

Coming Back: what would Erich Maria Remarque Write if He Lived in Modern Ukraine.

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In this report, I would like to reflect on the peculiarities of civil-military relations. The role of the latter has grown in recent times, due to military actions in eastern Ukraine. And I would like to present some results of our (my colleague Olga Kukharuk and me) research within the framework of the "Alternatives to Conflict and Violence" project ¹.

The survey was conducted between September and November 2016 in 4 regions of Ukraine: Western, South-East, Eastern and Central. In total, 1270 respondents were interviewed, including 646 military and 624 civilians. There were also six (6) focus groups held, three (3) involving military and three with civilians. I am aware that the arguments presented here are based on statistical data, some of them are only observations and probably not in the psychoanalytic paradigm.

The Road Back (Coming Back) Erich Maria Remarque. "I am ashamed, but at the same time, I am choked with rage. Rage for Uncle Carl, who exaggeratedly loudly launches a talk about military loans; anger towards these people who are thrilled with their intelligent conversations; The anger towards the whole world that continues to so vividly survive, absorbed by its little pitiful interests, as if there were not these terrible years when we knew only one thing: death or life - and nothing more".

Why did we mention Remarque? These words were written by Remarque almost 100 years ago. One can only imagine or read in memories (stories) about what had happened then, at the end of the First World War in 1917, in Germany. However, now, Ukrainian citizens from May 2014 till now (2017) have a terrible opportunity to be participants and civilian observers of one out of 58 military violent conflicts, and

¹ Civil society organization "Ukrainian association of experts on overcoming the consequences of traumatic events" with the support of Stabilization Support Services and the British Embassy in Kyiv.

the only one that is happening here and very close, less than a thousand kilometers from Berlin, in Europe.

You can probably understand us being as civilian observers and you might have a question: why are we participants? Let's have a bit of retrospective. I, like many of my other colleagues, psychologists could not be indifferent to the rallies that unfolded on Independence Square after the collapse of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU (Revolution of Dignity , end of 2013)). Then there was the episode of beating of protesters. This first power dispersal led to mass protests (up to 1 million people came from all regions of Ukraine). It was at this time that the Maidan Psychological Service was established, within which, I, along with my colleagues present here, provided psychological assistance to all those who needed it in Kyiv. After the February 2014 massacre, massive human casualties that led to the escape of ex-President Yanukovich and his close circle to Russia, there have been many tragic events that have changed the peaceful life of Ukraine. The decision of the Council of Federation to bring in Russia's armed forces and the annexation of the Crimea, the seizure of several cities in the eastern regions of Ukraine and the start of ATO. I recall how I was struggling with disability to influence the course of tragic events in the east, but went to the hospital to work with the wounded and their family members from March 2014 to January 2015. And since February 2015, I traveled as a part "Psychological crisis service" trainer to the proving grounds and ATO area.

Such a reaction was not just socially justified, but also had a personal background. Providing the first psychological help in Maidan and working with the military in the ATO zone and veterans aimed at least to do something to make traumatic events less disruptive and more understandable for the participants of the Russian-Ukrainian war. It creates the possibility to be able to talk about the traumatic experiences of the war, and to find the understanding between military and civilians in the conflict situations.

Remarque's "The Road Back" is a return after the war, the war that was lost, the war of empires. The return in Ukraine is a return from a hot conflict to a cold but equally traumatic war conflict in a civilian world, an experience of a new format of the country - "life in a country with post-Soviet thinking, in the context of a war

called an anti-terrorist operation". On the one hand, hostilities continue, as civilians and soldiers die from shelling. Part of the military dies from non-war losses or after service. And how long it will last is not known. Now we have the situation when all of us, the inhabitants of Ukraine, experience the war.

There are military and civilians from the East who are facing the war, but it exists also in the civilian world through news from the ATO zone about civilian and military battles, contacts with veterans or military, negative reports on veterans in the information space, etc. From a dangerous, but understandable, black and white world of hostilities, the military returns to a colorful but equally dangerous world of a hybrid civil war. What kind of return might it be?

A way of experiencing a war in a country inevitably divides people into groups with a certain vision. These visions, which are partially conscious, but more often, are a part of semi conscious, or unconscious processes. Processes that are caused by many factors: self-regulated models of self-regulation, personal and family history, a system of social roles and identities. The collision with the war consequences in Ukraine is inevitable. Sooner or later, everyone gives himself a conscious or not conscious answer to the question: "Who am I in relation to what is happening in the East, to that unannounced war?". Whatever the answer is, no matter what identity is formed – all of them are in one spectrum - the spectrum of attitude to the war.

In the widest sense, we can talk about several large groups. Groups that have different manifestations of the same identity - a citizen of a country where there is a war. We deliberately focus on polarity. Considering polar identities, we most clearly illustrate the conflicts that exist in society, the conflict of identity between "man in war," and "man outside the war." The conflict, which is most evident upon the return of the military into a peaceful world (where the civil war is known only from the media image).

Facing each other these identities create a specific configuration of relationships that worsens or improves interpersonal interaction. We would like to draw your attention to the locus of conflict, which are formed between groups of civilians and military, locus of conflict between identities.

For this analysis, we used the idea of the social unconscious in the group analysis, the approach of the Matrix S.H.Foulkes, and its development in the related work of Robi Friedman "My Soldier Matrix .." and Dick Blackwell "The Soldier Matrix in the Group Analytic ...". The authors, studying the relationship between civil and military (p.3), suggest that the matrix of society, which was influenced by war, has certain divisions: the matrix of the soldier and the matrix of the anti-soldier. We believe, considering the specifics of the country and the war on the territory, there is a matrix of military and a civilian matrix, which may include a matrix of anti-soldier, as Friedman and Blackwell point out.

The soldier's matrix, according to Friedman, functions in a specific way, where the soldier, serves not only as a carrier of a certain uniform, but also obtains certain mental and physical qualities, and a delegated and fixed function of violence (as a real or potentially permissible participation in the destruction of the enemy).

The collective unconscious matrix of a soldier is characterized, according to the author, with strong protection from feelings of guilt, shame, empathy for the suffering of the enemy (R.Friedman 2015). However, it is obvious that the effect of these mechanisms is a "healthy reaction", because it provides protection and survival of the society (civilian matrix) in conditions of danger. This is echoed by many other studies in other paradigms (including cognitive behavior therapy which relate to how the soldier's psyche changes in order to survive, for example, with the idea of combat thinking (MakHonnell, O. (2009), Sites, K. (2013) Military culture.)

That means that (So) by joining the matrix of a soldier, a person needs to form a new identity, which may conflict with the values of other personal or social identities.

On the other end of the spectrum of the matrix of the soldier there is a matrix of civilian. The bearers of this matrix may, on the one hand, are interested in the safety, protection of their values, development of society, and on the other hand, will in any way try to avoid information about the war in order to preserve their function. In order to keep functioning under the rules of peacetime (withdrawal), as if the war is far and does not relate to them, and preserve the conviction that there is the same reality that existed before the war, everything that characterizes ordinary civil life, when there are many conventionalities, cultural and status values. However, this

attitude of civilians causes military rejection, they feel that losses, sacrifice and work are not valued.

Blacwell D. "The soldier of the Matrix in the Group Analytic" noted that the anti-soldier matrix contributes "to the humanization of societies caught up in wars and political violence" (c.282) and identifies two forms - those who do not want to be soldiers "complete rejection of war and the idea of being a soldier" (p.287) and those who for subverting and redirecting the violence performed by the state into what we might call an anti-state soldier matrix). Our research did not include issues related to attitude to the war and the identification of values, but our observations suggest that anti-soldier sentiments are often raised by supporters of the pro-Russian vector or broadcasted as guidelines for aggression against the actions of the authorities and / or military who are "interested in making profits out of war".

Considering psychoanalytic key, it can be noted that representatives of both soldier and civilian matrices can use all Psychological Defence Mechanisms that are available. After all, no man without psychopathology does not call a war in his life and does everything possible to instinctively protect from it. But when the military and civil matrix is dominated by a non-reflective nonadaptive Psychological Defence Mechanisms, the conflict with reality and with representatives is inevitable. We would like to illustrate some of them with quotations from focus groups. And also we will try to recall some of Remarque's work to demonstrate the universal nature of the matrices.

One of the most widespread reactions, which to some extent is associated with a soldier's matrix, is the aggression (aggressiveness) that according to Freud reveals (shows up) in "identification with the aggressor" (Freud, 1936). Instead, the study's findings say that 73% of the military and 79% of civilians agreed with the statement that "Participation in hostilities is not a justification for aggression and violence." So both groups are somewhat unanimous. Some concerns are raised by responds of 13% of civilians and 19% of the military from the ATO area who disagreed with this statement, that is, we see that those who had experience in the war more often tolerated the reaction of aggression. Though their number is low.

The most frequently mentioned was the aggression for civilians' questions and their ignoring rights and privileges (of military people) provided by the state. One of the most sensitive topics was a right to free travel, which was violated by the drivers of urban private transport and privileges for obtaining a piece of land.

"... you are communicating with someone, requesting help, but he asks: "Why did you go there? What have you left behind there?" The brain explodes when I search for a respond. So I sit and think, what to tell him and how to explain? " Western, the military people.

Recognizing changes in the psyche of the soldier as necessary to adapt to the conditions of service, the acquisition of military thinking in order to protect the state, we immediately start talking about the emergence of one of the important conflicts. In his work "On Killing", Dave Grossman says that by delegating the function of violence to the soldiers, the society is almost never ready to divide with combatant the responsibility for its consequences and tend to show the demobilized soldier the rejection and hostility. In turn, soldiers, feeling not accepted, can start to consider themselves somehow "defective" or sick. According to our poll, 71% of civilian respondents believe that soldiers return to a family with psychological problems that they can not cope with themselves, and even 41% insist on the coercion of psychological help upon soldiers' return. But we are more concerned with the fact that 53% of the military agree with this opinion.

While we recall that according to the National Center of the United States PTSD can have about 10 to 20% of those who survived the traumatic event in the war. In Ukraine, this number is not known at this time, and it is far from the identical to the total number of those who served in the army, even in the zone of ATO). *As the military from the town near Kiev said during a group discussion "... we must apply for treatment, for medical aid and the family needs to somehow adjust "* Central, military.

"A person who went through the ordeal of a war has his psyche changed , it is a disease in principle." Easter, civilian.

Since the beginning of the Maidan, the work of psychologists has found support and approval not only in the rallies, but also in the international professional

community. Our colleagues from Georgia, USA, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Germany and other countries helped us. However, along with undoubted benefits, the information space is filled with the concepts of Vietnam's syndromes, PTSD after active service, which led to distortions in attitude towards the military, including stigmatized one.

The suppression and denial (of) the tendency not to notice war, another protective mechanism that appeared in the focus groups and was studied then in the survey. Many civilians' widespread thoughts are : "while it's not called war, it's not a war," "I'll fight if the war comes to my house." 51% of civilians agreed with this statement, and this is significantly higher figure than those of military (37%).

In 2014-2015 there was somehow a completely different attitude. That means that everyone was afraid that there would be an invasion, aggression. People saw that we stopped it all. So people got a sense of security". Central, military.

Denial " ... *there is no war here, all talk about it "*. Western, military people. The civilian population is not inclined to use the word "war", much less commonly use "ATO", as a rule euphemisms are used "what is happening in the country, in the East," "the current situation," etc. Moreover, 60% of the military and 65% of civilians agreed with the direct question to the representatives of both on "avoiding civil war views". The largest number of civilians who agreed with that was in the East (ATO area) - 74%, while in the West there were only 55% of those who agreed.

Rationalization is manifested in the spread of mass messages among both civilian and military, "this is a war for money, in fact, it has long been decided", "it's all political games, not war." And then the arguments are sought that are beneficial to the military, because they went to fight "for money" or for other reasons not related to patriotic motives: *"I respect the people who were there, but not all of them had a clear motivation to mecd the country» Western, civilians.*

Displacement is a mechanism, which manifests itself in the fact that the drive (energy) is redirected from the original object to another, because one can not manifest itself on the cause. So the anger that the war is going on in the country is carried over to the military, who is tangent to it. And such an attitude is not only in the ATO zone, but also in other regions.

"When we see the uniform, it is associated with the war because the war is shown to us by the news channels: mortars, «Grady» and so on. Also, immediately at the level of consciousness it pops up that the military is negative, that they are a war " Central, civilian.

Devaluation, idealization is manifested in the fact that all ATO participants are perceived as heroes, but I would not go to war.

"I respect them very much. But it is completely incomprehensible to me why he does not wear civilian clothes and does not continue to live a normal life. For what? In order to attract attention to himrself? Why? Or again, to speculate over it" Central, civilian.

The effect of this pair of mechanisms of idealization-devaluaion is quite widespread in the post-Soviet space, *the director's speech becomes more and more inspirational. He celebrates heroism not only on the battlefield, but also invisible heroism in the rear.*

Remarque.

"They tell me that I have an ATO syndrome. And I say good people, and what's your syndrome?", Easter, military.

Reversal is one of the mechanisms that allows you to cope with feelings that compromise your own self. And then to keep it under control.

Appeals to the moderator "... it seems to me that you are not working for this, but in order to somehow change us, that is, somehow make us behave normally. Someone will come back from ATO. And will you put instructions, so that he behave well with ATO person ?. Here's what conflict is already festering in me ... - the military, Easter.

Another controversial issue that was discovered in the course of the study is perceptual distortion of attitudes, or the perception of the feelings of another group. When each of the groups, evaluating what feelings they call in the another one, often chose worse feelings than the other group gave them. In this statement, we agree with Joanna Montgomery Byles, who states that our mechanisms of projective identification and splitting make a deep split, displacing "hateful, bad parts of

ourselves" in others, because of our own introspection of our hatred. That is, there is a tendency to notice negative more as a manifestation of the universal human survival mechanism. And this trend deepened by traumatic experience is more prone to heightened negative interpretations.

Figure No. 1 shows, "The results of a Survey of Respondents Regarding what Kind of Feelings a Military is Raising in Civilian" you can see these mutual evaluations, here I will mention only those feelings that have significant differences. The military underestimate civilian's respect (49% and 56%), appreciation (39% and 52%), compassion and pity (22% and 31%), and instead, overestimate interest (28% and 17%), indifference (18% and 9%), neglect (7% and 3%).

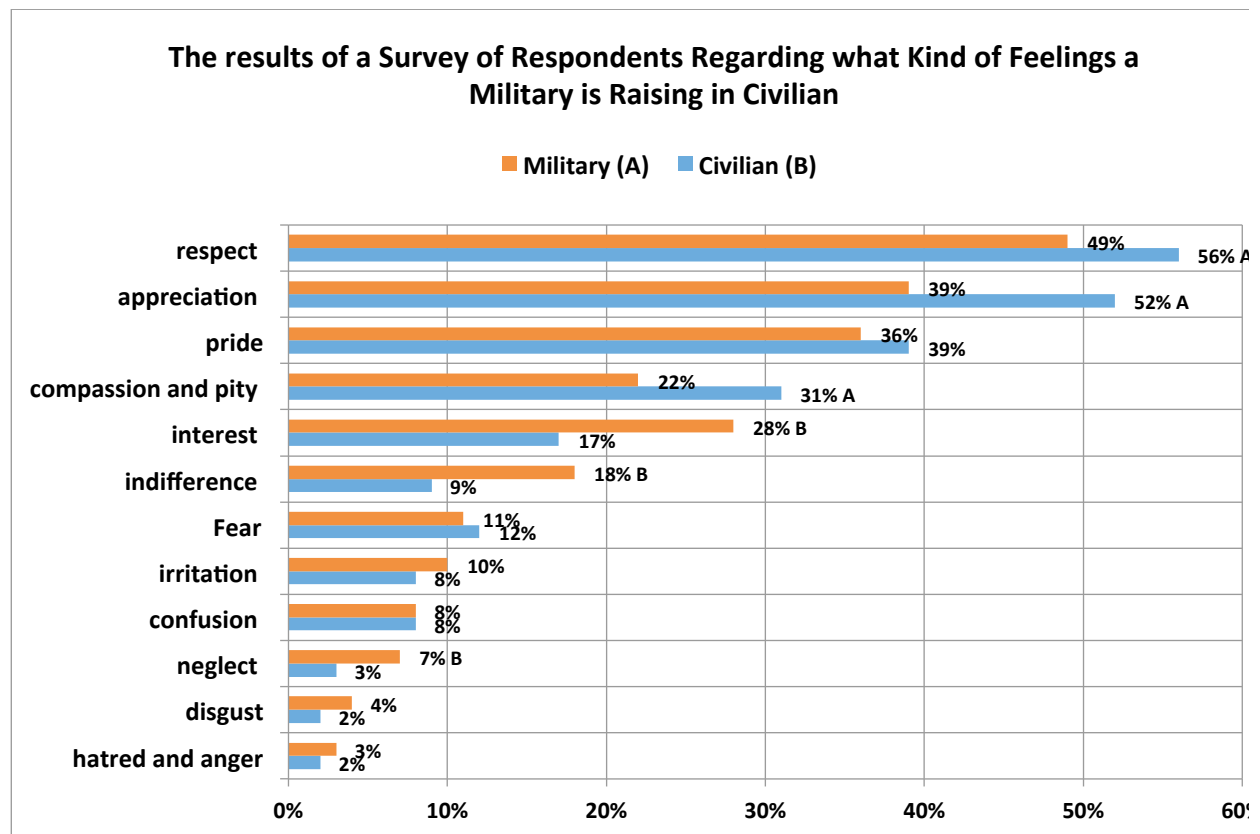
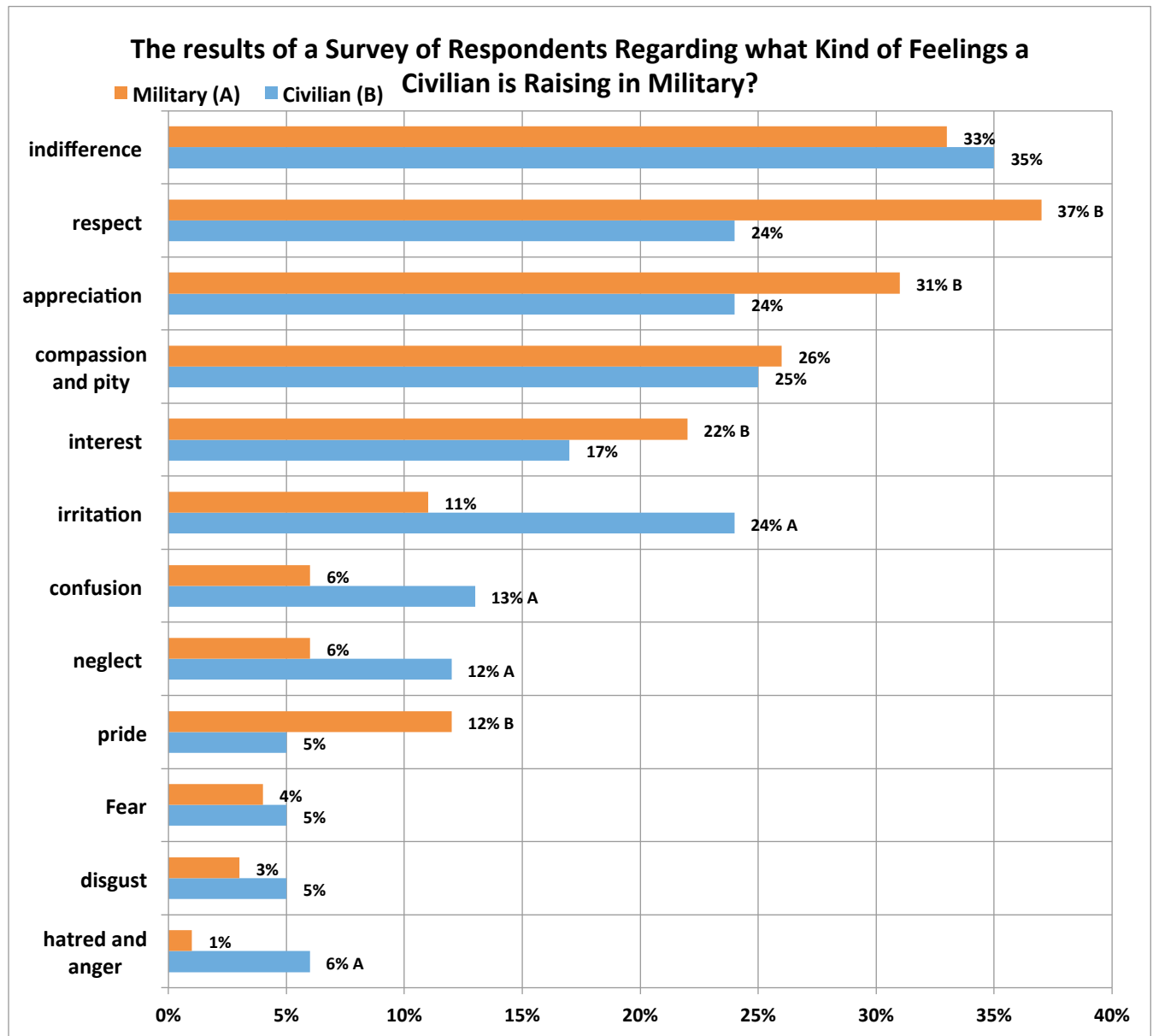


Figure No. 2 shows, "The results of a Survey of Respondents Regarding what Kind of Feelings a Civilian is Raising in Military " we can see that the most underestimated military's feelings are: respect (37% and 24%), appreciation (31% and 24%), interest (22% and 17%). The overrated feelings are negative - irritation (24% and 11%), confusion (13% and 6%), hatred and anger (6% and 1%)



So, according to the rating on these issues, the choice of military and civilian coincides. That is, the military is precisely aware of what feelings they are calling on and civilians can fairly accurately assess the senses of the military. The most noticeable are quantitative differences. Although feelings are being selected “in a right way”, each group believes that the other has more negative feelings and less pronounced positive ones than is the case.

Consequently, further thoughts on changing attitudes give grounds for the allocation and strengthening strengthening of the needs in their public and group reflections. In our opinion, such reflections can contribute to transformation, to more adaptive, Psychological Defence Mechanisms, to the development of mechanisms for understanding and resolving conflict issues.

It is obvious that veterans have a chance to change the civilian matrix (as it was in the United States, for example, because of the lobbying of new laws, check on government actions, new traditions, etc.), the adaptive flexible attitude of groups to each other is more profitable, since stigmatization not only increases stress, but it can also prevent the person or group from accessing resources that help (Aneshensel, 1992). A civilian matrix change reduces the traumatic component in the matrix of the soldier.

And in Ukraine there is a problem of who will initiate the change of matrices. In America, this was through heavy losses and grave crisis with Vietnam veterans and the blame for society (guilt of the society towards them). Ukraine has experience of Afghanistan and World War II veterans, but such large-scale conclusions have not been made.

Ways of resolving conflict or common ground (areas of common interest) that we found by analyzing the results of focus group study:

Recognition of the military and their role in preserving peace.

Understanding the need for adaptation, adaptation to one another (civilian to military and military to civilian). The notion that these misunderstandings exist and must be resolved. There is a significant demand for awareness and media literacy, both in civilian and military.

There is a request for clear "rules of the game" in relation to everything: from the attitude of the state to ATO veterans and privileges.

Shared beliefs about conflicts (in terms of officials, the role of the state, etc.) - a large subject area of interaction (not talking about the difference, but focus on common issues that can be solved).

Work with a sense of inferiority and guilt in society.

From the military side there is no accusation of inferiority. There is a request "do not annoy us with your feelings of guilt."

Grossman D. (1995) On killing: the psychological cost of learning to kill in war and society / Dave Grossman. – Little, Brown and Company Boston New York Toronto London.