

Policy Brief # PB-58-2019

October 04, 2019

**Contemporary Trends of Freedom and the rise of Orwellian
'Unfreedom' in the World**

**Waqas Nawaz
Research Assistant, BIPP**



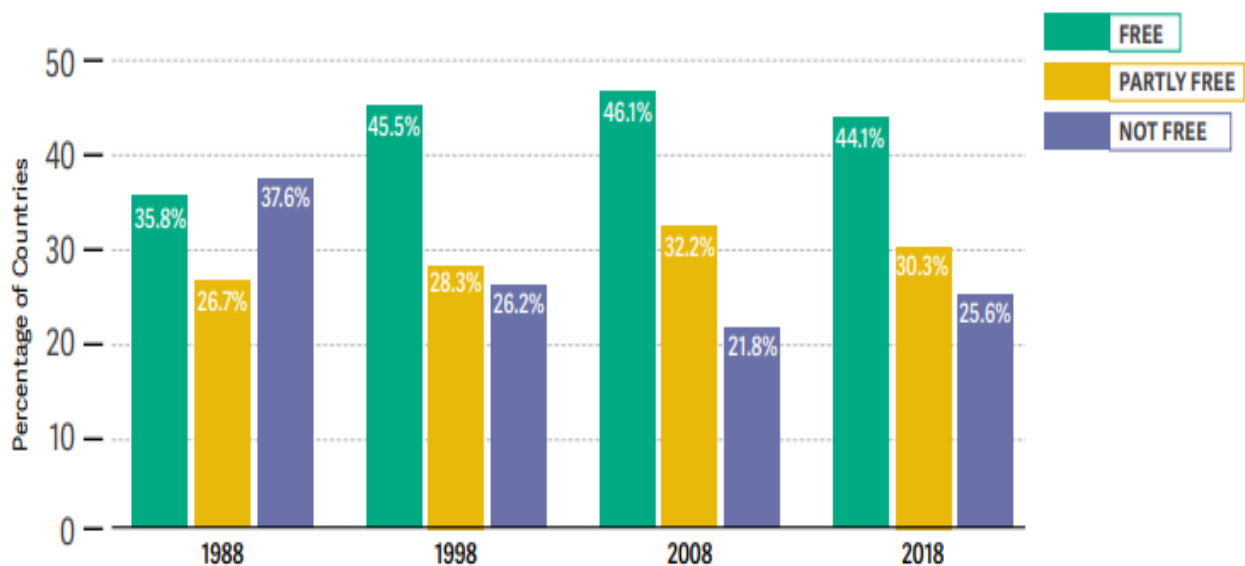
Contemporary Trends of Freedom and the rise of Orwellian ‘Unfreedom’ in the World

by

Waqas Nawaz, Research Assistant

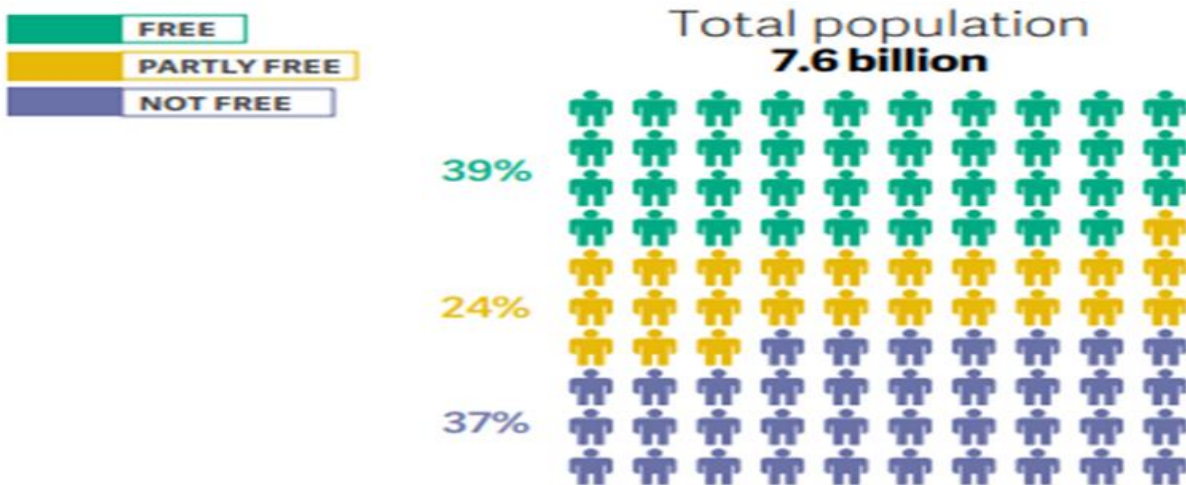
Events such as the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall led thinkers like Francis Fukuyama to declare liberal democracy as the zenith of mankind’s political consciousness. With its global acceptance and legitimacy, liberal democracy ruled the world. Along with liberal democracy its principals of individual liberty and freedom became the most cherished values of our times.

With the rise of populism, authoritarianism and undemocratic majoritarianism across the globe the political tide is turning. Global support for various human freedoms is going through a serious decline. Space to exercise individual liberty is shrinking at an alarming rate. Former engines of the liberal democratic order, such as United States and Europe, are themselves going through this change. This global shift’s impact on freedom can be seen in the following data charts by Freedom House 2019 Report which sums up one alarming trends.



As the data explains, the trends of global freedom and liberty during the past three decades a marked decline is observable in 2018. In comparison with 1988, this is not a healthy increment. At the same time the number of suppressed countries has risen from 21.8% to 25.6% between the

decade of 2008-2018. These data trends show an alarming picture of human freedom which is endangered, owing to the socio-cultural changes taking place.



The second chart depicts a gloomy picture of levels of freedom and liberty in terms of global population. Out of 7.6 billion people living more than half are faced with serious challenges when they try to exercise their basic freedoms. This situation is echoed in J.G. Rousseau's statement, 'man is born free but everywhere he is in chain'.

The quest for human freedom and liberties remain pertinent to this very day. In the 20th century, fascist and totalitarian trends swept across the world, and it inspired thinkers and writers such as George Orwell. He, in his fictional classic, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, beautifully pens down the ironical behavior of totalitarian regimes where they chain human freedom yet cherish freedom. The regime artificially and systematically programs its citizens to collude their thinking so that imagination becomes part of reality, where slavery/pacifism is preferred over freedom, and war is glorified. The state as an agenda undermines liberty of mind, thought, consciousness and expression by declaring independent and critical opinion as the most serious crime. History is written and re-documented in a way which justifies present atrocities and widespread lies in the world. Propaganda and information technology are often used to control and hinder human freedom. Ironically, the picture of stripping away of human liberty portrayed by Orwell is on the rise today, as a global trend. The waves of unconsciousness, decisions taken by emotions, and ever-expanding power of authority is sweeping away human liberty and basic rights.

Notwithstanding with these growing populist and undemocratic tools of human freedom, individual liberty remains the joy of soul and happiness of the mind. The following policy measures can surely help us regain our right to self-determination:

1. By accepting that state is not an end itself rather it is a mean to protect and ensure human freedom and liberty.

- (a) To achieve this, various factions of civil society need to pressure governments around to globe for promoting and implementing the doctrine of constitutionalism and rule of law.
 - (b) Independence of judiciary can act as a key pillar to mitigate this situation.

 - (c) Freedom of media and the use of the medium to spread liberal values is a core element.
2. Further, internalizing the doctrines and spirit of liberty in education systems as well as promoting education that is based on reason and critical thinking can help curb populist or majoritarian rule.