Site types revisited: comparison of traditional classification systems for European Boreal forests

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METHODS We used BioSoil vegetation and soil survey data (Finland: 341 sites; Russia 86 sites) to compare the Cajanderian and the Sukachevian site type classification systems in terms of understorey vegetation, soil fertility, tree productivity and biodiversity.

We created class prediction models to classify Finnish and Russian sites according to Sukachev and Cajander, respectively, based on vegetation data.

RESULTS

Site productivity and species richness: The types formed similar, meaningful gradients in terms of soil fertility, tree growth, and species richness. The differences likely reflect management history.
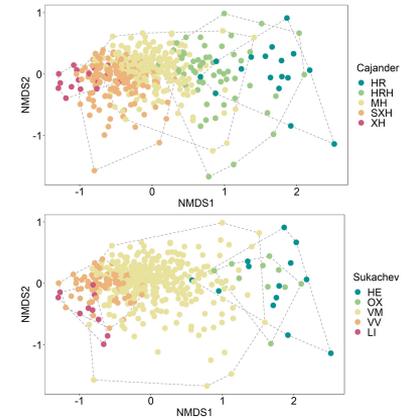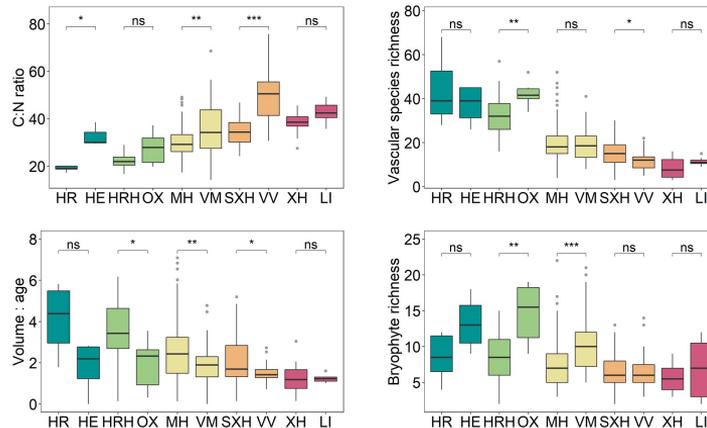
The arrangement of the site types in ordination space followed a fertility gradient in both systems.

CONCLUSIONS: Our results show that analogous types between the systems can be identified.