Central questions:

? What new organizational forms are emerging in civil society organizations in central Appalachia in response to economic globalization?

? From the point of view of grassroots activism, what are the challenges of economic globalization?

? How do these new civil society organizations position themselves in, and against, the civic ecology within which they arise – at local, regional, national, transnational levels?

To develop theoretical models of contemporary civil society, it is urgent to develop more nuanced and rigorous forms of **scalar analysis**. Under economic globalization, even the most seemingly ‘local’ of organizations must engage forces at multiple scales – local, regional, national, transnational. In many ways, economic globalization can be understood as the breaking down of buffering between the global and local as the political role of the nation-state changes. Under mid 20th-century ideologies, nation states played important roles as political buffers between local and global economies – protecting national industries with trade restrictions, buffering demographic impacts of global labor markets by redistributing national wealth with social and public services, enforcing environmental and health standards, etc.. The capacity for this sort of buffering was uneven, with some peripheralized regions and nations lacking political strength to enforce national controls against the might of global markets or militarily dominant nations. However, increasingly dominant ideologies of neoliberalism shift most national governments from a role as the buffer against transnational economic flows, towards a role as the broker who solicits and enables transnational economic flows. Therefore, the points of articulation **between scalar levels** are becoming politically charged zones, where new forms of gatekeeping and contestation are emerging. It is in the political vacuum and dislocations at these points of scalar articulation, that new forms of civic activism are emerging—attracting new kinds of political actors and generating new political metanarratives and imaginaries. In the grip of new necessities there is a great deal of experimentation in **organizational structure** as local communities try to defend themselves— leading to the creation of a diversity of types of civil society organizations.

This paper tries to understand how well these new structures of organization work

1) to achieve the goals of citizens who are creating them and
2) to engage effectively with the real problems and needs of their communities within the changing realities of globalization

It draws on research on environmental activism in central Appalachia. This includes 20 plus years of intensive ethnographic research, and, in the last four years, participatory action research with the UK Appalachian Center’s Common Knowledge Network and survey research with the UK Appalachian Center’s Civil Society Research Project [initiated by myself and now under the direction of Christopher Rice, UKAC Research Director].

In this paper, a typology of organizational types is presented:

1) non-placed
   a. social (and political) movement organization
   b. interest group: direct action network
   c. interest group: non-profit voluntary association

2) place-based
   a. representational: case studies—Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Community Farm Alliance
   b. pseudo-participatory authoritarian professional non-profit: case study—Mountain Area Community Economic Development in early and mid 1990s (this organization was reorganized in last several years, in positive new ways)
   c. incubator networks: case study—Rural Action.
   d. multisectoral partnerships embedded in regional public space: case studies—Community Farm Alliance & HB 611; UKAC Common Knowledge Network.

These different organizational models are evaluated to assess their effectiveness in promoting democratic planning able to grapple with multiple scalar levels. The following analytic questions are developed:

1) how effective is this organizational form in ‘scaling up’ grassroots decision-making and voice?
   a. Ability to be accountable to local needs and realities [SCALE\(^1\)]
   b. Ability to sustain itself through training & leadership development and to conduct ongoing research & self-evaluation [SCALE\(^2\)]
   c. Ability to engage in holistic and democratic planning of broad geographic and temporal scope and to extend its successes appropriately [SCALE\(^3\)]

2) How effective is this organizational form in generating the kinds of knowledge which are needed to engage in democratic planning at appropriate scalar levels
   a. Capacity to engage holistically with multi-issue problems engaging multiple perspectives and positionalities
   b. Capacity to deal with single-issue problems requiring specialization