

organization that endured from the Prohibition era through the 1980s. Most of us have heard of the Gambinos, Al Capone, or Lepke Buchalter, but the stories of organized crime in smaller cities like Kansas City, Denver, New Orleans, and Tampa perhaps provide greater insight into the social web that supported organized criminal activity. At the same time, the film leaves many basic questions unanswered and largely unexplored: What role, if any, did the Smaldones play in violent crime? What were the extent and limits of the family's relationship with Colorado and the nation's politicians? The filmmakers seemed content to provide a small litany of anecdotes rather than to help viewers think through the interrelationships of crime, politics, and the administration of justice.

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#### Work Cited

Kreck, Dick. 2010. *Smaldone: The Untold Story of an American Crime Family*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

*Influx: Europe Is Moving.*

By Luca Vullo.

Em Production, 2016.

86 minutes. Streaming format, color.

*Influx* is the latest documentary directed and produced by Sicilian filmmaker Luca Vullo, who for the second time explores via film the delicate issue of Italian emigration. His first documentary, *Dallo zolfo al carbone* (From sulfur to coal, 2008), examined the intimate and emotional experience of Italian miners in Belgium in the 1940s and especially the legacy of hard and degrading work conditions for a generation of Italians who left their home country in desperate need of a better life.

With *Influx*, Vullo shifts his attention to the United Kingdom. The film focuses on London, where, as the film claims, more than 250,000 Italians have taken up residence over the past decades, either temporarily or permanently. *Influx* is the result of a crowd-funded campaign that helped Vullo realize an independent visual work that tells a story not fully narrated elsewhere. It tries to answer two fundamental and pressing questions: Why have many Italians decided to migrate to London? Who are they?

The documentary begins with a long prologue in the Casa Italiana San Vincenzo Pallotti social club, where people speaking Italian are seen playing Italian card games and sharing homemade meals. The Italian English interviewed in the Casa Pallotti are the first generation of migrants who started to arrive in London in the 1960s. London was a different city at that time, gray (“You could hardly see anything in the London smog,” an unidentified man interviewed recalls) and unwelcoming (as Mario, one of the interviewees, says, “We were practically slaves. It wasn’t like now, which is a different story”). We listen here to an intimate narration, at times nostalgic, where the interviewees express their disappointment with the fact that the younger generations of Italians are still forced to leave their home country. What follows in the documentary is the narration of the “different story”—suggested by Mario in the prologue—that characterizes the most recent migration of Italians to London, a city that has evolved into a multicultural hub, where it is apparently much easier than in other European contexts to be a migrant because so many people are.

The intent of *Influx* is to map as thoroughly as possible the varied and different communities of Italians in the British capital, where immigration has become a *raison d'être*. Vullo manages to interview a large number of people who, according to his research, are representative of the Italian community in London. The interviewees include a celebrity chef (Francesco Mazzei), an artistic director (Riccardo Buscarini), the economic correspondent at the *Financial Times* (Ferdinando Giugliano), a senior strategy and policy adviser of the cabinet office (Alice Pilia Drago), a lawyer and writer (Simonetta Agnello Hornby), a former soccer player and manager at Chelsea FC (Gianluca Vialli), the mayor of Camden (Lazzaro Pietragnoli), an *Al Jazeera* news presenter (Barbara Serra), and many more established Italian Londoners who seem to have achieved gratifying, secure, and often prestigious positions within the highly challenging and competitive social system of London. On the other hand, the documentary also gives voice to a number of younger Italians in London who have temporary jobs and/or less-recognized positions such as Filippo, Sara, Laura, Andrea, and Claudio, who run Italian food stands in Camden Market and who seem to have less clear plans about their future stay in London. As they state in their interviews, they enjoy the fact that in London you can have humble jobs—such as selling street food—without being stigmatized, an inescapable reality in Italy.

*Influx* is divided into seven sections, which reflect the steps of a collective experience of those Italians who have chosen London as their new home: Leaving, Arriving, Adapting, Self-Analysis, Emotions, Awareness, and Renaissance. Each of the sections contains a series of interviews with immigrants who explain how moving to and settling in a city like London is both difficult and rewarding. The interviews are carried out mainly in the workplaces

of the interviewees or in their private homes, and the viewer never sees or hears the director's voice. Vullo lets the Italians talk introspectively about their experiences as migrants, their relationship with the home country, and their process of adaptation in a new sociocultural context. In most cases, the people interviewed talk to the camera while engaged in some work tasks; alternatively their narration becomes the voice-over that accompanies some scenes showing urban spots, such as bridges, that symbolically reflect the intercultural experience of the documentary's protagonists.

What most of the Italians interviewed by Vullo seem to share is a strong sense of motivation, commitment, determination, ambition, and competitive spirit, all qualities that are expected and easily discovered in a city like London—as most of the interviewees agree—but that in Italy, as the journalist Barbara Serra observes, are almost banned or come with negative connotations: “In Italy, if you are ambitious or competitive you are seen as a social climber.”

As *Influx* shows, these Italians in London seem to have developed a critical view toward their home country, which they see as a stagnant place in comparison. London is for them a dynamic city where they have been given the opportunity to grow and develop their potential with strong results, but it is mainly the place that has allowed them to become aware of the reasons and causes that forced them to leave their home country and become migrants. The acclaimed architect and designer Claudio Silvestrin, during his interview, stresses the fact that one of the problems Italians face in their own country is their atavistic resistance to everything that has to do with rules and regulations; while the art director and choreographer Riccardo Buscarini observes how in Italy art, including dance, is not considered a serious practice or something from which you can make a living. *Influx*, therefore, suggests that most of the Italians who have moved to London in the past decades have been driven by a strong determination to go beyond prejudices and resistance to social mobility that seem to characterize the Italian culture and economy. After all, “you can't stop people dreaming,” as the chef Francesco Mazzei says when referring to the rapidly growing number of young Italians who keep moving to London.

Some of the most bizarre and interesting scenes of the documentary take place in the Italian Consulate, a microcosm in the British capital where Italians seem to quit the social pressures of British life and behave as they might have back in their home country. It is only in this explicit Italian space that Italians fail to respect queues and have trouble meeting deadlines or respecting bureaucratic demands.

In the section titled “Emotions,” *Influx* shows us the vulnerability of these Italians who settle in London, a decision likened to tightrope walking, as suggested by some images of a real funambulist performing on a wire. The psychotherapist Daniela Fanelli stresses how difficult it is often for young

Italians to adapt to London, which one overwhelmed interviewee defines as a “devouring city”: too detached, too hectic. Many Italians do not in fact succeed in London, ending up sleeping on the street, and *Influx* is keen to show this other side as well. Some of them find solace in the Church of St. Peter, the city’s Italian church, where they are nourished with a daily meal and some psychological support. The priest Carmelo Di Giovanni is shown clearly stating that many desperate Italians who intend to move to the British capital are too naïve and unprepared and often victims of Italian agencies that con them, thus suggesting a darker side of the story.

*Influx* suggests that realizing one’s dreams in London is possible but by no means easy. This documentary becomes, then, a necessary tool to dispel several myths around immigration to London, a city that accepts diversity and encourages one to dismantle prejudices, a city that most of all values motivation, commitment, and resilience. Such characteristics might be hard to adjust to if you come from a cultural context that does not develop and encourage such skills.

*Influx* was strongly supported by a large community of people, as shown by the crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo that quickly reached its £20,000 target. There is an undeniable desire to know more about the Italian community in London, especially in light of the Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom. *Influx* tries to offer a comprehensive and inclusive view of this community, through a self-analytical journey that will allow viewers some insight into the fears, passions, and struggles of those Italians who have left their Italian homeland behind.

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