

June 23, 2025

Analysis of Narratives in the Democratic Primary for NYC Mayor

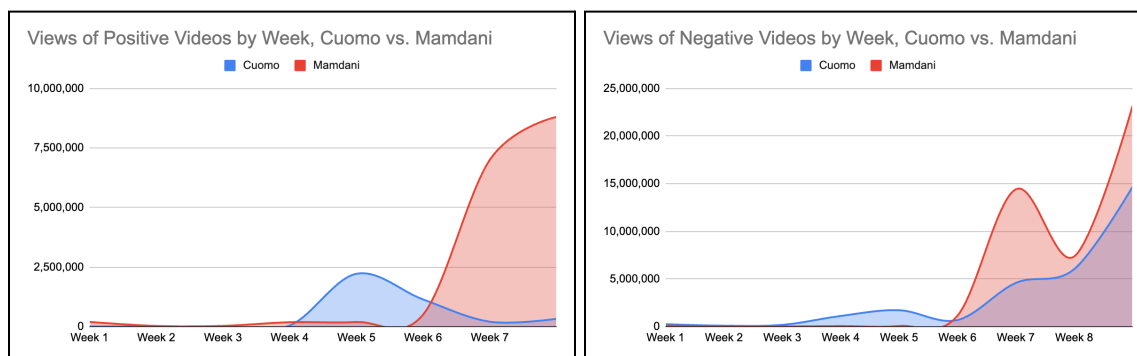
Positive (and Negative) Narratives About Zohran Mamdani Surging in Final Weeks of NYC Mayoral Race

Introduction

For this report, we used our ClarifyAI platform to collect and analyze 3,041 YouTube videos¹ that in total have received more than 48.7 million views. Each of the videos was selected because it mentioned or included content about Andrew Cuomo or Zohran Mamdani, the leading candidates in the Democratic primary for Mayor of New York City. We analyzed each video for positive or negative narratives and sentiments toward each of the two candidates.²

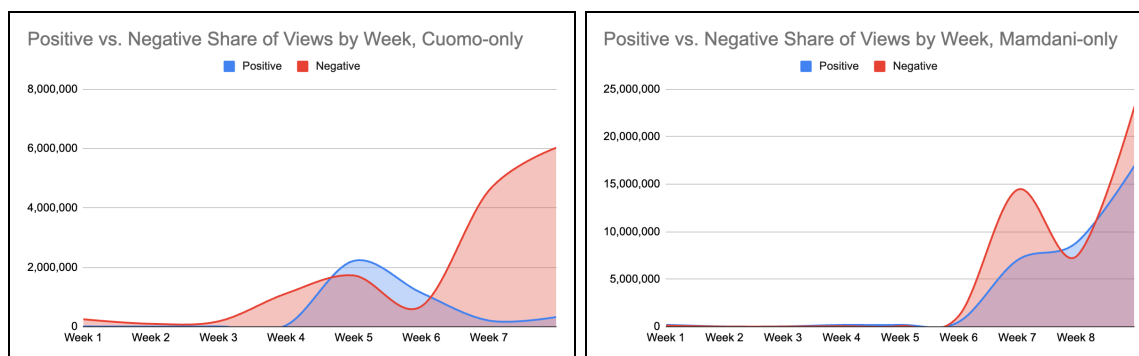
Key Findings

- Overall video views surged late: 83% of all views happened in the final 2 weeks.
- Views of videos about both candidates have been driven in large part by YouTube influencers, some of whom are controversial, in Mamdani's case and the campaign's owned channel in Cuomo's case.
- Content that expressed positive or negative sentiments toward Mamdani received 215% more views than videos expressing opinions on Cuomo.
- Views of positive narratives about Mamdani surged in the final two weeks – and in aggregate Mamdani received a 77% share of positive narrative views.
- Negative narratives about Mamdani had a 63% share of negative views when compared to negative content about Cuomo.
- The reach of positive narratives about Cuomo were limited until the second half of May when several of his campaign's videos, such as this [one](#), drove significant views around the same time as the U.S. Dept. of Justice announced an investigation.



¹ According to [Pew Research](#), 83% of American adults use YouTube and, according to [Nielsen](#), YouTube has the largest share of TV viewing among media companies, notably larger than Disney or Netflix.

² The videos in this analysis were all published in the 8 weeks April 25, 2025 and June 20, 2025.



Cuomo Narratives

- **Positive Narratives** - The primary positive messages about Cuomo viewed on Youtube are:
 - Cuomo's leadership during the pandemic
 - His ability to deliver for New York City
 - His general strength in the democratic primary and in public polls
 - *Contextual note: The top **three** videos promoting positive narratives about Andrew Cuomo were published by his [campaign Youtube channel](#). [a sample [video](#) from Cuomo]*
- **Negative Narratives:** The primary negative messages about Andrew Cuomo viewed on Youtube are:
 - Questioning his integrity and suggesting his policies are influenced by campaign donations
 - Criticism of the sexual harassment scandal that led to his resignation from the Governor's office
 - Specific policy criticisms about his stances on various issues with the most prominent one being "e-bikes"
 - *Contextual note: The top **two** videos promoting negative narratives about Andrew Cuomo were published by politically controversial Twitch streamer and YouTube influencer [Hasan Piker's channel](#). [a sample [video](#) from Piker]*

Mamdani Narratives

- **Positive Narratives** - The primary positive messages about Mamdani viewed on Youtube are:
 - His proposals to make New York City more affordable and freeze rent
 - Mamdani's proposal to implement faster, free buses and deliver universal childcare
 - Support for his general approach for delivering progressive solutions and new ideas for New Yorkers

- *Contextual note: The top **four** videos promoting positive narratives about Mamdani were published by politically controversial Twitch streamer and YouTube influencer [Hasan Piker's channel](#). [a sample [video](#) from Piker]*
- **Negative Narratives** - The primary negative messages about Mamdani viewed on Youtube are:
 - Mamdani will defund the NYPD and minimizes the importance of policing
 - Mamdani is a democratic socialist and a threat to the Democratic Party's success vs. Donald Trump
 - That he is antisemitic and unwilling to visit Israel
 - *Contextual note: Two of the top ten videos promoting negative narratives about Mamdani were videos posted by mayoral candidate [Whitney Tilson's channel](#) and received more than 2.6 million views. [sample [video](#) from Tilson]*

ABOUT CLARIFYAI

ClarifyAI is a proprietary, AI-powered platform that finds narratives online, identifies audiences exposed to those narratives and empowers brands and candidates to reach those audiences with advertising.

ABOUT GROUNDTRUTHAI

[GroundTruthAI, LLC](#) is a nonpartisan, pro-democracy AI Lab that produces technology to fight problematic narratives and misinformation. Our 2024 research in AI accuracy was featured on [MSNBC's Morning Joe](#). GroundTruthAI's founders, CEO Andrew Eldredge-Martin and CTO Brian Sokas, were named Campaign & Elections 2024 AI Pioneer's of the Year for their work on accuracy and political bias in AI systems.