

## SUMMARY

### Psychosocial Adjustment of Croatian Homeland War Veterans: Individual and Social Perspective

It is very well known that soldiers face diverse and severe stressors during active combat, but the impact of these stressors on one's psychological wellbeing, social relationships, and quality of life does not end with the conclusion of the armed conflict. This book presents the findings of several studies investigating psychosocial characteristics of Croatian Homeland War veterans, the nature of their war and post-war experiences, and the potential long-term effects of these experiences on their personal and social life. Our goal was to enable setting a groundwork for a more efficient system of psychosocial aid, in hope to eventually increase the well-being of this population.

The first chapter features a brief overview of the Croatian Homeland War through relevant numbers, dates and specific information related to the formation and structure of the Croatian Army. The second chapter addresses the issue of long-term psychological consequences of active combat. It presents findings from research on the relationship between combat exposure, coping strategies, emotional competence, regulation and control, quality of life and posttraumatic stress symptoms in Homeland War veterans. The third chapter focuses on intergroup (relations between veterans and other social groups) and intragroup dynamic (relationships within the veterans' population), as well as their impact on social capital. The final chapter presents the results of a survey examining preferred activities among veterans, focusing on their true needs and interests.

By understanding these processes and taking into account the specificities of the Homeland War and Croatian War veterans' status, we tried to define key issues that are important for designing programs that will provide support for veterans at both individual and group levels and ensure the improvement of the quality of their personal and social life. The lack of recognition and understanding of the consequences of the Home-

land War has caused numerous oversights in institutional policies and public image of war veterans, but there is always a possibility and hope that we can do more. We hope our findings will empower Homeland War veterans to focus their potential for cooperation and compassion toward increasing their personal wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of their comrades and their families, leaving a positive impact on the whole community. In both institutionally sanctioned or individually motivated activities and programs it is important to rely on sound scientific foundations. We believe this study can be a reference for such future endeavors.