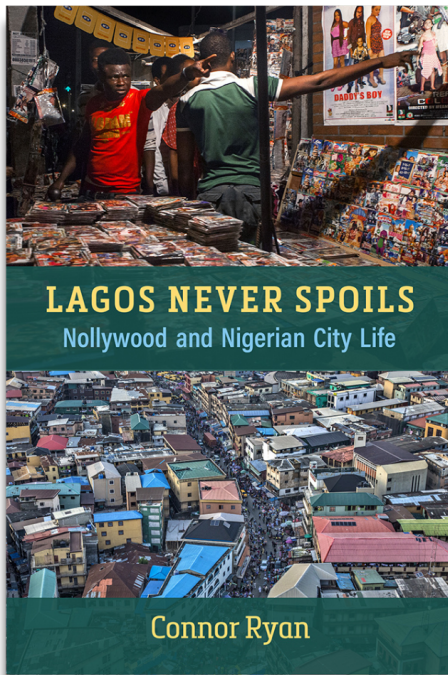




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## LAGOS NEVER SPOILS

### NOLLYWOOD AND NIGERIAN CITY LIFE

Connor Ryan

#### *Series: African Perspectives*

The slogan “Lagos shall not spoil,” found in print media, political campaigns, and common conversation, represents a shared expression of the optimism the city embodies. However, on city streets the phrase also appears scrawled in irreverent variations—“Lagos cannot spoil more than this!”—that meet the frustrations of city life with irony. In both cases, the slogan captures the resilience and persistence with which residents of Lagos live on, despite it all. This book examines the circumstances that make it possible for residents to persist in pursuing their various projects and for the city to remain a platform that supports these projects and creates space for even more to emerge. Author Connor Ryan argues that residents continually work to combine contingency and endurance in opportunistic ways that make the city work for them, and as such, Lagos never spoils: it endures.

What makes Lagos remarkable is what residents have made of it, and Nollywood—the industry and the body of films—both embodies and represents this continual urban transformation. *Lagos Never Spoils* traces how Nollywood arose from the social milieu of Lagos and, in turn, generates a repertoire of stories, images, styles, and sentiments with which audiences come to grips with city life. The book traces the evolution of the screen media industry in Lagos and explores how this corresponds with historical phases in the city’s representation onscreen. It discusses important urban spaces of production and consumption, including historic movie halls, video marketplaces, film sets, and multiplex cinemas. Across six chapters, it attends to celluloid films about oil-boom wealth, television sitcoms about urban tricksters, video melodramas about urban crisis, glossy romantic comedies about young professionals, and dark thrillers on streaming platforms about the pleasure of moral transgression. In this fashion, the book offers new approaches to the interpretation of screen texts produced in and about Lagos, a place that is today the most influential image of West African city life.

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