

New York

New York parties for Zohran Mamdani: 'The first time we've had hope in so long'

In the bodegas, bars and clubs of Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx, the mood was joyous - it was an emotional night



📷 Zohran Mamdani supporters cheer at the Brooklyn Paramount on Tuesday night. Photograph: Angelina Katsanis/AFP/Getty Images

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Inside an election watch party hosted by the Democratic Socialists of America at the Brooklyn Masonic Temple in Fort Greene, under the din of pet-nat wines being cracked open, there was a sense of nervous anticipation. "I'm not sure if this is an accurate recreation of Solomon's Temple," said one supporter in a [Zohran Mamdani](#) T-shirt. "This is like a who's who of everyone I've slept with," said another.

The suspense didn't last long. Just after 9.30pm, someone jumped on the mic to announce that news outlets had called it: a record number of New Yorkers had cast ballots in this electric - and [often ugly](#) - race between [Zohran Mamdani](#), Andrew Cuomo and Curtis Sliwa, [ultimately choosing](#) the 34-year-old Democratic socialist of seemingly boundless energy who had shocked party establishment in the primary by winning on a clear-eyed affordability agenda. The DJ immediately started playing I Gotta Feeling by Black Eyed Peas. And, indeed, tonight was a good, good night for those in the room, who erupted in tears, hugs and twerking.

Mamdani will be the first [Muslim mayor](#) of New York and its youngest in over a century - but not its first immigrant mayor, nor its first mayor to champion socialist ideals. New Yorkers celebrated his monumental election at official and unofficial parties spread across the five boroughs.

"I've been a DSA member for over 10 years," said 40-year-old health department worker Will, at the Fort Greene party. "This just shows that our politics are not radical, that New Yorkers actually think what we believe is

sensible, and maybe the rest of the country is ready for sensible, commonsense, Democratic socialism.”

As the dancefloor was in full swing (even as the house lights remained dangerously bright), Ellie, a 28-year-old bartender from Bed-Stuy, felt “absolutely ecstatic”. “This is the first time we’ve had hope in so long. I can’t remember a - ”

She cut herself short to scream along to the chorus of Kelly Clarkson’s Since U Been Gone.

These are the people who fought for Mamdani when he was polling at 1%, who celebrated his socialist principles when others said they disqualified him. As his speech played, there was a sense not just of political hope but a project come to fruition, the work of a lifetime building to a moment that might change the city – and all soundtracked to the 90s Eurodance anthem Freed from Desire.

Across the borough, in what has been affectionately called by pollster Michael Lange “the commie corridor” – so called because Mamdani pulled autocrat numbers there in the primary – the line for a dance club on the edge of Bushwick and Ridgewood was equally lively.

Hundreds queued up on the sidewalk outside Nowadays for another DSA watch party, cheering and holding signs, and, in the case of one woman, a cardboard cutout of Mamdani. Those who made it in wore various unofficial merch – Hot Girls for Zohran, Bisexuals for Zohran, at least one pair of hot pants with “Zohran” blazed on the butt – and bummed cigarettes or sipped mixed drinks as they waited for the race to be called. They were confident, if slightly scarred from past election upsets. “He’s good. We’re all just traumatized from 2016,” a man in a black beret said to no one in particular.

The crowd was a genuine mix: Black, white, brown, young folks and old folks, party gays, butch lesbians, bridge-and-tunnel kids who couldn’t even vote in the election but felt its reverberations nonetheless. Amber Pease, 25, lives in Nassau county in Long Island. Her inability to cast a vote didn’t stop her from traveling in to volunteer for Zohran’s campaign. She wants to get a job and move into the city soon. “I’ve been waiting to see a good progressive candidate, and to have one so close to home, it gives me a lot of hope.”



📷 Zohran Mamdani waves to his supporters at Brooklyn Paramount. Photograph: Jeenah Moon/Reuters

When the election was called for Mamdani, the cheers could be heard inside and on the street, and someone started a “DSA! DSA!” chant (not to be

mistaken with a “USA! USA!” chant). Soon a representative for the DSA named Kareem took the stage. He referenced Mamdani’s meteoric rise. “This didn’t just start last year,” he said. “This is the culmination of years of work.” He spoke of the progressive New Yorkers who campaigned against the Iraq war, and the Occupy Wall Street movement, and those who stumped for Bernie Sanders. He also noted how Cuomo’s campaign trafficked a message of fear, with Mamdani’s “antidote” being solidarity. At Nowadays, the victory felt communal.

In Astoria, Mamdani’s home turf, hijabi girls wearing keffiyehs raced to watch parties while uncles outside hookah bars kept an eye on the streets. (“We like this guy Mamdani. We’ll be watching him,” one said.) A large crowd gathered outside of Moka & Co, a Yemeni cafe, to hear the results come in over loudspeaker.

Nisa Ganiestry, a 41-year-old homemaker living in Astoria, stood with her young son. She recently worked to secure her citizenship so that she could vote for Mamdani; she has known Mamdani since he became Astoria’s assemblymember in 2021. Over the past five years, she said, Astoria has rapidly gentrified. “We couldn’t afford newer space, we couldn’t afford to get groceries, but I am really, really optimistic that he can fix the situation.”

“We’re in the belly of the beast here in New York. We’re the financial capital of the world,” said Shivana Jorawar, an organizer based in the North Bronx. “If we can elect a socialist mayor in New York, we can do that anywhere.”



Supporters celebrate Mamdani’s win in Brooklyn. Photograph: Jeenah Moon/Reuters

Passing cars, buses and cabs honked in celebration with the crowd as the night wore on. Every now and then, chants of free Palestine would ring out. Many cheered, some cried, and all waited patiently for their new mayor to speak.

For Shehab Chowdhury, 34, co-chair of Bangladeshi Americans for Political Progress, Mamdani’s participation in a 2021 [hunger strike](#) to win debt relief for taxi drivers and [dedication to the Palestinian cause](#) earned his respect. He said Islamophobic attacks on Mamdani have been felt throughout the entire Muslim community. “As Zohran has said: for so long we’ve stood in the shadows. Now it’s time to stand in the light.”

Zayed Chowdhury (no relation), who runs a cybersecurity startup in Virginia, grew up in the projects of New York in the 1980s. He can’t vote in New York any more, but the election still mattered. “We were here when there were no Muslims in New York. My grandfather has a plaque that says he’s the second

Muslim ever to land on Ellis Island,” Chowdhury said. “In 85, when I was in kindergarten, they didn’t even know what a Muslim was. Thirty years later, it’s like we won the championship.”



📷 New Yorkers celebrate at the Bohemian Hall & Beer Garden in Queens. Photograph: Jeremy Weine/Getty Images

Earlier in the night, in Jackson Heights, one of New York’s most diverse neighborhoods, Cherry Ann Chishti had a Mamdani sign outside the window of her halal restaurant. “Finally someone younger, someone with new ideas, someone connected to the people has arrived to make real change,” said Chishti, 38, who also works as a behavioral analyst in Ozone Park. “The bussing. The healthcare. I work with kids with autism. Every dollar we invest in childcare has a return of \$11-17. They grow up more social. And it allows their moms, their dads to focus better on their jobs. Better workers means more taxes that benefit the city.”

As midnight approached, Paul Aljoon, 62, exited a bodega in Bushwick yelling: “Mamdani!” He had canvassed for the candidate since the primaries. Now he’s looking ahead to Mamdani’s inauguration, and the daunting task of **making the city affordable** that awaits the new mayor. “Let him settle in office,” Aljoon said. “Let him get his team together. And then, move on. He has to do stuff with sanitation, then the police department, and then hope that no virus comes back to New York.”

For Daniel Dale, a 23-year-old actor from Bed-Stuy and an immigrant from Colombia, it was time to bask in the moment. “I’ve never felt in the right place,” Dale said. But Mamdani’s message has drawn him in. “It’s full of a couple simple things that everybody knows they want.” For Dale, as many others across the city, this was an emotional night.

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