of Accountability and Attitude toward the Industry*

As discussed, research in advocacy advertising, trust, and corporate credibility
indicate there may be three key components to advertiser trust in the context of
marketplace advocacy: intent, rule-based trust, and transparency. *Intent* involves the
perceptions of whose interest will be served, (Haley, 1996; Javalgi et al., 1994; Stafford
& Hartman, 2000), *rule-based trust* involves perceptions that there are prescriptions,
rules, or laws that apply to the industry (Fine & Holyfield, 1996; Kramer, 1999; Trettin &
Murham, 2000; Sinclair & Irani, 2005), and perceptions of *transparency* involve the
belief that the organization’s activities are open to public scrutiny and feedback (Sinclair
& Irani, 2005; Stafford & Hartman, 2000). Although the model and hypotheses testing
examined accountability as an indicator of an overall trust construct and as an individual
scale measure, the relative contribution of each of the three accountability dimensions in
influencing attitude toward the industry also warrants further discussion.

Relative to the other two dimensions of accountability, this dissertation suggests
perceptions of *intent* had the greatest influence on approval for the advocated industry.
In other words, trust in the industry’s intentions toward the public and society had the
strongest influence compared with rule-based trust and transparency. *Rule-based trust*
had the second strongest influence on approval for the advocated industry. It appears that
trust in the government to regulate the coal industry, in addition to the industry’s
adherence to those regulations, was the second largest predictor of attitude toward the industry. Finally, perceptions of the industry’s transparency seemed to have the least influence on approval for the industry, despite previous focus group research on perceptions of a marketplace advocacy campaign in which community stakeholders were unanimous in their call for advertiser transparency (Miller & Sinclair, 2005). In this dissertation, the limited influence of perceptions of the industry’s transparency in generating approval for the industry is likely reflective of the fact that the FOC campaign does little to identify its members, sponsors or organizers. Under the “Who we are” section of the FOC website, for example, the only information regarding the FOC structure is that the organization “consists of both West Virginians and residents from beyond our borders” (Friends of Coal, 2006). Without sufficient information to assess an organization’s identity, as is the case with FOC, it is highly probable that community stakeholders will perceive an organization or industry as less transparent than those that make their identity known.

Nevertheless, the findings of this dissertation do support the contention of marketplace advocacy research that suggests there may be an interaction between transparency and intent. In particular, Miller and Sinclair (2005) suggested that stakeholders’ perceptions of advertiser intent might depend on the advertiser’s transparency regarding both their identity and their motives (or intentions). Similarly in this dissertation, although transparency was not essential to the overall regression model, it could not be dismissed given its contribution in conjunction with the other accountability dimensions. Rather, the three dimensions had the greatest influence when working together to predict attitude toward the industry.
From an applied perspective, the results of this dissertation indicate that marketplace advocacy messages have the greatest impact on attitude toward the industry when they (1) underscore the industry’s motivations and actions, including the reason for initiating the advocacy campaign, and (2) highlight the regulations governing the industry and emphasize the industry’s commitment to adhering to those regulations. Although perceptions of the industry’s transparency seemed to have the smallest influence in predicting approval of the industry, this finding likely reflects the minimal information provided by FOC regarding its identity as an industry association – The West Virginia Coal Association. Despite the relatively smaller contribution of transparency, it is important to re-emphasize that the interaction between all three dimensions of accountability, including perceptions of intent, rule-based trust, and transparency, worked together to influence attitude toward the industry. With this in mind, advocacy efforts should capitalize on this interaction, thereby emphasizing transparency of intentions, transparency of identity, and transparency in the industry’s adherence to applicable rules and regulations.

Agenda-Building Issues and Attitude toward the Industry

As the model suggests, higher levels of awareness of the marketplace advocacy campaign were positively correlated with an agenda-building influence among community stakeholders, which in turn, resulted in more favorable attitudes toward the industry. As was the case with the accountability dimensions, it was also important to discern the relative contribution of each of the campaign issues – economy, energy, environment, and community identity – in influencing attitude toward the coal industry. Specifically, the findings from this dissertation indicate that messages have the greatest
impact on garnering approval for an advocated industry when they emphasize issues relating to community identity, using emotional appeals to highlight a resource community’s sense of tradition and heritage. The second most influential message related to economic issues, such as employment, economic prosperity, and personal economic benefits resulting from the industry’s role in the community. Despite their proliferation in this and other issue advocacy campaigns, issues relating to energy requirements and the environment contributed the least to predicting overall approval for the industry.

Speculation regarding the relative strength of each of these issues in predicting approval for industry leads to several hypotheses. To begin, it seems that the campaign-promulgated issues that generated the strongest approval for the coal industry were those that are likely less top-of-mind with community stakeholders, such as community identity issues and coal mining’s economic implications. Although this may seem counter intuitive, the campaign’s ability to emphasize certain benefits associated with coal mining that stakeholders may not be aware of (i.e. economic benefits) and/or may not have considered (i.e. the pride generated from promoting coal as part of the region’s cultural heritage) seemed to have been especially effective at generating approval for the coal industry. On the other hand, the association between meeting energy requirements and an energy-generating natural resource is obvious, as is the industry’s potential ramifications on the environment. Perhaps the general public was less influenced by persuasive efforts elucidating on 1) issues they’re already aware of, as would be the case with the industry’s role in meeting energy demands, and 2) issues that they may be less inclined to believe, such as the industry’s pro-environmental and reclamation messages.
Clearly, this finding lends further credence to the importance of understanding the needs and concerns of stakeholders prior to the initiation of a campaign designed to influence the salience of issues among community stakeholders. For longstanding industries such as coal mining, stakeholders may glean a sense of pride from their industry’s heritage; therefore, marketplace advocacy campaigns may spotlight the industry’s traditions and values in order to connect with the resource community and its culture. Just as FOC emphasized the coal culture of West Virginia and its residents, certain other industries may benefit from this same strategy, such as the agricultural, forestry, fishing, and steel industries. On the other hand, emphasizing community identity would not be possible for newer industries, such as biotechnology, stem cell research, and pharmaceuticals, as they are not confined to a geographic region, nor have they had sufficient time to develop a cultural dimension, such as that which exists in coal mining communities and among coal miners. In these settings, emphasis on economic benefits to society at large may be a more influential campaign strategy.

Strengths and Limitations

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine potential outcomes of issue advocacy campaigns and how they function together to shape the overall attitude toward the sponsoring industry. According to the Annenberg Public Policy Center (2005), issue advocacy in general is “abundant, growing in prominence, and central to important questions about the nature of democracy and the relationships among money, speech, and political influence” (p. 3). Specifically, this dissertation focused on a form of issue advocacy, known as marketplace advocacy, which is typically initiated in response to concerns about a particular product or service and to establish greater acceptance for a
related public policy issue. Although this form of advocacy is relatively specialized, it represents an increasingly important and prevalent form of advocacy. In recent years, industry campaigns in particular have proliferated, emphasizing the benefits of crops produced through biotechnology (Council for Biotechnology: “Good Ideas are Growing”), dairy products (International Dairy Foods Association: “Got Milk?”), and natural gas (Natural Gas Supply Association: “Clean, Safe, Affordable”). It is important for both scholars and practitioners to understand how these campaigns may influence stakeholder trust in the industry and acceptance of the industry’s agenda, as well as general approval for the advocated industry. The findings of this dissertation provide credence for the idea that these campaigns may be effective at accomplishing each of these objectives. A significant contribution of this dissertation is that it also provides a model demonstrating how these objectives were achieved by FOC, including the intermediate relationships between issue advocacy and various constructs identified in public relations, advertising, social psychology, political communication, and mass communication literature.

In order to evaluate these outcomes, results from a survey of a particular industry-sponsored marketplace advocacy campaign were analyzed using SEM. Specific paths and other relationships among variables were also assessed using correlation and multiple regression analyses. Both the proposed survey method and data analysis techniques have strengths and limitations that contribute to the implications of the findings and establish parameters for the resulting conclusions.

As with most survey research, the data provide only a snapshot of attitudes and perceptions at a given time. Since no pre-existing measure of attitudes toward the coal
industry in the state are available (revealing time sequence), and the data are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, it is not possible to demonstrate direct causation of any of the relationships evaluated in this dissertation since causal relationships cannot be established based on correlational data. Further, since the survey was administered and paid for by the sponsoring industry organization, the inclusion of certain questions was required. While these circumstances created the potential for leading and loaded questions, a number of questions were reverse coded and the direction of statements was mixed to eliminate response bias as much as possible. It is also important to note that these FOC-specific questions appear after the bulk of the survey, including all of the questions necessary for this dissertation. Only demographic information and environmental awareness questions were included after these items.

On the other hand, one of the main strengths of SEM is its ability to reject a priori specified models (Mueller, 1997), as proposed in this dissertation. SEM, which begins with a series of hypotheses about how variables are generated and interrelated, is used to test the plausibility of theoretical models and has the potential to “bridge the gap between the theoretical and empirical aspects of social science research” (p. 354). Although the research may not conclusively establish cause and effect between the marketplace advocacy campaign and perceptions of the sponsoring industry, this dissertation does serve as an initial step in demonstrating a clear relationship between the constructs in the model, including campaign awareness, perceptions of trust, agenda building, and attitude toward the industry. If there were a common cause between campaign awareness and the outcomes investigated in this dissertation, as would be the case if there were something missing from the model (such as pre-existing attitudes), this would have manifest in the
relationship between the disturbance term associated with campaign awareness (d1) and the error terms associated with perceptions of trust in the industry (z1) and/or an agenda-building influence (z2) as shown in Figure 4.1. In other words, the modification indices obtained in the Amos output would have suggested these items were correlated due to some unknown prior cause. This was not the case in this dissertation, suggesting that there is not a common cause between campaign awareness and the intermediate outcomes of awareness of issue advocacy identified in the model – perceptions of trust in the industry and a campaign agenda-building influence.

Moreover, the validated model suggests how these constructs interact to influence approval of the industry, which advances theory in each of their respective academic disciplines. Regarding perceptions of trust, for example, this dissertation suggests that both credibility and accountability may result from issue advocacy campaigns, ultimately influencing approval for the industry advertiser. From a theoretical perspective, this finding bridges a gap between consumer advertising research and research in issue advocacy. Despite different objectives, it seems that a fundamental sense of trust in the advertiser may predict approval for the advertiser, or in this case, the industry. Just as research in consumer advertising evolved from examining the relationship between advertiser trust and approval of the advertiser into whether or not advertiser trust could predict audience behavior, namely purchase intention, research in issue advocacy may now follow a similar evolitional process. Future research in issue advocacy, for example, may investigate whether industry trust and industry approval can predict stakeholder behaviors, particularly grassroots campaigning and lobbying, such as contacting elected officials. Survey research evaluating issue advocacy awareness and
campaign effectiveness, for example, could ask stakeholders directly whether they would consider engaging in these types of actions. These behavioral responses (stakeholder actions) could then be added to the validated model of issue advocacy outcomes in this dissertation as another dependent variable, perhaps as an outcome of attitude toward the industry (refer to Figure 4.1).

Additionally, this dissertation provides evidence that issue advocacy campaigns may serve as an agenda-building mechanism among public stakeholder audiences, influencing the salience of industry issues and, ultimately, approval of the advocated industry. It seems that issue advocacy campaigns may be added to the growing list of communication strategies that have the ability to build and shape public agendas through the acceptance of the industry-advanced frames. Perhaps a more significant contribution of this dissertation, however, is the contention that agenda building involves more than simply disseminating issue details via information subsidies and the assumption that the public will accept each of the issues deemed important by the industry responsible for the campaign. This dissertation takes agenda-building research a step further, examining the distribution of influence from the industry to the public. More specifically, the dissertation demonstrates how general awareness of an issue advocacy campaign influences public acceptance of inherently biased industry issues. Ultimately, the public acceptance of these industry-packaged and promulgated issues garnered approval for the communicator, demonstrating “the indirect ways through which power may be exercised” through the agenda-building process (Cobb & Elder, 1972, p. 26). The ability of issue campaigns to not only influence the salience of issues, but also acceptance of an industry
position on those issues and approval for the industry, distinguishes agenda setting from agenda building.

This dissertation also found that the public responded most favorably to issues that focused on personal benefits to stakeholders. The issue that had the strongest influence in predicting approval for the industry, for example, emphasized coal mining’s heritage and community pride. Stakeholders apparently were most swayed by communication messages that generated a sense of pride in their state, their coal mining heritage, and the individuals who undertake the high-risk task of coal extraction, perhaps running counter to the realized or feared social stigma associated with living in a resource community (Gregory & Satterfield, 2002). Meanwhile, the economy was identified as the second strongest predictor of approval for the industry, which also has direct personal benefits for citizens of West Virginia. On the other hand, energy and environmental issues may seem somewhat more removed to community stakeholders. It seems the issues, and the industry’s position on those issues, must be relevant to stakeholders’ self-interests to generate the greatest approval for the industry. Future research in agenda building should examine this assumption more thoroughly. For example, if issues pertaining to the environment were localized to the community rather than to society in general, would community stakeholders be more open and accepting of the promulgated issues? Focus groups, which are particularly well suited for providing insight into the issues an audience deems most important (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), could be used to evaluate audience perceptions of advocated issues when presented at the community versus societal level and when risks and benefits are localized. This research would likely be of interest to both industry and environmental advocacy campaigns.
Also, the dissertation identified trust in the industry as a potential foundation for an agenda-building influence, highlighting the importance of relationship-building efforts prior to the initiation of an agenda-building campaign. Moreover, this dissertation points to the need for ongoing relationship management efforts with stakeholders. Rather than assuming an agenda-building influence among stakeholders will automatically follow message dissemination, communicators should recognize that desired outcomes (such as agenda building and approval) are more plausible when long-term relationships, involving efforts to build and maintain trust with stakeholders, have been cultivated. Just as advocacy sponsors need to be cognizant of stakeholder benefits when promoting issues, it is also important to be aware of existing perceptions of stakeholder trust in the industry. Future research may examine this relationship between trust and agenda building in new industries where stakeholders have had less time to develop opinions and attitudes toward the industry, such as biotechnology.

Likewise, future research may also examine whether reduced trust has an inverse effect on the ability to build and shape public agendas. While 2005 was one of the safest years ever for coal mining (Naasz, 2006), 2006 began as one of the deadliest spans in coal mining history, with 18 miners dying in the month of January, 12 of whom were killed in a mine explosion that trapped 13 men for nearly two days as families and the world awaited news of their safety (Frank & Bazar, 2006). All but two of the 18 deaths in January were in West Virginia. Despite the strides in coal mining safety in previous years, do these recent events diminish trust in this longstanding industry among resource community stakeholders? If so, does a reduction in trust diminish the industry’s ability to build the public’s agenda? Given the high-risk nature of coal mining and other industries
engaged in marketplace advocacy, such as nuclear, gas, oil, tobacco, alcohol, and pharmaceuticals, the role of stakeholder trust may have significant implications in industries’ ability to communicate positions on issues over the long term.

Finally, the association between the theoretical concepts of trust, as measured by advertising research-generated scales, provides a direct link between the disciplines of advertising and public relations, professions that are often practiced in cooperation but researched in academe as distinct entities. Public relations research in trust, for example, has relied heavily on interpersonal communication research for developing and evaluating the concept of trust as either an antecedent or outcome of relationships, such as The Excellence Study’s emphasis on two-way interpersonal communication (e.g. Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig et al., 1992). Similarly, the taxonomy of relationship management strategies and outcomes developed by Grunig and Huang (2000) and the relationship outcome measures developed and tested by Hon and Grunig (1999) were based principally on the interpersonal communication research of Stafford and Canary (1991) and Canary and Stafford (1992). These interpersonal communication researchers, however, focused specifically on how romantic couples maintain relationships, which is not necessarily applicable in an organization-public, or an organization-stakeholder, context. Likewise, Ledingham and Bruning’s (1998) research in relationship building gleaned many of their variables from interpersonal communication, which suggested that relationships flourish when there is mutual and equal benefit among parties (Wood, 1995). Although mutual benefits may be vital from an interpersonal relationship perspective, this may not always be the case in an organization-public, or organization-stakeholder, setting. Generally speaking, public
relations practitioners are acting on behalf of certain interests, thus their efforts are oftentimes “necessarily partisan” (L’Etang, 1996). According to Karleberg (1996), the two-way notion of public relations (e.g., the excellence model) often fails because of the resource disparity that exists between organizations and many of their publics. Moreover, the excellence model doesn’t recognize fundamental issues associated with many organization-public relationships, such as the powerlessness of certain publics and irreconcilable differences between corporations and many stakeholders (Dozier & Lauzen, 2000). Understanding these innate power differences between corporations and publics is vital to relationship-building efforts (Bhattacharya et al., 1998). Future research in public relations, particularly in relationship building and maintenance, should avoid the supposition that advocacy and persuasion are antithetical to building and maintaining trust among stakeholders. As identified by this dissertation and existing research in advertising and marketing, trust can (and does) occur in the context of persuasion and exchange relationships (Haley, 1996; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Haley (1996), for example, found consumers accepting of advocacy messages that benefited the organization or corporation, providing the organization’s interests did not outweigh the consumers or societies in general. Furthermore, a logical association was an important component to perceptions of credibility. In all likelihood, a logical organizational or corporate interest in the advocated issue clarifies motivations, or the intent, of the campaign.

From a pedagogical perspective, given the proliferation of this form of communication and its potential influence on legislative and regulatory processes and public policy issues, issue advocacy should be afforded greater attention in advertising,
public relations, and environmental communication classrooms. Students should be aware of the prevalence of issue advocacy, as well as the motives and objectives for engaging in issue campaigns, as this communication is likely to increase, particularly among energy-related industries, as the world continues to grapple with meeting energy needs while maintaining and preserving the environment. Also, this dissertation further suggests the need to communicate to students the value of thorough audience and stakeholder research prior to engaging in issue advocacy efforts. In a campaigns course, for example, students could develop issue advocacy campaigns from different perspectives, including environmental, industrial, corporate, and non-profit organizations. Extensive audience and stakeholder research should precede the development of each campaign, and evaluative research should be proposed to follow each campaign. Students should address what issues the organization would likely want to communicate to stakeholders, as well as the issues that would likely be important to community stakeholders. Finally, students would examine how these interests correspond and/or diverge and how this would influence the direction of the issue campaign. Case study analysis of previous issue campaigns would also allow students to examine these questions and how they may have influenced the public’s response to the campaigns.

Given the demographics of the population investigated, and the rural nature of much of the surveyed region, the generalizability of this dissertation’s findings may be limited to some extent to advocacy campaigns in rural resource communities rather than those in more urban settings. However, considering the very nature of marketplace advocacy is to seek acceptance for a product and address concerns about its risks, this particular form of advocacy is likely most prevalent in populations that mirror many of
the demographic and psychographic characteristics of this resource community. The conflicting sense of appreciation for the economic and psychological benefits of the coal industry and disapproval for the environmental and physical risks associated with coal mining are likely reflected in agricultural, fishing, forestry, and steel-producing communities. Similarly, the findings of this dissertation may also be particularly applicable to high-risk industries and those associated with energy production, such as oil, natural gas, and nuclear energy. Meanwhile, other marketplace advocacy campaigns, including the promotion of alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceuticals, are directed at more urban, even national, audiences. Thus, future research is needed to examine whether the findings from this dissertation may be broadened beyond the boundaries of resource communities. One investigation may include delving deeper into the distinction between stakeholder perceptions of localized risks, such as the propensity for physical harm for those working in resource communities, versus risks to society, such as global warming, alcohol/tobacco dependency, and other generalized risks. Also, since the telephone survey collected demographic data, including whether the respondent or a family member had ever worked in the coal industry, future research may also evaluate the importance of perceptions of trust when the risk applies to the individual or a family member.

From a broader perspective, although this model appears to be an appropriate representation of the data, there may be other models of how issue advocacy influences stakeholder attitudes that also fit the data reasonably well. Future research may revise this model and/or generate new models to further advance this area of research. Nevertheless, given research to-date, there appears to be no reason to refute this model. Therefore, this model may be expanded to evaluate its ability to assess and evaluate the
outcomes of other forms of advocacy, such as political and values advocacy. For example, the model could be used to assess political candidates’ efforts to generate trust among constituents, build the public agenda regarding the candidates’ platforms, and ultimately generate approval for candidates. In summary, although the dissertation’s findings are certainly germane to organizations involved in marketplace advocacy to resource community stakeholders, future research should broaden this dissertation’s findings to examine its applicability to other socio-economic strata, geographic regions, and other forms of advocacy campaigns.
Appendix A:

Survey Demographics

Gender

![Gender Pie Chart]

Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
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<td>Mingo</td>
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<td>.3</td>
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### Income

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### Education

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<td>Total</td>
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17 According to the United States Census Bureau (2000), 74.3% of West Virginia’s population is over 18 and 12.4% are 65 and over. Consistent with survey response demographics, the median age is 35.3.

18 West Virginia’s population has a median household income of $41,994 and a per capita income of $21,997 per year.

19 Regarding West Virginia's true population educational levels, 75.2% hold a high school degree and 14.8% have a bachelor’s degree or higher.
According to the 2000 U.S. Census, West Virginia’s true population racial demographics are as follows: 75.1% White; 12.3% Black or African American; 3.6% Asian; 0.9% American Indian or Alaskan Native; 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Other Island Pacificer; 5.5% some other race; and 2.4% two or more races.

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<th>Race</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>2.0</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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\[20\]
Appendix B:

Friends of Coal Survey

Introduction
Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____ with ____. We’re not asking for money or trying to sell anything. Today, we’re conducting a poll regarding the coal industry in West Virginia. The survey will take no more than 10 minutes of your time and require only brief responses. Are you willing to participate in this survey?

[INTERVIEWERS: DO NOT READ. If the answer is “no,” say “thank you” and hang up. If yes, continue with the remainder of the survey.]

1. Are you a resident of West Virginia?
   a. Yes
   b. No

[INTERVIEWERS: If the answer is “no,” thank the participant for their time and hang up. If the answer is “yes,” continue with the survey.]

2. About how many years have you lived in West Virginia? ________________

I’m going to read several statements. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means that you strongly agree and 1 means that you strongly disagree, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements regarding the coal industry in West Virginia (WV):

3. My general attitude towards the coal industry in WV is favorable.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I generally dislike the coal industry in WV.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. My opinion of the coal industry in WV is positive.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. The coal industry has not contributed to WV’s economy.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I am proud of WV’s coal mining heritage.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. I believe that a stronger coal industry is bad for WV’s economy.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Coal mining helps keep my energy bills low.
   1 2 3 4 5
10. A stronger coal industry will help keep future generations of West Virginians from leaving the state.

11. I believe that greater reliance on coal is bad for WV’s economy.

12. Coal companies are generally concerned with WV’s environment.

13. The coal industry could do more to restore mine sites to their original condition.

14. Coal mining helps meet energy requirements.

15. Coal mining helps sustain modern electrical conveniences, such as airports and cities.

16. Most of WV’s electricity is generated by WV coal.

17. In general, I do not trust the coal industry.

18. The coal industry makes truthful claims.

19. The coal industry is honest.

20. I do not believe what the coal industry tells me.

21. The government does not do enough to regulate the coal industry.

22. The coal industry generally complies with government regulations.

23. Government regulation of the coal industry is adequate.

24. Coal companies are committed to protecting the public.
25. Coal companies do not care about people in WV.
   1  2  3  4  5

26. The coal industry shares its plans for the future.
   1  2  3  4  5

27. People can access important information about coal industry activities.
   1  2  3  4  5

28. The coal industry provides disclosure regarding important matters to the community.
   1  2  3  4  5

29. I have heard of the Friends of Coal campaign.
   1  2  3  4  5

30. I am aware of Friends of Coal Day at the Capitol in Charleston.
   1  2  3  4  5

[Interviewers: DO NOT READ. If the respondent answered 1 to BOTH 29 and 30, please skip to the LAST section – BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS.]

We’ve completed most of the survey. Now, we’re going to focus specifically on the Friends of Coal campaign. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being never and 5 being often, please indicate how often you have seen the following:

31. Friends of Coal bumper stickers on cars
   1  2  3  4  5

32. Friends of Coal advertisements on television
   1  2  3  4  5

33. Friends of Coal advertisements on the radio
   1  2  3  4  5

34. Stories about Friends of Coal in the newspaper
   1  2  3  4  5

35. Stories about Friends of Coal in magazines
   1  2  3  4  5

36. Friends of Coal billboards
   1  2  3  4  5

37. Friends of Coal booths or displays at public events
   1  2  3  4  5

38. The Friends of Coal website
   1  2  3  4  5
39. Are you familiar with Friends of Coal in any other capacity?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   If yes, please describe:____________________________________________

40. Have you seen any other Friends of Coal advertisements or messages?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   If yes, please describe:____________________________________________

We’re almost finished. For the following statements, indicate your level of agreement, with 5 means that you strongly agree and 1 means that you strongly disagree.

41. My attitude towards the organization Friends of Coal campaign is generally favorable.
   1 2 3 4 5

42. The attitudes of most West Virginians towards Friends of Coal are generally favorable.
   1 2 3 4 5

43. The Friends of Coal campaign has improved my general attitude towards the coal industry in WV.
   1 2 3 4 5

44. The Friends of Coal campaign has improved the attitude of other West Virginians towards the coal industry in the state.
   1 2 3 4 5

45. The Friends of Coal campaign communicates information about the contributions of the coal industry to WV’s economy.
   1 2 3 4 5

46. The Friends of Coal campaign makes me proud of WV’s coal mining heritage.
   1 2 3 4 5

47. The Friends of Coal campaign communicates reasons for future generations to stay in WV.
   1 2 3 4 5

48. The Friends of Coal campaign communicates environmental efforts by the coal industry.
   1 2 3 4 5
49. The Friends of Coal campaign makes me proud of the fact that most of WV’s electricity is generated by WV coal.
   1 2 3 4 5

50. The Friends of Coal campaign communicates the industry’s ability to meet the nation’s energy requirements.
   1 2 3 4 5

51. Friends of Coal makes truthful claims.
   1 2 3 4 5

52. In general, I do not trust Friends of Coal.
   1 2 3 4 5

53. Friends of Coal is an honest organization
   1 2 3 4 5

54. I do not believe what the Friends of Coal campaign says.
   1 2 3 4 5

55. Friends of Coal is made up of coal companies.
   1 2 3 4 5

56. Friends of Coal is made up of concerned citizens.
   1 2 3 4 5

**Background & Demographics**

And lastly, I have some general attitude questions. For the following statements, indicate your level of agreement, with 5 indicating that you **strongly agree** and 1 indicating that you **strongly disagree**.

57. When humans interfere with nature, it often produces disastrous consequences.
   1 2 3 4 5

58. Humans are severely abusing the environment.
   1 2 3 4 5

59. Despite our special abilities, humans are still subject to the laws of nature.
   1 2 3 4 5

60. The so-called “ecological crisis” facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.
   1 2 3 4 5

61. The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset.
   1 2 3 4 5
62. If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe.

63. Are you a member of any environmental groups?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   If yes, how many environmental groups do you belong to?

64. Have you ever donated money to any environmental groups?
   c. Yes
   d. No
   If yes, how many environmental groups have you donated money to?

65. Have you, or anyone in your family, worked in the coal industry?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   If yes, in what capacity have they worked for the industry?
   What is your relationship to them?

66. In what year were you born?

67. In what county do you now live?

68. What is the highest grade in school or level of education you have completed?
   [INTERVIEWERS: Read responses.]
   a. Less Than High School
   b. High School
   c. Some College
   d. College Degree
   e. Some Post Graduate
   f. Graduate Degree [Includes MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD, Etc.]

69. I am going to read you a list of income categories. Please stop me when a category best describes your total household income before taxes:
   a. Less Than $10,000
   b. $10,000 up to $19,999
   c. $20,000 up to $29,999
   d. $30,000 up to $39,999
   e. $40,000 up to $49,999
   f. $50,000 up to $59,999
   g. $60,000 up to $69,999
   h. $70,000 up to $79,999
   i. $80,000 or More
   j. No Answer
70. What race do you consider yourself?
   a. White/Caucasian
   b. Black/African-American
   c. Native American/ American Indian
   d. Asian/Oriental
   e. Other or Mixed [Specify] _________________________
   f. No Answer

CODE GENDER OF RESPONDENT GENDER
   a. Male
   b. Female

Thank you so much for your time.
Appendix C: *Intercorrelations Between Model Variables*  

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<th>Energy</th>
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<th>Approval 3</th>
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Textile Mills Corporation v. Commissioner, 314 U.S. 326 (1941)


