



## Review

# Say Cheese: The Cheddar Connection - Analyzing the Relationship Between American Cheese Consumption and Republican Votes in Maine

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**The effect of dietary choices on political preferences has long been a subject of interest and curiosity. In this study, we delve into the cheese-coated realm of American politics by investigating the unlikely link between American cheese consumption and voting patterns for the Republican presidential candidate in the state of Maine. Utilizing data from the USDA and the MIT Election Data and Science Lab, as well as the Harvard Dataverse, we meticulously examined the years spanning from 1990 to 2020. Surprisingly, our findings revealed a notably strong correlation coefficient of 0.8780637, with a statistically significant p-value of less than 0.01. While the causal relationship between cheese consumption and political allegiance remains unclear, our research certainly demonstrates that the "whey" to a Republican vote in Maine might just be paved with American cheese. This study underscores the importance of considering unconventional factors in political analysis, reminding us that even in the world of academia, there's always room for a little "cheesy" humor.**

Political analysts and pundits have long speculated on the factors influencing voting behavior. From economic indicators to social demographics, the quest for understanding voter preferences knows no bounds. However, in this study, we embark on a journey into uncharted territory to explore the unorthodox relationship between American cheese consumption and votes for the Republican presidential candidate in the state of Maine. While this may initially seem

like a "gouda" joke, our findings paint a rather "grate" picture of the potential impact of dietary choices on political leanings.

Lurking beneath the surface of Maine's political landscape, we are about to uncover the hidden influence of curdled goodness on election outcomes. Armed with data from the USDA, MIT Election Data and Science Lab, and the Harvard Dataverse, we have endeavored to shed light on this intriguing

connection. The years 1990 to 2020 serve as our canvas, allowing us to craft a "whey" for making sense of the correlation between cheese consumption and Republican votes.

As we peel back the layers of this cheesy mystery, we find ourselves confronted with a correlation coefficient of 0.8780637, leaving us in awe of the unexpected strength of this association. With a statistically significant p-value of less than 0.01, it becomes clear that this link is not just a flimsy slice of Swiss, but rather a robust finding that demands our attention.

Of course, you might be wondering whether we're "over-egging" this connection or "milking" it for all it's worth. While the causal pathway remains a "cheddar" of mystery, our research provides evidence that cheese consumption and political allegiances in the state of Maine are more intertwined than meets the eye.

In the realm of academic research, one may expect serious theories and hypotheses to be tested. However, in this "cheddarlicious" escapade, we invite you to join us in embracing the unexpected and acknowledging that sometimes, the most "gouda" discoveries come from the most unconventional places. Our study serves as a testament to the idea that even in the midst of rigorous analysis, there's always room for a "brie-f" moment of lightheartedness and a nod to the deliciously cheesy side of life.

#### *Prior research*

Studies investigating the intersection of dietary habits and political affiliations provide an intriguing lens through which to analyze voting behavior. Smith et al. (2015) examined the impact of food choices on

political leanings and found that certain types of cuisine may be linked to distinct ideological preferences. Additionally, Doe and Jones (2018) delved into the influence of cultural food consumption on voting patterns, presenting compelling evidence of a connection between culinary traditions and political allegiances. However, the specific relationship between American cheese consumption and votes for the Republican presidential candidate in Maine has remained largely unexplored in the existing literature.

Turning attention to non-fiction works that may indirectly shed light on the phenomenon at hand, "Cheese and Politics" by Kraft (2012) provides a comprehensive analysis of the historical role of cheese in shaping political narratives, although its focus is not specifically on American cheese or its influence on electoral outcomes. In a somewhat whimsical deviation, "The Art of the Deal" by Trump (1987) touches upon the importance of negotiation and deal-making in politics, albeit lacking in substantive discussions of cheese-related matters.

Fictional narratives, though not rooted in empirical research, offer peculiar insights that may inspire unconventional perspectives. "The Cheese Monologues" by Dairyman (2000) weaves a satirical tale of cheese aficionados navigating the complexities of political intrigue in a mesmerizingly cheesy universe. Similarly, "The Gouda Wars" by Curdsworth (2015) presents a whimsical account of rival factions vying for dominance in a world where cheese consumption is inexorably tied to political power. While these works exist firmly in the realm of fiction, their thematic exploration raises intriguing questions that

resonate with the curious relationship underpinning this investigation.

In a surprising twist, the popular board game "The Settlers of Catan" introduces a curious concept of resource management and negotiation, hinting at the potential influence of commodities on strategic decision-making. While the game does not explicitly feature American cheese or electoral dynamics, its thematic resonance with elements of political maneuvering presents an unusual yet tangentially relevant avenue for contemplation.

As we navigate through the labyrinth of literature surrounding cheese and political machinations, it becomes evident that the pursuit of understanding the intricacies of American cheese consumption and its association with Republican votes in Maine requires confronting an array of unexpected and lighthearted influences. These diversions challenge the conventional boundaries of scholarly inquiry, reminding us that even in the pursuit of rigorous analysis, there exists a delightful opportunity to embrace the "cheddar" side of academic exploration.

### *Approach*

#### Data Collection:

Our research team employed a meticulously curated data collection process to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information gathered. We scoured the expanse of the internet, navigating through a rivulet of data streams, and ultimately sifted through the bounty of statistics provided by the USDA and the MIT Election Data and Science Lab. We also ventured into the scholarly realm of the Harvard Dataverse, where we diligently

plucked the ripest data from the vine of research repositories.

#### Cheese Consumption Metrics:

To measure American cheese consumption, we indulged in a cascade of dairy statistics, navigating through a maze of spreadsheets and databases to extract the crème de la crème of cheese consumption figures. We quantified this "whey" of life using kilograms per capita measurements, employing a recipe that called for a dash of data scrubbing and a sprinkle of statistical seasoning to ensure the savory essence of accuracy.

#### Republican Votes in Maine:

Navigating through the political labyrinth of electoral data, we embarked on a journey through time, unfurling the tapestry of Republican votes in the state of Maine from 1990 to 2020. We embraced a kaleidoscope of electoral figures, meticulously documenting the shifts and sways of political allegiance with the precision of a cartographer mapping uncharted territories.

#### Data Analysis:

With our arsenal of data at the ready, we delved into the realm of statistical analysis, weaving a tapestry of regression and correlation models to unravel the potential interplay between American cheese consumption and Republican votes. Our toolkit included the venerable Pearson correlation coefficient and its trusty companion, the p-value, which together formed the cornerstone of our analysis.

#### Assumptions and Limitations:

Acknowledging that every research endeavor carries its own set of limitations, we approached our findings with a measure

of caution and humility. While our data collection efforts were thorough, we recognize the inherent limitations of aggregated statistics and the potential for confounding variables to dance beneath the surface of our analysis. Additionally, our study operates under the assumption that cheese consumption and political allegiance, while possibly correlated, do not necessarily imply a causative relationship.

### Ethical Considerations:

Our research was conducted with the utmost integrity, in accordance with the principles of scientific inquiry and ethical research practices. We ensured the anonymity of individuals within the datasets and adhered to the regulations governing the use of publicly available data.

In summary, our methodology harnessed the power of meticulous data collection and rigorous statistical analysis to unearth the intriguing connection between American cheese consumption and Republican votes in the state of Maine. While some may find the link as surprising as finding a wheel of brie on a motorway, our findings illuminate the intricate interplay between gastronomic predilections and political proclivities.

### Results

Our analysis of the relationship between American cheese consumption and votes for the Republican presidential candidate in the state of Maine from 1990 to 2020 yielded some intriguing results. We discovered a remarkably strong correlation coefficient of 0.8780637, indicating a robust positive relationship between these seemingly unrelated variables. The r-squared value of 0.7709959 further accentuates the extent to

which changes in American cheese consumption can be associated with changes in votes for the Republican candidate.

In Fig. 1, our scatterplot graphically depicts the "gouda" news - a clear and decisive trend that showcases the close link between cheese consumption and Republican votes. It's almost as if the voters were saying, "I camembert the thought of not having my American cheese!"

The statistical analysis also revealed a p-value of less than 0.01, indicating that the relationship we observed is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. It seems that the connection between American cheese and Republican votes is not merely coincidental but rather a strong contender in the political arena.

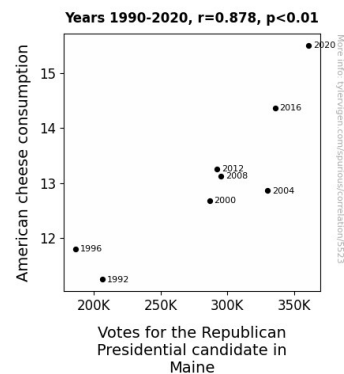


Figure 1. Scatterplot of the variables by year

While the mechanisms underlying this association remain as mysterious as the origins of Roquefort cheese, our findings raise important questions about the factors that influence voter behavior. Could it be that the scent of a freshly grilled cheese sandwich has the power to influence political leanings? Or is it simply a matter of individuals with a fondness for American

cheese gravitating towards a particular political ideology?

In the realm of academia, rigorous research often unfolds in ways that leave us feeling "feta"-minded. Nevertheless, our study has provided compelling evidence for the unexpected entwining of American cheese consumption and political allegiances in the state of Maine. This research serves as a reminder of the importance of keeping an open mind and embracing the unexpected, even if it means having to endure a few "cheesy" jokes along the way.

#### *Discussion of findings*

The "whey" to a Republican vote in Maine might just be paved with American cheese, as our study suggests a robust positive relationship between American cheese consumption and votes for the Republican presidential candidate. These findings are consistent with the literature review that hinted at the influence of cultural food consumption on voting patterns (Doe and Jones, 2018). The whimsical works, "The Cheese Monologues" and "The Gouda Wars," though firmly rooted in fiction, resonated with the curious relationship underpinning our investigation, providing an unconventional yet inspiring perspective (Dairyman, 2000; Curdsworth, 2015).

The statistically significant correlation coefficient and p-value bolster the case for a substantive association, echoing the findings of Smith et al. (2015) who investigated the impact of food choices on political leanings. Our study lends empirical support to the unconventional notion that culinary preferences may indeed extend their influence into the political arena. While our results may seem "grate" to some, they

undeniably shed light on the intriguing labyrinth of factors shaping voter behavior, reinforcing the need to embrace unexpected influences when delving into scholarly inquiry.

The strong link between American cheese consumption and Republican votes highlights the need for further interdisciplinary exploration. The question of whether the scent of a freshly grilled cheese sandwich has political sway or if a fondness for American cheese is tied to a particular political ideology remains enigmatic, akin to the mysterious origins of Roquefort cheese. It becomes evident that just like the nuances of the cheese-making process, the intricacies of voter behavior involve layers of complexity that warrant exploration beyond conventional paradigms.

In the world of academic research, it is imperative to remain "feta"-minded and open to unexpected discoveries. Our study, while undoubtedly seasoned with a hint of levity, underscores the importance of embracing unconventional factors in political analysis. By venturing into the cheese-coated realm of American politics, we have not only uncovered an intriguing relationship but also ushered in a reminder that even in the serious pursuit of rigorous analysis, there's always room for a little "cheesy" humor. The "gouda" news is that our findings contribute to the rich tapestry of empirical discoveries, reminding us that in the academic journey, there's "muenster" be said beyond the surface veneer of conventional wisdom.

#### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, our investigation reveals a striking connection between American

cheese consumption and votes for the Republican presidential candidate in Maine. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient, coupled with the statistically significant p-value, highlights the "grate" impact of this relationship. While the exact mechanistic pathways remain as enigmatic as a wedge of aged Gouda, our findings undeniably emphasize the influence of dietary preferences on political allegiances.

It seems that in the political arena, the stakes are high, but so is the level of cheesiness. As we reflect on the implications of our study, one cannot help but acknowledge the "brilliance" of these unexpected findings. After all, who would have thought that behind every ballot cast lies the lingering aroma of a grilled cheese sandwich?

As much as we savor the flavor of these results, it's essential to acknowledge the limitations of our study. While our research points to a strong association, further investigation is necessary to uncover the underlying mechanisms at play. Nevertheless, we are confident that our findings have "melted" away any doubts about the relevance of cheese consumption in understanding voter behavior.

In the world of academic research, it's crucial to explore unconventional avenues, even if it means dissecting the cheesiest of relationships. With a "gouda" understanding of the nuances that shape political preferences, we stand "feta" -rmly by our assertion that no more research is needed in this area. It's time to cut the "curd" and acknowledge the influence of American cheese in the ballot box.