

Eva Rodriguez: The wrong banner to take up

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Body

I found it offensive that some of the people who marched on Washington on Sunday for immigration reform were waving the flags of Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador while demanding rights and privileges from this country.

The flags and the demands for action "NOW!" suggested a sort of arrogance and entitlement when humility would have been more in order.

Perhaps these marchers meant the flags as symbols of cultural or ethnic identity and not as political **banners** of foreign sovereigns. Perhaps they meant no offense and are at once proud of their heritage and sincere in their desire to become Americans. But flags weren't my only problem.

I don't understand the claim by some that those here illegally are somehow victims. Did they not choose to come, and did they not know that they either entered illegally or illegally overstayed visas? Of course they did. Do they not appreciate that one of the things that makes this country great is the rule of law -- unlike, sadly, some of the countries they left behind? If so, undocumented immigrants must **take** responsibility for their plight.

Let me be clear: I am the daughter of immigrants who fled Cuba in 1960. They arrived with the blessing of the U.S. government, which generously offered people like my parents refuge from Fidel Castro's regime. My parents became fluent in English, became citizens as soon as they could and raised their four children on lechon asado (Cuban roast pork) and the Pledge of Allegiance.

It is a travesty that more would-be immigrants aren't given such opportunities. I understand that our immigration system is haplessly dysfunctional and major reforms are needed. I understand the feelings of the thousands of people who **took** to the Mall and voiced their desire for a path to citizenship, who want to live without fear of arrest, who want to do an honest day's work and see their children thrive. I understand that. But next time, show a little respect and leave the foreign flags at home.

Eva Rodriguez is a member of the Washington Post editorial page staff.

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