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Citation for published version:

Leite Rezende, V, Pontara, V, Bueno, ML, van den Berg, E, Silva de Miranda, PL, Oliveira-filho, ATD & Dexter, K 2020, 'Phylogenetic regionalization of tree assemblages reveals novel patterns of evolutionary affinities in the Atlantic Forest', *Journal of biogeography*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jbi.14038>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1111/jbi.14038](https://doi.org/10.1111/jbi.14038)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Journal of biogeography

Publisher Rights Statement:

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1 **Phylogenetic regionalization of tree assemblages reveals novel patterns of**
2 **evolutionary affinities in the Atlantic Forest**

3 **Short running title: Phylogenetic regionalization of the Atlantic Forest**

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8 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

9 V.L.R. and V.P. thank the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brazil (CAPES)
10 for the Postdoctoral scholarship. E.v.d.B had the support of the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento
11 Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq).

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17 **Abstract**

18 **Aim** We used a phylogenetic approach to group assemblages of woody plant into major vegetation units
19 in the Atlantic Forest, thus for the first time incorporating information on species evolutionary
20 relationships into a bioregionalization of this critical hotspot. A phylogenetic regionalization will provide
21 a spatially explicit framework for answering many basic and applied questions in biogeography, ecology
22 and conservation

23
24 **Location** Atlantic Forest

25
26 **Methods** Our data set comprises 614 genera and 116 families, spread over 1755 assemblages. To place
27 assemblages in a multivariate evolutionary composition space, we used a phylogenetically-informed
28 ordination analysis, and to determine what the main phylogenetic groups of assemblages were, we used
29 K-means clustering based on phylogenetic dissimilarity of assemblages. To quantify how well
30 environmental variables distinguish the phylogenetic groups found we implemented classification tree
31 approaches. Then, to explore the evolutionary turnover between the phylogenetic groups, we calculated
32 phylogenetic beta diversity. Finally, we determined the lineages that are most strongly associated with
33 individual phylogenetic groups using an indicator analysis for lineages.

34
35 **Results** Our analyses suggest that there are seven principal groups, in terms of evolutionary lineage
36 composition, in the Atlantic Forest. The greatest turnover of phylogenetic lineage composition separates
37 tropical evergreen rain forest and semideciduous assemblages from subtropical and highland assemblages.
38 The mixed subtropical forest showed the lowest phylogenetic compositional similarity values with other
39 groups. Tropical rain forest had the highest number of significant indicator lineages, and the highest values
40 of the indicator statistic for lineages.

41
42 **Main conclusions** We found that the most pronounced evolutionary division separates southern and
43 highland tree assemblages from those occurring under more tropical climates and at lower elevations. Our
44 phylogenetic analyses point to an environmentally driven compositional division, likely based on the
45 regular occurrence of freezing versus non-freezing temperatures. Precipitation and edaphic regimes that
46 assemblages experience had less definitive effects on their evolutionary lineage composition.

47
48 **Keywords:** South America, rainforest, NeoTropTree, phyloregions, mixed forest, lineage diversity,
49 latitudinal gradient, subtropical forests

50
51

52 Introduction

53 The substitution of phylogenetic clades in space is a fundamental pattern of biodiversity (Eiserhardt
54 *et al.*, 2013), and an essential goal of biogeography and conservation biology is to identify regions that are
55 significantly different from each other in their composition (Williams, 1996; Magnusson, 2004). The niche
56 conservatism hypothesis assumes that closely related species should be more ecologically similar, and thus
57 overlap more in their ecological niche, than those that are more distantly related (Connolly *et al.*, 2011;
58 Gerhold *et al.*, 2015). This can lead closely related species to be “filtered” into environmentally similar
59 areas (Cavender-Bares *et al.*, 2004; Cavender-Bares *et al.*, 2009; Graham *et al.*, 2009; Vamosi *et al.*, 2009).
60 Therefore, phylogenetic relationships and other mechanisms (e.g. dispersal limitation and biotic
61 interactions) can help to explain why all groups of organisms do not appear in all geographic regions (Crisp
62 & Cook, 2012).

63 The association of species assemblages into distinct phylogenetically delimited biogeographic
64 units can capture historical processes, such as diversification, niche conservatism, dispersal and extinction
65 that have operated over millions of years (Daru *et al.*, 2017; Crisp & Cook, 2012; Guo *et al.*, 2012; Wu *et al.*,
66 2016). Recently, phylogenetic information for plants has begun to be incorporated into regionalization
67 schemes, which has shown how such evolutionary data can provide new insights into the spatial structure
68 of biodiversity, and reveal hidden evolutionary affinities between vegetation types (Daru *et al.*, 2017; Daru
69 *et al.*, 2016; Segovia *et al.*, 2020). The means by which vegetation types are grouped into compositional
70 units has major implications for conservation, landscape management, and projected ecosystem change,
71 and the implementation of a phylogenetic perspective may provide additional information beyond
72 traditional hotspot approaches. As suggested by Daru *et al.* (2017), more evolutionarily distinct
73 phyloregions, or phylogenetically-delimited groups of assemblages, might deserve greater conservation
74 priority since they may encompass more rare and distinct biodiversity. Thus, by grouping species
75 assemblages into biogeographic units using information on their shared evolutionary histories (Holt *et al.*,
76 2013), we can gain insight into the evolutionary and ecological processes shaping species geographical
77 distributions, which can in turn serve as a tool to help guide conservation projects on the basis of
78 evolutionary heritage.

79 The Atlantic Forest is one of the most endangered ecological regions on earth, being considered
80 one of the 35 hotspots for biodiversity conservation in a global context (Mittermeier *et al.*, 2004).
81 Angiosperms represent approximately 94% of all vascular plants in the Atlantic Forest, and are distributed
82 in 208 plant families (Werneck *et al.*, 2011). There are approximately 15,510 angiosperm species from the
83 Atlantic Forest, the majority of which are endemic at the species level (8,710), and some even at the genus
84 (210) or family level (14) (Flora do Brasil 2020). Amongst the angiosperms of the Atlantic Forest, woody
85 species represent a highly diverse group (>7,000 species) (Flora do Brasil 2020). Dissecting this
86 biodiversity hotspot, Neves *et al.* (2017) classified the Atlantic Forest into 10 main vegetation types with

87 various environmental characteristics operating as filters determining the distribution of the non-rain forest
88 vegetation types (marginal habitats). The high woody plant diversity is therefore attributable, at least in
89 part, to the successful utilization of the diversified habitats and microhabitats present in this region, which
90 are generated by temperature, rainfall and soil variation resulting from the latitudinal breadth and
91 elevational complexity of the region (Scarano, 2009; Neves *et al.*, 2017, Canditio & Souza 2019). In a
92 recent study, Canditio & Souza (2019) suggested that woody plant ecoregions in the Atlantic Forest reflect
93 (at least partially) historical events, quantified via a variable representing the historical climatic stability
94 of the Atlantic Forest over the last 120 kyr. Climatic (in)stability on this timescale very well may have
95 shaped the distribution of individual species, and ecoregions that are delimited based on species
96 composition. Phylogenetically-delimited compositional units could also be shaped by climatic instability,
97 but phylogenetic lineages in angiosperms are millions of years old and other processes operating on deeper
98 timescales (e.g., niche conservatism, diversification) likely have a larger influence on where units fall in
99 geographic and environmental space. No study to date has taken an explicitly phylogenetic perspective,
100 which can account for deeper-time evolutionary processes, in delimiting vegetation units of the Atlantic
101 Forest.

102 In the present study we use a phylogenetic approach to group assemblages of woody angiosperm
103 species into major compositional units in the Atlantic Forest, thus for the first time incorporating
104 information on species evolutionary relationships into a bioregionalization of this critical hotspot. We
105 opted to work with woody species because data for tree assemblages vastly exceeds that available for
106 any other group of plants (Eisenlohr & Oliveira-Filho, 2015), and because trees represent the largest and
107 longest lived of plant species, providing the foundation for terrestrial ecosystems (O'Brien *et al.*, 2000).
108 A phylogenetic regionalization of the Atlantic Forest will provide a spatially explicit framework for
109 answering many basic and applied questions in historical and ecological biogeography and conservation
110 for this exceptionally biodiverse region. While ecoregions based on species composition may reflect
111 processes of dispersal limitation unrelated to environmental factors (e.g. biogeographic barriers such as
112 rivers), we expect that phylogenetically-delimited biogeographic regions will reflect deeper evolutionary
113 processes, particularly the evolutionarily conserved environmental associations of phylogenetic lineages
114 (Segovia *et al.*, 2020). Specifically, given that the Atlantic Forest spans areas that experience freezing
115 temperatures and areas that do not and that adaptation to freezing conditions is a major ecophysiological
116 barrier for angiosperm lineages (Zanne *et al.*, 2014), we predict that phylogenetically-delimited
117 compositional groups will align with temperature regime (Duarte *et al.*, 2014). In addition, we expect
118 clades with a southern temperate origin, referred to as 'Gondwanan clades' (*sensu* Segovia & Armesto
119 2015), will be affiliated with southern phylogenetic groups that experience freezing temperatures.
120 Neotropical angiosperm lineages also show clear affiliations with water availability (Neves *et al.*, 2020),
121 which leads us to additionally predict that phylogenetic groups of assemblages will secondarily align
122 with precipitation regime. Thus overall, we expect habitats, such as highland or semideciduous forests,
123 that have been classified as marginal because they occur under extremes of temperature or water

availability (Scarano 2009, Neves *et al.*, 2017), to represent distinct phylogenetic groups. Finally, as edaphic specialization may be more variable within angiosperm lineages (Fine *et al.*, 2005, Nascimento *et al.*, 2020), we expect that edaphically marginal formations, such as coastal vegetation mosaics (i.e. *restingas*) and forests associated with rock outcrops, to not form distinct phylogenetic groups.

Material and Methods

Study area

Our study area comprises the entire extension of the Atlantic Forest (*sensu latissimo*), which stretches for over 3,500 km across equatorial, tropical and subtropical latitudes in South America and is renowned world-wide for being one of the most diverse of 35 biodiversity hotspots for conservation prioritization (Myers *et al.*, 2000). The *sensu latissimo* concept of the Atlantic Forest includes rain forests, semideciduous forests, *Araucaria*-dominated ‘mixed’ forests, coastal vegetation (*restinga*), rock-outcrop associated forests, cloud forests and riverine forests, the latter nested within other major vegetation formations or domains such as the Cerrado and Pampas (see Appendix 1 for further details, including associated environmental parameters; see also Oliveira-Filho *et al.*, 2006 and Neves *et al.*, 2017).

Data base

Floristic data were obtained from the NeoTropTree database (<http://www.neotropree.info/>; Oliveira-Filho, 2015), which consists of a compilation of tree species lists and occurrence records collected from the literature and herbarium specimens. Each sampling assemblage has a radius of 5 km and contains records of occurrence of tree species that can be found in that area and within a single, given vegetation type. Where two or more vegetation types co-occur in one 10 km diameter area, these were treated as spatially overlapping assemblages but assigned to different vegetation types (see description, history and protocol of NeoTropTree at <http://www.neotropree.info>). Major heterogeneity in vegetation type within 10 km diameter areas was common in eastern South America (Silva de Miranda *et al.*, 2018). In addition to the presence and absence data for tree species, each assemblage is characterized by numerous descriptive and environmental data, such as altitude, geo-edaphic and climatic variables. We built a presence/absence matrix of genera for all 1,755 assemblages to use in downstream analyses. As found by Cantidio & Souza (2019), we might expect that abundance data will reveal more than presence–absence data. However, we are not aware of the public availability of large-scale abundance data for the entire domain, including all of its (micro)habitats (although see de Lima *et al.*, 2015 for the largest-scale effort to date).

Our data set focuses on angiosperms and comprises 614 genera, and 116 families, spread over 1755 assemblages. The inclusion of ferns and gymnosperms has a very strong effect on phylogenetic diversity

metrics, yet they are exceedingly rare over most of the Atlantic Forest, so they were excluded from analyses (*sensu* Kembel & Hubbell, 2006, Honorio-Coronado *et al.*, 2015). For phylogenetic analysis we use a temporally-calibrated, genus-level phylogenetic tree constructed using maximum likelihood phylogenetic analyses of the *rbcL* and *matK* plastid regions by Neves *et al.* (2020). This molecular phylogeny encompasses 1,100 tree genera from South America and includes 89% of the angiosperm tree genera in our study area. We excluded 68 angiosperm genera from the distribution dataset that were not found in this genus-level phylogenetic tree. Together they represented 1.55% of the occurrence records in the dataset.

Data analysis

To place assemblages in a multivariate evolutionary composition space, we used an approach developed by Pavoine (2016). Specifically, we conducted a principal component analysis of a Hellinger transformed compositional matrix that not only includes the occurrence of genera in assemblages, but also the occurrence of phylogenetic nodes. This approach is recommended for having high discriminatory power to detect changes in evolutionary lineage composition over gradients, while also being connected to an ordination that can serve to place lineages and assemblages in the same compositional space. We implemented this approach using the *evoPCAHellinger()* function in the *adiv* package (Pavoine 2016). To determine what the main groups of assemblages were in terms of evolutionary composition, we used K-means clustering based on Euclidean distance between assemblages in the compositional ordination space. We chose this approach because large differences in richness (here phylogenetic diversity) between sites may affect analyses based on the Sørensen, or similar indices, and their phylogenetic equivalents (e.g., *Phylosor*), while the placement of assemblages in ordination space should be less affected by richness differences. Thus, the Euclidean distance between assemblages in ordination space should largely reflect compositional differences (Fayolle *et al.*, 2014). For calculating the distance between assemblages in ordination space, we used the first five axes of the evolutionary ordination, as a scree plot showed a large decrease in variation explained by subsequent axes. To understand the environmental correlates of these ordination axes, we used general linear models. For determining the optimal number of groups in the clustering analysis, we used an analysis of gap statistics, average silhouette widths and an elbow plot (see Appendix S2 in Supporting Information).

We used a random forest classification tree approach (Breiman, 2001), to assess whether the phylogenetic groups identified could be distinguished using environmental data. The random forest classification consists of many individual decision trees that operate as an ensemble; it aggregates the votes from different decision trees to decide the final class of the test object. For this, we used altitude and 27 environmental variables available for each site (at 30 arc-second resolution) in the NeoTropTree database (description, history and NeoTropTree protocol at <http://www.neotropree.info>) (Table 1).

In order to evaluate the success rate of the classification tree approach in assigning sites to phylogenetic groups and to determine which assemblages were incorrectly classified using environmental variables, we generated confusion matrices. We also estimated the importance of each variable for distinguishing phylogenetic groups of assemblages using Breiman's measure of importance (Breiman, 2001), specifically the mean decrease in the Gini coefficient when a variable is chosen to split a node.

To explore phylogenetic turnover between the seven phylogenetic groups, we calculated phylogenetic beta diversity (PBD), using the Phylosor metric. This metric calculates the proportion of phylogenetic branch length shared between two phylogenetic groups relative to the total branch length of all taxa in the two groups. We also determined the lineages that are most strongly associated with individual phylogenetic groups using an indicator analysis for lineages (Dufrene & Legendre, 1997), which was based on the presence versus absence in assemblages of the genera descended from each phylogenetic node (*sensu* Segovia *et al.*, 2020). We also included terminal nodes, i.e. individual genera, in the indicator analysis.

All analyses were conducted in the R 3.2.3 Statistical Environment (R Core Team, 2017) using the following packages: 'picante' (Kembel *et al.*, 2015), 'vegan' (Oksanen *et al.*, 2016), 'adiv' (Pavoine, 2016), 'cluster' (Maechler, 2018), 'factoextra' (Kassambara, 2016), ape (Paradis *et al.*, 2019), 'labdsv' (Roberts, 2016) and randomForest package in the R statistical software (Liaw & Wiener, 2002).

Results

The optimal number of groups in our phylogenetically-informed compositional classification of assemblages varied from seven to nine, with all methods giving good support for seven clusters (Appendix S3). We therefore subsequently focused on seven phylogenetic groups (Fig.1), which we have named based on their dominant vegetation types: (1) Tropical and subtropical coastal vegetation mosaic (including *restinga* and mangrove); (2) Tropical rain forest; found along the Atlantic coast extending from northeast to southeast Brazil; the southern limit was found to occur in Rio de Janeiro state at the latitude of 23° 33' S (almost exactly coinciding with the Tropic of Capricorn), in the Paraty municipality; (3) Tropical semideciduous forest, in which 30 to 60% of the leaf mass is deciduous in the dry season, and which also extends southwards to near the Tropic of Capricorn; (4) Tropical and subtropical highland forests, which have a frequently more open vegetation, usually found above 1000 m.a.l.s. with a low canopy, between 3 and 5 m in height, including some cloud dwarf-forest; scattered taller trees may emerge from the canopy; (5) Subtropical rain forest; rain forest found on the southern portion of the Atlantic coast and also including most cloud forests from north of the Tropic of Capricorn; (6) Subtropical semi-deciduous forest, in which 30 to 60% of the leaf mass is deciduous in the cold season;; (7) Mixed angiosperm and gymnosperm subtropical forest; *Araucaria angustifolia* often makes up more than 50% of canopy crowns, and may reach 30 m in height. The other tree species in mixed forest are angiosperms, except for *Podocarpus*

226 *lambertii*, which may be locally abundant (Oliveira-Filho, 2015). We provide maps in the supplementary
 227 materials showing the distribution of phylogenetic groups when an alternative number of groups was
 228 selected (Appendix S3).
 229

230
 231 **Figure 1.** Map showing the geographical distribution of the seven phylogenetic groups of tree
 232 assemblages found in the Atlantic Forest as well as the distribution of values for the first five axes from
 233 an evolutionary ordination of sites based on their phylogenetic composition.
 234

235 Temperature variables seem to be more important than precipitation and edaphic variables (as
 236 quantified) for distinguishing phylogenetic groups in the Atlantic Forest. The five most important
 237 environmental variables for classification were related to temperature: (1) temperature seasonality, (2)
 238 altitude, (3) minimum annual temperature, (4) temperature annual range and (5) mean annual temperature
 239 (Table 1).
 240

241 **Table 1.** The mean variable importance value for all environmental variables included in the random forest
 242 analysis.

Environmental variables	Mean Decrease in Gini Coefficient	Source
Temperature seasonality	121.55	WorldClim 2005
Altitude	113.66	CGIAR, 2006
Minimum temperature	113.19	WorldClim 2005
Temperature annual range	87.65	WorldClim 2005
Mean annual temperature	81.22	WorldClim 2005
Soil water storage	75.15	EMBRAPA's protocol
Grassy cover	71.92	Google Earth© images
Maximum temperature	69.40	WorldClim 2005
Precipitation in the dry period	66.56	WorldClim 2005
Temperature daily range	64.71	WorldClim 2005
Precipitation seasonality	56.02	WorldClim 2005
Isothermality	50.88	WorldClim 2005
Potential evapotranspiration	50.10	Zomer <i>et al.</i> , 2008
Ranked soil sand percentage	45.67	Harmonized World Soil Database v 1.2
Water deficit severity	39.35	Water's Climate Diagram
Ranked soil drainage	36.63	EMBRAPA's protocol
Precipitation in the wet period	35.75	WorldClim 2005
Aridity index	35.07	Zomer <i>et al.</i> , 2008
Water deficit duration	33.45	Water's Climate Diagram

Hyper seasonality	31.49	interpolating known values*
Water excess duration	28.95	Water's Climate Diagram
Number of days of frost	27.18	interpolating known values*
Ranked rockiness of soil	26.77	Harmonized World Soil Database v 1.2
Ranked salinity of soil	25.07	Harmonized World Soil Database v 1.2
Cloudiness (light interception)	24.83	interpolating known values*
Mean annual precipitation	24.31	WorldClim 2005
Water excess severity	23.98	Water's Climate Diagram
Ranked total base saturation in soil	10.89	Harmonized World Soil Database v 1.2

*Obtained from interpolating known values as response variables with elevation, latitude and the WorldClim layers as predicting variables

In the evolutionary composition ordination (Fig. 2), the first axis explained ~12% of the variation in the phylogenetic compositional data, and largely split the assemblages located north of the Tropic of Capricorn (tropical zone) from those located south of this line (subtropical zone). Exceptions were subtropical rain forests and highland forests which group with other assemblages below the Tropic of Capricorn along this axis, but can be found to the north of the Tropic of Capricorn at higher elevations. The coastal vegetation mosaic group also had a few assemblages found south of the Tropic of Capricorn. Minimum temperature and temperature seasonality were the most strongly correlated variables with this axis (Appendix S4). The tropical and subtropical areas in our study do not differ substantially in precipitation regime, but have markedly different temperature regimes (Fig.3). Along this axis, the nodes *Tapirira*, *Detarioideae*, *Burseraceae*, *Papilionoideae*, *Chrysobalanaceae*, *Humiriaceae* and *Dichapetalaceae* were associated with tropical assemblages, while *Myrceugenia*, *Clethra*, *Laplacea*, *Cunnoniaceae*, *Canellales*, *Prunus*, *Symplocos*, *Lauraceae* (*Cinnamomum* + *Persea*) and *Piptocarpha* were associated with subtropical assemblages (Appendix S5). In our dataset 83% of *Tapirira* occurrence records are found above the Tropic of Capricorn and 92% of *Myrceugenia* occurrence are found in the subtropical portion or in high altitude sites. The second axis (6.8%) showed a gradient mainly linked to maximum

260 temperature and isothermality (Appendix S4). The tropical and subtropical coastal vegetation mosaic and
 261 the subtropical semideciduous forest, the phylogenetic groups occurring at the lowest altitudes and
 262 experiencing the highest maximum temperatures (30 and 31°C, respectively; Fig.3; Table 2), showed
 263 positive values for Axis 2 (with only three Subtropical Semideciduous sites found with negative values for
 264 Axis 2). The tropical and subtropical highland forest group (25°C mean maximum temperature) and
 265 subtropical rain group forest (including cloud forest assemblages at high altitude; with 27°C mean
 266 maximum temperature) have the great majority of sites with negative values for Axis 2. Negative values
 267 for this axis are mainly associated with the Melastomataceae genera *Macairea* and *Trembleyia* (Appendix
 268 S5). For axis 3, grassy cover and soil salinity were the most important variables, with Tropical and
 269 Subtropical highland forest and Tropical and Subtropical coastal vegetation mosaics having negative
 270 values for the axis. Positive values for this axis are associated mainly with *Cedrela* (Meliaceae) (Appendix
 271 S5).

277 **Figure 2.** First three axes from an evolutionary principal component analysis showing the distribution of
 278 assemblages according to their phylogenetic composition. Symbols represent the phylogenetic groups found
 279 in the Atlantic Forest.

Figure 3. Distribution of assemblages with respect to (A) mean annual precipitation and temperature seasonality; (B) mean annual temperature and altitude. The ellipses encompass the points of a given group. (C) Distribution of sites in climatic space across the nine biomes proposed by Whittaker, R. H. (1975), considering mean annual precipitation (in centimetres) and mean annual temperature (in degrees Celsius). 1- Tundra; 2- Subtropical desert; 3- Temperate grassland desert; 4- Boreal forest; 5- Woodland shrubland; 6- Tropical dry forest and savanna; 7- Temperate forest; 8- Temperate rain forest; 9- Tropical rain forest.

299 **Table 2.** Geographical and climatic characterization of the seven phylogenetic groups of tree assemblages
300 found in the Atlantic Forest in terms of evolutionary lineage composition.
301

Phylogenetic group	Number of assemblages	Vegetation type (% match)	Latitude (upper and lower 95% quantiles of distribution)	Mean distance from the ocean (km; range in brackets)	Mean altitude (m; range in brackets)
Tropical and subtropical coastal vegetation mosaic	167	90% <i>Restinga</i> ; 7% Semideciduous and 3% Rain Forest	2° 46' S 25° 16' S	6 (1-87)	33 (3-395)
Tropical rain forest	308	46% Rain and 54% Semideciduous Forest	4° 40' S; 23° 01' S	79 (1-310)	356 (15-1122)
Tropical semideciduous forest	383	66% Semideciduous and 33% Tropical Riverine; 1% Rock-outcrop Forest	9° 17' S; 23° 12' S	455 (41-952)	717 (265-1300)
Tropical and subtropical highland forest	131	49% Rock-outcrop; 44% Cloud; 5% Araucaria-dominated, 2% Tropical Riverine Semideciduous Forest	12° 05' S; 27° 00' S	236 (4-1017)	1322 (820-2278)
Subtropical rain forest	307	58% Rain, 13% Cloud; 12% Semideciduous; 10% <i>Restinga</i> ; 4% Araucaria-dominated; 2% Rock-outcrop; 1% Tropical Riverine Forest	17° 02' S; 29° 16' S	61 (1-323)	621 (2-1533)

Subtropical semideciduous forest	300	65% Semideciduous; 24% Subtropical Riverine; 11% Araucaria- dominated Forest	22°41' S; 34° 09' S	372 (1-853)	306 (3- 853)
Mixed subtropical forest	159	92% Araucaria- dominated; 4% Subtropical Riverine; 3% Cloud; 1% Semideciduous Forest	24° 05' S; 30° 21' S	195 (1-1017)	747 (4-498)

302

303 The mixed angiosperm and gymnosperm subtropical forest showed the lowest phylogenetic
304 compositional similarity values with the others groups, despite that gymnosperms were not included in the
305 analysis (four similarity values of the six pairwise comparisons are below 80%; Mean value ~ 77%; Fig.
306 4). Among all phylogenetic groups, just the subtropical semideciduous forest and the tropical and
307 subtropical highland forest showed similarity values higher than 80% with the mixed subtropical forest.
308 Interestingly, the tropical semideciduous forest was more similar to rain forest (tropical and subtropical)
309 than to subtropical semideciduous forest. The similarity values among any of these three phylogenetic
310 groups (tropical and subtropical rain forest, tropical semideciduous forest) was always above 90%. The
311 lowest value of similarity was found between the mixed subtropical forest and the tropical and subtropical
312 coastal vegetation mosaic (71%; Fig.4). While similarity values overall seem high (particularly compared
313 to taxonomic presence/absence analyses), it is worth noting that they are based on the presence versus
314 absence of genera in the entirety of each phylogenetic group of assemblages. The values thus represent an
315 upper estimate of similarity, but should be comparable among different pairwise comparisons.

Figure 4. Phylogenetic similarity among the different phylogenetic groups found in the Atlantic Forest. Numbers represent the pairwise Phylogenetic Sorensen's Similarity Index (PhyloSor), with higher values indicating higher similarity in evolutionary lineage composition.

The tropical rain forest phylogenetic group showed the highest number of significant indicator lineages (206), and the highest values of the indicator statistic (Table 3; Appendix S6). The lineage with the highest indicator value (0.56) for tropical rain forest was a subclade of the Malpighiales, which includes the genera *Rinorea*, *Paypayrola*, *Amphirrhox*, *Kuhlmanniodendron* and *Carpotroche* (Table 3).

Table 3. Indicator analysis for lineages of the seven phylogenetic groups found in Atlantic Forest. Numbers in parentheses represent indicator values for the node.

Phylogenetic group	No. Species	No. Genera	No. of significant indicator lineages (p<0.005)	Lineage with highest indicator statistic and genera in lineage (indicator value in brackets).
Tropical and subtropical coastal vegetation mosaic	1328	387	40	Capparaceae subclade <i>Neocalyptrocalyx</i> , <i>Cynophalla</i> (0.45)
Tropical rain forest	3156	533	206	Malpighiales subclade (Violaceae and Achariaceae): <i>Rinorea</i> , <i>Paypayrola</i> , <i>Amphirrhox</i> , <i>Kuhlmanniodendron</i> , <i>Carpotroche</i> (0.56)
Tropical semideciduous forest	2263	493	90	Papilionoideae subclade: <i>Grazilodendron</i> , <i>Platypodium</i> (0.5)
Tropical and subtropical highland forest	2030	387	33	Ericaceae subclade: <i>Agarista</i> , <i>Gaultheria</i> (0.42)
Subtropical rain forest	2632	478	104	Lauraceae subclade: <i>Aniba</i> , <i>Licaria</i> (0.35)
Subtropical semideciduous forest	1202	374	38	Polygonaceae subclade: <i>Triplaris</i> , <i>Ruprechtia</i> (0.36)
Mixed subtropical forest	1025	287	46	Canellales (Canellaceae and Winteraceae)

Discussion

We found that the most pronounced evolutionary division in tree assemblages of the Atlantic Forest occurs at the Tropic of Capricorn which seems to represent a southern latitudinal limit for phylogenetically-delimited groups of tree assemblages associated with the tropics. Subtropical groups do make it north of the Tropic of Capricorn, but only at higher elevations. Previous studies have found a north versus south division in species composition in the Atlantic Forest (Carnaval *et al.*, 2014 for vertebrates, mainly reptiles and amphibians; Canditio & Souza, 2019 for shrubs and trees), which has been attributed to biogeographic effects (i.e. vicariance, dispersal limitation) centered on the Rio Doce. However, evolutionary analyses point to an environmentally driven division, likely based on the regular occurrence of freezing versus non-freezing temperatures (Segovia *et al.*, 2020). We found that phylogenetic conservatism for a tropical versus extratropical niche may be the most important factor in shaping the broadscale evolutionary biogeography of the Atlantic Forest. However, any vegetation formation might be thought of as a snapshot of multiple interacting factors (environmental, evolutionary and historical process) that determine the distribution of taxa (Duarte *et al.*, 2014). The northward migration of Gondwanan lineages from subtropical areas and the current relictual distribution of these lineages at high elevations in tropical areas represent an example of the importance of these interacting factors (Segovia & Armesto, 2015).

Overall, our results are in accordance with our hypothesis that phylogenetic groups would most strongly align with temperature regime. Our hypothesis that precipitation regime would be of secondary importance, particularly in the tropics, received less evidence. While evergreen rain forests and semideciduous forests are more clearly segregated in subtropical areas, there is substantial mixing of rain forest and semideciduous forest within the tropical rain forest group (Table 2, Fig. 4). As pointed out by Oliveira-Filho & Fontes (2000) and also observed by Neves *et al.* (2017), the tree flora of tropical semideciduous forests is largely a subset of the tropical evergreen rain Atlantic forests. Therefore, though semideciduous forests have endemic lineages, most of its plant lineage diversity can also be found in rain forests. In our database, 92,8% of the genera that occur in the Tropical semideciduous forest also occur in the Tropical rainforest. Thus, the *a priori* division of these forests into two categories is based on physiognomic differences, especially leaf deciduousness, and may be driven by either facultative deciduousness or variation in the abundance of deciduous genera, which our presence/absence data cannot assess. Lastly, our hypothesis that edaphically-driven vegetation types would not form distinct phylogenetic groups received partial support. For example, coastal vegetation mosaics (a.k.a. *restinga*),

365 which are most environmentally distinct in terms of soils, did form a clear phylogenetic group (Appendix
366 S1). In contrast, forests associated with rock outcrops were combined with cloud forests in a single high
367 elevation group, despite having divergent edaphic environments (Appendix S1).

368 The geographical pattern of differentiation found between Tropical and Subtropical phylogenetic
369 groups can be further explained by the fact that the extratropical portion of South America went through
370 different historical biogeographical processes such as natural fragmentation and gradual extinction of
371 woody lineages, mainly due to the contraction of temperate forest, and the uplift of the Andes, which
372 drastically altered precipitation and temperature regimes (Rezende *et al.*, 2018; Hinojosa & Villagrán,
373 2005; Ortiz-Jaureguizar & Cladera, 2006). Relicts of these extratropical forests would have remained at
374 specific locations along the southern Pacific coast of South America (Hinojosa & Villagrán, 2005), on the
375 Brazilian plateau (Rezende *et al.*, 2015) and on the slopes of the tropical Andean Range (Villagran &
376 Hinojosa, 1997; Segovia & Armesto, 2015). These relicts of extratropical forest are consistent with our
377 phylogenetic analyses, where tropical areas at higher elevations (above 1300m) were found to be more
378 evolutionarily linked to subtropical forests than to tropical forests, even though they occur in a matrix of
379 tropical forest. Analyses using species composition have found finer-scale compositional distinctions
380 among high altitude vegetation types (Neves *et al.*, 2017), including splitting them into five different
381 groups (evergreen cloud dwarf-forest; evergreen cloud forest; rocky highland seasonal savanna; rocky
382 highland seasonal dwarf-forest and mixed Araucaria forest), but our analyses suggest that these vegetation
383 types are broadly occupied by the same phylogenetic lineages of angiosperms. These high altitude areas,
384 which are formally within the tropics ($< 23^{\circ}$ S latitude), offer climatic conditions similar to those found in
385 subtropical areas, favoring the occurrence of extratropical tree lineages at tropical latitudes. Altitudinal
386 migrations were also caused by glacial cycles through the spread, contraction and fragmentation of the
387 ranges of cool-and warm-adapted species (Collevatti *et al.*, 2012; Turchetto-Zolet *et al.*, 2013; Leopold *et*
388 *al.*, 2015). Some examples of these extratropical lineages are members of the Cunoniaceae and
389 Winteraceae (Hooghiemstra, 1984; Segovia & Armesto 2015), found here associated with subtropical and
390 highland forests.

391 The influence of phylogenetic conservatism for precipitation regime in shaping the evolutionary
392 structure of the Atlantic Forest was not as clear when examining how semideciduous and rain forest
393 assemblages fell into phylogenetic groups. This may reflect a complex interplay of deciduousness driven
394 by temperature and precipitation regimes. In contrast with the results found by Neves *et al.* (2017) with
395 taxonomic composition data, we found relatively high phylogenetic similarities between tropical
396 semideciduous forest and tropical and subtropical rain forests, with subtropical semideciduous forests
397 being phylogenetically diverged from those other three groups. The similarities between tropical
398 semideciduous and rain forests suggest that the divergent precipitation regime that semideciduous forests
399 experience, with mean annual precipitation below 1,600 mm and water stress in five to six months of each
400 year, is not causing a major phylogenetic turnover of tree assemblages, even if it is sufficient to cause
401 markedly divergent phenology. Meanwhile, in the subtropical portion of Atlantic Forest, rainfall is
402 relatively high and constant across the year, and temperature is reported to be a more important variable

in explaining phenology and species composition across forest types (Alvares *et al.*, 2013; Giehl & Jarenkov 2012, Neves *et al.*, 2017; Oliveira-Filho *et al.*, 2006; Oliveira -Filho *et al.*, 2015; Rezende *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the phylogenetic divergence between semideciduous and rain forests in the subtropical portion of the Atlantic Forest reinforces the predominance of temperature regime in shaping the distribution of phylogenetic groups of tree assemblages. In addition, we found that the semideciduous forest phylogenetic group was more restricted to inland areas than Neves *et al.* (2017), with tropical rain forest occupying a much larger area (not restricted to a narrow band along the coast). This can be especially important from a conservation perspective, since wet forests have twice as much protection as marginal habitats (Neves *et al.*, 2017), and according to our phylogenetic results many protected areas allocated to preserve the marginal habitats of Atlantic Forest can actually be protecting more wet forest.

The importance of climatic niche conservatism for shaping biogeography may be lower for some vegetation types, such as coastal vegetation (e.g. *restinga*; Hesp, 2008), in which temperatures are more constant throughout the year, even in subtropical areas. For this specific vegetation type, soil variables (e.g. salinity, texture and fertility) are suggested to be key in driving its floristic distinctness (Marques *et al.*, 2011; Silva & Souza, 2018; Canditio & Souza, 2019). When analyzing floristic composition data, Neves *et al.* (2017) found the *restinga* to be strikingly distinct from the other Atlantic vegetation types, both floristically and environmentally, and we found a similar pattern with our phylogenetic approach. As an example, the genus *Cedrela* (Meliaceae) has a wide distribution (from Mexico to Argentina) and occurs in different climatic regimes. However the genus does not develop properly in poorly drained or shallow soils (IPEF, 2005), which can justify the association of *Cedrela* with the third axis of our evolutionary ordination (in the opposite direction of the *restinga* sites).

The Atlantic tropical rain forest is thought to be an old climatically stable vegetation formation (Carnaval & Moritz 2008; Carnaval *et al.*, 2014, Costa *et al.*, 2018, Canditio & Souza 2019), which may explain why it has the highest number of indicator lineages among the seven phylogenetic groups. Overall, our lineage indicator results are consistent with the distributional occurrence of Atlantic Forest species according to Flora do Brasil (2020). As an example, *Kuhlmanni dendron* (Achariaceae) (indicator of tropical rain forest) is restricted to the Atlantic Rain Forests of Bahia and Espírito-Santo states (Flora do Brasil, 2020). Another endemic genus of Atlantic Forest is *Grazielodendron* (Fabaceae), that we found to be an indicator of tropical semideciduous forest. This genus is monotypic, with just one species (*Grazielodendron riocens*), which shows a restricted distribution in the states of Bahia, Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro, in southeastern Brazil (de Lima, 2012), and with a predominant occurrence in the seasonal lowland forests in the Região dos Lagos, Rio de Janeiro state (Ribeiro & Lima, 2009). For tropical and subtropical highland forest, we found two Ericaceae genera (*Agarista* and *Gaultheria*) to be indicators of this evolutionary group. In the Neotropical region, the Ericaceae family finds its center of diversity and endemism (Luteyn, 2002) at altitudes between 1000 and 3000 m, in cold, open and humid mountainous environments (Luteyn, 1989). We found *Drimys* (Winteraceae) and *Cinnamodendron* (Canellaceae) to be the most important genera for subtropical mixed forest. These lineages show a broad distribution throughout the Southern Hemisphere, and are often suggested to have a Gondwanan origin,

which reached higher elevation areas in southeast Brazil via a northward migration route (Segovia & Armesto, 2015).

Our study showed that genera and higher-level lineages of trees in the Atlantic Forest largely segregate into southern and highland tree assemblages versus those occurring under more tropical climates at lower elevations. In lowland areas, the highest phylogenetic turnover was found to occur at the Tropic of Capricorn line separating tropical from subtropical assemblages. Mixed forests (with angiosperms and gymnosperms), the phylogenetic assemblage group that is exposed to the highest amount of frost, were the most distinct phylogenetically from the other groups, notwithstanding that gymnosperms were not included in the analysis. This result is driven by the high number of Gondwanan lineages found in mixed forests, demonstrating that the different Atlantic Forest vegetation types are composed of lineages of diverse evolutionary origins. The high variability in tree phylogenetic composition among the phylogenetic groups found here reinforces the great floristic wealth of the Atlantic Forest, where many distinct phyloregions can be found. It is worth noting that the tropical rain forest vegetation type is often considered the main core of the Atlantic Forest, while other vegetation types are considered floristically poor marginal habitats. The phylogenetic turnover found here underpins the importance of improving conservation efforts for the entire domain, aiming to preserve the distinct lineages found in each vegetation type.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The NeoTropTree database are available at: <http://www.neotropree.info/>

BIOESKETCH

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:

Appendix S1. Soil and climatic characterization of the seven vegetation types found in the Atlantic Forest in terms of species composition, further information can be found in Neves *et al.* (2017).

Appendix S2. Results obtained by different methods used to determining the optimal number of clusters. The gap statistic method (compares the total within intra-cluster variation for different values of k with their expected values under null reference distribution of the data); The average silhouette method (computes the average silhouette of observations for different values of k) and the elbow method (define clusters such that the total intra-cluster variation [or total within-cluster sum of square (WSS)] is minimized).

Appendix S3. Maps showing the geographical distribution of the different phylogenetic groups of tree assemblages found in the Atlantic Forest. Each map represents the suggested groups for different values of k. A) k=1; B) k=2; C) k=3; D) k=4; E) k=5; F) k= 6; G) k=7; H) k=8; I) k=9; J) k=10.

Appendix S4. Adjusted r^2 values found between each axis of the evoPCA and environmental and soil variables. * represent significant values.

Appendix S5. Principal component analysis of a Hellinger transformed compositional matrix (EvoPCA) showing the phylogenetic nodes contribution.

Appendix S6 Indicator analysis for lineages of the seven phylogenetic groups found in Atlantic Forest. Genera names were extracted from each indicator node. Numbers indicates different subclades. Clade names and numbers as the same as the annotated phylogeny (Supplementary Material).

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