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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 6, June 18, 2022

Introduction

By July 16th, 2022, registered voters in Osun State will elect a new governor to lead the state from November 2022, when the tenure of Alhaji Gboyega Oyetola expires[1]. Governor Oyetola was elected in 2018 to succeed Engineer Rauf Aregbesola. 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 have been campaigning, informing the electorate why they should be voted for. Though INEC approved April 2022 as the month for official campaign, our observations of various campaign platforms in the state revealed that concerned stakeholders started internal campaigns before the month. The All Progressives Congress (APC) officially inaugurated its Campaign Council in May 2022, while the People's Democratic Party (PDP) initiated its committee in April 2022[2]. 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 communities[3]. 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 activities, these two lines of thought have been part of the campaign. Similar to what characterized previous electoral campaigns held since 1999, political actors have started raising various concerns ahead of the July election. There are have been allegations of vote buying, use of thugs to disrupt campaign venues and harm attendees, as well as threat to life.

Although all these issues can affect the credibility of the July 16th, 2022 poll, our analysts believe that the issue of vote buying requires specific attention of concerned stakeholders,

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[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, available from: https://www.dataphyte.com/latest-reports/elections/osun-2022-6-key-socio-economic-indicators-candidates-and-electorates-should-know/

most importantly the electoral body and citizens. Vote buying is one of the strategies usually deployed by political actors such as candidates, their representatives, direct and indirect supporters; throughout the previous governorship elections in the state, it was employed by the stakeholders using different approaches. Events that characterised the elections of 2014 and 2018 attest to this fact. During the 2014 gubernatorial election, the two leading parties in the election, the ruling APC and the opposition PDP, engaged in the unethical electoral practice. Popular mechanisms of vote buying before and during the previous elections include pre-election hand-outs such as food and money; infrastructural projects in targeted electoral districts; as well as provision of incentives to voters/supporters to attend polling. In line with this background, this report, which is the sixth output and the second week report of the second month of the 2022 governorship election campaign monitoring in the state, specifically considers campaign strategies employed by candidates, parties and their supporters, most importantly members of the media team of the parties and the candidates, for communicating these issues and engaging the potential electorate ahead of the July election. The strategies were examined within the context of the intended and unintended outcomes of the messages spread on social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter) and political actors' interactions with the conventional media (newspapers and presentation of party as well as candidate's agenda through radio jingles in the state). The incumbent government's policy issues or programmes were also looked at, with the idea that opposition parties should use them to engage the public by offering alternatives or discussing recognized 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. Osun public information seeking about campaign issues or needs through various search engines, which are aggregated by Google Trends, also constituted a source of data for the report. In all, the data were sourced between April 6 and June 15, 2022. On a surprising note, between June 9 and June 15 (the covering the sixth week), our analyst found a message communicated by faction members of the ruling party (APC). This singlehandedly added to our number of political parties being monitored every week, but only from the intra-party type. Like what

has been monitoring, in week six, our analysts paid specific attention to campaign-driven messages (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, and campaign speeches. Attacks were the messages that denigrated personality traits of candidates and leadership qualities and/or competences of the parties and candidates to govern the state. Attacks were also examined from the perspective of the actors, demeaning the quality of programmes, and 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 qualities as well as competences in delivering quality public goods to the residents. Defenses were the messages that refuted negative elements pushed out by actors against other candidates and political parties. In this context, our analysts looked for traces which established that members of the opposition and the ruling camps defending what were considered as negatives and/or not true about the personality traits, leadership styles and competences of the candidates and political parties.

The focus of the weekly monitoring is to find informed policy engagement or intensive personality disparagement. In this regard, *highly informed policy engagement* which means mentioning of a particular policy or programme, citing location of the programme or when the policy was implemented, and discussing its consequences on the targeted beneficiaries or communities, were formulated. *Moderately informed policy engagement* represents a message that contains specific policy or programme and cites the location or discusses its impacts. No message can fit this category without having at least two of the elements associated with *highly informed policy engagement* metric. *Slightly informed policy engagement* metric entails a message that has one of the three elements associated with *highly informed policy engagement* metric. For the personality assessment, we considered *highly intensive personality disparagement, moderately intensive personality disparagement, slightly intensive personality disparagement and none intensive personality disparagement*. A message falls into highly intensive personality disparagement when it has elements that establish lack of competence of a candidate,

incomplete educational qualifications, and previous history of poor management of resources either in a private or public establishment. *Moderately intensive personality disparagement* was measured with the consideration of two of the three elements of *highly intensive personality disparagement* metric, while *slightly intensive personality disparagement* denotes a message that has only one of the three elements. *None intensive personality disparagement* specifically represents an absence of all the three elements. *Threats to credible poll* is a main metric with a focus on vote buying, rigging through political thugs, rigging through collusion with electoral body, and rigging through collusion with security agencies. Representations of these sub-metrics are premised on the trends discussed earlier. 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 on July 16th, 2022.

Apart from considering the issues political actors and their supporters discussed with the public weekly, we also examined public information seeking on issues and/or needs. The focus was on economy, health, security, education, road, employment, agriculture and salary. Public interest in these issues and/or needs were gathered through volume of searches normalised by the Google Trends. This tool was able to normalise information seeking of people in Ede, Iwo, Abeere, Ife, Osogbo, Ojudo, Ilesa, Edunabon, Ila-Orangun, Ipetu-Jesa, Efon-Alaaye, Ikirun and Apomu throughout the six-week period of monitoring the campaign activities of the actors. During data collection, our analysts discovered that media teams of some political parties and candidates deliberately shared same messages across the media types we examined. This is mostly evident among the new media team of the ruling party (APC). We also discerned a similar pattern among some supporters, who have dedicated Facebook pages for their candidates. The campaign strategies and issues/or polices 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 a strong level of agreement in line with what each campaign strategy and issue and/or policy represented.

Key Results

For the six weeks of monitoring, our analysts gathered 444 relevant messages. A total of 60 messages were found for week one. This represents 13.50% of the entire messages (n=444). In week two, 85 messages were discovered which signifies 19.10% of the entire messages (n=444) and an increase of 5.60% from the first week. Ninety-two messages were found for week three, representing 20.70% of the total messages (n=444). Comparing this with the percentage of the messages discovered for week two, it indicates 1.60% increase. From week four to week six, the number of relevant messages discovered by our analysts established fluctuation trends. In week four, the relevant messages (18.20%) dipped by 2.50% against the number of messages found for week three (20.70%). It reduced again in week five by 7.80% and picked by 7.60% in week six (see Exhibit 1). Based on the insights, our analysts note that the unstable trends were largely due to presidential primary elections of political parties that took place during the periods which necessitated concentration of resources by the actors to the issues and needs around the elections.

Exhibit 1: Campaign strategies by week[4]
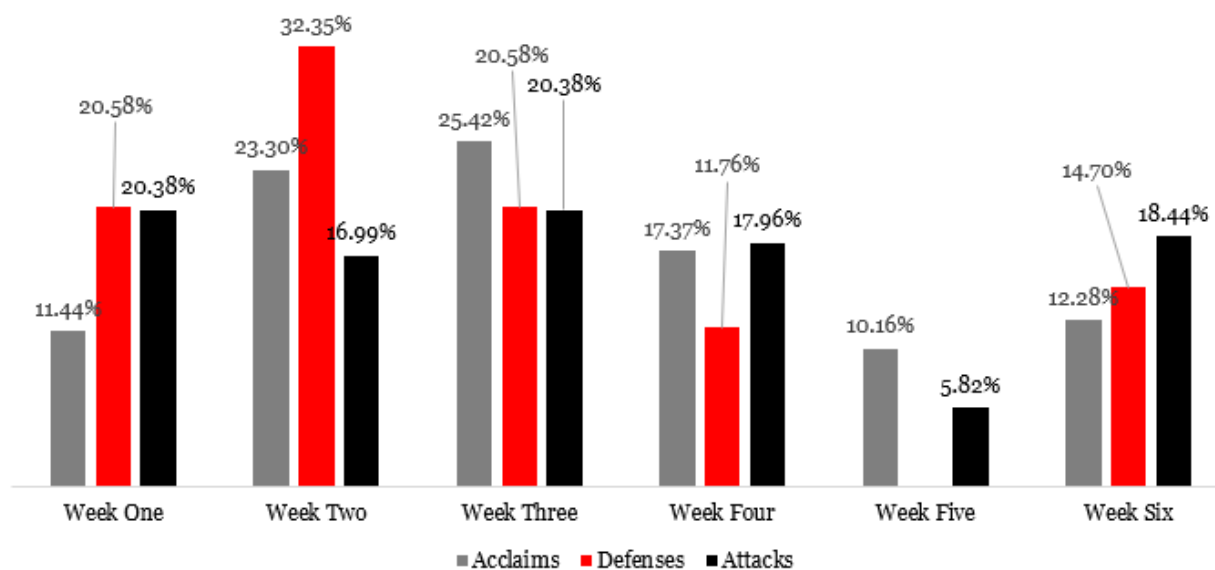
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Out of the 444 messages, our analysis reveals that parties and their supporters deployed acclaims (236=49.57%) and attacks (20=43.27%) strategy more than defenses

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[4] ***Key:*** Acclaims=236; Defenses =34; Attacks=206

(34=71.4%) strategy. Week-by-week analysis indicates that defenses and attacks strategy were mostly used in week one. The use of defenses and acclaims increased in week two while attacks reduced relatively. In week three, acclaims continued its level of increase due to its deployment by the actors. However, in week four through week six, the campaign strategy dipped significantly. Defenses were also less used in weeks four and six while it was not appropriated at all in week five. From week four to week five, actors embraced a little bit of decency in the use of attacks strategy by not using the strategy predominantly. However, in week six, actors recreated almost the level of percentage of using the strategy in weeks one and three (see Exhibit 1).

Campaign issues and/or policies engagement

From week one to week five, personality issues of the candidates, competence or lack of it of the candidates, assassination attempts or threats to life, vote buying among others were significantly discussed at the expense of informing potential voters the need to vote candidates based on their abilities and capabilities to address existing practical problems on health, education, security, agriculture, economy, social programmes, infrastructure, workers' salary, welfare and employment under our "other category metric". For week six, new issues and needs that are not captured in the formulated metrics were added by the actors. In the context of attacking and claiming superior leadership style as well as competence, actors discussed the need for rebuilding Osun and rescuing Osun. Suffice to note that rescuing Osun was most discussed by the oppositions than the ruling party. It was discussed within the context of poor management of material, human and financial resources by the ruling party. This was countered by the ruling party and its supporters, saying the Governor and the party utilized the state resources judiciously. Zero borrowing policy of the government was cited copiously by the media handlers and supporters of the party (APC). This is also applicable to the discussion of good governance, transformation among others that resonate with governance and development of the state. As the campaign gets hotter and the election day draws nearer, our analysts found the actors discussing defection of politicians from parties to parties. Our dataset also reveals engagement of the public on winning the election by a political party, the need for continuity, local government and house-to-house campaign strategies.

Statistically, actors have largely engaged the public on other campaign issues and needs in week three (26.84%) and week two (20.23%). Meanwhile, comparing week one with week six, our analysis shows a close percentage of discussing issues and needs that the public do not need for making informed voting decision on July 16, 2022. The cumulative analysis of the real campaign and or policy issues discussed reveals that workers' salary, welfare and employment, infrastructure, economy, social programmes, education, health, agriculture and security have mostly been discussed in this order. With workers' salary, welfare and employment as the most debated, our analysts note that the actors believe that presenting and discussing human capital-related issues and/or needs are more important that engaging the public on critical issues and/or needs in the infrastructural development, economy, education, health, agriculture and security sectors.

Exhibit 2: Campaign and/or Policy Issues by week

	Health	Education	Security	Infrastructure	Workers' Salary, Welfare and Employment	Agriculture	Economy	Social Programmes	Others
Week One	20.93%	18.00%	20.00%	18.75%	14.49%	25.64%	16.66%	20.75%	11.28%
Week Two	23.25%	18.00%	28.57%	21.87%	15.94%	25.64%	27.77%	18.86%	20.23%
Week Three	32.55%	20.00%	22.85%	21.87%	17.39%	20.51%	22.22%	20.75%	26.84%
Week Four	16.27%	20.00%	17.14%	17.18%	18.84%	17.94%	22.22%	24.52%	15.56%
Week Five	4.65%	10.00%	5.71%	12.50%	21.73%	5.12%	3.70%	5.66%	8.94%
Week Six	2.32%	14.00%	5.71%	7.81%	11.59%	5.12%	7.40%	9.43%	17.12%
Total	43	50	35	64	69	39	54	53	257

Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Similar to the data presented in Exhibit 2, data in Exhibit 3 reveal the volume of information Osun residents sought about the campaign issues/and or needs. Across the weeks, analysis shows that Osun public sought information about road, education, salary, economy, employment, security and health. Week-by-week analysis reveals that in week one, the public had significant interest in road-- which is within the infrastructure category--, salary and economy. The same week was used by the actors to discuss agriculture, health and social programmes. This indicates a clear mismatch between public interest and what the actors debated during the week. While employment, security and agriculture occupied public minds in week two, analysis shows that actors equally discussed security in addition to agriculture and health. With this outcome, our analysts note that the actors relatively aligned with the public interest. Health, salary and economy were the areas in which the public sought information about in week three predominantly. During the same week, actors discussed health, others issues and/or needs and security.

This result establishes that actors only aligned with one out of the three dominant areas that interested the public the most, indicating a significant point of divergence between the public and the actors. In week four, actors believed that social programmes, economy and education were important than other campaign issues and/or needs. Whereas, the pubic preferred seeking information about agriculture, education and health. In this regard, our analysts concluded that the actors slightly keyed into the public line of interest during the week. Comparing week five of the actors with the week five of the public, our analysis reveals significant discussion of workers' salary, welfare and employment by the actors, while the public actually had interest mostly in road (that is in one of the infrastructure components), security and agriculture. While actors devoted their resources to communicating unrelated campaign and/or policy issues in week six, the public deployed their resource (Internet data and device) to knowing employment issues in the state.

**Exhibit 3: Issues and/or needs searched by Osun Public based on weeks[5]**

Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

The six-week period indicates that across media types (Facebook, Twitter, radio jingles, campaign speech, and newspapers), the identified campaign issues/polices were discussed on Facebook, Twitter, in the newspapers and in the radio jingles more than during campaign rallies. Actors mostly deployed Twitter for discussing issues/needs that

[5] Volume of issues and/or needs search (Economy=604, Health=1666, Security=594, Education=1357, Road=739, Employment=300, Agriculture=762, Salary=766)

were not directly related with governance. This is also observed on Facebook and in the newspapers. While social media (Facebook and Twitter) were employed for discussing unrelated issues and/or needs, analysis shows that radio jingles were less used for this. Jingles were mostly employed for communicating what have been and will be done in the areas of agriculture, security, economy, infrastructure, workers' welfare, salary and employment.

***Exhibit 4: Campaign and/or Policy Issues by Media Types[6]***
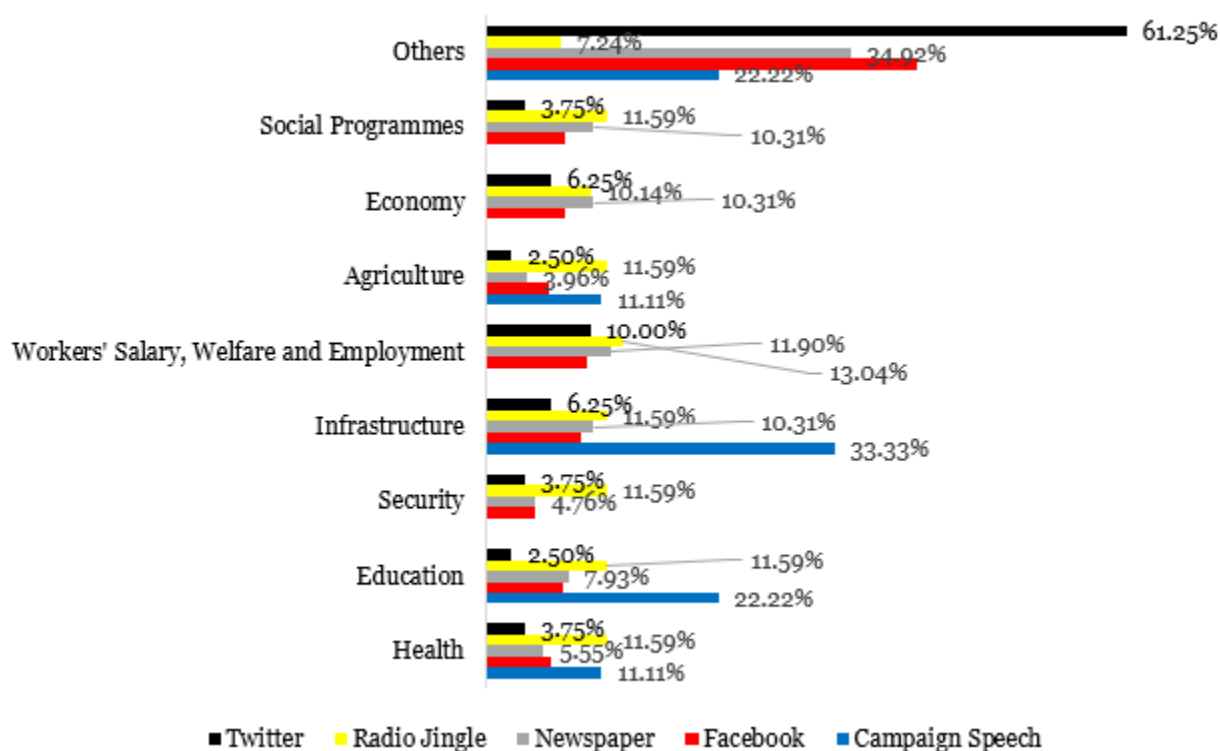
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Again, it seems that actors exploited the reduced regulation of Facebook for significant deployment of attacks as a campaign strategy. This medium was used more than newspapers, Twitter and radio jingles for attacking personalities, policies or activities. Over 62% of 156 traces of attacks as a strategy discovered for the four weeks were found on pages of political parties' supporters and groups. Defenses were equally used on the medium significantly, more than attacks. In the newspapers, our analysts found defenses

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[6] ***Key:*** Campaign Speech=9, Facebook=380, Newspaper=126, Radio Jingle=69, Twitter=80

more than acclaims and attacks strategies. This seems to be in order, given the expected gatekeeping power of the media producers which stresses the need to publish non-derogatory unchaotic messages. Like newspapers, analysis indicates significant deployment of defenses on Twitter while it was less used in radio jingles and during campaign rallies (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: Campaign Strategies across Media Types[7]
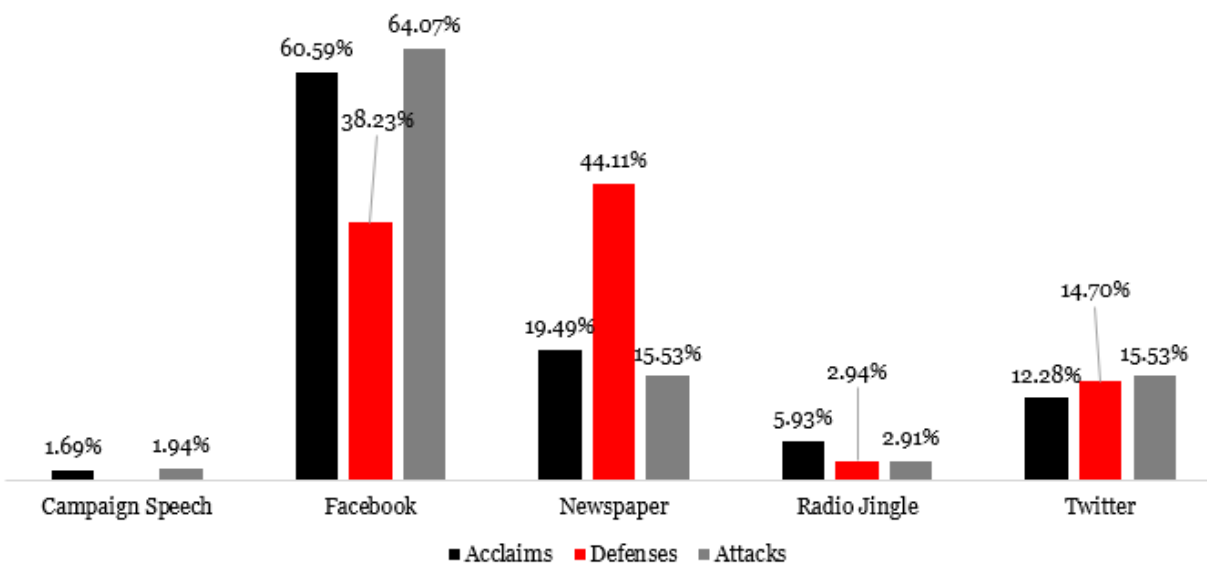
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

The ruling party remains the only political party that has significantly engaged the public across the campaign issues and/or needs in the last six weeks. The party has discussed what he has done in the areas of health, social programmes and workers' salary, welfare and employment more than telling the public what it intended to do differently if elected for another four years. As stated previously, the actors engaged the public on issues and/or needs that are not based on the needs of the public as well as challenges they are facing. For instance, the contextual analysis of the ruling party's engagement clearly shows discussion of performance and asking the public to vote it again for continuation of what it is doing. The People's Democratic Party is the only opposition party, according to our dataset, that trailed the ruling party in terms of engaging the public in the last six

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[7] **Key:** Attacks=206, Acclaims=236, Defenses=34

weeks. While the ruling party has been discussing some critical issues and needs, the main opposition party has largely deployed its resources towards debating unrelated issues and needs (see our earlier definition of "other category metric"). Despite this, the party (PDP) has relatively engaged the public by discussing issues and needs within agriculture, security and economy more than other expectations of the public. Like the ruling party, our dataset reveals that the party and its supporters only discussed the issues and/or needs in relation to personality disparagement with less emphasis on what the candidate (Senator Nurudeen Ademola Adeleke) and the party will do differently. In some campaign or policy issues discussion, Accord and Labour Party slightly engaged the public (see Exhibit 6).

**Exhibit 6:** *Campaign and/or Policy Issues by Political Parties*

	Health	Education	Security	Infrastructure	Workers' Salary, Welfare and Employment	Agriculture	Economy	Social Programmes	Others
APC	72.09%	66.00%	60.00%	68.75%	71.01%	53.84%	55.55%	71.69%	43.19%
APM	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.44%	2.56%	1.85%	1.88%	0.38%
PDP	23.25%	26.00%	31.42%	26.56%	21.73%	33.33%	27.77%	22.64%	41.24%
Labour Party	2.32%	2.00%	2.85%	1.56%	0.00%	5.12%	7.40%	1.88%	5.05%
Accord	2.32%	6.00%	5.71%	3.12%	5.79%	2.56%	5.55%	1.88%	7.78%
ADP	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%
ZLP	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.56%	1.85%	0.00%	0.38%
PRP	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%
AAC	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%
YPP	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%
SDP	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%
APC-Faction	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Total	**43**	**50**	**35**	**64**	**69**	**39**	**54**	**53**	**257**

Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Data analysis also shows that acclaims and attacks were closely used by the actors. This is not quite different from the last week cumulative report, which had week one to week five analyses. While attacks strategy was used by 31.96% based on 682 traces of the campaign strategy found for the previous five weeks, with addition of week six, the level of deploying the strategy reduced to 30.7%, out of 816 traces of campaign strategy discovered for the six-week monitoring period. Acclaims strategy increased from 58.35% recorded for the previous five weeks to 60.78% when week six is added to the dataset. Defenses reduced from 9.67% to 4.16%. This indicates that actors are concentrating on deploying acclaims and attacks strategy as the campaign gets hotter. It also suggests that the ruling party is now moving towards employing acclaims and attacks strategy more than defenses strategy.

A total of 682 traces of the strategies were found across the campaign issues. From this figure, 31.96% were associated with attacks, while 58.35% and 9.67% resonated with our definitions of acclaims and defenses. Further analysis establishes that the three strategies have predominantly been employed while actors discussed *others category* (see earlier definition of others for more components of the category), infrastructure, economy, workers' salary, welfare and employment. With the use of the strategies mostly in infrastructure, economy and issues/needs related to human capital development, our analysts note that both the ruling and the opposition parties believe that the areas are more connected with people than others. Hence, the need to prove, defend and attack ideas where necessary in order to significantly secure relative level of public share of minds ahead of the election.

***Exhibit 7: Campaign Strategies across Campaign and/or Policy Issues[8]***
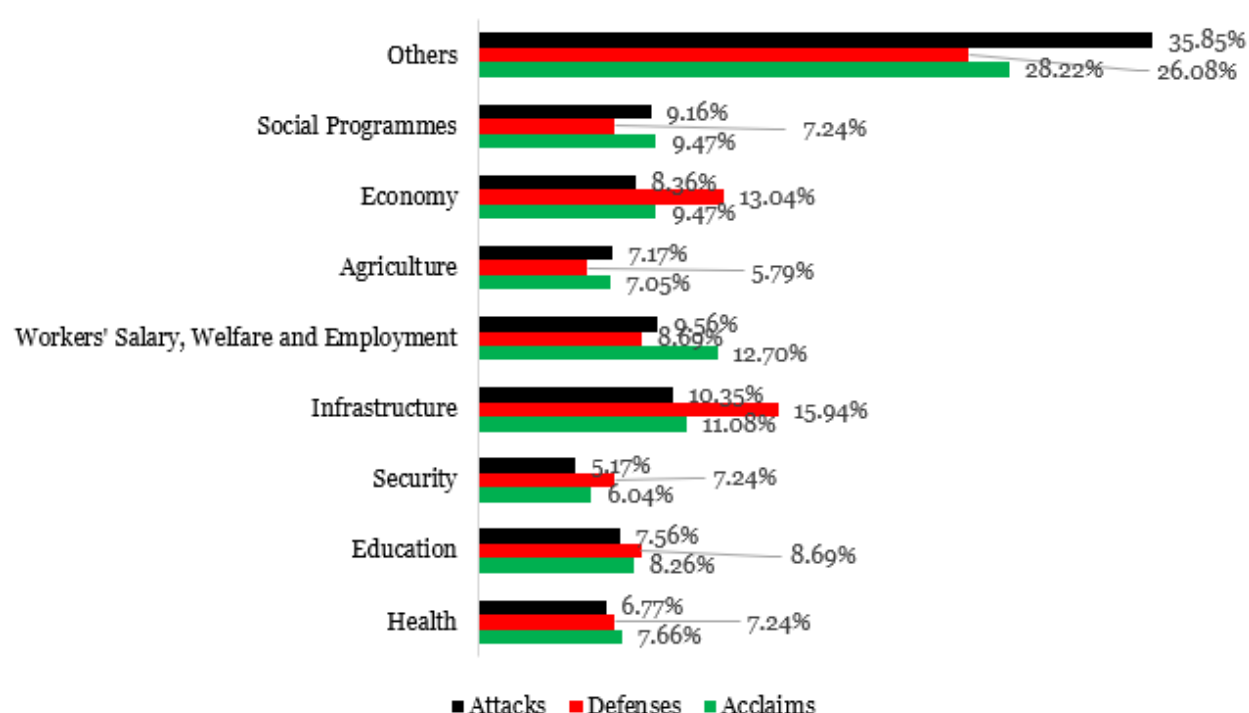
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

We were equally interested in knowing which of the political parties employed the strategies significantly in the last six weeks. Further analysis indicates that the People's Democratic Party attacked more than acclaimed and defended, while the Labour Party

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[8] ***Key:*** Acclaims= 496, Defenses=69, Attacks=251

and Accord only acclaimed. With the addition of week six data, the ruling party's use of defenses strategy increased from 75.86% to 79.41% (see Exhibit 8). However, acclaims strategy of the party reduced from 57.97% to 55.93%. The same pattern was also found for attack strategy deployment, where the level of utilizing it dipped from 33.92% to 32.09%. According to our analysts, this suggests that the party is following its earlier position of running issue-based campaigns. On a surprising note, the main opposition party improved in the area of deploying attacks strategy when it was supposed to capitalise on the less use of the strategy attained in week four. From 57.73% to 60.67%, attacks strategy deployment of the party increased. With slight increase (25.12% to 27.11%), the party was also found to appropriate acclaims strategy better in week six while it nose-dived in the use of defenses strategy, decreasing from 24.13% of using it in five weeks to 20.58% of employing it in six weeks.

Exhibit 8: Campaign Strategies across Political Parties[9]
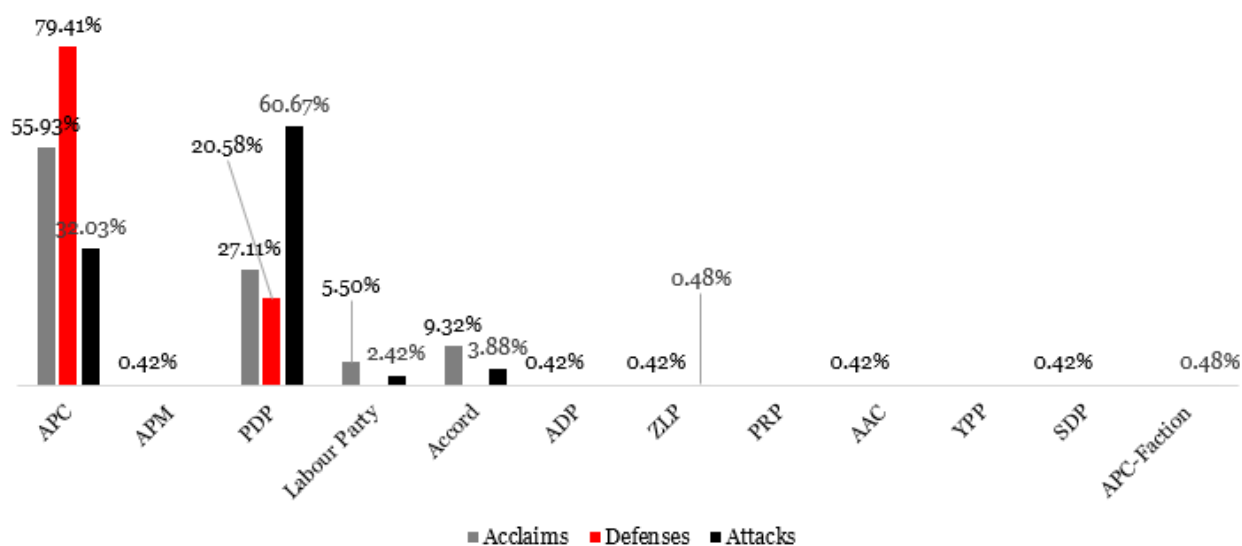
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

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[9] **Key:** Attacks=206, Acclaims=236, Defenses=34

From all the previous analyses, it is obvious that the actors are deploying the campaign strategies differently. The ruling party prefers defenses and acclaims to attacks while the opposition party, especially the People's Democratic Party, largely deploys attacks as a strategy. This position led our analysts to further examine the number of times all the parties have deployed the strategies in the last six weeks. Considering the five weeks' cumulative analysis with the six-week cumulative analysis, it emerged that the level of using acclaims strategy while discussing issues and/or needs around education remains the same. It has been used more than 1 time. From more than 4 times of using the strategy in the course of discussing infrastructure in the previous five weeks to more than 7 times in the latest six weeks of monitoring, it is obvious that the strategy is being prioritised by the actors. The strategy was also deployed more than 12 times for debating workers' salary, welfare and employment in the previous cumulative report, while it increased to 19.2 times in the current report. Its usage also increased in the discussion of economy and other category metric. Some levels of use were also found for defenses and attacks strategy. For example, the use of defenses strategy for discussing infrastructure decreased from 8.9 times to 8,4 times while it increased for agriculture (from 3.2 times to 4.8 times). It dipped significantly from 7.2 times to 1.1 times for economy. For the discussion of workers' salary, welfare and employment, the use of attacks strategy increased from 8.1 times to 9.4 times. Likewise for agriculture, from 1.9 times to 4.8 times as well as "other category" (from 24.7 times to 38.6 times).

Exhibit 9: Number of times parties deployed campaign strategies across campaign issues/policies during the three weeks

|	Acclaims	Defenses	Attacks
Health	0.1	0.0	0.1
Education	1.3	0.0	0.0
Security	0.3	0.6	1.1
Infrastructure	7.2	8.4	1.4
Workers' Welfare and Employment	19.2	0.7	9.4
Agriculture	0.0	3.0	4.8
Economy	2.9	7.2	1.1
Social programmes	2.0	1.4	1.9
Others	6.1	0.1	38.6

Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Policy Engagement or Personality Disparagement

We discovered that the ruling party is better on informed policy engagement and less intensive in disparaging the personality of the opponents. The leading opposition party (PDP) slightly engaged the policies or programmes of the current administration while it moderately disparaged the personality of the ruling party's candidate and the party itself (see Exhibit 12 and 14). A further analysis of the levels of policy engagement across campaign issues and/or policies shows mixed results for *others as a category*. Parties and their supporters slightly and highly engaged potential electorate when discussing infrastructure, economy, workers' welfare, salary and employment, and health, they highly engaged the public (see Exhibit 13). Statistically, the ruling party retains its status of highly informed policy engagement while its moderately informed policy engagement reduced from 74.19%, had in the five-week cumulative report, to 72.22% in the current report. The People's Democratic Party's level of moderately informed policy engagement increased from 16.12% to 16.66%. Labour party equally increased while Accord's level dipped (see Exhibit 12). In terms of slightly informed policy engagement, the ruling party's status reduced from 65.38% to 59.72% while the main opposition party increased from 17.30% to 23.61%. The smaller opposition parties also had some changes in engaging informed discussion with the public within the context of slightly informed policy engagement. While Accord increased from 11.53% to 12.50%, Labour party nose-dived from 5.76% to 4.16%.

**Exhibit 12: Levels of policy engagement by party**[10]
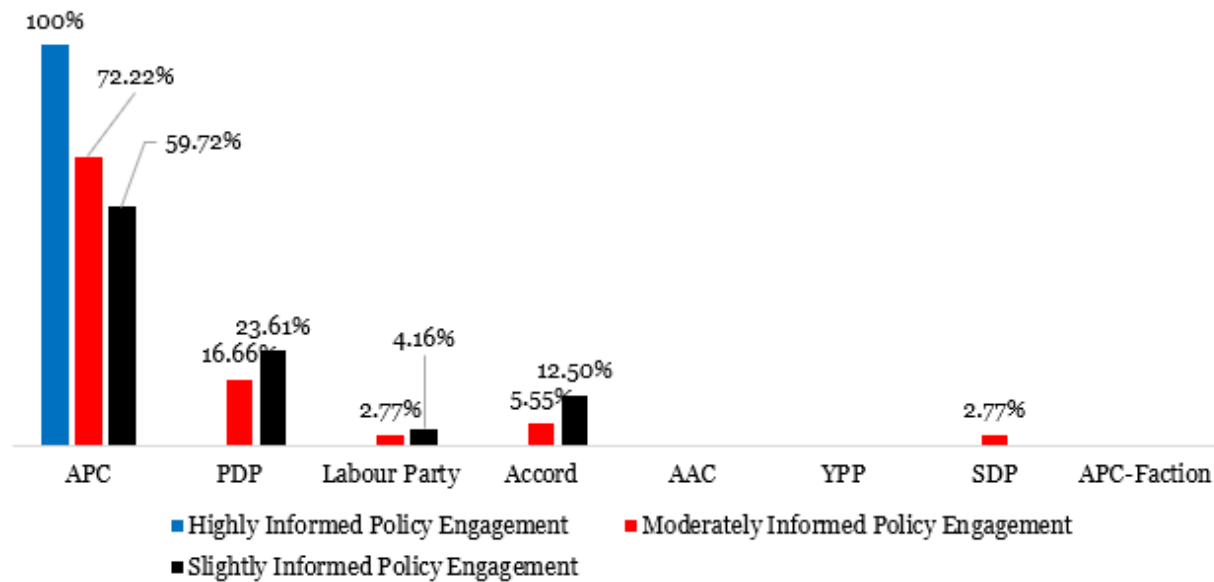
Exhibit 13: Levels of policy engagement by campaign issues and/or policies[11]
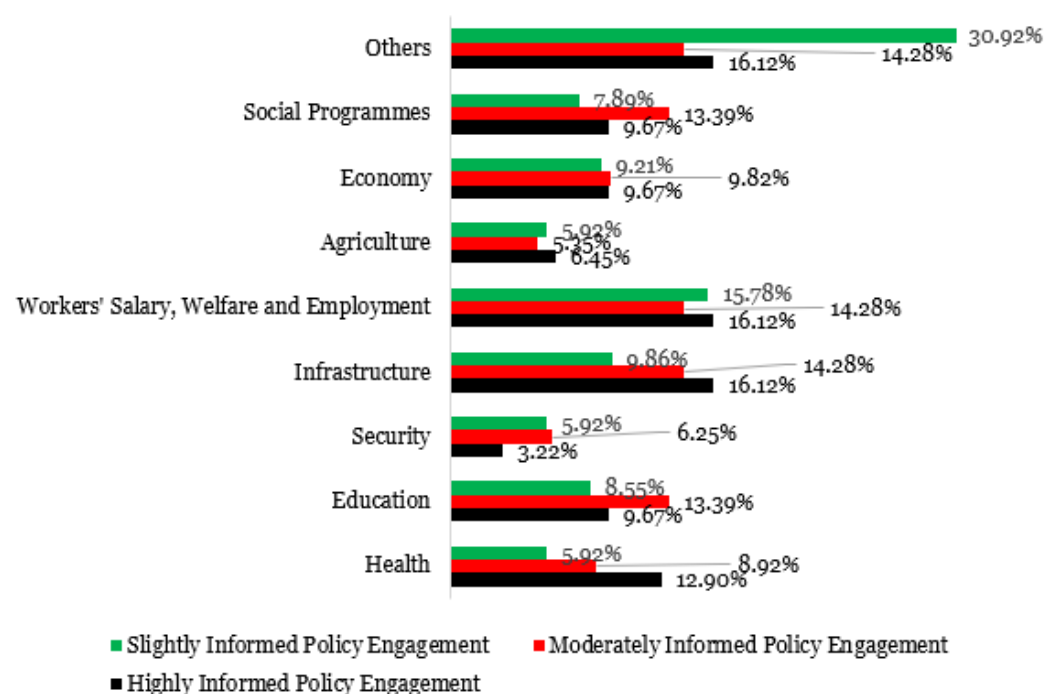
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

From the data in Exhibit 13, it is clear that actors have only succeeded in engaging the public better while discussing infrastructure, other issues within other category metric and health. The examination of highly informed policy engagement across the campaign and/or policy issues reveals that actors remain unchanged while discussing infrastructure, workers' salary, welfare and employment as well as other issues of the other category metric. Instead of concentrating on increasing level of using slightly informed policy engagement metric for infrastructure, the actors have the data in Exhibit 13 showed in comparison with the last week cumulative report, where they employed the metric by 10.52%, demonstrated lack of interest in it (see Exhibit 13).

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[11] **Key:** Highly Informed Policy Engagement=31, Moderately Informed Policy Engagement=112, Slightly Informed Policy Engagement=152

Exhibit 14: Levels of personality disparagement by party[12]
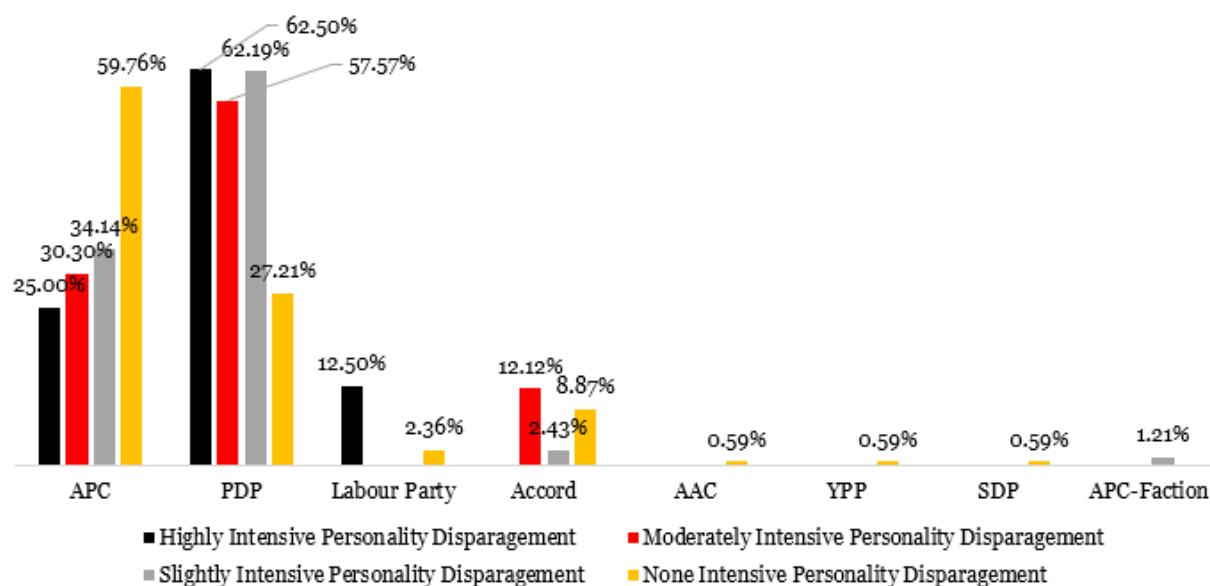
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

From highly informed policy engagement to intensive personality disparagement, our analysis suggests that the ruling party seems to be better than the opposition parties based on comparison of week-five cumulative report with the week-six cumulative report. The level at which the ruling party disparaged personality reduced from 28.57% to 25.00% while the main opposition party' position increased from 57.14% to 62.50%. Labour party reduced it adoption of highly intensive personality disparagement metric by 1.78% (from 14.28% to 12.50%). In terms of moderately intensive personality disparagement, the ruling party stepped up its usage from 28.00% to 30.30% while the PDP increased its application from 60.00% to 62.19%. Accord equally improved on its use from 12.00% had in the previous cumulative report to 12.12% in the current report. The level of increase recorded by the ruling party while employing moderately and slightly intensive personality disparagement was a result of its lack of significant regard for none intensive personality disparagement in week five. According to our analysis, the party's deployment of no intensive personality disparagement reduced from 66.92%, had during the last week cumulative report, to 59.6% attained in the current report. This also applies to the main

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[12] **Key:** Highly Intensive Personality Disparagement=8, Moderately Intensive Personality Disparagement=33, Slightly Intensive Personality Disparagement=82, None Intensive Personality Disparagement=169

opposition party, which achieved 19.68% of its appropriation in the previous report and 27.21% for the current report (see Exhibit 14).

Exhibit 15: Number of times parties deployed highly informed policy engagement and intensive personality disparagement during the four weeks

	Highly Informed Policy Engagement	Highly Intensive Personality Disparagement
Health	2.9	0.2
Education	0.8	0.2
Security	2.7	0.4
Infrastructure	3.3	0.2
Workers' Welfare and Employment	2.2	2.2
Agriculture	0.0	4.5
Economy	1.5	0.2
Social programmes	0.1	4.3
Others	0.0	0.2

Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

The examination of highly informed policy engagement and intensive personality disparagement within the context of frequency of deployment reveals different patterns across the campaign and/or policy issues. The use of highly informed policy engagement while discussing health increased from 2.6 times (in the previous week cumulative report) to 2.9 times (in the current report). Increases were also discovered for its acceptance while issues and needs around infrastructure (from 1.6 times to 3.3 times) and economy (1.2 times to 1.5 times) were communicated and discussed. The use of highly intensive personality disparagement while discussing agricultural issues and needs increased from 0.1 time to 4.5 times. This was also discovered for the discussion of workers' salary, welfare and employment, where its deployment increased from 0.9 time to 2.2 times.

Threats to credible poll

The APC and PDP frequently addressed vote buying and manipulation, citing political thugs, among the four sub-metrics our analysts investigated under threats to credible poll as the main metric (see Exhibit 17). The APC maintained the necessity for a fair election, but the PDP's comments implied vote buying. They attacked each other because they believed political thugs were being used to cause violence during campaigns and that they might be used during the July 16th, 2022 election. While vote buying and rigging through political thugs were addressed at the same rate of 50.00% in the five-week cumulative report, the supplementary data shows that these topics were discussed at 41.66% in the current report.

Exhibit 17: Threats to credible poll[13]
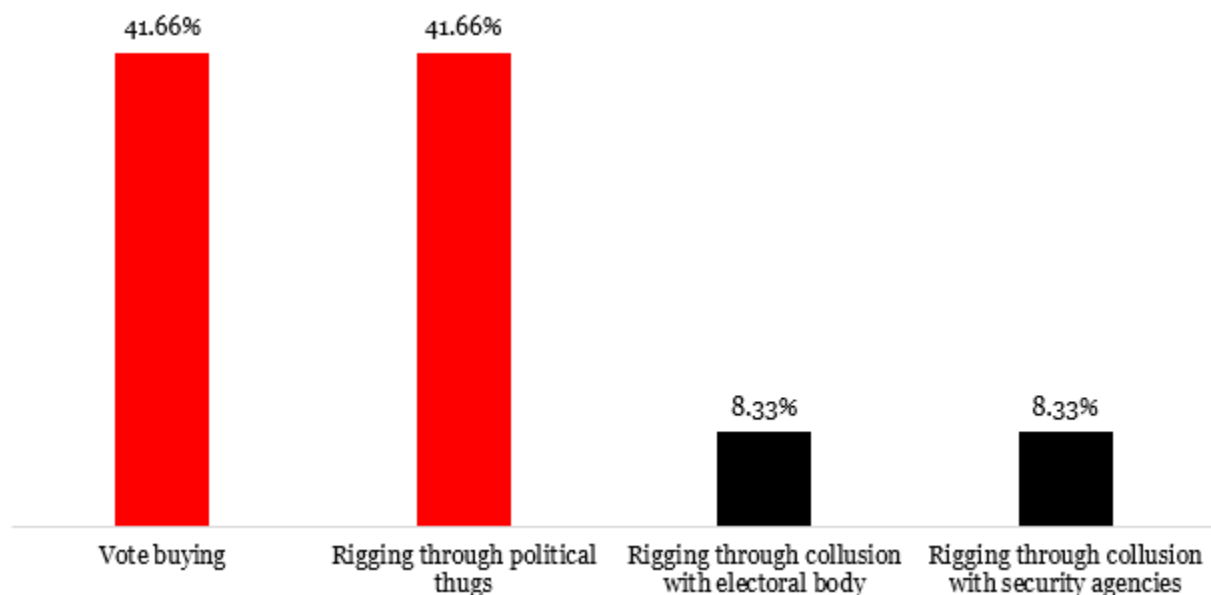
Source: Positive Agenda Nigeria, 2022

Conclusion and Our Verdict

For some days this week, the two major parties in the state were carried away by happenings in the national politics, especially the presidential primary election of the ruling party. As they and their supporters were busy posting about the primary, they were disconnected from Osun politics during the periods. We understand that national politics was the talk of the town before and during the presidential primary election of the ruling party, but we expected the opposition party in particular to have used the periods to rigorously market its candidate instead of also paying more attention to the ruling party's presidential primary election.

Also, the results for the week recorded more attacks than acclaims and defenses, though defensive messages outweighed the acclaimed ones. Specifically, the ruling party aligned with defenses and acclaims than attacks as its strategic communication approaches while the main opposition party largely deployed attacks as a strategy. As observed in the previous weeks monitored, attacking the personality of opponents and their political

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[13] **Key:** Vote buying=5, Rigging through political thugs=5, Rigging through electoral body=1, Rigging through security agencies=1

parties remains a strategy deployed by the political parties, though the ruling party has drastically reduced its attack strategy if we consider what was observed in week one of the monitoring. The ruling party remains the only political party that has significantly engaged the public across the campaign issues in the last six weeks. The party has discussed what he has done in the areas of health, social programmes and workers' salary, welfare and employment more than telling the public what it intended to do differently if elected for another four years. The main opposition party, on the other hand, has relatively engaged the public by discussing issues and needs within agriculture, security and economy more than other expectations of the public.

Also, during the week, opposition parties condemned some policies of the ruling party (e.g., salaries and pensions, roads, education) while the ruling party issued rejoinders to defend itself. This, we believe, is a feature of democratic political contests in as much as the condemnations and the defenses are evidence-based and backed. Having a discussion on local government autonomy by the main opposition party shows that its campaign is being directed to the grassroots. Despite this, issues that cannot influence the potential voters' decision on July 16, 2022 also appeared in the communication infrastructure of the political parties this week.

As campaigns get hotter and the election day draws nearer, political thuggery or violence and vote buying keep appearing in discussions of political parties and their supporters. We therefore urge the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to partner with security agents in the state with a view to ensuring lives and property of voters are protected on the election day. We also urge the INEC to convene meetings of political stakeholders in the state where issues relating to vote buying and violence alongside the legal penalties for offenders will be discussed. In addition, as election draws nearer, we specifically suggest that the two main political parties convene meetings among their media teams and handlers, and enlighten them on the need for decorum and strategic issue-based campaigns across their online platforms. This, we believe, will reduce the toxic political atmosphere being observed in Osun online-sphere.

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.

Research Team

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