

## 当代人类学家之一：James C. Scott

来自 Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

James C. Scott (born 2 Dec 1936) is Sterling Professor of Political Science at Yale University. Before being promoted to Sterling Professor, he was the Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Anthropology. He is also the director of the Program in Agrarian Studies. By training, he is a southeast Asianist.

### Research Topics

James Scott's work focuses on the ways that subaltern people resist dominance. His original interest was in peasants in the Kedah state of Malaysia, and he wrote *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Subsistence and Rebellion in Southeast Asia* (1976) about the ways peasant peoples resisted authority. In *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (1985) he expanded his theories to peasants in other parts of the world, and in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: The Hidden Transcript of Subordinate Groups* (1990) he argued that all subordinate groups resist in ways similar to peasants. These three books have been summarized humorously with the descriptions "Peasants in Malaysia, peasants everywhere, everyone everywhere." Scott's theories are often contrasted with Gramscian ideas about hegemony. Against Gramsci, Scott argues that the everyday resistance of subalterns shows that they have not consented to dominance.

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Scott uses the term public transcript to describe the open, public interactions between dominators and oppressed and the term hidden transcript for the critique of power that goes on offstage, which power holders do not see or hear. Different systems of domination, including political, economic, cultural, or religious, have aspects that are not heard that go along with their public dimensions. In order to study the systems of domination, careful attention is paid to what lies beneath the surface of evident, public behavior. In public, those that are oppressed accept their domination, but they always question their domination offstage. On the event of a publicization of this "hidden transcript", oppressed classes openly assume their speech, and become conscious of its common status.

Scott's most recent monograph, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (1998) took him more into the realm of political science. In it, he showed how central governments attempt to force legibility on their subjects, and thus lose local knowledge, which he calls *mētis*. One example is in permanent last names. Scott cites a Welsh man who appeared in court and identified himself with a long string of patronyms: "John, ap Thomas ap William" etc. In his local village, this naming system carried a lot of information, because people could identify him as the son of Thomas and grandson of William, and thus distinguish him from the other Johns and the other grandchildren of Thomas. It was of less use to the central government, which did not know Thomas or William. The court demanded that John take a permanent last name (in this case, the name of his village). This helped the central government keep track of its subjects, but it lost local information. Scott argues that in order for schemes to improve the human condition to succeed, they must take into account local conditions, and that the high-modernist ideologies of the 20th century have prevented this. He highlights collective farms in the Soviet Union, the building of Brasilia, and Prussian forestry techniques as examples of failed schemes.

Scott was a leading figure in the Perestroika movement in political science, which argued that quantitative studies were being over-privileged and that qualitative studies should be accepted into more academic journals.

Scott's other academic interests include: political economy, anarchism, ideology, peasant politics, revolution, Southeast Asia, and class relations.

Scott lives in Connecticut, where he raises sheep. He received his bachelor's degree from Williams College and his MA and PhD (1967) from Yale. He taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison until 1976, when he returned to Yale.

### Bibliography

(Note: excludes edited volumes.)

*Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale University Press, 1998 ISBN 0-



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