



Arab Media Watch
for objective British coverage of Arab issues

Monitoring Study:

Gaza - Israeli & Palestinian Sources in the UK Press

Author:

Guy Gabriel - AMW adviser

Contact details:

Tel: 07815 747 729

E-mail: info@arabmediawatch.com

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Summary

Throughout the reporting of the Gaza conflict in the British press,¹ the division of sources, and words devoted to sources, on either side demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of Israel: 58% of sources and 56% of words devoted to sources.

Over the 21-day conflict, the British press published a total of 343 articles that used sources to report the story, 40 of which were Sunday newspaper articles. A spike in the number published can be seen following the initiation of the conflict, and around the time of the ground invasion.

Daily newspapers

The Guardian published the greatest number of articles (63, or 21% of the dailies' total), and the Daily Express published the fewest (16, or 5%). Following the ground invasion, all dailies except the Guardian, Daily Telegraph and Express increased the percentages of words given to Palestinian sources (the Guardian remained constant, while the other two dropped by around a third to 37%).

Following the Israeli attack on the UN-run school in Jabaliya and the killing of 30 civilians in a reportedly designated "safe" house (6 - 9 January 2009), Palestinians received the highest values during the monitoring period (61% of sources and 63% of words devoted to sources).

Overall, when taking both sources and words into consideration, the Express was the daily that closest approached a balance of 50 - 50%. The Daily Mirror was the only daily to return figures of above 50% for both Palestinian sources and words. The Telegraph was the least balanced daily, returning the lowest figures for both Palestinian sources (32%) and words used by those sources (37%).

The Guardian is the only daily to have included at least one source from either side on every day it covered the story.

Sunday newspapers

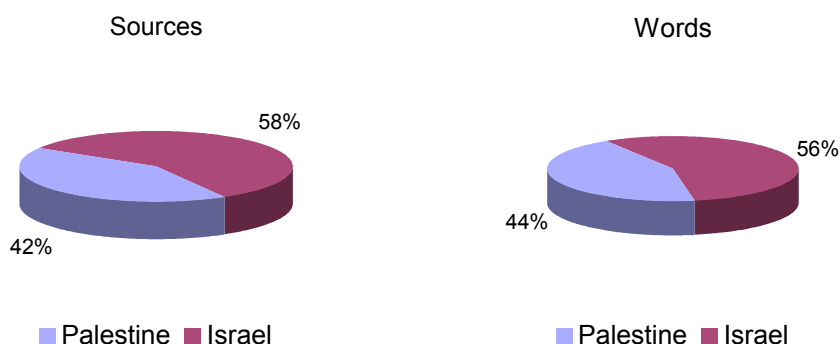
The Sunday Telegraph published the most articles (eight, or 20% of the total). The News of the World and Sunday Star published the fewest (two, or 5%, each). Overall, the division of sources and words devoted to sources demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of Israel: 55% for sources, and 65% of words devoted to sources.

The Independent on Sunday, Sunday Express and Sunday Times attained over 50% in favour of the Palestinians for sources and words devoted to sources. The Mail on Sunday was the most imbalanced paper in favour of Israel (Sundays and dailies), with only 16% of sources being Palestinian, and 17% of words devoted to those sources.

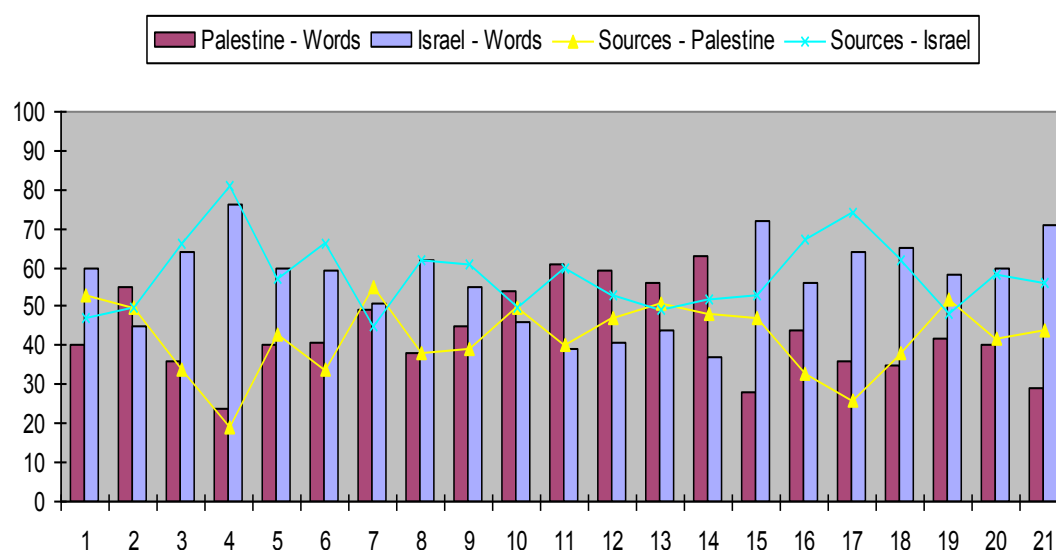
¹ The daily newspapers considered are: Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Daily Telegraph, Evening Standard, Financial Times, Guardian, Independent, Sun and Times. The Sunday newspapers considered are: Independent on Sunday, Mail on Sunday, News of the World, Observer, Sunday Express, Sunday Mirror, Sunday Star, Sunday Telegraph and Sunday Times.

Overall Three-Week Analysis of the British Press

Over the 21-day conflict, the British press published a total of 343 articles that used sources to report the story. Overall, the division of sources, and words used by sources, on either side demonstrated that a greater proportion was in favour of Israel:



Viewed as individual day-to-day change over the 21 days (28 December 2008 - 17 January 2009), the figures are as follows:

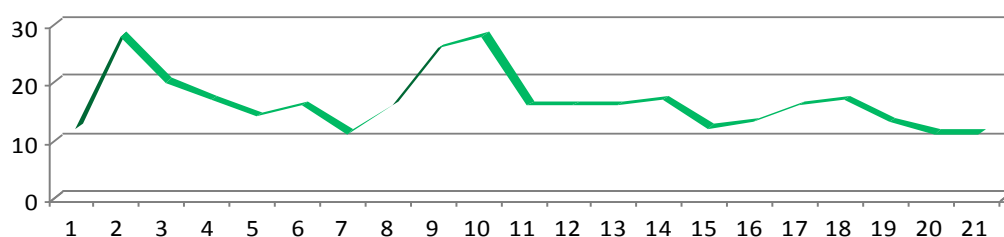


Following the killing of two Israeli civilians by rocket fire on 29-30 December (day 2-3), the percentage of both words and sources given to Palestinians dropped to the lowest values during the monitoring period (36% and 24% respectively).

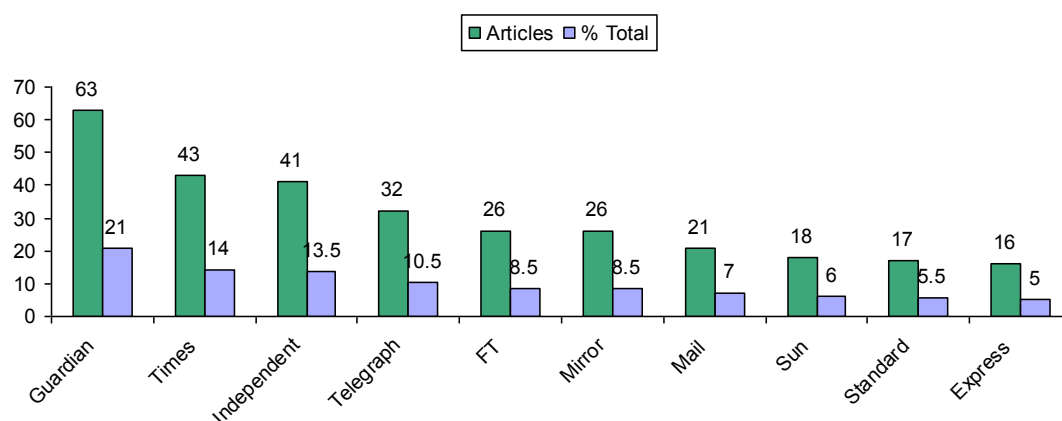
Following the attack on the UN-run school in Jabaliya and the killing of 30 civilians in a reportedly designated “safe” house (6 - 9 January), Palestinians received the highest values during the monitoring period (61% and 63% respectively).

Number-of-Articles Breakdown

Including Sundays, a total of 343 articles that used sources were published during the conflict. The number of articles that were published daily in the British press is represented below. A spike can be seen following the initiation of the conflict, and in days 9 and 10, around the time of the ground invasion.



The number of articles, and percentage of the total that represents, that were published by each newspaper is below.

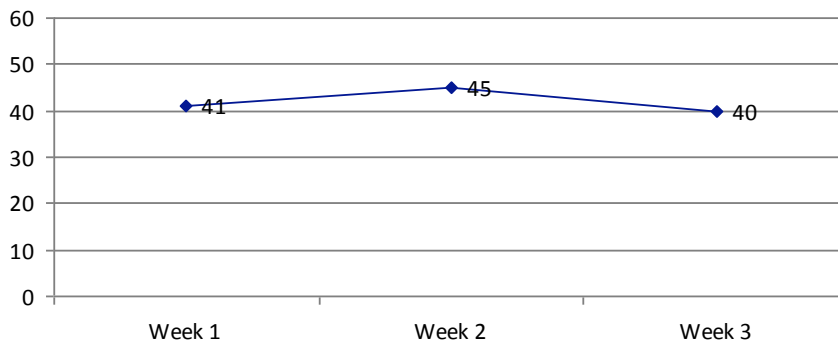


Note: This table excludes Sundays (ie 28 December, 4 & 11 January) articles. The dailies published 303 articles.

Week-on-Week Changes

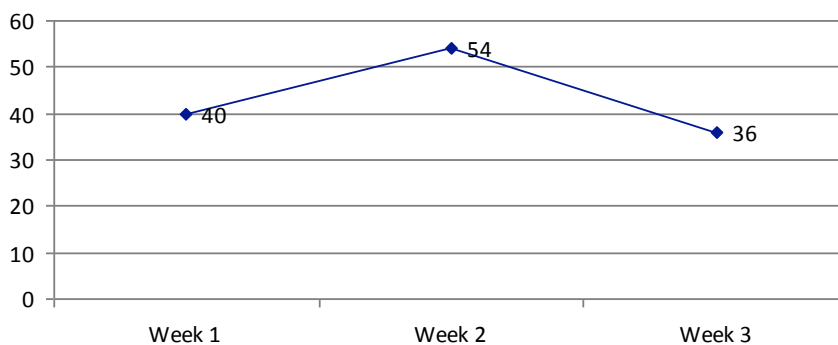
This section demonstrates the changes in weekly averages for the British press in general, and for individual newspapers. Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for Palestinian sources rose by a small margin, but dipped in the third week. The number of Palestinian sources remained a minority compared to their Israeli counterparts throughout the three weeks.

Palestinian Sources



The percentage of words given to Palestinian sources increased and decreased by a greater margin, surpassing the percentage of words given to Israeli sources in the second week only.

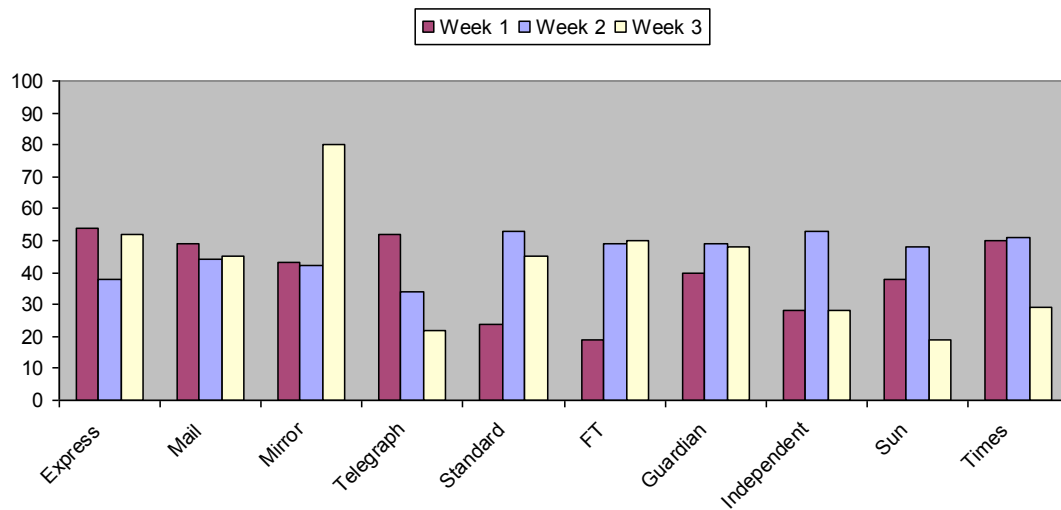
Words Given to Palestinian Sources



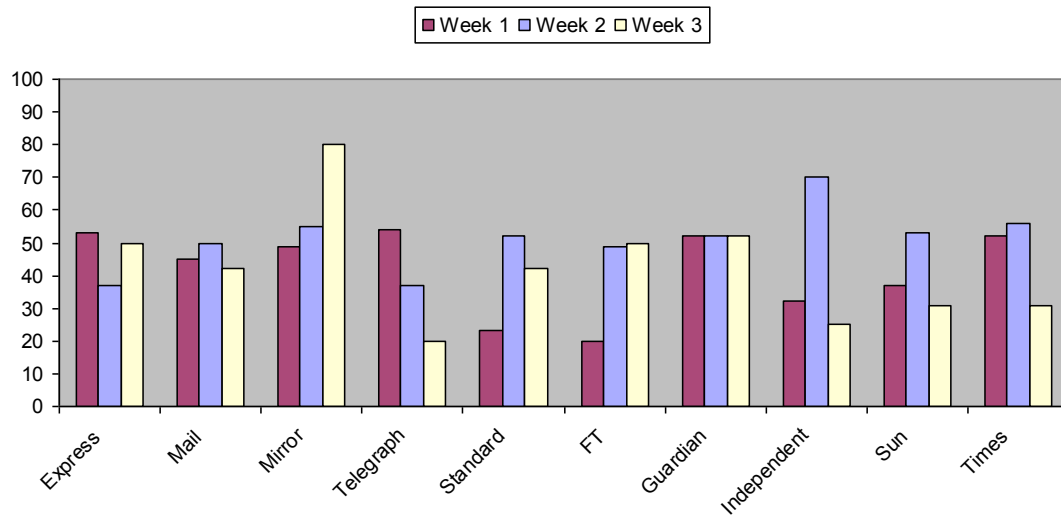
Weekly Values of Percentage of Words and Sources Used for Palestinians

Newspapers varied in the proportions of sources and words given to sources from week to week.

Percentages of sources given to Palestinians

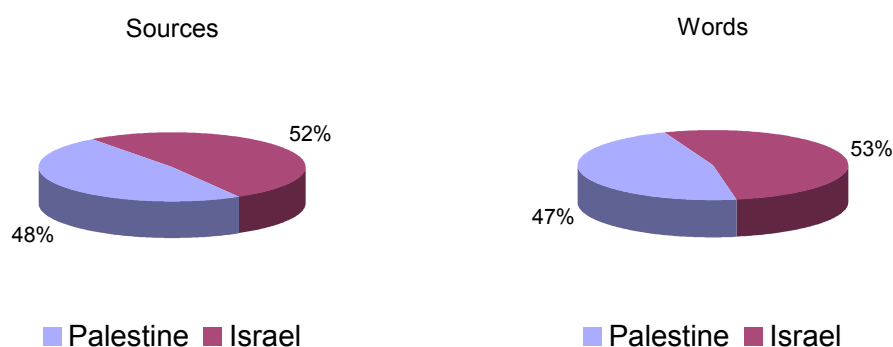


Percentage of words given to Palestinian sources

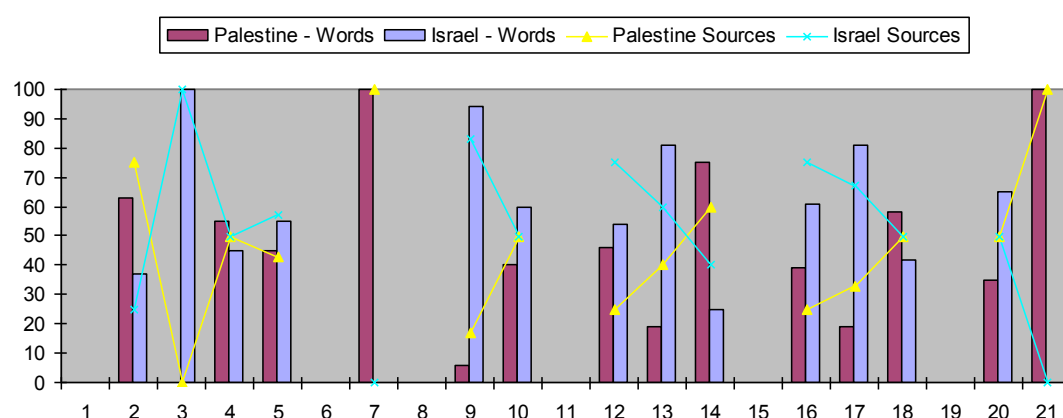


Three-Week Analysis of the Daily Express

The Express published the fewest articles of all newspapers under consideration in this survey - 16 (5% of the total). The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a slightly greater proportion in favour of Israel:



Overall, when taking both sources and words into consideration, the Express was the newspaper that closest approached a balance of 50 - 50%. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

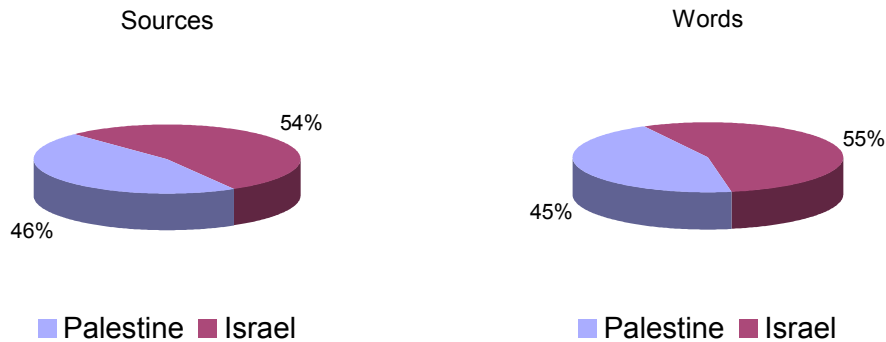


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

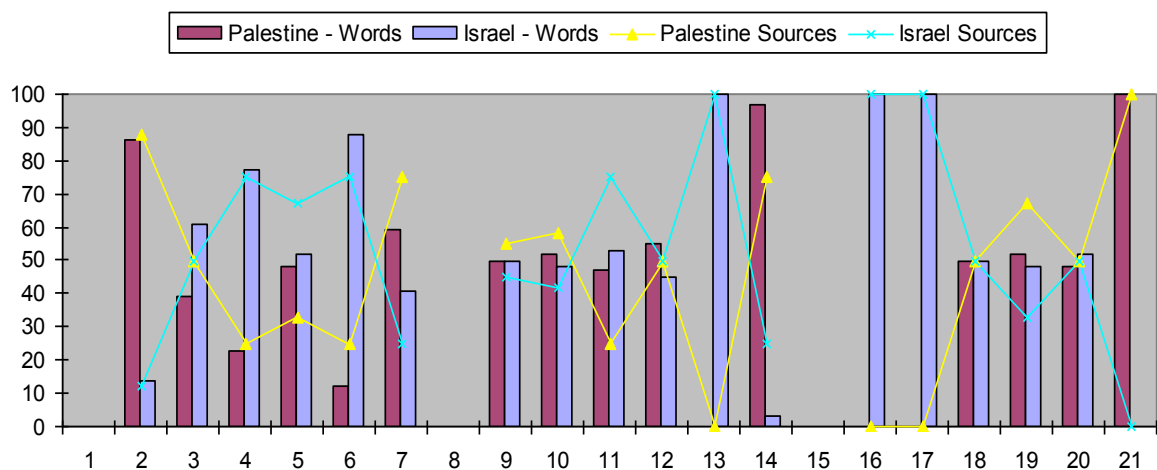
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for sources and words given to Palestinians dipped fairly significantly. These figures rose again in the third week. This was contrary to the more usual, opposite trend. On one occasion, the Express published an article with no Palestinian sources; on two occasions, it published articles with no Israeli sources.

Three-Week Analysis of the Daily Mail

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a slightly greater proportion in favour of Israel:



Overall, the Mail approached a balance of 50 -50% more closely than seven of the 10 newspapers. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

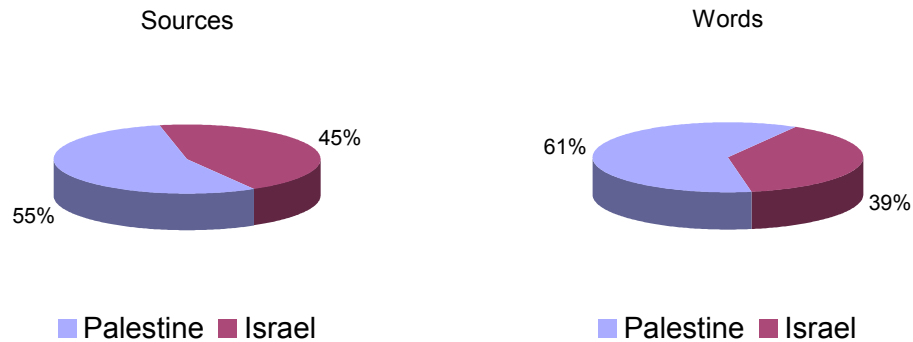


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

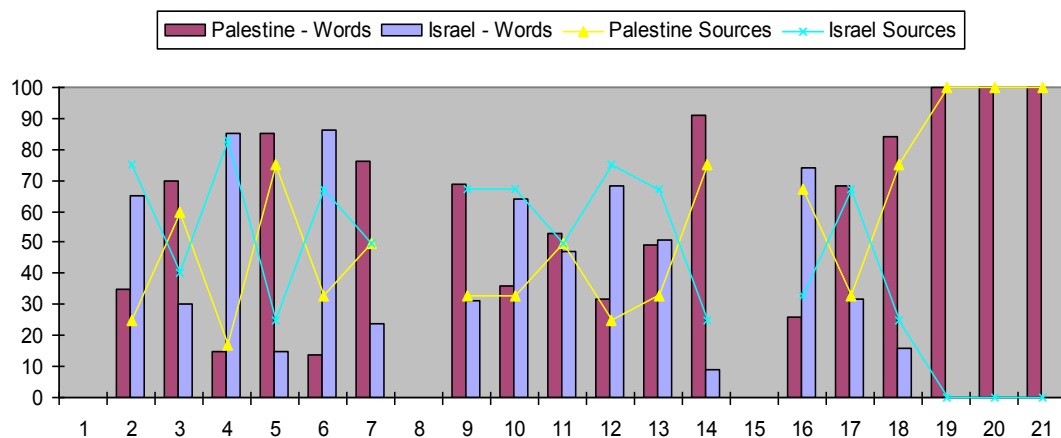
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians rose by five points. On three occasions, the Mail published articles with no Palestinian sources; on one occasion, it published an article with no Israeli sources.

Three-Week Analysis of the Daily Mirror

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of the Palestinians:



The Mirror was the only newspaper to return figures of above 50% for both Palestinian sources and words. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

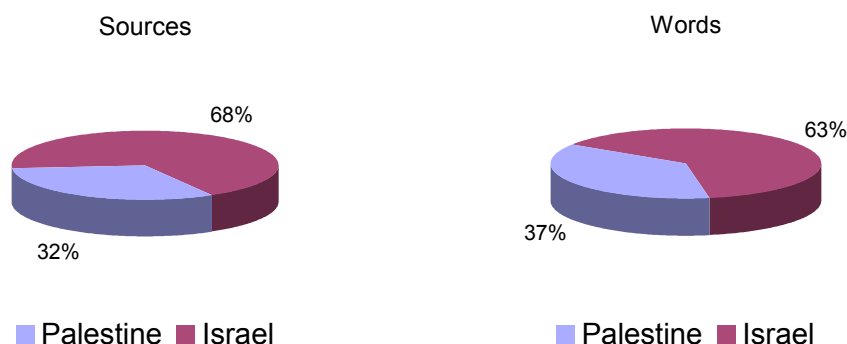


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

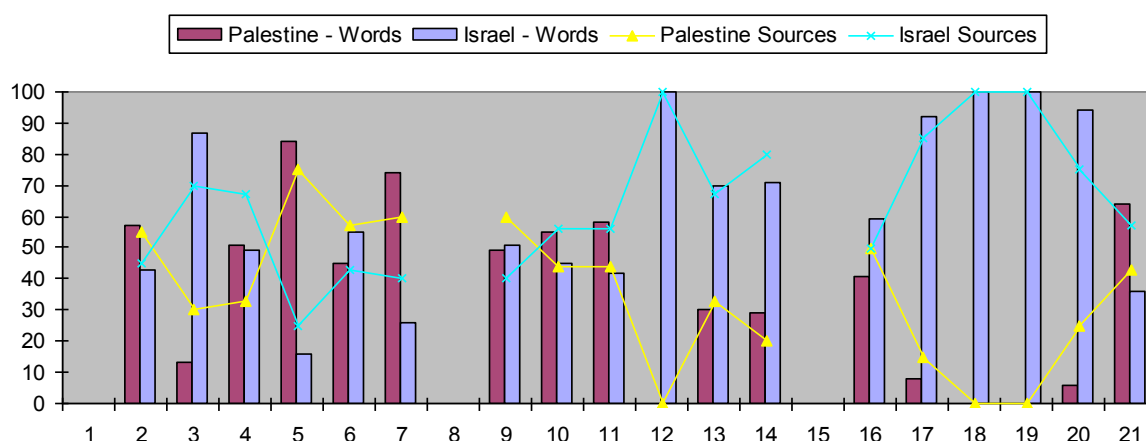
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians rose six points to 55%, finishing with 80%. In all 26 articles, the Mirror used Palestinian sources; on three occasions, it published articles with no Israeli sources.

Three-Week Analysis of the Daily Telegraph

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of Israel, more than any other newspaper:



The Telegraph was the least balanced newspaper, returning the lowest figures for both Palestinian sources and words used by those sources. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

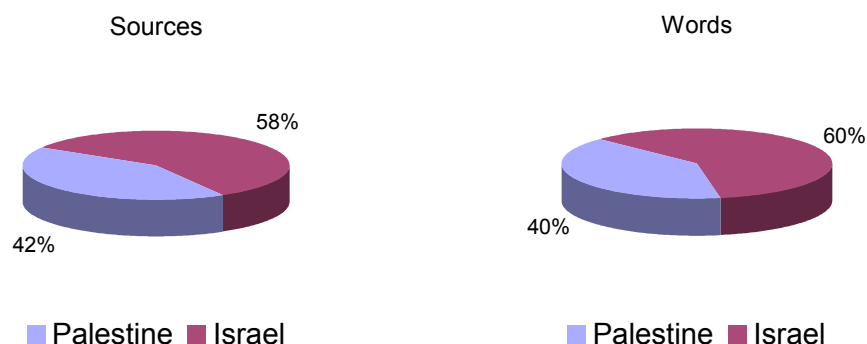


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

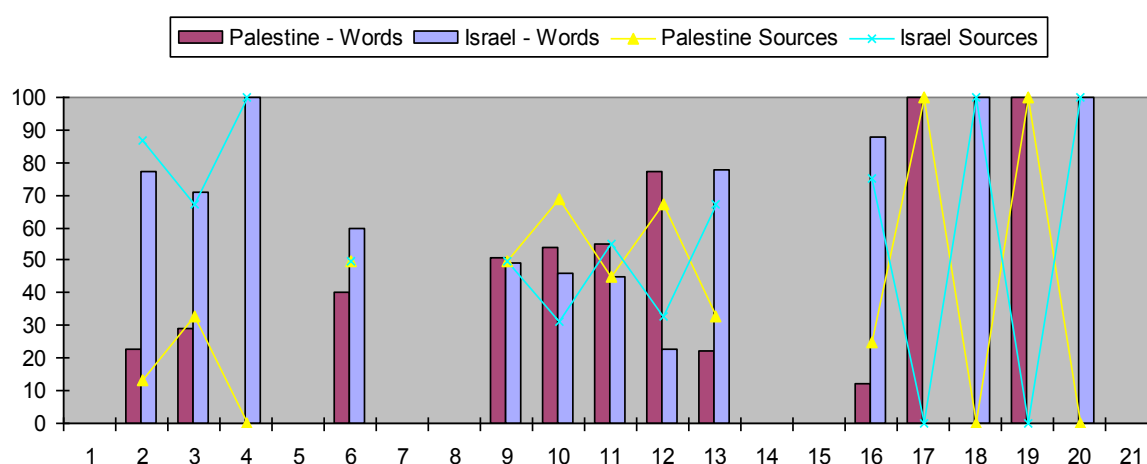
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians dipped significantly to 37% from 54%, contrary to the more general trend. This figure dropped further in the third week to just 20%. On three occasions, the Telegraph published articles with no Palestinian sources; Israeli sources were always used.

Three-Week Analysis of the Evening Standard

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of Israel:



Of 10 newspapers, four were further from approaching a balance of 50 - 50% than the Standard. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

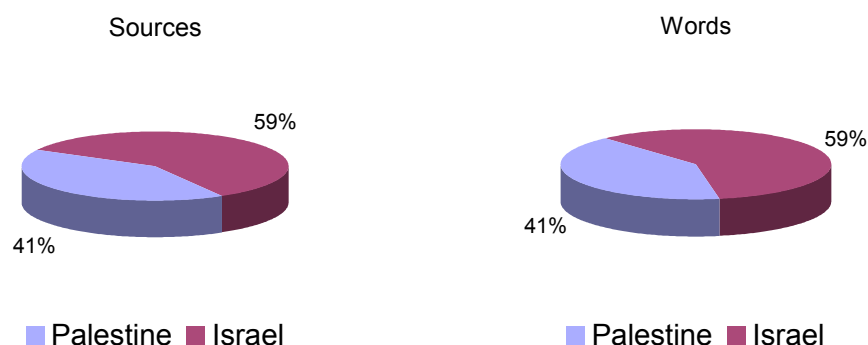


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

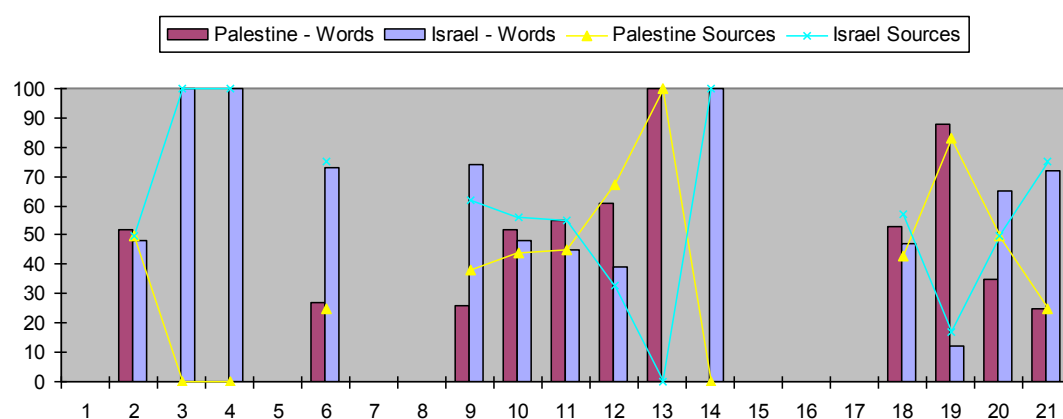
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians rose significantly, from 23% to 52%. On three occasions, the Standard published articles with no Palestinian sources; on two occasions, it published articles with no Israeli sources.

Three-Week Analysis of the Financial Times

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of Israel:



Of 10 newspapers, four were further from approaching a balance of 50 - 50% than the FT. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

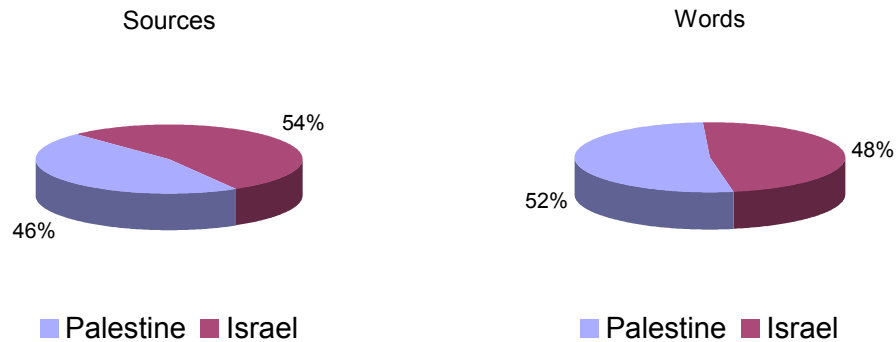


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

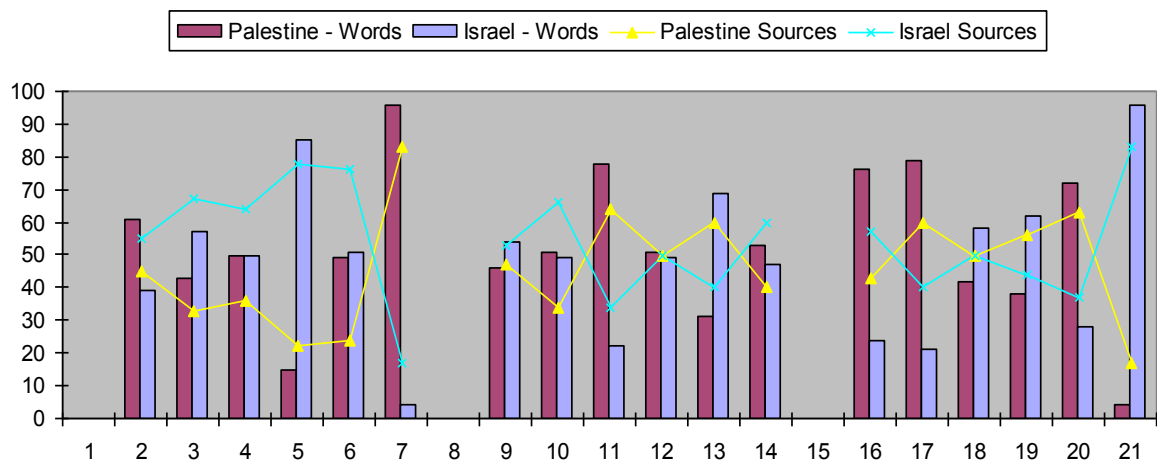
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians rose significantly, from 20% to 49%. On three occasions, the FT published articles with no Palestinian sources; on one occasion, it published an article with no Israeli sources.

Three-Week Analysis of the Guardian

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a slightly greater proportion in favour of Israel for sources, but a slightly greater proportion in favour of the Palestinians for words given to sources:



After the Daily Express, the Guardian most closely approached a balance of 50 - 50%. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

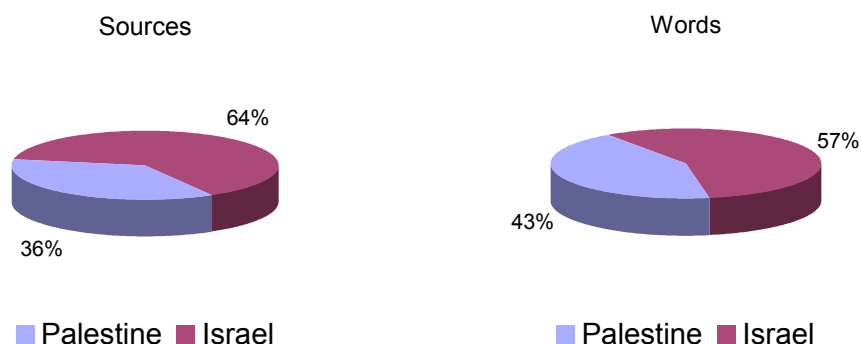


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

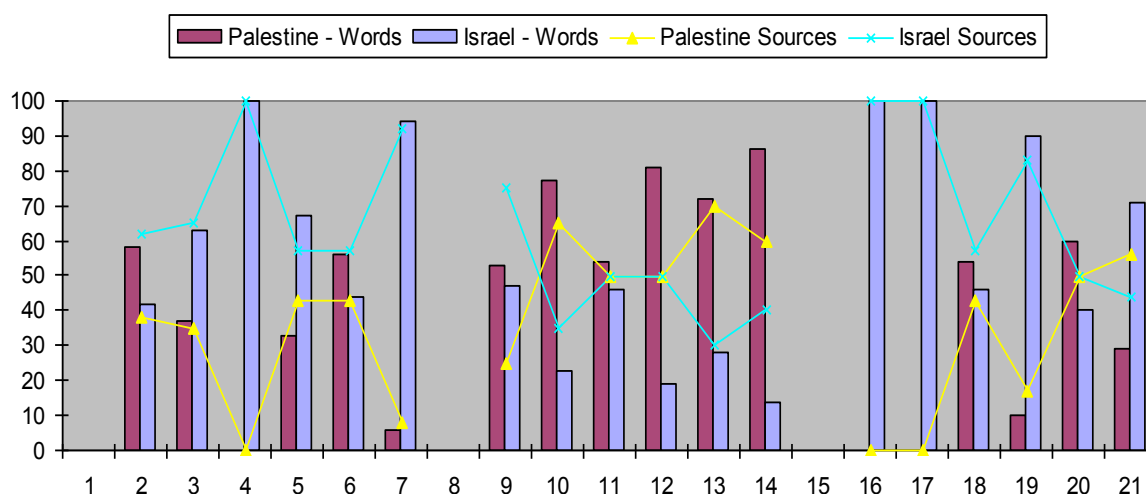
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians remained equal, at 52%. The Guardian is the only paper to have included at least one source from either side in all its articles.

Three-Week Analysis of the Independent

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of Israel, particularly on sources:



Only two newspapers were further from approaching a balance of 50 - 50% than the Independent. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

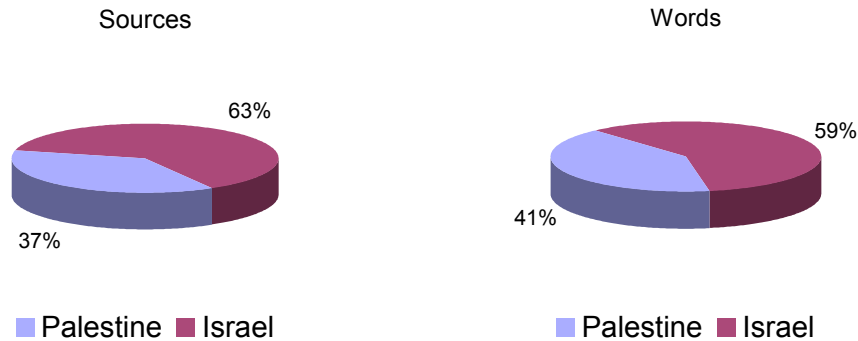


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

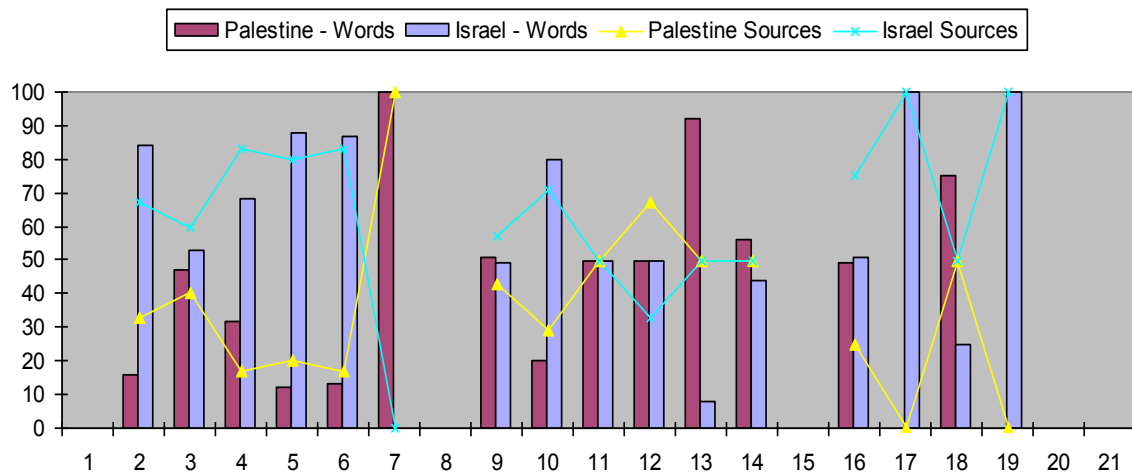
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians more than doubled, from 32% to 70%. On three occasions, the Independent published articles with no Palestinian sources; Israeli sources were always used.

Three-Week Analysis of the Sun

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of Israel, particularly on sources:



Only one newspaper was further than the Sun from approaching a balance of 50 - 50%. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

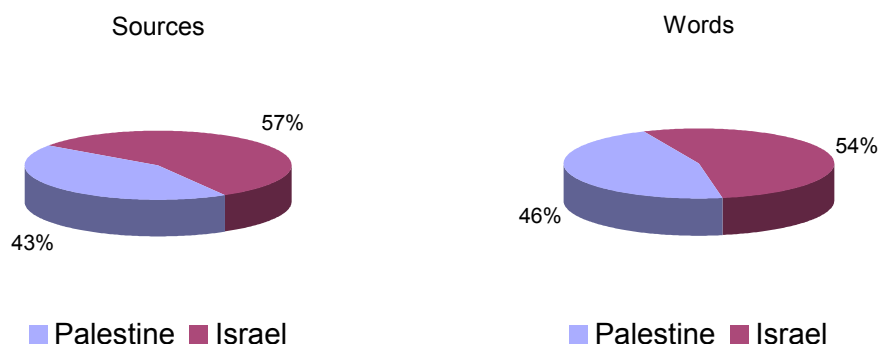


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

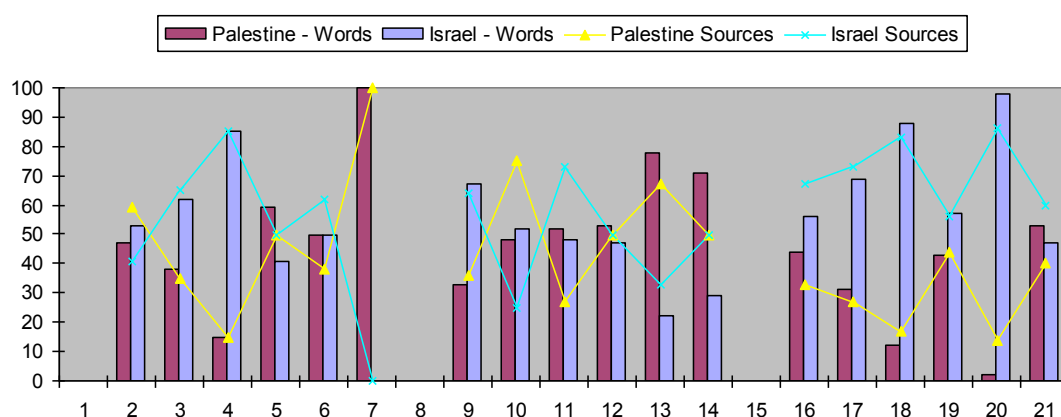
Following the ground invasion (say 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians rose significantly, from 37% to 53%. On two occasions, the Sun published articles with no Palestinian sources; on one occasion, it published an article with no Israeli sources.

Three-Week Analysis of the Times

The division of sources and words to either side demonstrated a slightly greater proportion in favour of Israel:



Of 10 newspapers, three approached a balance of 50 - 50% more closely than the Times. Viewed as individual day-to-day changes over the three weeks, the figures are as follows:

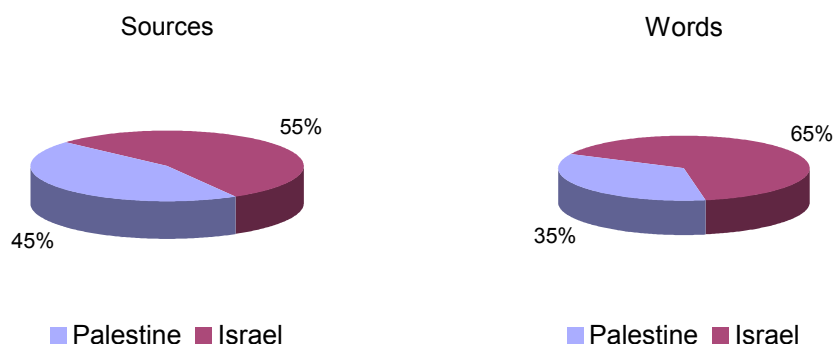


Note: gaps in the bars and lines representing Palestinian and Israeli words and sources mean that on that day, no article was published.

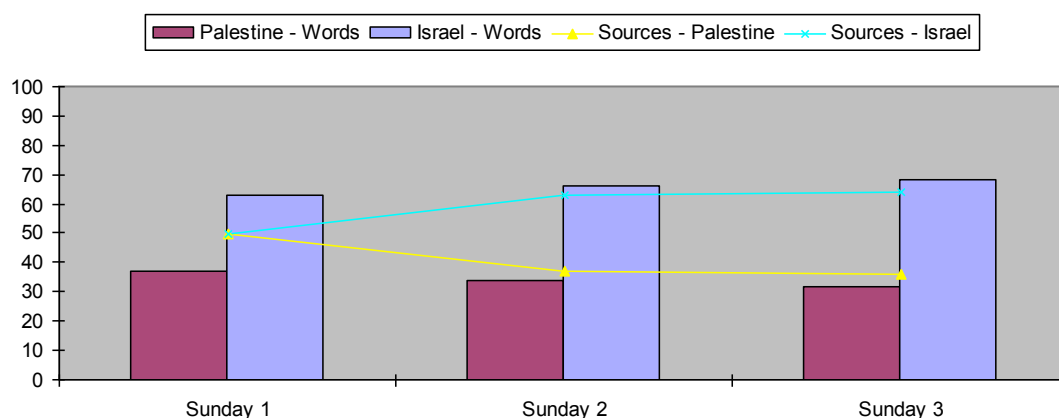
Following the ground invasion (day 7), the average percentage value for words given to Palestinians rose by four points, from 52% to 56%. The third-week value of 31% was low enough to render the overall average as 43%. The Times always used Palestinian sources; on one occasion, it published an article with no Israeli sources.

The Sunday Newspapers

There were three Sundays over the course of the 21-day conflict. The British Sunday newspapers published a total of 40 articles that used sources to report the story. Overall, the division of sources and words used by sources on either side demonstrated a greater proportion in favour of Israel, particularly in terms of words given to sources:



Viewed as individual Sunday-to-Sunday changes over the conflict, the figures are as follows:

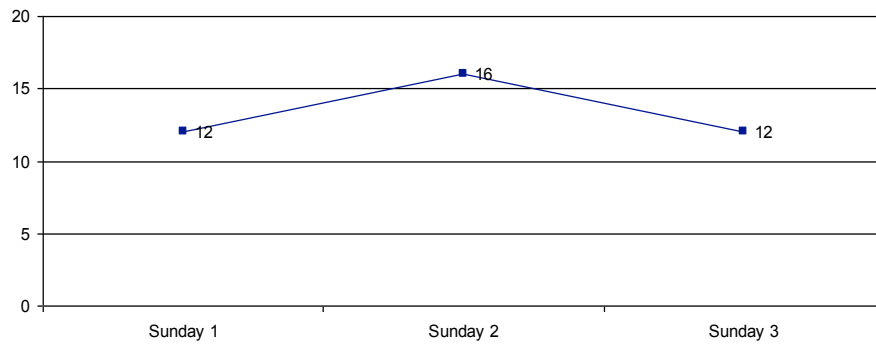


The proportion of words given to Israeli sources remained consistently high, between 63% and 68%. The proportion of sources used started equal, but then tipped in favour of Israel at 63% - 64% for the following two Sundays.

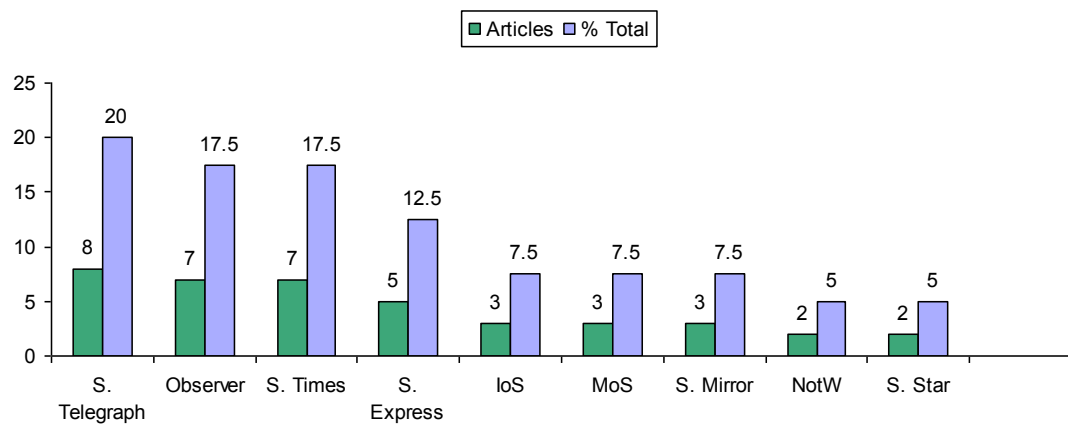
Number-of-Articles Breakdown

Nine Sunday newspapers published a total of 40 articles over the three Sundays, with the greatest number coming the day after the ground invasion.

Articles published

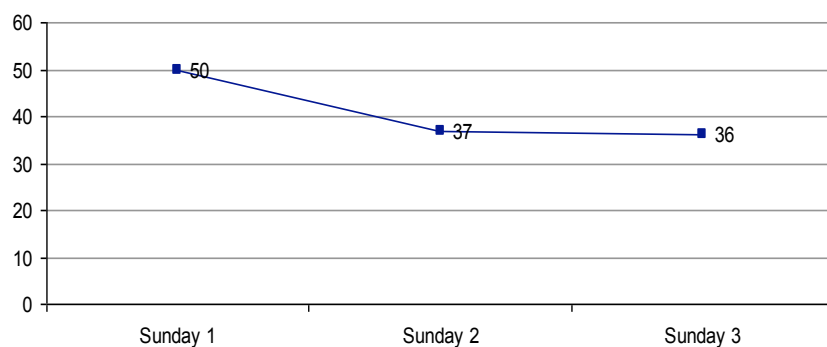


The number of articles, and percentage of the total it represents, is shown below.

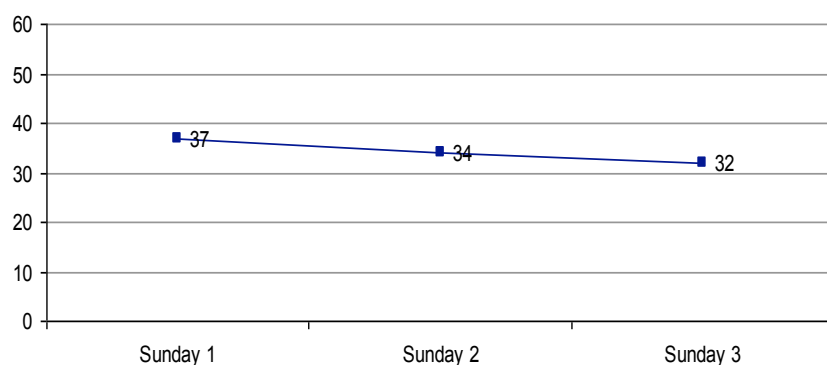


Week-on-Week Changes

This section demonstrates the changes in weekly averages for the British Sunday press in general, and for individual newspapers. In terms of sources, the results demonstrated a gradual reduction in the proportion given to Palestinian sources.



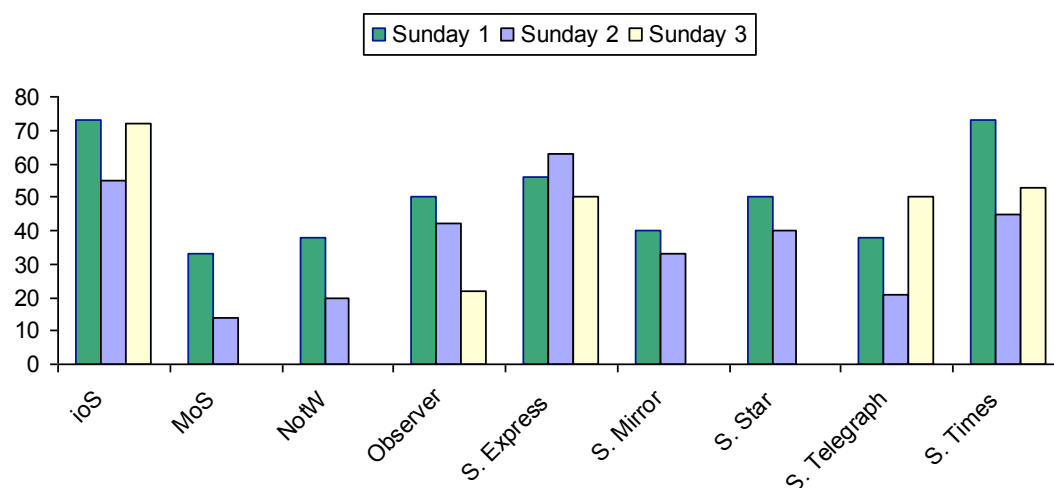
In terms of percentage of words given to sources, the results demonstrated a gradual reduction in the proportion given to Palestinian sources, from a starting point already significantly below 50%.



Sunday Values of Percentage of Total Words and Sources used for Palestinians

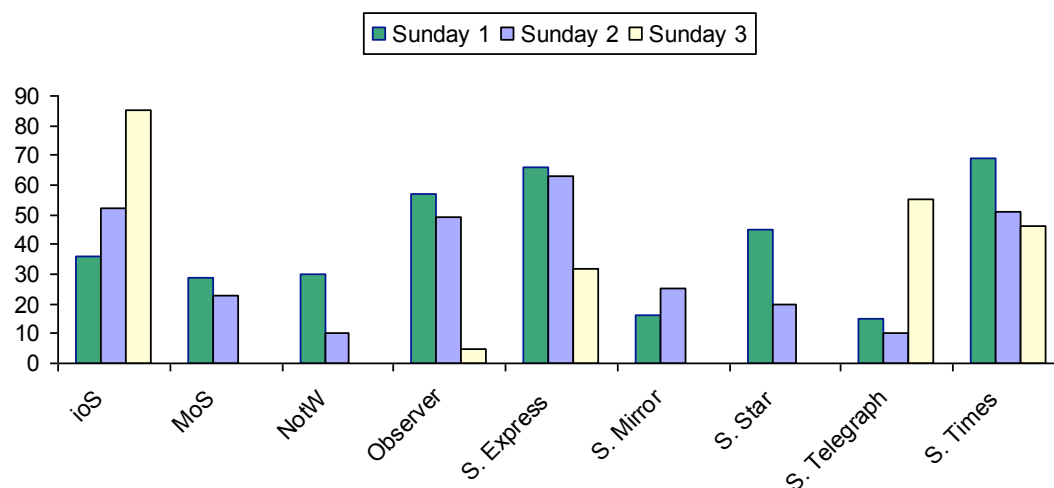
Newspapers varied in the proportions of sources and words given to sources from Sunday to Sunday. This information is presented below.

Palestinian Sources



Note: The News of the World and Sunday Star published no articles on the third Sunday.

Words given to Palestinian sources



Note: The News of the World and Sunday Star published no articles on the third Sunday.

Individual Newspapers

Palestinian sources in individual newspapers

The Independent on Sunday averaged the highest for Palestinian sources, with 67% of sources being Palestinian. The Sunday Times (57%) and the Sunday Express (56%) were the other newspaper to average over 50%. Excluding these three newspapers, the average for the remaining ones was just 31%. The lowest average was the Mail on Sunday, with just 20% of sources being Palestinian.

Words given to Palestinian sources in individual newspapers

The Sunday Times was highest for words given to Palestinian sources, with 55%. The Sunday Express and the Independent on Sunday also averaged over 50%, with 54% and 51% respectively. Excluding these three newspapers, the others averaged just 23%, less than a quarter. Again, the Mail on Sunday averaged lowest of all, with just 14% of words used for sources being given to Palestinians.