

# 1

## Introduction

Why have fear and anger become such a prominent feature of social life, evidenced by violent responses to home invasion? Why is it that, contrary to the objective evidence, it is the people who live in the greatest comfort on record, more cosseted and pampered than any other people in history, who feel more threatened, insecure and frightened, more inclined to panic, and more passionate about everything related to security and safety than people in most other societies past and present? (Bauman, 2006: 130)

A walk around many of the world's leafiest and most prestigious neighbourhoods and new mansions reveals a world of relative secrecy, high security and what can only be described as a kind of fortification – of the private home. Were we able to leap the gates of many of the proliferating gated communities across the global north we would find similar products, increasingly tailored to those on middle incomes as well as the global rich. Whether it be the bomb-proof windows of ultra-prime properties like One Hyde Park in London, the gated mansions of footballers in Manchester's rural hinterland, the island retreats of celebrities and the super-rich, the palatial excess of Los Angeles' suburbs or the efforts of homeowners in risky areas to prevent burglary the trend is increasingly apparent, the feel of these neighbourhoods increasingly hostile and anxiety-ridden. Fear has been democratised and, where resource exists to do so, the sense of concealment, protection and defence is ever more apparent in the designs and adaptations now being deployed. So it is that our use of Zygmunt Bauman's pithy observation as an opening to this volume helps to reveal much about one of the social paradoxes of our time – why do we witness the presence of anxiety and fear among many of the globe's most affluent people,

and how does this translate into a kind of urban life that offers both continuities and definite breaks with the built landscapes of even the recent past?

Many commentators on our social condition have emphasized that fear has become a defining component or index of contemporary life and our project in this book builds upon these concerns to offer a consideration of how it is that unease is increasingly linked to the private territories of home life. Domestic routines position us in a paradoxical relation to our fear since the home is both the site around which much apprehension is experienced (of invasion from outside, or of violence within the home), yet it is also a defensible space which can protect us from gnawing concerns about a more unpredictable world outside. As security has become a central aspect of the life of nations and urban centres it thus seems important to consider where the domestic home is positioned against a range of potential threats, and its place within these concerns. This is a new kind of home front that can be deployed as a crucial resource in a wider battle against a range of sources of anxiety that press upon us, as well as being bound up with the political projects of market freedoms and orientations that characterize so many aspects of social life more broadly. What has for some time been described as a culture of fear (Bauman, 2006; Glassner, 1999) has thus been met with an increasingly emphatic retreat by homeowners into fortified dwellings, extravagant houses, concealed bunkers and countless gated developments globally.

Many homes now feature numerous defensive security measures: alarms, CCTV, motion-sensing lights and some even include impregnable panic rooms. Yet the disquiet driving these physical and geographical responses is neither socially or historically novel, nor restricted to the rich and famous. Rising real household incomes and home ownership rates have enabled many households to adopt similar technologies, producing a type of home, the domestic fortress, that displays our fear in the solidity of the built environments around us, with homes and suburbs taking on the look and feel of increasingly secured terrains. As Bauman notes:

The war against insecurity, dangers and risks is now waged inside the city [and home], and inside the city battlefields are marked out and front lines are drawn. Heavily armoured trenches and bunkers intended to separate out strangers, keep them away and bar their entry are fast becoming one



**1.1** Safe house (night-time mode, shutters and doors closed), Poland

of the most visible aspects of contemporary cities ... in which the safety-addicted urban residents dwell (Bauman, 2005: 82)

While our homes provide us with a means of locking out the daily hardships and risks of everyday life, from them we witness and anticipate a range of troubling phenomena: internationalised and potentially unending forms of terror, regional warfare, the anxieties generated by global ecological change, the rise of ethnic and nationalist extremism, global flows of the dispossessed, feelings of loss and uncertainty around social identity, new-found insecurities of the workplace and our future welfare, to say nothing of the growing risks of flood, fire and other incalculable catastrophes. To go a little beyond Bauman's paradox we need to note that today's home is unevenly positioned – between offering a site that protects us, more or less, and yet which is also a foregrounded space upon which we project many of our worst fears of potential invasion, violation or even destruction. In the context of a risk-based view of the world that emphasises the central role of individuals in managing such possibilities (Beck, 1992) many industries now profit from these pervasive fears and have thus sought to sell a war against intruders, dirt and disaster and include insurance and security

companies offering defensive home technologies (see Chapter 6). Thus fear combines with an individualised project of the self within homes hidden from view or fortified using diverse security technologies and in many ways absent of state safeguards or community supports. While defence has been a primary function of the home from the earliest times (Gardiner, 1976), and security measures have been variably emphasised within particular historical epochs according to prevailing social arrangements, the presence of new plans, designs and constructions suggests something novel is occurring across much of the global north and west. While these formations have connections with those of the past, a major aim of this volume is to discuss how and why what we see is new and distinctive.

Pervasive worry can be linked to the home in diverse ways – we are fearful when people knock at the door, irritated when salespeople or even friends call us unannounced, worried when we are not there to protect our property. Similarly we have nightmares about our house being broken into as we sleep, are furious and confused about media stories of elderly women raped in their homes, anxious about subsidience, ponder the risk of repossession and the risk of being ‘under water’ (in negative equity), or behind in our repayments, while at other times, we worry about being literally underwater from floods and other incalculable risks to the physical fabric and social life of the home. Such fears are by no means baseless, even if we may mis-estimate their occurrence, yet they not only tell us much about our own psychological states, but also about our fear of other people, the fragmentation of society into rich and poor enclaves, and the consequences of the state withdrawing previous assurances that it would protect citizens. Elliott and Lemert (2006: 8) argue that this social condition of pronounced individualism has generated:

privatized worlds [which] propel individuals into shutting others and the wider world out of their emotional lives. Under the impact of privatism, the self is denied any wider relational connection at a deeply unconscious level, and on the level of day-to-day behaviour such ‘new individualisms’ set the stage for a unique cultural constellation of anguish, anxiety, fear, disappointment and dread.

These are strong words, to be sure, and ones that perhaps compel us to confront the pressures on us as individuals within less social and increasingly unequal societies. Yet the more important point we might take

from such observations concerns how these social forces combine and propel forms of privatised responsibility and fear and the way that the private home has been situated as a potential safe/danger zone within this context.

### **Withdrawal and defence**

Political ideologies of economic freedom combined with messages about social disorderliness form the worrisome backdrop of much of everyday life, implying competition with, and perhaps also fear of, our neighbours. Thus we see more and more lockable front gates, fences, external post-boxes, internal and external iron grilles, shades and shutters put in place to avoid the observation and social contact of those known and unknown to us. The fortress mentality and physicality of the modern home goes beyond achieving basic security through design, marking an even deeper commitment to the pursuit of status, loneliness and privacy as the bonds of community and state assurances have been loosened over time (Putnam, 2000). Looking ‘through the keyhole’, as the popular television series had it, or more appositely, through the fisheye viewer in many front doors, we see an extensive array of mechanisms through which the privacy and sanctity of domestic life is now managed and ensured: metal-reinforced doors, burglar alarms, bedside panic alarms, toughened glass windows, pressure pad and laser sensor intruder systems and even elaborate panic rooms, echoing past anxieties about incendiary or nuclear attacks. These are now the taken-for-granted measures of security in many homes, but they are supplemented by other strategies that extend beyond the home, such as gated communities, curfews, legal ordinances and other mechanisms to ensure ‘civilised’ behaviour in public space.

As an example, gated communities often represent a withdrawal into the perceived safety of more secure neighbourhood spaces, despite the fact that no guarantee exists that the dangerous outside world is fully excluded or that neighbours will not present a threat (see Chapter 4) (Atkinson and Smith, 2012). Data on the extent of gated communities suggests that around 6 per cent of all households in the USA live in gated communities (Sanchez *et al.*, 2005); in Australia, just under 6 per cent (5.9 per cent) of households live in homes with secure entry systems (in gated communities and apartment blocks using pin code entry systems, and so on) (Atkinson and Tranter, 2011), while in the



**1.2** House with side-scrolling electronic gates, Adelaide, Australia

UK, there are now more than a thousand gated communities (Atkinson *et al.*, 2002). Current figures for each country are now likely much higher.

Both within and outside gated enclaves, we find diminishing levels of sociability and anxieties about contact with others that are reflected in the design of houses, many of which are large enough to accommodate a wide range of home entertainments making the home the centre of daily life. New detached homes are being built to a higher density and have become larger, swallowing up garden space with their expanded floor plans and double or triple garages (Australian Bureau

of Statistics, 2007). Such air-conditioned 'McMansions' provide a dramatic contrast with their harsh external environment and are often equipped with the latest technologies of private consumption, such as home cinema systems and games rooms that substitute for public alternatives. The desire for more privacy and for social withdrawal by homeowners is both manipulated and met by the housebuilding industry.

## **Tenure and jurisdiction**

Our primary focus in this book is on home ownership, particularly in England, Australia and the USA. We are interested in the ideological, economic and legal status associated with ownership, themes running throughout the book that we use to explain the connection between the private home, an increasingly individualised society, and the primacy of the economy to political life and social fear, more broadly. Certainly these are themes shared in the conditions of the global south and poorer nations characterised by higher levels of urban violence, inequality and forms of criminality that have generated a firmer basis and entrenched position of gating and domestic security. While touching on these issues our focus remains broadly on the affluent within affluent countries, searching for answers as to why patterns of fortification and exclusion should be so pronounced in locations where crime has been falling for some years.

While all three of the countries we focus on here exert significant economic power, this wealth is unequally distributed amongst their citizens in comparison with most other nations (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009) and, as former English colonies, the USA and Australia have the same common law system. Further, each of the three countries has high rates of home ownership compared with other leading economies, albeit not the highest rates in the world. There are a number of 'ideologically convergent features', despite some differences, in how the UK, the USA and Australia have respectively achieved mass home ownership (Ronald, 2008: 162). In England, the USA and Australia, rates of home ownership peaked at over 70 per cent between 1996 and 2008, before gradually decreasing as a result of declining affordability and the global economic recession. Each country has also seen a significant rise in housing prices over the decades since the 1990s, albeit interrupted by the 2008 financial crash. We turn to an analysis of these countries, then,



for linguistic, legal, data availability and research reasons, yet also intend to offer a diagnosis that has wider applicability to the wider global north and beyond.

Changes in housing tenure are not merely residual features of the economies we highlight in our analysis here; the increase in ownership and wealth has been viewed as fundamental to the economic base of these societies, apparently freeing many households from the 'waste' of rent payments and landlord servitude that make this tenure incredibly important in ideological and cultural terms. The financial crisis that began in 2008, however, highlighted the consequences of over-extending these dreams and the catastrophic impact of mortgage loan default, super-light financial and political regulation and the push by governments to ensure political popularity by offering low interest rates and economic conditions favourable to ownership. The private home is also deeply and ideologically implicated within the need for financial security in the contemporary homeowner's consciousness and those that aspire to be homeowners. The home is now a key part of what has come to be known as equity-based welfare, in which the store of value in the home becomes a substitutive resource, drawn from at times of ill health or in retirement, to top up the decreasing entitlements available to private individuals from western governments (Kluyev and Mills, 2010). Home ownership has thereby come to be seen as essential for the maintenance of personal income and 'welfare' in societies such as the USA and Australia, and this is important to understand the vital social position of ownership as a perceived bulwark against potential insecurities that may present themselves to the individual and household.

There has also been a fundamental change over time in popular understandings of the home, from providing a safe habitation to a tradeable, wealth-generating asset. The recent financial shake-down was linked not only to the role of financial institutions' lending practices in the pursuit of home ownership, but also the complicity of governments in allowing the unfettered rise in value of housing assets because of the intense feel-good factor such economic growth generated. For example, Alan Greenspan (then Chair of the US Federal Reserve Bank) felt it was his duty to assist in a low interest environment to help promote home ownership as the cornerstone of a property-owning society, even while acknowledging that the sub-prime mortgage market was risky (Greenspan, 2007). So deep-seated are these connections between



affluence, liberty and property, that the effects of deregulation and the profound and embedded concurrent social inequalities were ignored until it was too late.

### **Tessellated neoliberalism**

Throughout the book we consider what we see as an important relationship between the private home, political life and the economy that we seek to capture in the term *tessellated neoliberalism*. By this we mean the ways in which we can understand the wider order and values of exchange and economic life that expand outwards from the micro-scale of a multitude of owned homes and into the fabric of the macro-economy, guided by prevailing ideologies and decisions by ruling parties and financial institutions. Thus the architecture of ideologies prescribing homeownership is constructed to a significant degree by this pattern of individual interests and physical structures within everyday, lived realities. The alignment of interest has helped to generate deeper social inequalities, amplified through the housing market (Dorling, 2014), fear of crime, the securitisation of the home (as a financial and physical asset), competitive home ownership, and unsustainable property price rises.

In the uncertain times following the global financial crisis of 2008, homes have become perhaps an even more precious asset that needs defending – rising repossession rates and concerns over national economic futures have exacerbated these concerns. The ability to secure the home is predicated on particular material and legal relationships and conditions such as our relative wealth and housing tenure. Whether we own a property or not affects the stakes we have in our home and determines the extent to which we can make modifications without permission from a landlord. Home, or rather home ownership specifically as a particular kind of legal relationship to it, has become an obsession across the Western world. Governments have responded to and manipulated the deep, psychological need by humans for security by using interventions such as subsidies toward mortgages and maintaining low interest rates while also overseeing the relative insecurity and low regulation of the private rented sector and planning system as well as the continued withering of the welfare functions of the state. The rhetoric underpinning state encouragement of homeownership has long been evident in all three countries we examine here and is very

clear in this example, from a 1943 speech by Albert Dunstan, Premier of Victoria, Australia:

Invariably, the man who owns his home is an exemplary citizen. His outlook on life is immediately changed from the moment when the first nail is driven into the structure that is eventually to become 'his castle' ... The homeowner feels that he has a stake in the country. (Dunstan, 1943, cited in Ronald, 2008: 155)

The metaphor of the home owner's 'castle' is of course a much-used trope. We utilise and interrogate it throughout this book, given its ability to conjure defensive ideas about personal jurisdiction, autonomy and control over access. The image derives from a law report by Edward Coke, then Attorney General for England, of *Semayne's case*, heard at court in 1604 and included by Coke in his later publication, *Institutes of the Laws of England*:

The house of every one is to him as his castle and fortress, as well for his defence against injury and violence as for his repose. For a man's house is his castle, *et domus sua cuique est tutissimum refugium* [and each man's home his safest refuge]. (Coke, 1644: 192)

This original wording was 'cheapened' into the now familiar phrase 'an Englishman's home is his castle' by Freeman (1873), according to Joseph Rykwert (1991: 53). The essence of this usage lies in suggesting that the owner is able to exclude all others and should be supported in being able to actively defend their property from attack or intrusion. The law supports this by defining as trespass even the slightest and most harmless trespass of another's property. In the eighteenth century, property rights were described in another phrase that has had lasting power as exclusionary 'despotic dominion', what might be thought of as a kind of sovereignty expressed at the domestic scale (Blackstone, 1768: 2). Ownership thus enjoys firm support from the state that connects with the arguments of some commentators who have suggested that the desire to own one's home is driven by deep territorial and acquisitive instincts (see Saunders, 1990: 69). So we can suggest that the psychological and legal justifications of property ownership chime with suggestions that 'human territoriality' is best understood as a spatial strategy of control and as an expression of social power (Sacks, 1986) which plays itself out through our built environment and the homes we inhabit as expressions of these attempts at mastery and exclusion.



**1.3** Small town defensive architecture, UK

Shared understandings of the home as a place of repose and refuge, to borrow Coke's words, suggest a space of socialisation, contentment and relaxation. The autonomy associated with ownership of the home implies a haven from interference in a wider unstable public realm, but the home also presents a burden of responsibility. While the state encourages homeowners to provide security for their family and household, the relative burden of ownership is at least partly responsible for creating the circumstances that require maintenance and defensive measures. In the USA, Australia and the UK, the state's withdrawal from provision of public services and the implications of this move have been well documented (see for example, Rose, 2000). Policing cuts have also widely been perceived to leave homes vulnerable, and any breach of the security of the home exposes the problematic relationship between the individual, the state and official agencies of law enforcement.

These initial observations lead us to a broader conclusion about the role of the home and of home ownership – that notions of territory, legal ownership and markets are core to how we understand our

position within society more broadly. The idea of neoliberalism as an extending and deepening mode of government that presents and advances exactly these interests and values has been a regular theme of social science for some time (see for example Peck, 2010; Harvey, 2005). But perhaps we might go further. Something interesting and important is happening that exists in a figuration, or set of links, between property ownership, neoliberal governance and the home itself. Like a tessellated mosaic we can look down upon increasing sections of the urban system and see an interlocking patchwork of affluent housing, compounds and gated enclaves that are the very bedrock of the systemic architecture that favours ownership, exclusion and market autonomy. In the domestic fortress we find social values that are aligned with market rationalities, interest in the state of the macro economy, stock markets, interest rates and mortgage products, to say nothing of house values. Meanwhile the state, despite its mantra of rolling back to allow unfettered social and economic activity, firmly orchestrates and appeals to the interests of those living in the kinds of districts and homes that this volume discusses.

In many ways the project to promote home ownership, particularly in the past quarter century, is aligned with politically assisted market rule (Peck, 2010). Successive governments in many countries have helped to create favourable conditions for ownership and the political capital that stems from them. The championing of freedom viewed in terms of unhindered markets appears to be closely related to the property market and what it is seen to do for those who benefit from it. In this sense the home is protected by the state in legal terms as property, but is also held up and protected as a way of being that meshes with wider projects of financialisation and the privileging of the wealthy.

While home ownership offers a range of freedoms and advantages, not least the escape from a low quality and largely unregulated private rented sector, vast social and economic inequalities prevent such emancipation for many. The reality of the political drive to promote ownership and growing social divides are often starkly witnessed in the visible differences between the physical homes and neighbourhoods that put the winners and losers on show. Whereas in previous generations affluence could be seen in terms of the divide in terms of tenure, today we see the widening of material differences in the highly securitised and fearful landscapes of wealthy neighbourhoods, homes and suburbs. These have been built partly as displays of prestige but also to help

exclude the risks from a less predictable and hierarchically ordered social world outside. Fortress homes and neighbourhoods help to manage and block out this risky world and impressions of risky 'others' who do not belong. In a sea of social precarity the gains of the very affluent can be deployed to shield their conspicuous gains from those least able to achieve them – behind gates, high walls and protected homes. If a shared public realm could be used to galvanise the motivation for common taxes and spending in decades gone by, the fortress home and gated community now enable spaces of uninterrupted enjoyment by social and economic elites who are catered for by private services and club goods. Whereas the risks of disinvesting in the public realm or insuring the poor were once well understood the new-found ability to live uninterrupted behind gates and walls facilitates a political logic of extending market provision; any social friction generated by inequality (Dorling, 2014) can be ignored as a distant sideshow.

This discussion leads us to an important conclusion about the relationship between space, the home and contemporary politics which is to suggest that physical form both follows and feeds the kind of prevailing market orthodoxies and ideologies that have fed the kinds of social divisions we see today. In this context the homes of the affluent and of homeowners form a tessellated system of almost interlocking spaces that build-up wider districts, but also form the basis for legitimating the projects of market excess and freedoms which must be protected alongside the rights to private enjoyment of property. We will return to these themes throughout the book as we examine the relationship between home, the wider built environment and the kinds of social politics in evidence today globally. In this context the changing urban landscape suggests to us a complex series of relationships between self, home and security that combine with the emergence of markets and inequalities as increasingly dividing and divisive processes today (Piketty, 2014).

### **Crime and fear of crime**

Burglary is the most obvious form of transgression to which the home is vulnerable. We use this term to refer to all kinds of forced entry into the home with criminal intent. Legislation in some US states also criminalises 'home invasion'; definitions vary, but typically include forced entry into a residential building when the occupants are at home,

involving the use of weapons or physical intimidation. The annual rates of actual or attempted burglary of households are consistently high in England and Wales (7.9 per cent), the USA (7.5 per cent) and in Australia (6.1 per cent), as compared with a global average of 4.4 per cent and with much lower rates in Scandinavian countries, for example (Bernasco, 2014). However, in all three countries, the numbers of burglaries have decreased since the mid-1990s, after a post-war pattern of rising crime rates. In fact, there has also been a general decrease in the fear of crime, though with variabilities by particular groups and areas, despite a huge emphasis on crime and fear within the popular media. The fear of burglary is, of course, linked to anxiety about an invasion of privacy alongside worry for the loss of financially and personally valuable effects. Even if much fear is dysfunctional and arguably unnecessary, it is essential that we respect the validity of these emotions, the real impact and harms of burglary, and importantly, the wider social, political and media influences on these states of agitation and anxiety.

Burglary is significant not only because of the financial cost resulting from loss of property and the consequent (re)investment in home security measures. It is equally if not more important because of the unsettling prospect of its occurrence and its psychological impact, as our homes and belongings are essential elements of our private and public identities (Chapman, 1999). So, for example, we see Douglas Porteous (1976) writing about the home as a 'territorial core', a psychic and physical space, building on notions of personal space developed by Erving Goffman (1971), who considered the home as a kind of fixed territory or aspect of the self. According to environmental psychologists, there are three ways of infringing on another's territory (Altman, 1975): invasion (taking control), violation (vandalism), and contamination (for example, defecating in the home during a burglary; Friedman, 1968). These types of infringement remain at the core of defensive concerns about the home, which Irving Altman (1975) considers to be the primary and therefore the most potent, personalised and permanent form of human territory. The complex result of burglary victimhood includes both anger and fear.

Many of the understandable fears of homeowners are fanned by media reports of global dangers: home invasion, shootings in quiet neighbourhoods, stories of prisoners and domestic slaves as well as terror, war and environmental catastrophe that stream into our homes via proliferating media systems, from televisions and internet to social



**1.4** Brooklyn, New York city

media more broadly. We are also subject to constant ‘crime talk’ (Sasson, 1995), through which stories of danger and harm are amplified by local papers and the gossip of peers and social networks. These influences further raise the value of the home as a calm defence against the exterior chaos; in this context, the home is an ontological anchor, a space which helps bind us to the reality and continuity of the world around us. Yet the home is often placed at the forefront of public debates about crime and disorder, which stokes fear in the collective imagination. There is an established public and media perception that violation of the domestic home is widespread and that the law does not sufficiently help



householders to defend their own territory, which, we argue, has generated a deeper fortress mentality than a simple analysis of gated communities and fortress homes allows us to index.

The interlocking of fear, security and the home is further cemented 'by the commercial security industry, whose sales of security devices fuelled the public's fears and insecurities at the very moment that it claimed to allay them' (Garland, 2001: 161). The insurance industry has done well from these fears, and in turn, it ensures sales for purveyors of security by making the installation of security features a condition of providing home insurance. The house-building companies that construct and renovate homes and their sales agents hold out the promise to homeowners of release from their anxieties, marketing even ordinary homes as the realisation of a dream of total privacy and security. At the other extreme from this home market, the global security market was estimated to be worth £410 billion in 2012 and was forecast to rise to £571 billion by 2016 (UK Trade & Investment, 2014), extraordinary figures which encompass the commercial, military and residential security market sectors. Another projection forecasts the residential security market in the USA to grow at a *compound annual growth rate* of 32 per cent over the period 2014–19, and the European residential security market is slated to grow at 16 per cent over the same five years (Technavio, 2015a and 2015b). The huge profits generated by selling residential security connect the fears of owners with the power of media and industry narratives that focus on threats to the home itself.

Another marked impact of the profound wealth generated in recent decades has been both the ability and desire of the rich to take much greater precautions in home security. The use of bodyguards (also known as close protection personnel) is well known, but there has been an accompanying and much larger investment in strategies designed to keep their homes secure. Purchasers pay huge sums for extensively fortified homes, equipped with bulletproof windows, electronic alarm systems, motion-sensitive cameras, voice and fingerprint security entry systems, secure panic rooms and round-the-clock guards. A survey of the wealthy found that over 98 per cent of those with a net worth of over \$25 million had paid for personal security services in the previous few years (Farrell, 2008). The security spending of Chief Executive Officers of the 'Fortune 100' companies (the largest by gross annual revenue public and privately held companies in the United States) is published annually in *Fortune* magazine. The figures for 2013 include

two reports of expenditure over \$1.5m, by Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Oracle's Larry Ellison (Zillman, 2015), though of course, this does not include the raw expenditure of many wealthy people on the home as a defensible asset, such as the 'bomb-proof' apartments of London's One Hyde Park development with prices as high as £140m.

As the wealth of the super-rich has increased, so have investments in assets like second and third homes, yachts and planes, that also need to be secured by domestic security systems, trained bodyguards and remotely accessible surveillance. In 2008, *Forbes* magazine reported on some of the most advanced security systems installed in the homes of the super-rich (Farrell, 2008). These included perimeter command centres inside custom-built homes, long-range infrared cameras, fence and other motion sensors. One particular hedge fund manager installed biometric access scanners and trap doors in a 'fortress' that cost \$10 million. In some homes equipped with panic rooms, the whole house can be flooded with tear gas in the event of a break-in, no doubt also bringing to mind stories of raids on the homes of the super-rich in the French Riviera where the use of sleeping gas by a gang of jewel thieves was alleged.

The role played by the media in shaping our tastes, fears and aspirations, is another key theme of this book. Media empires profit from and boost the cult of the celebrity and the public's apparently limitless interest in the homes and interior designs of the rich and famous, extending to details of top-of-the-range security measures and hi-tech installations ordinary homeowners may only fantasise about. Take for example the Manchester United and England footballer Wayne Rooney. A newspaper article gives extensive details about his modern mansion, with its cinema, pool, indoor sports complex and tennis courts, as well as five-a-side football pitch (Wilkes, 2009). We would suggest that the ready availability of this so-called property porn featuring the homes of multi-millionaires also fuels aspirations to upgrade our own homes by installing cheaper imitations of their hardwood floors, kitchens with stainless steel appliances, and defensive technologies. The necessary loans and refinancing secured on homes as collateral thereby locks homeowners further into debt; for example, Australia's 'renovation economy' was valued at A\$28.1 million in 2006–07 (Allon, 2008: 26).

Technologies of domestic security and neighbourhood organisation present a form of domestic arms race, in which the major beneficiaries are an enlarged commercial sector from housing developers to car

manufacturers, marketing products on the basis of their defensive properties. Many of the most extreme examples of such domestic fortressing lie outside the Anglo-Saxon societies which are the focus of this book, but which as time goes on, are marketed to and adopted by homeowners in Australia, the UK and the USA. In South Africa, for example, where some of the most extreme rates of violence occur, the process of fortification has been taken to its conclusion:

They raise their low, picturesque garden walls by two, three or sometimes even four metres, and top them with spikes or glass chips; they unfurl razor wire ... along their perimeters; they add electric fencing, designed to shock when touched; they install automated driveway gates and intercom systems ... to pass from sleeping to living to kitchen areas may involve unlocking three security gates ... If one house on a street installs an electric fence, the others feel pressurized to follow suit, afraid of becoming the most vulnerable property on the block. (Bremner, 1998: 8)

As consumers, we feel obligated to install the latest security technology or find ways to prevent our comparatively less protected home from being the next target. Similarly, as more people move into gated developments, burglaries tend to be displaced on to people who are less well-protected. The growth of gated communities and the increase in defence of homes by security measures such as alarms, vigilantes or private police forces illustrate in material form these contemporary social pressures and responses.

### **Vengeful homeowners**

Homeowners have adopted an increasingly strategic approach to the defence of the home and a progressively vengeful rhetoric, also amplified through the media, against those who might present a threat. These calls for the obliteration of risks and risky people echo the principles of criminal justice systems today and the use of probability estimates to locate and manage risky populations who threaten those within 'included' or respectable society. In this sense, there is now a clear connection between affluent groups seeking to protect property, the media's role in representing these feelings as the fears of respectable society and political systems which are aligned with these constituencies. The public conversation that stems from these alliances often expresses punitive sentiments and crude representations of the lived reality of the socially



**1.5** Gated community, Hong Kong

excluded and poor, seen by many homeowners as those from whom they would like to escape. It is a short step from the lawful right to exclude to demanding the right to exclude by force, now legitimated in many US states – an indicator of the combination of fear and desire for action by many globally.

In some cases, fear is indicated in less visible ways than architecture, for example, the presence of guns in the home and a readiness to use them. Our understanding of the defence of the home must therefore be broadened beyond an analysis of the basic defence and physical security of the home to include broader indicators like the demands upon political and legal systems by the affluent for using maximised and potentially violent force against any threat to the home. Having engendered these perceived needs, the forces associated with financial and political capital have given birth to a constituency that seeks security at every scale, even those external to the home, as a non-negotiable necessity (Simon, 2007). Physical, social and legal measures in the pursuit of domestic safety are thus significant elements of the wider constitution and mood of society, while remaining centred on the home.

### **The meaning of home**

Given that the home occupies such an important position in our lives, it is not surprising that there has been considerable discussion about

its meaning, from the viewpoints of many academic disciplines including sociology, anthropology, feminism, psychology, law, human geography, history, politics, economics, architecture and philosophy (Mallett, 2004). The symbolism of home and the fascinating varieties of meaning attached to the concept of home have occupied the attention of many writers on the subject. Environmental psychologists consider the home to be essential for satisfying basic human needs for privacy and personal identity formation (Bell *et al.*, 1996: 303). Home has also been defined in economic terms as a 'socio-spatial system' that incorporates both the physical dwelling and the household residing in it (Saunders and Williams, 1988: 82). It can be seen as an investment, as a physical structure, as territory, as the founding block of identity, and as the most basic social and cultural unit of any society. Functions and activities associated with the home include caring and upbringing, intimate and familial relationships, leisure, consumption, work, inheritance, and it is a primary site of emotion, memory and nostalgia. Homes are used to promote our public image (Goffman, 1971) and to express our identities through décor and taste (Cooper, 1995). What clearly emerges from the debate over the meaning of home is that, although 'white Western conceptions of home privilege a physical structure or dwelling' (Mallett, 2004: 65), the idea of home can exist equally in the imagination, and this concept has a shared cultural significance, despite class, gender and ethnic differences, that lead to very different experiences.

Joanne Moore has pointed to the irony 'that while home is examined largely because it has physical form, this feature of home has been left relatively unexplored in comparison with the personal and psychological aspects' (Moore, 2000: 213). In this book, we attend closely to the home as a physical and defended structure, but we also want to convey the idea that home is a place and concept around which our dearest ambitions and deepest fears find focus – the 'shell' that protects our psychic development and wider sense of assuredness in the world. As well as the ideal of a shelter providing for each individual's most fundamental psychological, social and physiological needs, home is therefore at the same time a lived reality, which can at times be disappointing, frightening or oppressive. Such themes are explored in Michael Haneke's 2005 film *Caché* (*Hidden*), which takes us inside the domestic life of an affluent family in an inner Parisian neighbourhood. It is not only the past that is concealed from view in this multi-layered drama; the

comfortable residence that forms the centrepiece of the film is itself secluded from view, a place barely perceptible, unremarkable to the passer-by. The kind of everyday domestic bunker seen in *Hidden* shows us evidence of a deeper anxiety around social contact and disturbance more generally – who might be observing us, how might our own pasts come to haunt us and will the walls of our home protect us from these possibilities, even if it cannot ultimately allay those fears?

*Hidden* explores the private world of the home and the trauma that may lie concealed behind the doors in everyday family life. Freud's 1919 well-known essay on the *unheimlich*, translated as the 'uncanny', raises the related question of how seemingly familiar objects may create feelings of dread, even horror (Freud, 2003 [1919]). These are emotions that we may all relate to: the fear of particular recesses, familiar rooms viewed in twilight or darkness, the feeling of hauntings or other presences. The uncanny or *unheimlich* is also that which *ought* to have remained hidden, causing us to feel alarm or anxiety at its exposure. The trauma may take a real as well as psychological form in homes that conceal spaces in which lives are ruined or even ended. So it is that shocking statistics on domestic violence and revelations such as the Fritzl dungeon in Austria that came to light in 2008 (after his daughter had been imprisoned there for twenty-four years) and the 2009 Jaycee DuGard case in the USA, puncture our shared understandings of domesticity as being essentially a nurturing environment.

### **The argument of this book**

The object of our enquiry is complex, and it is distinct from the idea of the home as a place of basic refuge. Few would argue against or deny the fundamental human needs for privacy and security. What is distinctive about our project is that it seeks to understand what we see as the over-development and layering of security arrangements, strategies and fears that have been generated particularly in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Our contention is that social anxiety, inequality and profound economic changes have connected with housing tenure to produce a defensive and physically bolstered form of home ownership, an archipelago of domestic fortresses in a social environment that celebrates private ownership, retreat and fortification (Minton, 2012). We argue that the market orientations of many governments has shaped the production of particular types of domestic and urban space – home

territories that form larger aggregations of affluent and vocal constituencies. This tessellated form of neoliberalism comprises householders seeking economic conditions that satisfy their material desires and social aspirations for privacy and security. Yet of course it also suggests a continued role for governments as stewards of economic systems generating particular kinds of inequality that are firmly expressed around divisions generated by housing tenure.

The preceding decades have witnessed the general triumph of neoliberal thinking that envisions markets as the very cornerstone of social life, and this has also generated deep shifts in how we think about our houses (Dorling, 2014). The home has been ideologically positioned as a space of emancipation and as an asset, generating wealth and leverage for the advanced consumerism associated with affluent society. The dividends of home ownership have come to be culturally associated with control, status and identity, but the safety and predictability



**1.6** Underground access and defensive frontage, London



associated with western homes is eroded by the very systems that offer the patina of remarkable possibilities of freedom through private property ownership. Just as these dreams have materialised, so have the wider costs of social exclusion and inequality that induce nightmares about envy, destruction and the invasion of the home. Impressions of risk have been distorted by governments, the media and security interests to the extent that the privately owned home is enmeshed with concerns about crime, disorder and numerous sources of less tangible forms of social harm which even extend beyond national borders. Under these prevailing conditions, home ownership has become the site of what we see as a rather more defensive, and sometimes quite aggressive, social disposition.

This book is an attempt to understand the social, economic and political forces that have, in a sense, domesticated fear. That is to say, we can see social anxiety being played out at the levels of the national, urban and domestic scales, yet it is within and through the lens of the home that such fear is ultimately realised and made concrete. Reflecting on the transformation of the home into the domestic fortress can help us understand more clearly a number of wider social, economic and political transformations.

The book is structured as follows. Chapter 2, 'The myths and meanings of home security', sets out the processes and forces that have normalised the contemporary fortress-home. It deals with the social changes in the second half of the twentieth century that undermine collective responses to risk and insecurity and promote a much more individual perspective. We argue that neoliberal government policies have shifted responsibility for protecting households from crime and disorder away from the state onto homeowners, whose homes have come to be seen as commodified financial assets. The consequent retreat into the protective haven of the home is reinforced by the legal emphasis on control as the most important feature of property ownership. The need to defend this combined asset and refuge is further underlined by media accounts of the elaborate security measures employed to protect the homes of celebrities, which feed perceptions of home as a site of vulnerability, prestige and status.

The third chapter, 'A shell for the body and mind', continues the themes of individualism, privatism and withdrawal, but from a different perspective: their effect on the meaning and importance of the psychological aspects of the private home. It has been argued that home

ownership provides us with ontological security in today's troubled times as trust in community has been lost. Psychoanalytic and sociological theories of consumption practices are used here to examine the role of home in psychic development, illustrated through fairy stories, fiction and films. The home acts as a bridge or mediator to the public world outside, but may also be a private place of dreadful secrets. Feminist analyses of the development of gender roles in the home and data on domestic violence show the darker side of the sanctified private home, not always a haven.

Chapter 4, 'Invasions of privacy', focuses on the risks that are perceived to threaten the home. Contemporary life presents us with new problems and terrors which may invade the home, such as identity theft, predatory paedophiles, telesales and so on. The chapter discusses the extent to which home ownership can ensure absolute control and protection, against the powers of the state as well as against neighbours and varied forms of privacy invasion. Chapter 5, 'Fear, crime and the home', addresses anxieties about crime and particularly burglary. It connects to how we are taught to fear in our childhood homes and the contemporary forces that amplify the perceived need for home defence. Data on burglary rates and fear of crime are deconstructed, and the inter-connected roles of the media and of government in feeding fear are analysed. We argue that the news media's reportage of rare and horrific events have cumulative and traumatic effects on our perception of the relative safety of the home. The chapter also looks at the treatment of the home, crime and fear in popular culture, through fiction, films and videogames highlighting terrorised occupants and invaded homes.

In Chapter 6, 'Technologies of the defended home', architectural features and defensive technologies are examined. The ebbs and flows of fortification are traced over time, exposing the origins of contemporary alternative home designs of stealth and spikiness. The recent increase in defensive technologies has turned homes into the architectural representation of our fears, from which we can never be truly free. We now fear to stop fearing, and the contemporary homeowner must forever be alert.

The central issue discussed in the seventh chapter, 'Withdraw, defend or destroy', explores the balance of responsibility between the state and the individual homeowner to protect the home and to punish the intruder. The focus of this chapter is the legal position of the

homeowner who uses lethal force in defence of the home, foregrounding a lack of confidence in governmental ability to prevent crime and the rising status of victimhood in popular culture and criminal justice systems. The ultimate deterrent and defensive weapon is the personal firearm. We point to links between attitudes to gun ownership in the USA and recent legislation there that appears to prioritise property over human life. In contrast, the political and legal systems of Australia and the UK are lobbied by affluent constituencies and the populist media to eliminate perceived threats to the home, calling homeowners to arms and pressing the state to sanction lethal force.

Chapter 8, 'The fortress archipelago', examines the rising trend in organising homes and neighbourhoods around defensive principles. The rise of gated homes and the domestic fortress are architectural motifs that have become normalised in many suburbs and districts. Taken together, these shifts mean that a more prickly and defensive form of home ownership has arisen, the result of which is a neoliberal endgame, penetrating the innermost civic and domestic spheres of our lives. Scripts of domesticity emanate from the home, articulated in the way that public spaces, neighbourhoods and even national boundaries are controlled.

Our concluding chapter, 'Complexes of the domestic fortress', reflects on the difficulty of imagining a way out from the forces that have generated this more anti-social and defensive mode of home ownership and security landscapes. Here we suggest that a range of political and corporate entrepreneurs draw profits from fear – developers selling gated communities, politicians arguing for tough law enforcement and private security companies with an increasingly sophisticated array of technologies designed to seal the home. While these designs have helped secure the home, the dividend does not include any significant reduction in social fear. Instead, the evolution of the defended home suggests its presence as an increasingly anti-social and counter-civic moment in advanced capitalist society, one that may be highly difficult to unravel, even if the social and political will existed to try and achieve this. The generalised retreat into the private home exposes the individual owner's defensive capabilities, choosing or forced to abandon collective responses to disorder and taking responsibility for a shared, gentler and less fearful form of social life.