

It is culture selection/quantity, curd size/flocculation, and milk that affect cheese styles more than the heat schedule.

Heating serves two primary functions. One, it helps the curds to expel whey faster (stirring also helps here). Two, it helps the bacteria to grow faster and produce more acid than they would at the lower temps. That's why the temp targets are different for meso vs thermo. In both cases, you usually heat to close to the max threshold of the bacteria. The heating times, say 45 mins, are there as a guide for when the curds are ready to be pressed provided that you used the exact same rennet strength, curd size, and milk as the person who created the recipe. In reality the heat time required can vary, and the end goal should be the right curd texture at the right acidity for the cheese style.

With that in mind, there is a big reason why heating is done gradually vs quickly, and why it is uniform (for most cheeses) as opposed to slow at first and faster later or vice versa. It is because with a typical 3/8" curd size, if you heat too quickly, or have heat pockets at the bottom because you don't stir, then the outer layer of the curd pieces loses moisture faster than the inside of the curd. This acts as a casing, making it harder for the inside of the curd to lose its moisture. The end result of this retained moisture is not really a more moist cheese, but rather pockets of whey in the cheese. That is, the water is not uniformly distributed. More moisture leads to faster proteolysis and higher acid, because there's lactose in that trapped whey. And those lead to texture and flavor/aroma defects.

To answer your question more directly, if you raised it 3 degrees over 5 mins for a thermo cheese, that's fine. If you raised it for a meso cheese, you would hit your target temp too quickly and possibly trap more moisture in the curd than you wanted. Or you will develop acidity too quickly because you give the bacteria a better environment, and then by the time you drain the whey, your acidification curve will be too steep, say 6.0 at whey drain. This would mean you'd need to work quickly to get the cheese salted or brined, depending on style, by the time the cheese hit 5.5. By that time, the whey needs to drain, and the curds need to knit. Pretty hard to do.

Conversely, say you tried to control that acidity by raising temp quickly, but not so fast as to form a casein shell, and used less culture to begin with so that the acidification curve was slower. In this case, the cheese would take too long to make, and this may expose it to contamination because pathogens or bad bacteria would have a longer time to get a foothold in the cheese with the more favorable pH conditions.

To summarize. If you heat too fast overall with a constant pace, you hit final temp too quickly, possibly causing too high acidity, but not enough whey expulsion. If you heat slowly at first, then increase heat, there will be too much water retention, and you will need to stir it longer to get the curds right (this depends on the difference in rates between early slow and later fast, I am assuming extreme examples). And if you heat it too quickly at first, then slow down, it will likely form a casein shell, causing, again, too high of a water retention.

Heating properly has to do more with avoiding cheese defects than making a completely different style of cheese. Cheese styles are formed more by culture, curd size/flocculation, and process combined with affinage.