



Positive Agenda Nigeria

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Informed Policy Engagement or Intensive Personality Disparagement in Osun 2022 Governorship Election Campaign?

Osun 2022 Governorship Election Campaign Monitoring Report

Issue 2, May 21, 2022

Introduction

By July 16th, 2022, registered voters in Osun State will be at their various polling units in the state to elect a new governor who will be leading the state from November 2022 when the tenure of Alhaji Gboyega Oyetola expires¹. Governor Oyetola was elected in 2018 after the former governor, Engineer Rauf Aregbesola, spent 8 years of two terms. Since the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared the official date for electorate to be at the poll, and hinted that primary election would commence in February and end in March 2022, political parties and candidates had been campaigning, informing electorate why they should be voted for. Though the national electoral body approved April 2022 as the month for official campaign, our observations of various campaign platforms in the state revealed that concerned stakeholders had earlier started internal campaign before the month. Available information indicates that the All Progressives Congress (APC) officially inaugurated Campaign Council in May 2022, while the People's Democratic Party (PDP) initiated its committee in April 2022². There have been a number of mixed results since the incumbent governor took office in 2018, employing the state's human and material resources to generate and preserve public goods. In terms of socioeconomic growth, the governor has adamantly maintained that he fulfilled nearly all of his pledges in 2018 and that voters should re-elect him to continue working for the good of all citizens and communities³. His opponents, both within and outside his political party (APC), say he has accomplished little, and hence should not be re-elected. Since the national electoral body lifted the ban on campaign activity, these two lines of thinking had been part of the campaign. Therefore, this report is the second output of the 2022 governorship election campaign monitoring in the state. The report specifically considers campaign strategies employed by candidates, parties and their

¹ INEC (2022). Osun State Governorship 2022 Timetable and Schedule of Activities. <https://inecnigeria.org/osun-state-governorship-2022-timetable-and-schedule-of-activities/>.

² Dada, L., (2022). Osun Guber: Senate spokesperson named DG Oyetola's campaign council. *The Sun*, May 5, 2022. <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/osun-guber-senate-spokesperson-named-dg-oyetolas-campaign-council/>; Ezedinuo, F. (2022). Osun 2022: PDP inaugurates campaign, anti-rigging committees. *Daily Post*, April 26, 2022. <https://dailypost.ng/2022/04/26/osun-2022-pdp-inaugurates-campaign-anti-rigging-committees/>.

³ Amata, D., (2022). Osun 2022: 6 Key Socio-Economic Indicators Candidates and Electorates Should Know. <https://www.dataphyte.com/latest-reports/elections/osun-2022-6-key-socio-economic-indicators-candidates-and-electorates-should-know/>.

supporters, most importantly members of the media team of the parties and the candidates. The strategies were examined within the context of the intended and unintended outcomes of the messages spread on social networking platforms (especially Facebook) and political actors' interactions with the conventional media (especially newspapers). The incumbent government's policy issues or programmes were also looked at, with the thought that opposition parties should use them to engage the public by offering alternatives or discussing recognised flaws.

Our Approach

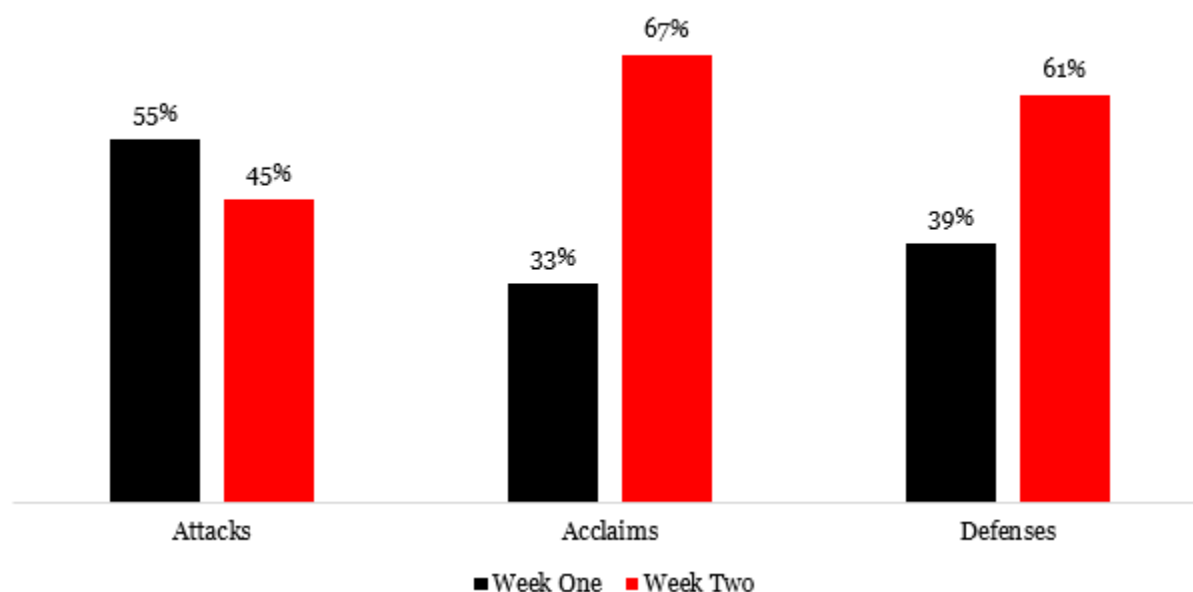
Messages posted on Facebook and Twitter by the political parties through their official pages, candidates' pages and supporters' personal accounts, radio jingles as well as news stories were the primary sources of data for this report. These stakeholders were monitored from May 12 to May 18, 2022. This is a 7-day period. During the period, our analysts paid specific attention to messages that were campaign-driven not general messages, especially those promoting activities of the incumbent governor and mere social engagements of the candidates that were not related to political activities. Attacks, acclaims and defenses were the three categories of campaign strategies our analysts looked for in each message extracted from Facebook, Twitter, radio jingles and national newspapers. Attacks were the messages that denigrated the personality traits of candidates and leadership quality and/or competence of the parties as well as candidates to govern the state. Attacks were also examined from the perspective of the actors, demeaning the quality of programmes, initiatives and projects of the incumbent. Acclaims were the messages that show that the parties and the candidates were better in terms of personality traits, leadership quality as well as competence in delivering quality public goods to the citizens and residents in the state. Defenses were the messages that refuted negative elements pushed out by actors against candidates and political parties. In this context, our analysts looked for traces that established members of the opposition and the ruling camps defending what were considered as negatives and/or not true about the personality traits, leadership style and competence of the candidates and political parties. Across the campaign platforms that were examined, 85 messages were found as relevant for evaluation by our analysts. Apart from the campaign strategies (attacks, acclaims and defenses), infrastructure, social programmes, workers' salary, welfare and employment, agriculture, economy, education, health, security and others were created as campaign

issues or policies that the parties and their supporters need to address for the electorate to make informed decision during voting on July 16th, 2022. The campaign strategies and issues/or policies were reliably checked using stability and reproducibility approaches. A member of the research team coded the messages several times while another member repeated the process of coding the messages. The outcome indicated strong level of agreements in line with what each campaign strategy and issue and/or policy represented.

Key Results

In the previous week (Week One), 60 messages were examined from Facebook and newspapers. A total of 85 messages were found relevant for week two. This is an increase of 17.2%. For both weeks, a total of 77 attacks were traced while 82 and 18 traces of acclaims and defenses were found respectively. From the 85 messages, a total of 101 traces of the campaign strategies were found against 76 traces which were discovered during week one. Week-by-week analysis of the strategies showed that the level of using attacks reduced in the second week of the monitoring while acclaims and defenses increased significantly (see Exhibit 1). According to our analysis, attacks reduced by 10% in the second week while acclaims and defenses increased by 34% and 22% respectively.

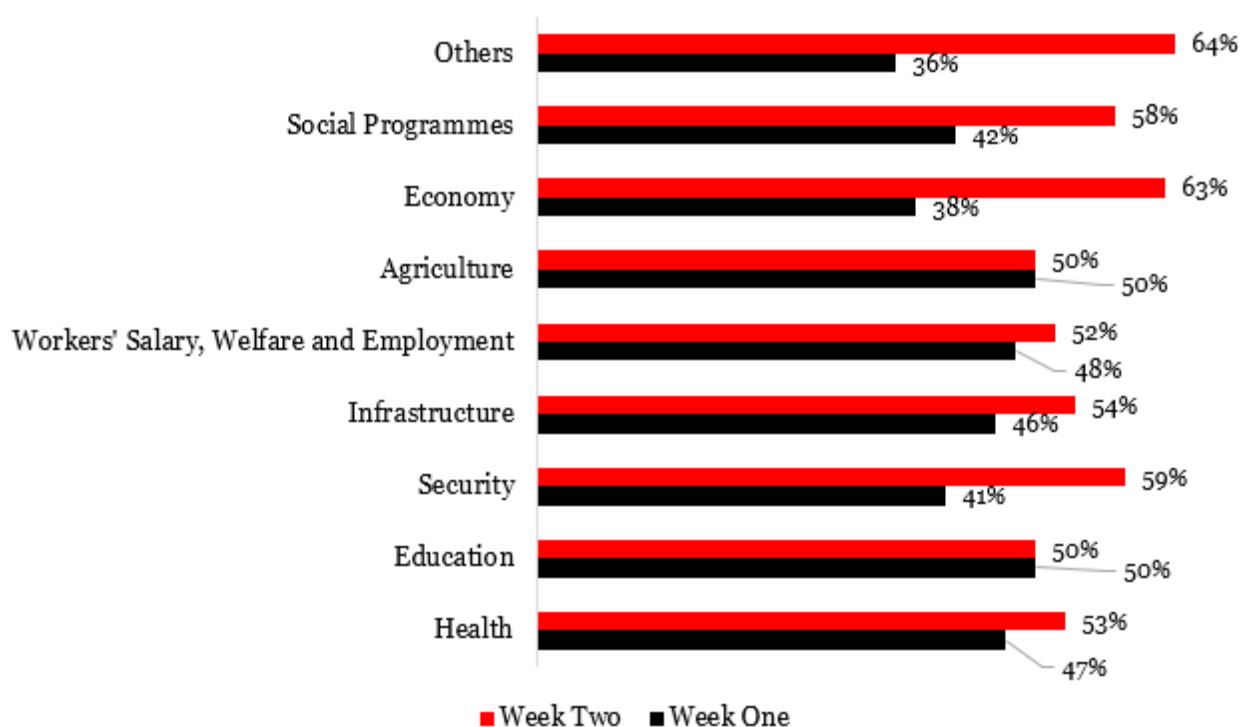
Exhibit 1: Campaign strategies by week



Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Our analysts identified modest improvement in the number of traces that resonate with campaign and/or policy issues. A total of 106 traces of the previously-discussed issues or programmes were discovered in week one. Our analysts discovered 146 traces in week two, an increase of 16 percent. Individual analysis reveals that the category of others grew by 28%, while discussions of social programmes and economy grew by 16% and 25%, respectively. The topics of security and health in various media forms improved by 18% and 6%, respectively. According to our analysis, the discussion of employees' salaries, welfare, and employment has increased only somewhat (see Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Campaign and/or Policy Issues by week⁴



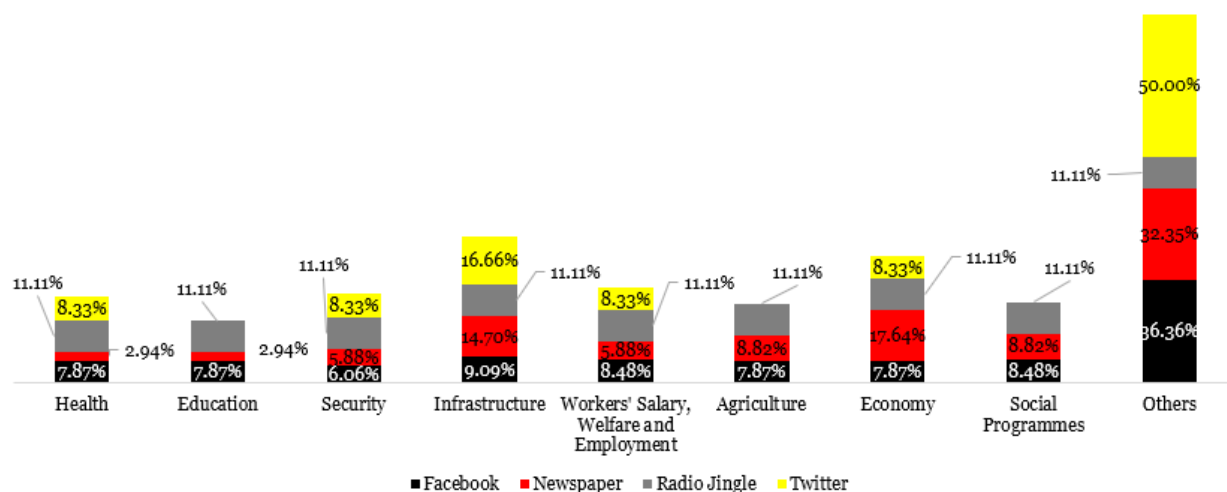
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Against the dominance of personality attacks and demeaning leadership style that were recorded during week one, for this week, our analysts found discussions of candidate's competence, reconciliation (Ademola Adeleke and Dotun Babayemi's reconciliation

⁴ **Key:** Health=19, Education=18, Security=17, Infrastructure=26, Workers' salary, welfare and employment=21, Agriculture=20, Economy=24, Social Programmes=26, Others=81

meeting), prevention from being candidate of the ruling party (Lasun Yusuf's of Labour Party vehemently discussed this), vote buying and campaign rally atmosphere mostly appeared under 'others category' this week.

Exhibit 3: Campaign and/or Policy Issues by Media Types⁵



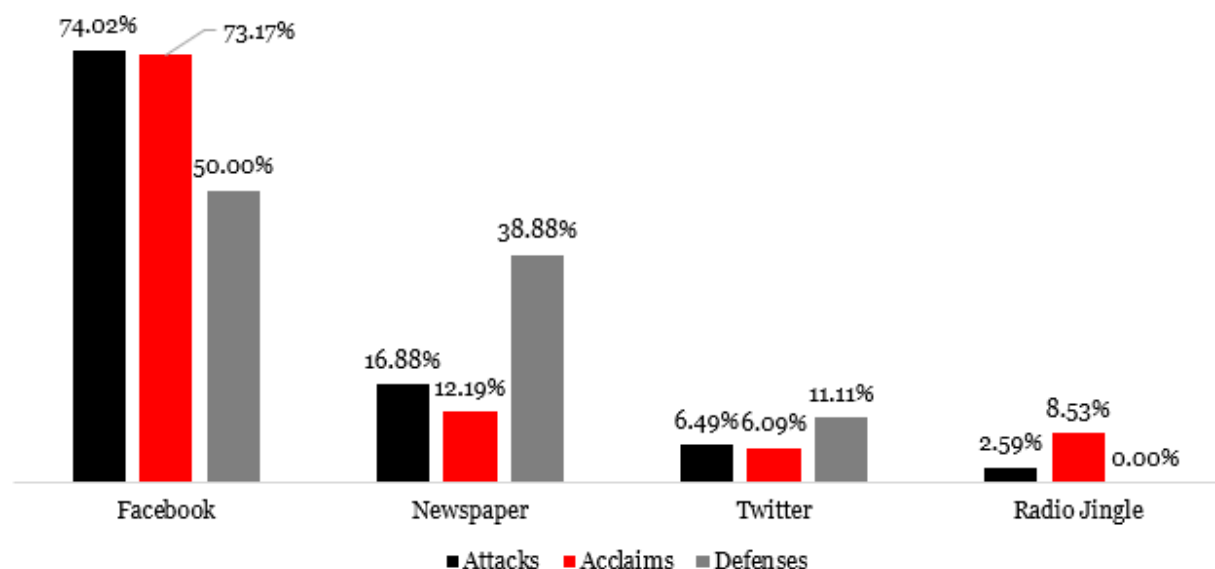
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Across media types (Facebook, Twitter, radio jingles and newspapers), analysis reveals that the identified campaign issues and/or policies were discussed on Facebook and in radio jingles more than in the newspapers (though small messages were found from the newspapers) and Twitter (see Exhibit 3). Analysis further indicates that actors discussed elements that identified under 'others category' earlier mostly on Facebook followed by Twitter and newspapers. Apart from others category that was explored by the actors, our analysis also reveals that economy (17.64%), infrastructure (14.70%) and agriculture (8.82%) were mainly discussed in the newspapers. One of the more interesting outcomes of the analysis was that in the radio jingles examined, all of the campaign issues or policy problems were debated at the same percentage level.

⁵ **Key:** Facebook=165, Newspaper=34, Radio Jingle=36, Twitter=12

Again, it seems that actors were leveraging less regulation of Facebook for significant deployment of attacks campaign strategy. Our analysts discovered that this platform was used more than newspapers, Twitter and radio jingles for attacking personalities as well as policies or activities. Over 74% of 77 traces of attacks strategy discovered for the two weeks were found on pages of political parties' supporters and groups. Acclaims and defenses were equally used on the platform significantly. Defenses and attacks strategy were also deployed in newspapers while acclaims were more used in radio jingles than other campaign strategies.

Exhibit 4: Campaign Strategies across Media Types⁶



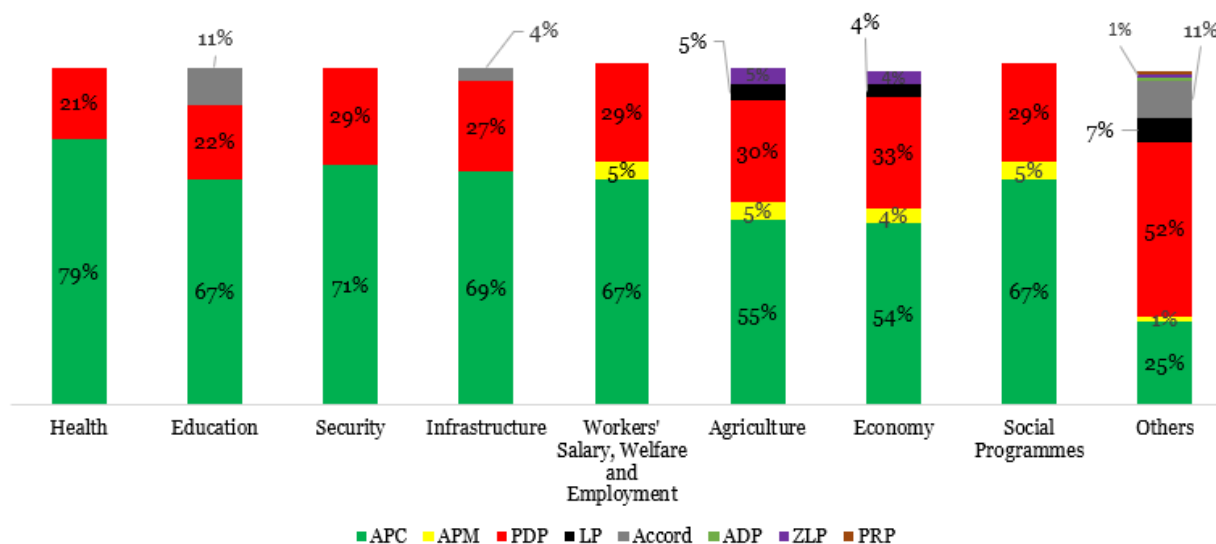
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

In terms of political party that had supporters and candidates who engaged the public using the campaign issues and/or policies, our analysis shows that the APC was much better than the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Allied People's Movement (see Exhibit 5). However, the PDP led the APC in the *others category*. Textual analysis of the category reveals that supporters of the party and the party itself (through its campaign Facebook page [*Imole DE*]) predominantly leveraged reconciliation and vote buying

⁶ **Key:** Attacks=77, Acclaims=82, Defenses=18

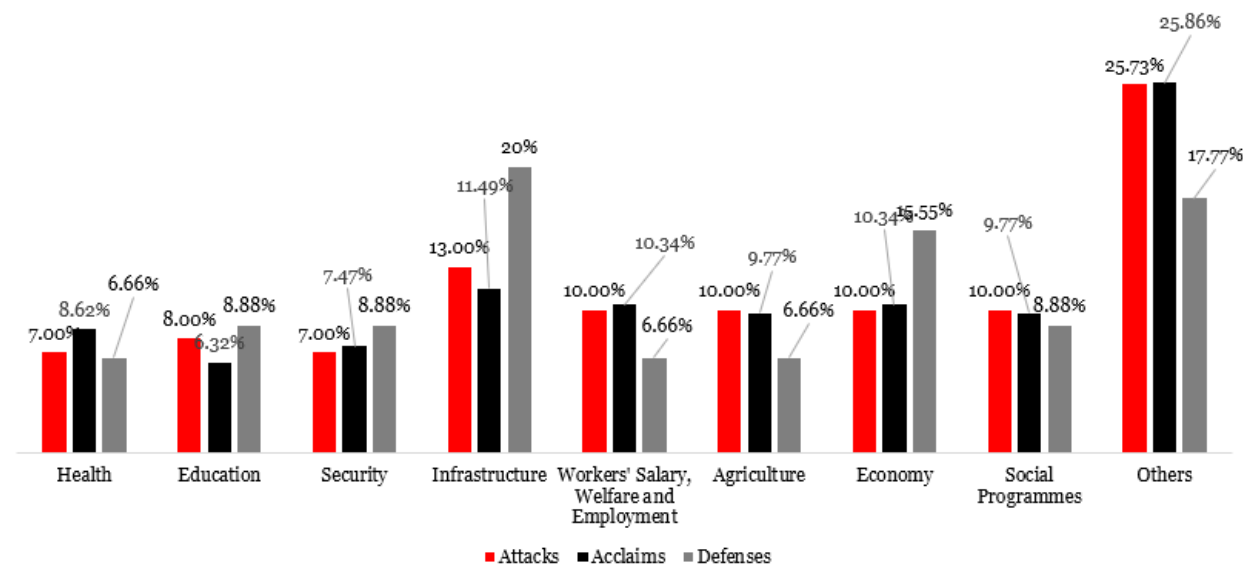
(defending PDP's candidate utterance on bringing local and foreign currencies for the election) components of the category.

Exhibit 5: Campaign and/or Policy Issues by Political Parties⁷



Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Exhibit 6: Campaign Strategies across Campaign and/or Policy Issues

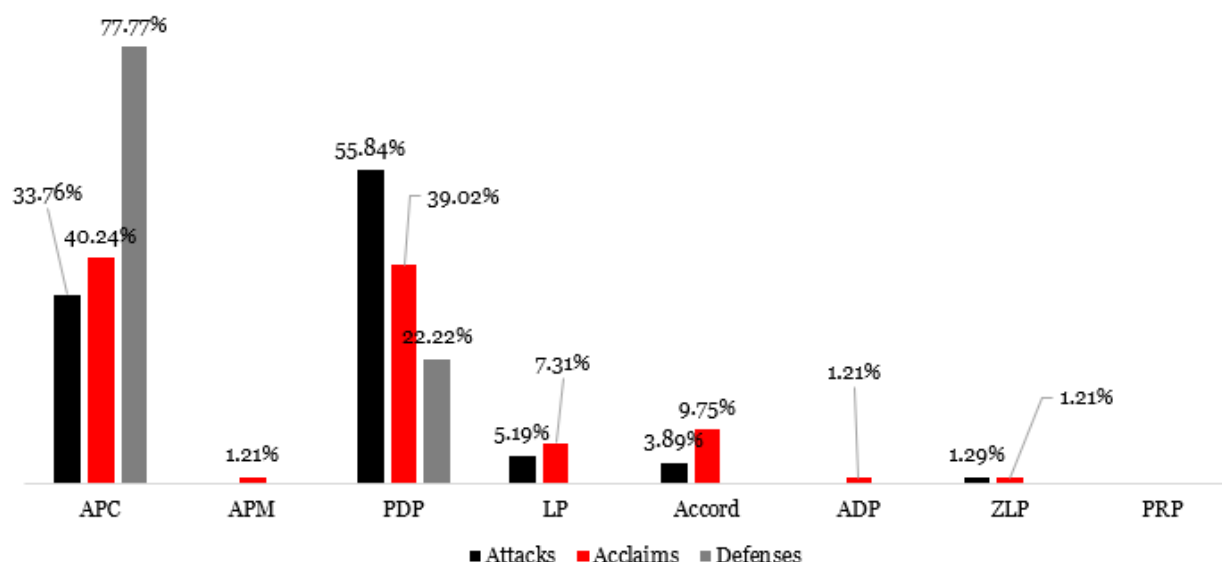


Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

⁷**Key:** Health=19, Education=18, Security=17, Infrastructure=26, Workers' salary, welfare and employment=21, Agriculture=20, Economy=24, Social Programmes=26, Others=81

Analysis of the campaign strategies in relation to the campaign issues reveals that acclaims and attacks were closely used by the actors. A total of 355 traces of the strategies were found across the campaign issues. From this figure, 38.30% were associated with attacks, while 49.01% and 12.67%% resonated with our definitions of acclaims and defenses. Further analysis establishes that attacks were predominantly employed while actors discussed reconciliation, vote buying and party's engagement of the candidates (see earlier definition of others for more components of the category). Acclaims were also deployed significantly while discussing these components. Defenses were mostly employed in the course of discussing issues related to economy, infrastructure, education and security against infrastructure, social programmes and education, which were the bone of contention across media types when the actors were monitored within a week. In this regard, our analysts found members and supporters of the APC as the main users of the strategy. It was mainly used to correct perceived negativities communicated by members and supporters of the PDP

Beyond understanding which political party and its supporters that deployed these strategies mostly across the campaign issues and/or policies, our analysts were equally interested in knowing which of the political parties that employed the strategies significantly during the two weeks monitoring period. Our analysts found 177 traces of the strategies. Over 55% of this figure were attacks while 35.52% and 9.21% were acclaims and defenses respectively. Further analysis indicates that the PDP attacked more than acclaimed and defended while the Accord only acclaimed. Over 77% of defenses found were basically deployed by the APC' members and supporters (see Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: Campaign Strategies across Political Parties⁸

Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Conclusion and Our Verdict

We implore all the parties, and especially the two major parties, to sustain the present atmosphere of increased acclaims instead of being attack-inclined in their campaigns. In the same vein, we enjoin the political parties to as well keep on focusing on the issues of the state. The improved focus on programmes and policies of the candidates and their political parties should be continued. PAN commends the positive slight deviation observed in the parties and candidates' engagement this week. However, we condemn the introduction of insinuation of vote buying capacity by one of the candidates. It is too early for such issues to rear its ugly head in the campaign atmosphere for the Osun 2022 election. For a state like Osun, bringing up policy issues and campaign programmes using the radio as a means of communication is commendable. It allows the people at the grassroots level to have access to campaign issues. While urge more of this in the weeks ahead, we frown at the deployment of Facebook for attacks by the parties. It is our opinion that the seeming lack of regulatory mechanism for the social media should not be taken

⁸ **Key:** Attacks=77, Acclaims=82, Defenses=18

for granted by the parties. As the campaign gets deeper and the election gets closer, we urge all political parties to focus on the programmes and policies in their campaigns.

About Positive Agenda Nigeria

Positive Agenda Nigeria is a non-governmental organisation led by a group of academics and independent researchers dedicated to adopting evidence-based approaches to preserve a favourable climate for Nigeria's socioeconomic and political activities.

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