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| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references (p. 359-434) and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | pt. 1. State projects of legibility and simplification -- pt. 2. Transforming visions -- pt. 3. The social engineering of rural settlement and production -- pt. 4. The missing link. |
| Sommario/riassunto | Compulsory ujamaa villages in Tanzania, collectivization in Russia, Le Corbusier's urban planning theory realized in Brasilia, the Great Leap Forward in China, agricultural "modernization" in the Tropics-the twentieth century has been racked by grand utopian schemes that have inadvertently brought death and disruption to millions. Why do well-intentioned plans for improving the human condition go tragically awry?In this wide-ranging and original book, James C. Scott analyzes failed cases of large-scale authoritarian plans in a variety of fields. Centrally managed social plans misfire, Scott argues, when they impose schematic visions that do violence to complex interdependencies that are not-and cannot-be fully understood. Further, the success of designs for social organization depends upon the recognition that local, practical knowledge is as important as formal, epistemic |

knowledge. The author builds a persuasive case against "development theory" and imperialistic state planning that disregards the values, desires, and objections of its subjects. He identifies and discusses four conditions common to all planning disasters: administrative ordering of nature and society by the state; a "high-modernist ideology" that places confidence in the ability of science to improve every aspect of human life; a willingness to use authoritarian state power to effect large-scale interventions; and a prostrate civil society that cannot effectively resist such plans.
