

Gandhi and Bolívar: Demystifying two Universal Leaders' Vision of Human Emancipation

DIVYA SALONI

Amity University, Haryana (India)

ABSTRACT

In this study, the visions of human emancipation of Mahatma Gandhi and Simón Bolívar are compared, both of which continue to be a part of the ongoing debates on freedom, justice, and political change in the present day. The purpose of the study is to examine the philosophical foundations, forms of resistance, and understandings of governance embedded in the different liberation approaches, in order to discuss the areas of similarity and difference in their views of human emancipation. The study employed a qualitative interpretive research approach, including a broad review and analysis of primary and secondary sources, as well as an historical and political perspective. The results show that both leaders had a common vision of opposing imperialism, human dignity, a sense of national unity, and a vision of government that is based on moral responsibility, but they differed in their means and political ideologies. Gandhi's means of achieving liberation were through Ahimsā (non-violence), Satyāgraha (truth force or insistence on truth), and Svarājya (self-governance), which involved moral self-transformation and decentralized self-governance. Bolívar, on the other hand, appeared to favor armed revolution and a strong anti-imperialist stance to create political unity and firm institutions that would guarantee freedom and sovereignty. Gandhi's sense of freedom was more closely linked with an ethical and social movement, while Bolívar's sense of freedom was more political and institutional.

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, Simón Bolívar, Human emancipation, Ahimsā, Satyāgraha, Svarājya, Armed revolution, Anti-imperialism.

INTRODUCTION

One of the central concerns of political and social thought is human emancipation. It is regarded as a process of liberating people and society from oppression, exploitation, and alienation that undermines human dignity and self-reliance. As opposed to political emancipation, which involves only the state granting legal rights, human emancipation encompasses the total elimination of social, moral, and economic barriers that hinder human freedom and development (Webber, 2024). Contemporary citizens have continuously been subjected to all forms of domination, such as political oppression, social discrimination, and authoritarian government, even though the colonial system has long been abolished. As a result, scholars have revisited the ideologies of historical leaders who fought for liberation, finding

resonances with present-day society. Some of the most remarkable figures in history include Mahatma Gandhi from India and Simón Bolívar from Latin America, whose contributions to the liberation of several societies extend beyond their historical contexts and who held deep visions for human liberation and dignity (Pagliawan and Tamondong, 2025).

The notions of non-violence and Satyāgraha were proposed by Gandhi as means of resisting colonial rule in India. Nonetheless, Gandhi's aim was not merely to achieve political independence; he also advocated for social justice, moral regeneration, economic self-reliance, and the uplifting of the deprived people of the society (Biswas, 1990). Human emancipation, according to him, meant political liberation and the moral transformation of individuals and the whole society. Gandhi emphasized that achieving freedom is incomplete

if issues of social discrimination and economic exploitation persist. His vision of non-violence and Satyāgraha has inspired other liberation movements throughout the world. For instance, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. both embraced the concept of non-violence in their fight against injustice (Horace, 1984; Muller, 1995). Gandhi perceived emancipation as political freedom entwined with ethical and social responsibilities that cultivate national consciousness.

Simón Bolívar, often called “The Liberator,” was a prominent figure known for the role he played in the independence movements of several Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. His ideology was based on republicanism, equality, national sovereignty, civic virtue, and resistance to imperial rule (Fitzgerald, 1971). The emancipation of Latin America from Spanish colonial rule provided a solid foundation for regional unity and self-governance, in his view (Vila, 1980; Bolívar, 2003). He never supported slavery, so he appealed for its abolition, viewing social inclusion and citizen participation as safeguarding a nation’s freedom and progress (Pérez Vila, 1996). Bolívar’s approach to colonial subjugation was armed resistance, unlike Gandhi’s, who encouraged nonviolence and moral responsibility.

The philosophy of nonviolence, moral leadership, and social reform of Gandhi has obtained significant consideration from existing studies (Kripalani, 1964; Biswas, 1990; Muller, 1995), whereas previous literature of Bolívar focused more on his role in the wars of independence, republican ideals, and vision of regional unity for Latin America (Lynch, 1983; Fitzgerald, 1971; Wilgus, 1939). Nonetheless, relatively few studies have dealt with the convergence and divergence of these two universal human emancipators. They emerged during different eras, came from different continents, and used different methods of revolution. Still, they both fought against oppression, preserved human dignity, and laid the groundwork for the community’s liberation. The different approach they had to the subject offers valuable insight into how human emancipation is conceptualized and achieved across diverse regions.

This study provides a comparative assessment of the contributions of Mahatma Gandhi and Simón Bolívar to human emancipation, drawing on this background. Specific aspects, such as their philosophy, methods of resistance to oppressive regimes, vision of liberty, and participation in national and international emancipation

movements, are considered. The aim of the study is to scrutinize the key ideologies and methods of their liberation movements to evaluate the enduring relevance of their legacies in the context of the current struggle for human freedom from subjugation and inequality.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative comparative historical research design for this study. The method is considered appropriate because it compares two prominent figures whose ideas were shaped by different historical and cultural contexts, while examining the relevance of their ideologies to struggles against subjugation and inequality.

Method of Study

An interpretative method was used in the study. This involved examining texts within their historical context and identifying ideas related to emancipation. Through this method, the study sought to uncover deeper meanings and key principles behind liberation, nationalism, anti-imperialism, and social change in both Gandhi’s and Bolívar’s ideologies.

Collection of Data

Data were obtained from primary sources, including Gandhi’s writings on Ahimsā, Satyāgraha, and Svarājya, and Bolívar’s *Letter from Jamaica*, *Cartagena Manifesto*, and Angostura Address. Secondary sources, including books, journal articles, speeches, autobiographies, historical records, and scholarly commentary related to Gandhi and Bolívar, were used. Academic studies on liberation movements, political philosophy, and comparative history further supported the analysis. The credibility of the research is strengthened through this triangulation approach of consulting multiple scholarly and historical materials

Data Analysis

The study used thematic and comparative analysis to analyze the data. Themes were generated through meticulous reading of primary and secondary data sources, identifying concepts related to emancipation. The comparative analysis then examined the convergences and divergences of Gandhi’s and Bolívar’s approaches, especially in how each envisioned justice,

freedom, and liberation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gandhi's Philosophy of Non-violence and Liberation

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi remains one of the most important political and moral figures of the twentieth century. The idea of non-violence is old, of course, and has been embraced by many religious and philosophical communities, but Gandhi framed it as a workable approach to political conflict and national liberation (Ulafor, 2023). This shift is part of the reason why he got known as “a transformational leader of transcendental outreach”. This conceptualized a new form of political struggle based on moral courage, faith, and self-discipline. Gandhi's involvement in liberation movements extended beyond the attainment of India's independence. This developed into an inclusive philosophy that aimed not only to liberate people from colonial rule but also to change people and society. Gandhi believed in the concept of freedom, which included moral, social, economic, and political freedom. His thoughts entailed the struggle against oppression and the aspiration for human dignity, social justice, and ethical self-governance (Howard, 2026).

Gandhi's philosophy has had worldwide implications. Martin Luther King Jr. visited India in 1959 and called nonviolent resistance “the most powerful weapon in the hands of oppressed people when they strive to be free”. King Jr. also stated that mankind was at a crossroads between nonviolence and self-destruction and that Gandhi's principles remain relevant for addressing conflict and injustice (King, 1998). These evaluations provide remarkable insight into how Gandhi's ideas evolved and transcended their context to become a universal strategy for liberation movements worldwide.

Ahimsā and Satyāgraha as Instruments of Liberation

The tenets of Gandhi's political philosophy were Ahimsā (non-violence) and Satyāgraha (truth force or insistence on truth). Where Ahimsā spoke of not hurting others, Satyāgraha pointed out that there was a way to resist injustice without hurting others. These ideas were the basis of Gandhi's strategy of political action. Satyāgraha was not simply about quietly accepting oppression; instead, it was a serious, disciplined resistance against injustice, grounded in truth, bravery, and a kind of self-giving. Gandhi's view was that people

who face unfair treatment should not surrender to tyranny, and they also should not answer violence with retaliation against those who are oppressing them. Rather, they must refuse to do wrong with moral persuasion, break the law with civil disobedience, and suffer for a just cause (Muller, 1995).

This knowledge of nonviolence set Gandhi apart from those willing to compromise with injustice and from those who were revolutionaries of violent struggle. His concept of nonviolence demanded strength, never weakness. He remarked that violence is “the weapon of the weak” and nonviolence “the weapon of the strong” (Bose, 2005, p. 236). Likewise, he argued that there was no real nonviolence without courage to defy oppression and fearlessness. In his view, “Non-violence does not mean weak submission to the will of the evil doer. It means pitting one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant” (Chopra, 1998, p. 69). Gandhi also made nonviolence into a political mechanism. He helped spread the message that moral resolve and collective action can work together. Also, resisting abusive systems can still preserve human dignity along with social cohesion. In other words, it was not just a stance; it was a strategy.

His dedication to nonviolence became even more forceful through his conviction that means and ends are inseparable. He did not agree with the idea that ‘good ends justify bad means’ and was convinced that the means used in a struggle determine the ends. Thus, non-violence was not just a tactic but a moral imperative. Ethical means were to be used for ethical ends (Gandhi, 2009). Both Ahimsā and Satyāgraha changed the definition of political resistance during the freedom struggle of Bharat (India). Gandhi did not consider liberation a process of defeating the enemy by force, but rather a moral process that transformed the oppressed and the oppressor. This awareness extended the concept of liberation from political success to moral transformation and social reconciliation.

The Religious and ideological Background

Gandhi's ideas were developed from a range of religious and philosophical influences, but the *Bhagavad Gita* played an especially important role. Gandhi considered the book a spiritual guide and inspiration in his life. It represented a symbolic contrast between truth and falsehood, selflessness and selfishness, not a call to arms. He was also influenced by other religions. Singh and Singh (2004) maintain that Gandhi was influenced

by these principles of Jesus Christ and the Buddha, who spoke of compassion, sacrifice, and non-violent means of challenging injustice and disparity. He also learned about the principles of Ahimsā from Jainism, which advocated for non-violence towards all beings. Besides these religious influences, some Western thinkers, such as Leo Tolstoy's ideas on nonresistance and Henry David Thoreau's on civil disobedience, strengthened Gandhi's conviction that moral principles could be used to effect political change. Gandhi's philosophy was a synthesis of various ideas from Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity, and Western political theories, creating a comprehensive philosophy (Meir, 2021). Through this intellectual synthesis, Gandhi was able to articulate a vision of liberation grounded in ethical responsibility, human dignity, and social justice, universal in nature.

Svarājya and the concept of self-governance

Self-rule (Svarājya) was a core aspect of Gandhi's political philosophy, but Gandhi saw it as something more than just political independence from colonial rule. It was a totality of freedom, individual self-discipline, community empowerment, economic self-reliance, and democratic engagement (Mukherjee, 2009). Self-control and moral responsibility were necessary at the individual level for Svarājya. Gandhi felt that political freedom would not endure until citizens developed the discipline to rule themselves ethically. So, the process of personal transformation and political emancipation were two sides of the same coin.

Gandhi called for Gram Svarājya (self-rule at the village level) at the societal level. He saw an opportunity for local communities to take control of their own affairs through local participation and collective responsibility. His principles of democracy were rooted in decentralization and local self-governance, whereas in centralized political systems, power is vested in the state (Anjaneyulu, 2003). Svarājya had an economic dimension as well. Gandhi opposed reliance on external economic structures because they violated his concept of liberation. He developed his vision of economic self-sufficient development by encouraging Khadi, village industries, and local production, which he believed were prerequisites for political independence and social justice. Svarājya was not only a rejection of colonial rule but the formation of a society that was morally responsible, economically self-reliant, and politically participative (Anjaneyulu, 2003). His idea of Svarājya

reveals that freedom was not only about fighting the colonial power but also an endeavor to transform oneself. This implies that institutional autonomy and the formation of responsible citizens for democratic self-governance were necessary for freedom.

Constructive Program as a Social Reform

Gandhi is universally famous for his campaigns of resistance; he also spoke of the need for social reform. This led him to devise a program called the "Constructive Program" for this purpose. This program would address the social and economic factors that obstruct true freedom. Gandhi realized that political independence would be incomplete if inequalities in society and economic exploitation continued (Sorensen *et al.*, 2023). Hence, he promoted activities such as Khadi, local industries, communal harmony, women's empowerment, rural sanitation, the eradication of untouchability, and basic education through Nai Talim.

The Constructive Program aimed to reinforce the grassroots of society by fostering a sense of self-reliance and collective responsibility (Kripalani, 1964; Gianolla, 2025). Gandhi considered these changes vital to the process of national reconstruction, as they addressed the root causes of social injustice. He was dedicated to the oppressed and downtrodden, like Dalits, Adivasis, peasants, and leprosy patients, and had a general sense of human emancipation. Gandhi's fight for liberation was not political alone, but also social, to establish a more just and humane society. This social reform demonstrates Gandhi's belief that liberation could not be limited to merely individual problems but must also take into account the structural inequalities of the society (Mathew, 2021). He believed in the connection between political freedom, social reform, and economic self-reliance, and thus had a comprehensive idea of human emancipation that went beyond the question of national independence.

The Legacy and global influence of Gandhi

Gandhi's influence extends beyond Indian Independence. His ideas on nonviolent resistance have inspired political leaders, social movements, and human rights organizations worldwide. Horace (1984) further reports that his techniques had a significant impact on Martin Luther King Jr. and his leadership of the American Civil Rights Movement. Gandhi's principles of peaceful resistance and moral leadership inspired figures such as Nelson Mandela, César Chávez, and the Dalai Lama. In

today's movements for justice, democracy, and human rights, his nonviolent ideology is key, not just in the work of individuals. His principles of truth, nonviolence, moral leadership, and social responsibility are also applicable to conversations about conflict resolution and political change. Some critics have doubted the applicability of nonviolence in certain situations and have criticized his economic theories; however, Gandhi's greatest value to posterity was in showing that moral principles could be important instruments of political change (Ulafor, 2023). His legacy, in this sense, continues to be at the heart of the international debate on liberation, human dignity, and moral governance.

Simon Bolivar's Revolutionary Vision of Liberation

Simón Bolívar has a special role in the history of Latin America's liberation movements. Popularly known as "El Libertador," he coordinated military and political campaigns that helped Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and later Panama secure independence from Spanish colonial rule (Prada, 2021). Still, Bolívar's importance doesn't really end with what he achieved on the battlefield. He pictured freedom as something broader, not just the removal of colonial authority, but also the birth of new civic arrangements grounded in liberty, equality, and self-determination. Lynch (1983) maintains that Bolívar viewed the peoples of Spanish America as sharing a common past and a common destiny, so collective resolve would be required to achieve freedom from colonialism.

While Gandhi's approach to liberation was based on nonviolent resistance, Bolívar's was through revolution. His political philosophy, however, was from a different perspective and shaped by Enlightenment ideas and by the teachings of his mentor, Simón Rodríguez, who had imparted to him the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity, and civic responsibility. These intellectual dimensions instilled in Bolívar's mind the belief that independence was insufficient without transforming the political, social, and institutional order. Thus, Bolívar shifted the focus from the fight against colonialism to a "nation-building" process. He also wanted political autonomy, but he was equally determined to form Republican administrations that could defend liberty and ensure that oppression did not return (Bonfá Neto and Suzuki, 2024). Bolívar often spoke, or rather dreamt, of a connected Latin America, morally reawakened, capable of resisting external

control, and turning into a steady engine for advancement across the region

The anti-imperialist spirit and call for Republicanism

One of the main tenets of Bolívar's political ideas was his opposition to the rule of emperors and kings. Bolívar saw that both systems were incompatible with the ideals of liberty and equality that he thought should be the basis of the new free nations of Spanish America (Marínes, 1970). In his renowned *Letter from Jamaica*, Bolívar claimed that a republic would better serve freedom than imperial powers, since it would be less prone to expansion and domination (Vila, 1980). Bolívar's anti-imperialism was a product of his own experience of colonial oppression and his recognition of the threat that might ensue upon his country's independence. He knew that independence did not necessarily mean freedom, if it came to that. In the absence of proper political institutions, new nation-states might face internal instability and external aggression. Bolívar called for a new form of government that was suited to the conditions of Latin America, not compatible with those of Europe. Political disintegration and poor governance would leave the region vulnerable to new forms of subjugation by foreigners, which was what he feared for (Simón, 2012).

This signaled Bolívar's shift away from earlier revolutionary thinking that treated liberation as basically the same thing as political independence, and it did not always stress state-building as the key to real freedom (Fitzgerald, 1971). He both confronted colonial rule and sought to construct durable institutions able to safeguard sovereignty and maintain political stability once independence arrived by pushing for a Republican framework. In that sense, he shows an institutional orientation toward emancipation.

Internationalism and Unity

Bolívar saw freedom not only for individual nation-states, but for all. He felt that the newly independent republics of Spanish America shared common interests and faced similar problems, and that it was necessary to cooperate in the region to ensure their survival. This conviction would lead him to his dream of continental unity, which manifested itself in Gran Colombia and the Congress of Panama (also known as the Amphictyonic Congress) in 1826. Whitaker (1962) claimed that the Congress of Panama was one of the first steps to establish

a basis for political and diplomatic cooperation among the Independent Latin American States. Bolívar did not consider unity merely an ideal, but a strategic necessity. He feared that political disintegration would leave the region weak and vulnerable to outside interference. De Martins *et al.* (2014) also state that Bolívar conceived of regional unity as the best means to maintain independence and advance the region's development as a whole.

Bolívar's internationalism expanded the concept of emancipation beyond nations and states. He connected sovereignty and regional cooperation, suggesting that freedom could only be achieved collectively. This idea foreshadows subsequent theories of regional integration and collective security in Latin America.

Moral Governance, Citizenship, and Equality

Bolívar also recognized the need for moral leadership, civic duty, and political independence. He felt that democratic forms of government should be limited to pious, educated, and responsible citizens. This belief is manifested in his declaration that, "It is the good men, not the laws, that make the republics" (Fitzgerald, 1971, p. 89). For Bolívar, the quest for freedom didn't just come down to constitutional order; it was about developing civic virtue and public responsibility. This conviction inspired him to establish a "Moral Power" in the government to advance moral behavior and public education, and to foster civic consciousness. The proposal reflects his belief that a nation must be politically stable and move forward on the condition of moral development.

Castro-Klarén (2003) maintains that Bolívar believed that morality was the basis for establishing a republic. Yet if ordinary citizens are not devoted to the common welfare, then legal and political structures alone can't secure liberty. That is why his interest in education, civic identity, and ethical leadership was not an afterthought but an integral part of his liberation plan. Meanwhile, Bolívar remained deeply committed. Meanwhile, Bolívar was dedicated to the ideals of equality and self-determination. He was at first impressed by the example of successful independence in America, but became more wary of America's expansionist spirit. Wilgus (1939) points out that as the United States acquired greater power, Bolívar warned that the sovereignty of the new Latin American republics might be endangered. This strengthened his already-existing

solidarity with the other regions and a desire for political independence and regional unity to a new level.

Decentralization, Slavery, and Sacrifice

Bolívar's ideas were strongly pro-republican; however, he also believed in local participation in government. His political philosophy was based on the idea of a nation united by its people, with acknowledgment of their differences, and on the principle that effective governance should attend to local needs and conditions. However, in contrast to Gandhi's vision of self-rule and Constructive Resistance, he saw the nation-state as the essential political entity through which liberty and stability could be realized. Bolívar's devotion to freedom encompassed the fight against slavery and the pursuit of social integration. Although the ideals were sometimes limited by political realities, he came to realize that true freedom was incompatible with a system of human bondage and exclusion. His generosity in giving his own money, his suffering exile, and his dedication to the struggle for independence further bear witness to his commitment to the cause of liberation (Fitzgerald, 1971).

Bolívar's opposition to slavery is proof that his understanding of freedom was broader than just national freedom; it was the recognition of human dignity that he sought (Nunez-Faraco, 2018). While these ideals' goals were not fully realized within the context of his own policies, they spread the concept of emancipation, linking it to political sovereignty and social inclusion.

Bolívar's legacy in the political thought of Latin America

The legacy of Simón Bolívar is much more than independence movements in the nineteenth century. According to Pérez Vila (1996), Bolívar is still one of the most potent epitomes of freedom, sovereignty, and resistance to foreign control in Latin America. His ideas have inspired generations of nationalists, anti-imperialists, and regional integration movements on the continent. Bolívar's political ideas still influence discussions of national identity, interregional cooperation, self-determination, and political autonomy. While some of his contributions are controversial and others impractical, what is undeniable is his place in history for his vision of liberation, not only political independence but also the building of a just and stable social order. Bolívar continues to be a subject of resistance for those who aspire to freedom and unity in

Latin America (Simon, 2012).

Comparison of Gandhi's and Bolívar's Philosophies on Emancipation

Mahatma Gandhi and Simón Bolívar are unique figures in the world history of liberation movements. They were born into different historical, cultural, and political circumstances, but both gave their lives to change systems of domination and to promote the cause of human freedom. Gandhi fought the British colonial rule in India with non-violence, while Bolívar rose against Spanish imperialism in Latin America with armed forces. They both wanted political independence and social change. Each of their philosophies offers valuable insights into the varied ways in which liberation can be sought and maintained.

Gandhi and Bolívar shared a strong anti-imperialist stance, particularly in their resistance to British rule in India and Spanish rule in Venezuela. These leaders saw colonialism as a process that took away political freedom and a dignified life. Gandhi found the British rule to be a moral, economic, and political oppression that deprived Indians of self-realization and self-governance. (Kripalani, 1964). Bolívar saw colonialism as a barrier to both freedom and national growth. He said that the only route for Latin America to really thrive was to be independent and free (Pérez Vila, 1980). This shared anti-imperialist idea showed that both thinkers understood colonialism as more than mere political domination; they recognized it struck at human dignity, freedom, and people's autonomy.

The shared vision of independence and unity among people as the way to liberation was another aspect they had in common. National freedom for Gandhi lay in eliminating internal differences and antagonisms along caste, religious, and social lines. He always linked independence with collective action and social harmony (Howard, 2026). Gandhi maintained that ethical self-discipline and personal responsibility are necessary for political freedom. He saw Svarājya as an individual's moral governance, which must precede the possibility of effective participation in self-governance (Mukherjee, 2009). Similarly, Bolívar also believed that unity was crucial to maintaining freedom following independence. His vision of a politically integrated Latin America was driven by his belief that their political disunity would leave the newly independent republics vulnerable to instability and external interference (Simón, 2012).

Bolívar emphasized that the institutions of the republic would only work if they were backed by the virtuous and educated citizen. He proposed a "Moral Power" which was based on his conviction that civic virtue was required for political stability and the maintenance of liberty (Fitzgerald, 1971). In both instances, unity was a basis for national survival and progress, though in different contexts, and neither thinker believed that a legal or political order could provide total freedom. Hence, they both rejected the purely institutional models of freedom and emphasized emancipation as a moral and political process. This showed their belief that the transformation of citizens is a prerequisite for good governance.

Although there are many similarities between Gandhi and Bolívar, they were fundamentally different in their approaches to political action. The biggest difference is their attitude towards violence. Gandhi considered nonviolence to be a moral philosophy and a political tool for bringing about political reform. He attempted to fight injustice without perpetuating the system of hatred and force that had oppressed society (Muller, 1995). For him, means and ends were one and the same, and he did not condone violence even for noble causes. Gandhi faced a colonial power that could be challenged through mass civil resistance, and that could raise public opinion and international pressure in the twentieth century. Bolívar, on the other hand, considered armed struggle as an inevitable tool of liberation. He viewed the struggle for independence as a revolution, as the only way to regain it when the colonists were held in power by force (Bonfá Neto and Suzuki, 2024). Bolívar's revolution was fought in the early 19th century, amid a context in which military confrontation was a common means of achieving independence. So, both were attempting to free themselves from their oppressors through moral action in Gandhi's case and through military force and revolution in Bolívar's case. They also had different historical contexts to their strategies; hence, their approaches originated from different philosophical and historical circumstances.

The visions they both had of political organization are also quite different. Gandhi developed a philosophy of decentralized Svarājya, based on local communities (Mukherjee, 2009). He envisioned the villages as the fundamental units of political life and wanted them to have autonomy, participatory democracy, and economic self-sufficiency through the concept of Gram Svarājya.

Bolívar focused on building strong republican institutions that would hold the nation together and forestall political disunion (De Martins *et al.*, 2014). He was aware of the significance of local involvement, while he mostly saw the nation-state as the key actor in the fight for liberty and stability. Gandhi's political model was grassroots to the top; conversely, Bolívar's model was focused on consolidating the institutions from the top down. This shows a contrast between two visions of post-colonial governance: Gandhi was convinced of the power of empowerment from below through local autonomy, while Bolívar focused on strengthening institutions from the top to avoid political disintegration.

Another difference can be seen in their views on social change. Gandhi felt that real liberation should be a change in the attitude of the individual, in relations among individuals, and in economic systems. His Constructive Program was meant to reduce social inequalities, boost self-reliance, and give power to marginalized communities (Sørensen *et al.*, 2023). And for him, political independence would never be fully complete unless there was also a moral and social reform. Bolívar was concerned about citizenship, education, and equality, but he focused more on building political institutions to protect independence and maintain order in his country. His emphasis was more on the establishment and maintenance of the republics than on the complete social reorganization that Gandhi had in mind (Wilgus, 1939). This idea of emancipation, as embodied in Gandhi, is more social in its dimensions, while that of Bolívar is more state-led and institutional.

However, both leaders transcended narrow nationalism and adopted a broader international perspective. Gandhi believed in universal human solidarity and that India's freedom should benefit humanity. Likewise, Bolívar saw the possibility of integrating Latin American nations to safeguard sovereignty and advance them together. Gandhi's internationalism was predominantly moral, whereas Bolívar's was political. Both denied the concept of isolation and saw the need to work together across national lines.

This perspective revealed two opposing yet complementary schools of thought on liberation. Gandhi's focus on moral change, non-violent assertion, and decentralized self-governance stood in contrast to Bolívar's emphasis on revolutionary struggle, republic-state building, and continental unity. Although they both

wanted to build societies based on freedom, dignity, and justice, they differed in many ways. The philosophies of these two revealed how essential it is to resist oppression and to envision political and social structures that will enable human emancipation to continue. Liberation has felt its impact over the years, and it is obviously not a one-dimensional process. Rather, it demands political freedom, moral responsibility, social transformation, and collective self-determination. Currently, Gandhi and Bolívar remain relevant and significant for their contributions to the study of liberation.

Conclusion

The study argues that Gandhi and Bolívar are parallel streams of liberation thought. They have left a lasting legacy that proves that sustainable freedom can only be achieved through both moral change and political organization. Their ideas collectively offer rich insights into the ongoing struggle for justice, autonomy, and the liberation of the human person in modern society. The concepts of human liberation by Mahatma Gandhi and Simón Bolívar, who lived in two cultural and historical backgrounds, were assessed. These two things were against the oppressor and sought to liberate humans. It meant more to both of them than political independence. They saw it as a process of social change, of empowering citizens, of establishing conditions that assure human dignity and self-determination. The study found several major similarities between them, including their opposition to imperialism, the view that unity is a prerequisite for freedom, and their emphasis on morality in political life. Both also emphasized the need for the struggle against external domination as well as the development of values and institutions that would provide freedom after independence.

Their ideas on liberation were very different, though. Gandhi gave prominence to nonviolence, moral reform, and decentralized self-government (Svarājya and Gram Svarājya), stressing the need for the means to be ethically consistent with the ends. Unlike Bolívar, who saw revolution as a necessary option for the release of oppressed people and believed that the establishment of strong republican institutions was essential for order, unity, and stability among new independent states. Gandhi's solution was bottom-up, whereas Bolívar's was top-down and state-driven. These similarities and differences illustrate two complementary traditions of liberation. An ethical tradition bound to nonviolence and

social reconstruction is the first one, and a political tradition related to revolutionary action and institutional formation is the second. Their ideas collectively imply a twofold process of liberation, where one is moral and the other political.

Gandhi and Bolívar's legacies live on with political thinking and liberation movements around the world. Gandhi's principles have mattered greatly to civil rights movements, peace movements, and broader global social justice efforts. Bolívar's concepts have often sat at the center of debates on sovereignty, regional integration, anti-imperialism, and national identity across Latin America. It is clear that their visions are a programmatic call for liberation from oppression and for creating systems that ensure freedom, equality, and human dignity.

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