

1 **Apparent thermal acclimation of soil heterotrophic respiration**
2 **mainly mediated by substrate availability**

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19
20 **Running title:** Substrate availability mediates thermal acclimation of R_H

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28 **Abstract**

29 Multiple lines of existing evidence suggest that increasing CO₂ emission from soils in
30 response to rising temperature could accelerate global warming. However, in
31 experimental studies, the initial positive response of soil heterotrophic respiration
32 (R_H) to warming often weakens over time (referred to as apparent thermal acclimation).
33 If the decreased R_H is driven by thermal adaptation of soil microbial community, the
34 potential for soil carbon (C) losses would be reduced substantially. In the meanwhile,
35 the response could equally be caused by substrate depletion, and would then reflect
36 the gradual loss of soil C. To address uncertainties regarding the causes of apparent
37 thermal acclimation, we carried out sterilization and inoculation experiments using
38 the soil samples from an alpine meadow with 6-years of warming and nitrogen (N)
39 addition. We demonstrate that substrate depletion, rather than microbial adaptation,
40 determined the response of R_H to long-term warming. Furthermore, N addition
41 appeared to alleviate the apparent acclimation of R_H to warming. Our study provides
42 strong empirical support for substrate availability being the cause of the apparent
43 acclimation of soil microbial respiration to temperature. Thus, these mechanistic
44 insights could facilitate efforts of biogeochemical modelling to accurately project soil
45 C stocks in the future climate.

46

47 **Keywords:** heterotrophic respiration, warming, nitrogen addition, microbial
48 adaptation, substrate depletion

49 **Introduction**

50 Globally, soils up to two-meter depth store about 3 times as much carbon (C, 2200-
51 2500 Pg) as Earth's atmosphere (Scharlemann *et al.*, 2014; Jackson *et al.*, 2017). The
52 loss of soil organic carbon (SOC) via microbial decomposition, referred to as
53 heterotrophic respiration (R_H), has been increasing in response to climatic warming
54 (Crowther *et al.*, 2016; Bond-Lamberty *et al.*, 2018), representing positive feedback
55 that would further contribute to rising global surface temperatures. The positive
56 warming-C cycle feedback has been embedded in the Earth system models to predict
57 C stocks in terrestrial ecosystems (Cox *et al.*, 2000; Wieder *et al.*, 2015; IPCC, 2021).
58 However, a wealth of long-term field manipulative experiments showed that the initial
59 positive response of soil respiration to warming may decline over time (Luo *et al.*,
60 2001; Melillo *et al.*, 2002; Hartley *et al.*, 2008; Bradford, 2013; Walker *et al.*, 2018).
61 Thus, when measurements are made at a common temperature, R_H rates are lower in
62 previously warmed soils than in soils from control plots. This phenomenon is referred
63 to apparent thermal acclimation, indicating that soil C stocks may be less vulnerable
64 to climate change than currently feared. Therefore, a deeper understanding of soil
65 microbial decomposition in response to warming is imperative to improve the
66 accuracy and precision of model projections of terrestrial C-climate feedback in the
67 future (Luo, 2007; García-Palacios *et al.*, 2021).

68 Two main mechanistic explanations have been proposed to interpret the
69 decreased trend of soil microbial respiration over time (Fig. 1). Firstly, shifts in
70 microbial community composition, population dynamic, and physiological

71 acclimation following warming may attenuate SOC decomposition (Zhang *et al.*,
72 2005; Allison *et al.*, 2010; Bradford *et al.*, 2019). For example, a decade of soil
73 warming induced a shift of microbial community towards Gram-positive bacteria and
74 decreased the relative abundance of fungi (Frey *et al.*, 2008; Melillo *et al.*, 2017).
75 Meanwhile, the reduction of microbial growth efficiencies and carbon-use efficiency
76 at warmer temperatures could decrease microbial respiration (Crowther & Bradford,
77 2013; Li *et al.*, 2019). Alternatively, substrate (especially the labile soil C pool
78 representing readily bioavailable C components to microbes) depletion caused by
79 enhanced microbial activity may weaken the positive effect of warming on microbial
80 respiration over time (Knorr *et al.*, 2005; Tucker *et al.*, 2013; Pold *et al.*, 2017). While
81 substrate depletion reflects the gradual loss of soil C, and rates of C release would be
82 dependent on the availability of SOM to decomposers, thermal adaptation would
83 imply a reduction in microbial activity prior to C being released. Thus, these two
84 hypotheses have very different implications for feedbacks of C cycle to climate
85 change. For this reason, uncertainties related to the importance of microbial
86 adaptation vs. substrate depletion in regulating the feedbacks of R_H to warming limit
87 our confidence in projecting long-term soil C dynamics in response to climate change
88 (Bradford *et al.*, 2016; Ye *et al.*, 2019).

89 Several attempts had been made to clarify the role of microbial adaptation and
90 substrate depletion on R_H to climate warming. Laboratory incubation studies with
91 long-term warmed soils, which measured mass-specific respiration rate under
92 saturated substrate condition with sucrose amendment, showed that shifts in microbial

93 physiology and community mediated the response of R_H to warming (Bradford *et al.*,
94 2008). However, in a 3-year grassland experiment with soil warming and shading
95 treatments, Hartley *et al.* (2007) found that substrate availability was the key driver
96 involved in apparent thermal acclimation of R_H ; by reducing differences in substrate
97 availability between previously warmed and control soils, the legacy effects were lost.
98 In addition, the result of a 26-year soil warming experiment, conducted in a mid-
99 latitude hardwood forest, suggested that the rate of soil C loss was modulated by
100 diverse factors at different warming phases, including depletion of microbial
101 accessible C pools at the early phase, reductions in microbial biomass and shifts in
102 microbial community composition and C use efficiency at the middle phase, and a
103 decrease in the relative abundance of recalcitrant C pool, representing that soil
104 organic matter is not readily available to microbes either because of its intrinsic
105 chemical stability or protected in the soil matrix physically (Dungait *et al.*, 2012), at
106 the late phase (Melillo *et al.*, 2017). However, it is still uncertain whether and how
107 substrate availability and microbial community influence the response of R_H to
108 warming.

109 To reduce the uncertainties, we evaluate the roles of microbial community and
110 substrate depletion in causing apparent thermal acclimation of R_H by using a
111 sterilizing-inoculating method in alpine meadow soils of the northeastern Qinghai-
112 Tibetan Plateau. Soils in this region have high SOC density but are among the most
113 vulnerable regions to global warming (Ding *et al.*, 2016; Crowther *et al.*, 2016). Soil
114 samples were taken from a 6-year experiment with warming and nitrogen (N)

115 addition. N addition can alter plant growth rates, the C:N ratio, and then the amount of
116 new C entering the soils (Vitousek *et al.*, 1997; Xia & Wan, 2008). Therefore, it
117 provided further opportunity to investigate the importance of substrate availability in
118 determining the respiration rates. We tested the following two main hypotheses: (1)
119 previous experience of 6-years of warming would cause apparent thermal acclimation
120 by reducing R_H in warmed soils compared with controls when both incubated at a
121 common temperature, and (2) the apparent thermal acclimation was mediated by
122 microbial adaptation and substrate depletion jointly.

123

124 **Materials and Methods**

125 *Site description and sample collection*

126 The soil warming and N addition experiment was established in a typical alpine
127 meadow ecosystem (36°42' N, 100°47' E) in the Qinghai Lake basin, northeastern
128 Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau in 2011. The elevation of this experimental site is about 3200
129 m. Mean annual temperature (MAT) and precipitation (MAP) range from -4.6 to 1 °C
130 and 291 to 575 mm, respectively. Soil temperature ranges from 6.3 to 20.5 °C across
131 the growing season. Mean annual evaporation is about 800 to 2000 mm in 2011-2017.
132 Both maximum temperature and precipitation were found in July. The dominated
133 vegetation includes *Kobresia tibetica*, *Triglochin maritimum*, *Blysmus*
134 *sinocompressus*, and *Carex heterostachya*.

135 The field experiment included 12 plots, each 4 m × 4 m, that were grouped into 3
136 blocks. The four plots within each block were randomly assigned to one of four

137 treatments: (i) control (CK) – no warming and no N addition; (ii) warming (W) –
138 increasing soil temperature by about 1.4 °C using open-top chamber (OTC, 60°
139 inclination of the panels, 0.5-m tall, and 2.08-m basal diameter); (iii) N addition (N) –
140 adding NH₄NO₃ at a rate of 1 g m⁻² a⁻¹ twice a year based on the reported atmospheric
141 N deposition rate in the study area (Lü & Tian, 2007); and (iv) the combination of
142 warming and N addition (WN).

143 Soils were sampled in July 2017 and three soil cores (3 cm in diameter and 15
144 cm in depth) were taken from each plot. The surface soils were used since microbial
145 activity and then heterotrophic respiration rate are greatest in this layer (Bradford *et*
146 *al.*, 2008). All soil samples were transported with dry ice to the laboratory in East
147 China Normal University for analysis. Soil samples were sieved through 2-mm
148 screen, and roots, large litter fragments and stones were removed. For each plot, the
149 homogenized soils were divided into three subsamples: (1) one was stored at 4 °C for
150 incubation experiments; (2) another was air-dried to measure soil physical and
151 chemical properties; and (3) the last one was frozen at -20 °C to measure soil
152 microbial properties.

153 *Soil and microbial analyses*

154 Soil water holding capacity (WHC) was determined by wetting a subsample for
155 12 h, and then draining it through filter paper for 12 h. The saturated gravimetric
156 water content (100% WHC) was calculated by drying the subsample at 105 °C for 24
157 h. The soil total C and N contents were measured using an elemental analyzer
158 (Elementar, Vario Max, Germany).

159 Soil microbial community composition was determined by phospholipid fatty
160 acid (PLFA) analysis. Briefly, the PLFAs were extracted from a subsample of 8 g
161 freeze-drying soils following the mild alkaline methyl esterification method (Bossio
162 & Scow, 1998), and identified by gas chromatography and mass spectrometry
163 (Thermo ISQ TRACE GC system Ultra ISQ, Germany). The fatty acids were
164 quantified by the standard of FAME 19:0. Soil bacteria (i15:0, a15:0, i16:0, i17:0,
165 a17:0 16:1 ω 7c, cy17:0, 18:1 ω 7c, cy19:0) and fungi (18:1 ω 9 and 18:2 ω 6,9) were
166 classified as different microbial communities based on the results of the PLFA
167 analysis (Frostegård & Bååth, 1996; Liu *et al.*, 2021).

168 *Experimental incubations*

169 To investigate variation in soil heterotrophic respiration (R_H) and its temperature
170 sensitivity (Q_{10}) affected by warming and N addition, 12 wet soil samples (4
171 treatments \times 3 replicates) were set up to measure the R_H for 10-day incubation.
172 Specifically, 30 g (dry weight equivalent) of each homogenized subsample were
173 placed in 150 mL polyethylene plastic bottles. All soil samples were adjusted to 60%
174 water-holding capacity (WHC) through adding deionized water, since 50-70% WHC
175 was treated as optimum range for soil incubation (Paul *et al.*, 2001). Soil water
176 content in each bottle was measured and adjusted based on weight at intervals of 2-3
177 days. Before starting the incubations, soils were pre-incubated at 20 °C for 24 hours
178 to activate the microbes and minimize disturbance of microbial activities (Hamdi *et*
179 *al.*, 2011). After pre-incubations, all soil samples were placed in a varying
180 temperature incubator that automatically regulated temperature to increase from 5 to

181 25 °C and then decrease from 25 to 5 °C in 24 h. The incubation temperature spanned
182 the full temperature range (6.3 to 20.5 °C) experienced by soils across the growing
183 season at our study site. The CO₂ emission rate from soil was measured ranging from
184 5 to 25 °C using an automatic temperature to control soil flux system (PRI-8800; Pre-
185 Eco, Beijing, China). Each soil sample was measured every hour over the measuring
186 period, with a total of about 120 measurements for each treatment. Briefly, sample
187 bottles were placed in a 16-hole water bath and the temperature was controlled
188 automatically. The CO₂ concentration of each bottle was measured by a CO₂ analyzer
189 (Li-7000, LI-COR, Lincoln, NE, USA) every second, and the total measuring time for
190 each sample was 180 seconds. The R_H was calculated by the following equation (Liu
191 *et al.*, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2018):

$$R_H = \frac{C \times V \times \alpha \times \beta}{22.4 \times m} \quad (1)$$

193 where R_H is the rate of soil heterotrophic respiration ($\mu\text{g C-CO}_2 \text{ g}^{-1} \text{ d}^{-1}$); C is the slope
194 of CO₂ concentration; V is the volume of the gas tube and bottle (mL); m is the soil
195 weight (g); α is the conversion coefficient for CO₂ mass (from CO₂ to C); and β is the
196 conversion coefficient for time (from seconds to days).

197 Q_{10} values were calculated using the following exponential equations (Lloyd &
198 Taylor, 1994; Luo & Zhou, 2006):

$$R_H = A \times e^{bT} \quad (2)$$

$$Q_{10} = e^{10b} \quad (3)$$

201 where T is the incubation temperature (°C), and A and b are the exponential
202 parameters that represent the intercept and slope of the line, respectively.

203 To distinguish the effects of soil substrate and microbial community on R_H
204 variation, soil sterilization and inoculation experiments were used in the further
205 incubations (Fig. S1). A subset of soil samples from three treatments (CK, W, and
206 WN) were sterilized by γ -irradiation of 25 kGy for about 24 h (Marschner & Bredow,
207 2002; McNamara *et al.*, 2003). To investigate the effects of soil substrate on R_H
208 variation, sterilized soils from different treatments were inoculated with the same
209 microbes (Table S1). Specifically, the irradiated soil samples of CK and W were
210 inoculated by replacing 5% of the sterilized soil with non-sterile soil of CK, with
211 these treatments abbreviated to CK-CK(S) and CK-W(S), respectively. Then these
212 soil samples were filled back into bottles after homogenization. Meanwhile, the
213 irradiated soil samples of W and WN treatments were inoculated with non-sterile soil
214 of W, which were termed as W-W(S) and W-WN(S). By contrast, in the experiment
215 investigating the effects of soil microbial community on R_H variation, sterilized soils
216 of CK were inoculated with non-sterile soils from CK and W, with these treatments
217 abbreviated to CK(M)-CK and W(M)-CK. The other two treatments: W(M)-W and
218 WN(M)-W were produced by using the similar configuration steps (Table S1). All
219 these samples were adjusted to soil moisture of 60% WHC using sterile deionized
220 water before incubation. We measured the R_H using the PRI-8800 system, and
221 calculated the Q_{10} values using equations 1-3. The soil heterotrophic respiration rate
222 at 20 °C (R_{20}) was used as an index of substrate lability (Craine *et al.*, 2010).

223 *Statistical analysis*

224 Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test for significant

225 differences in all measured data among different treatments. Differences were
226 assessed by post-hoc tests using Fisher's protected least significant difference (LSD),
227 and the significance level was set at 0.05. Exponential regressions were used to
228 investigate the relationship between R_H and incubated temperature for each treatment
229 (SigmaPlot, version 12.5, SysStat Software, Inc.). Using linear regression, we
230 evaluated whether other soil and microbial variables, such as soil C/N ratio and fungi
231 biomass, explained significant variation in R_{20} and Q_{10} . All these statistical analyses
232 were conducted by IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA).

233

234 **Results**

235 *Effects of warming and N addition on R_H*

236 Soil heterotrophic respiration (R_H) increased exponentially with the incubation
237 temperature in all treatments (Fig. 2). The R_H in warming (W), N addition (N) and
238 their combination (WN) was significantly lower than that in the control (CK).

239 Warming decreased the R_H in those plots without N addition, but increased it in N
240 addition plots, showing an interaction between warming and N addition ($P < 0.01$,
241 Figs. 2a and b, Table S2). On average, the respiration rates at 20 °C (R_{20}) were 20.2,
242 19.4, and 25.3 $\mu\text{g C-CO}_2 \text{ g}^{-1} \text{ d}^{-1}$ under W, N, and WN treatments, respectively,
243 representing decreases of 24.3%, 27.3%, and 5.2% compared with the control.

244 However, the temperature sensitivity (Q_{10}) of R_H showed no significant changes
245 among different treatments (Figs. 2c and d).

246 We regressed R_{20} against soil substrates and microbial properties among

247 treatments, observing a positive relationship between R_{20} and soil C:N ratio ($r^2 = 0.35$,
248 $P < 0.05$, Fig. 3a) and a negative relationship between R_{20} and fungi biomass ($r^2 =$
249 0.33 , $P < 0.05$, Fig. 3b).

250 *Soil substrate and microbial community regulating the R_H*

251 To quantify the role of substrate availability on the variation of R_H , the sterilized
252 soils from CK and W treatments were inoculated with microbes of CK, having two
253 treatments: CK-CK(S) and CK-W(S). The R_H and R_{20} of CK-CK(S) were significantly
254 higher than those in the CK-W(S) ($P < 0.05$), but Q_{10} showed no significant
255 differences ($P > 0.05$, Fig. 4c). When the sterilized soils from W and WN treatments
256 were inoculated with microbes of W treatment (W-W(S), W-WN(S)), the R_H and R_{20}
257 of W-W(S) was significantly lower than those in the W-WN(S) with no significant
258 difference in Q_{10} (Fig. 4d). The retention of differences between different *in situ*
259 treatments following sterilization and inoculation showed that soil substrates largely
260 regulated the variation of R_H .

261 To identify the influence of soil microbial community on the response of R_H to
262 warming, we inoculated microbes of CK and W treatments to the sterilized soils of the
263 control, which were named as CK(M)-CK and W(M)-CK, respectively. The R_{20} and
264 Q_{10} showed no significant difference between CK(M)-CK and W(M)-CK (Fig. 5c).
265 When microbes of W and WN treatments were inoculated to the sterilized soils of W
266 treatment (abbreviated as W(M)-W and WN(M)-W, respectively), the R_{20} in WN(M)-
267 W was slightly higher than that in the W(M)-W with no significant difference in the
268 Q_{10} (Fig. 5d). Again, these results showed that microbial community had little

269 influence on the response of R_H to warming.

270

271 **Discussion**

272 In this study, our results demonstrate that the reduction in soil R_H caused by
273 experimental warming in an alpine meadow was largely caused by substrate
274 depletion, rather than microbial thermal adaptation. On average, when measured at a
275 common temperature, the reduction in the R_H in the warmed treatments was about
276 32% compared to the control (Fig. 2). This is in broad agreement with previous
277 findings on apparent thermal acclimation (Eliasson *et al.*, 2005; Carey *et al.*, 2016;
278 Chen *et al.*, 2016a). The respiration rate at a common assay temperature (i.e., 20 °C in
279 this study) was significantly correlated with soil C/N ratio and fungi biomass (Fig. 3),
280 suggesting that the warming-induced reduction in R_H may be dictated to changes in
281 soil substrate and/or microbial communities (i.e., substrate limitation and microbial
282 adaptation, Hartley *et al.*, 2007; Bradford *et al.*, 2008; Melillo *et al.*, 2017).

283 Taking advantage of the sterilizing-inoculating experiments, we further clarified
284 the effects of microbial community and substrate limitation in determining the
285 apparent thermal acclimation of R_H . If the adaptation of the microbial community
286 explained the differences in respiration rates across the treatments, inoculation of the
287 sterilized control soil with the warmed community should have reduced respiration
288 rates. However, a non-significant increase in respiration was observed for the
289 sterilized control soils inoculated with warmed microbes. Similarly, inoculation of the
290 warmed soils with microbes from the warmed and N addition treatment should have

291 increased respiration, but a small statistically significant decrease in respiration was
292 observed (Figs. 4 and 5). Therefore, it does not appear that the adaptation of the
293 microbial community controls respiration rates. This empirical investigation suggests
294 that the lower R_H from the warmed soils is regulated by substrate depletion, rather
295 than the microbial adaptation.

296 N addition also reduced heterotrophic respiration (Fig. 2), likely resulting from
297 the decrease in soil pH, microbial biomass, and extracellular enzyme activity (Zhou *et al.*
298 *et al.*, 2014; Chen *et al.*, 2018; Xing *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, our sterilization-
299 reinoculation experiments suggest that this negative effect was driven by a substrate
300 availability. This could be related to reductions in decomposition rates of more
301 recalcitrant organic matter, which also decreased the availability of labile C (Janssens
302 *et al.*, 2010; Tian *et al.*, 2019; Widdig *et al.*, 2020). However, the data also suggest
303 that N addition appeared to alleviate the apparent acclimation of R_H to warming. The
304 R_H in the warming combined with N addition treatment was higher than that in each
305 single factor (Fig. 2), suggesting that there existed significant interaction between
306 warming and N addition that reduced the effects of warming on substrate availability
307 (Zhou *et al.*, 2016; Yue *et al.*, 2017). A field manipulative experiment conducted in
308 Tibetan alpine meadow demonstrated that warming significantly increased N losses
309 via enhanced NO_3^- leaching and N_2O emissions (Zhang *et al.*, 2020), alleviating the
310 limiting effect of N addition on microbial activity. Since alpine ecosystems are
311 characterized by limited soil mineral N (Chen *et al.*, 2016b), N addition likely also
312 stimulates plant productivity and C inputs to soil, and then moderates the substrate

313 depletion induced by warming. Therefore, the interactive effects of multiple global
314 change factors on soil microbial respiration should include a more detailed
315 understanding of the mechanisms underlying variation in substrates (Zhou *et al.*,
316 2016; Song *et al.*, 2019), and deserves the further study.

317 Experimentally determining the relative importance of microbial community and
318 substrate depletion in regulating apparent thermal acclimation of R_H is extremely
319 difficult due to their tight coupling (Walker *et al.*, 2018). Since our sterilization and
320 inoculation experiments were designed to differentiate the effects of microbial
321 community and substrate limitation, it should be noted that sterilization and
322 inoculation might alter soil C substrate to some degree (Figs. 2, 4 and 5). However,
323 sterilization and inoculation did not eliminate the impacts of low substrate availability
324 induced by 6-year warming, as evidenced by a lower R_H in the sterilized soils from
325 warmed treatments inoculated with the control microbes than that in sterilized soils
326 from the control inoculated with the same microbial community (Figs. 4 and 5). Our
327 results therefore demonstrate that substrate depletion can explain the reduction in
328 respiration rates. Despite this, no effect was observed on soil C content and
329 components (e.g., labile and recalcitrant C pools). This finding is actually consistent
330 with the results from warming experiments (Lu *et al.*, 2013; Guan *et al.*, 2018; Li *et*
331 *al.*, 2020) and demonstrates that it is remarkably difficult to measure a “small change
332 in a big number” such as a warming effect on the amount of C stored in soils, likely
333 due to these changes being less than the measurement errors (Smith, 2004; Hartley *et*
334 *al.*, 2007). Currently, there is large uncertainty in the projected soil C changes under

335 warming, and future research is needed to probe how climate change affects the
336 measurable and biophysically defined sub-SOM pools using isotopic, biomarker, and
337 fractionation approaches (Hartley *et al.*, 2021; Lugato *et al.*, 2021; Georgiou *et al.*,
338 2022).

339 Having eliminated microbial community composition as a key determinant of
340 differences in rates of heterotrophic respiration in these soils, again it indicates that
341 the differences in the R_{20} were caused by the depletion of labile SOC pools in
342 response to sustained warming (Knorr *et al.*, 2005; Hartley *et al.*, 2007). Therefore,
343 our data suggest that there remains the potential for C loss in response to warming,
344 and it thus becomes critical to understand the soil properties that regulate how much
345 soil C stocks are vulnerable to being released in the long-term (Crowther *et al.*, 2016;
346 Hartley *et al.*, 2021). Most Earth system models (ESMs) are heavily dependent on the
347 short-term temperature responses of soil respiration (Q_{10}) to infer long-term changes
348 in global C stocks (Davidson *et al.*, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2020). Our
349 evidence that microbial adaptation does not cause the apparent thermal acclimation of
350 heterotrophic respiration in soil warming experiments suggests that C stocks will be
351 lost as the world warms, and it is critical that soil C vulnerability is reflected in the
352 process-based models that are used in future climate change projections.

353

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563 **Figure legends**

564 **Figure 1** Proposed mechanisms to interpret the thermal acclimation of soil

565 heterotrophic respiration (R_H). Microbial adaptation (a) results from a shift in soil
566 microbial population, community composition, and physiological activities in
567 response to soil warming, and then attenuates the SOC decomposition rate.

568 Substrate depletion (b) involves a decrease in the soil labile C pool in response to
569 sustained warming, leading to a subsequent reduction in the rate of R_H .

570 **Figure 2** The response of heterotrophic respiration rates (R_H) to incubated

571 temperature in different treatments (a and b), including control (C), warming (W),

572 N addition (N), and the combination of warming and N addition (WN). This

573 relationship was modeled as an exponential function of soil temperature: $R_H = \alpha$

574 [$\exp(\beta \times \text{temperature})$], where α is respiration rate at 0 °C and β is temperature

575 sensitivity of respiration (Q_{10}). Effects of warming, nitrogen addition, and their

576 combination on the respiration rate at 20 °C (R_{20} , c) and temperature sensitivities

577 (Q_{10} , d). Different letters over the bars indicate significant differences among

578 different treatments at $P = 0.05$ level.

579 **Figure 3** Relationships between soil heterotrophic respiration rate at 20 °C (R_{20}) and

580 soil C:N ratio (a) and fungi biomass (b).

581 **Figure 4** The heterotrophic respiration rates (R_H , a and b), respiration rate at 20 °C

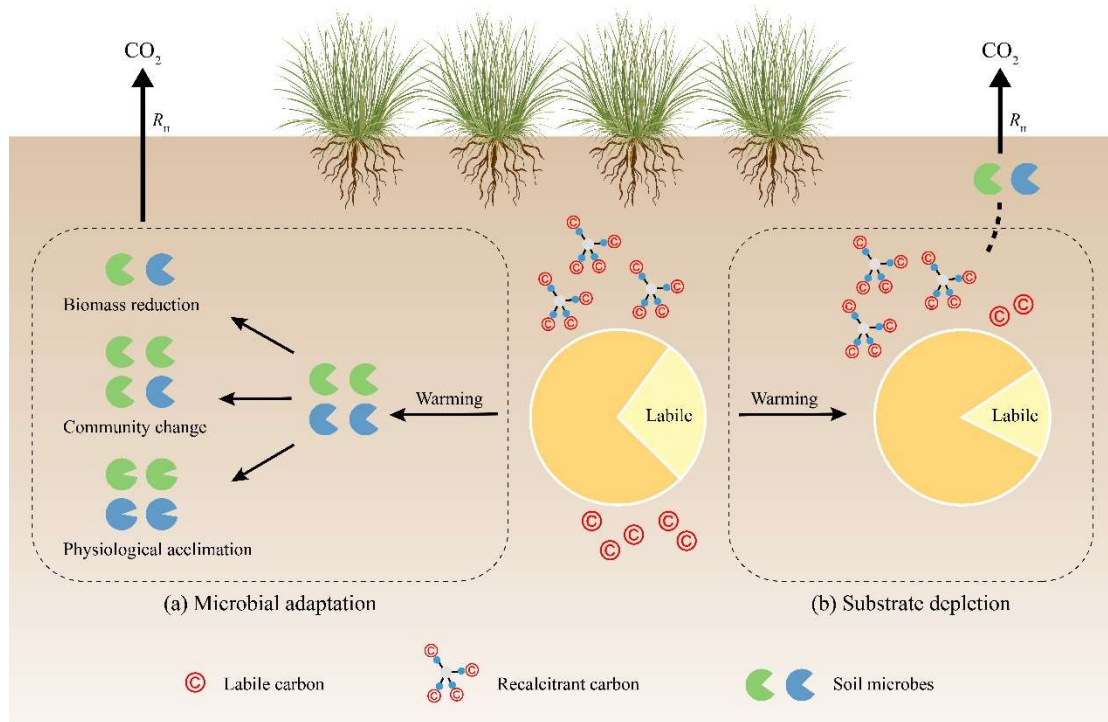
582 (R_{20} , c) and temperature sensitivities (Q_{10} , d) in different sterilized samples

583 inoculated with the same microbial community. CK-CK(S) and CK-W(S)

584 represents soil microbial community of CK were inoculated to the sterilized soil

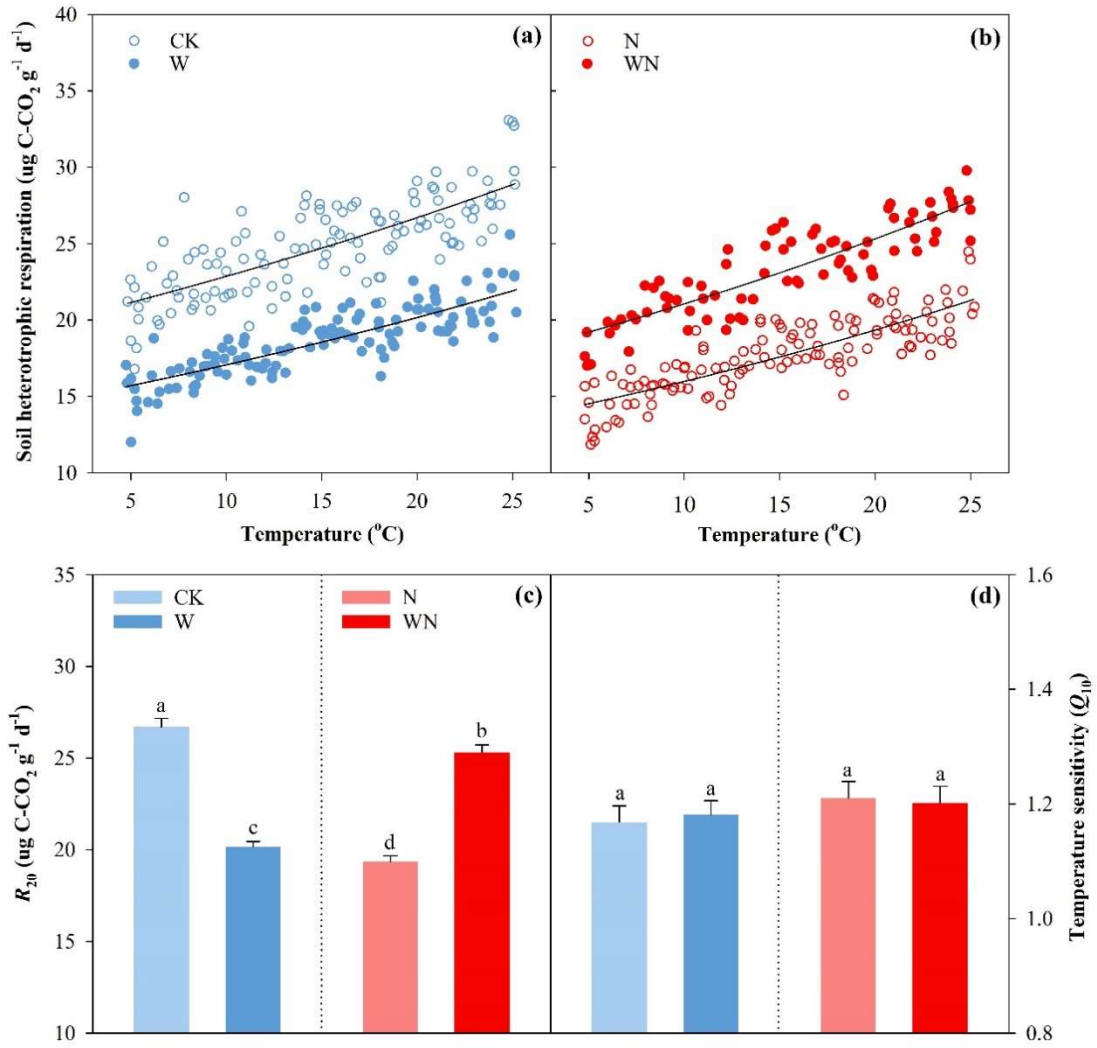
585 samples of CK and W, respectively (a). W-W(S) and W-WN(S) represents soil
586 microbial community of W were inoculated to the sterilized soil samples of W
587 and WN, respectively (b).

588 **Figure 5** The heterotrophic respiration rates (R_H , a and b), respiration rate at 20 °C
589 (R_{20} , c) and temperature sensitivities (Q_{10} , d) in the same sterilized soil samples
590 inoculated with different soil microbial communities. CK(M)-CK and W(M)-CK
591 represents the sterilized soil samples of CK inoculated with microbial community
592 of CK and W, respectively. W(M)-W and WN(M)-W represents the sterilized soil
593 samples of W inoculated with microbial community of W and WN respectively.
594



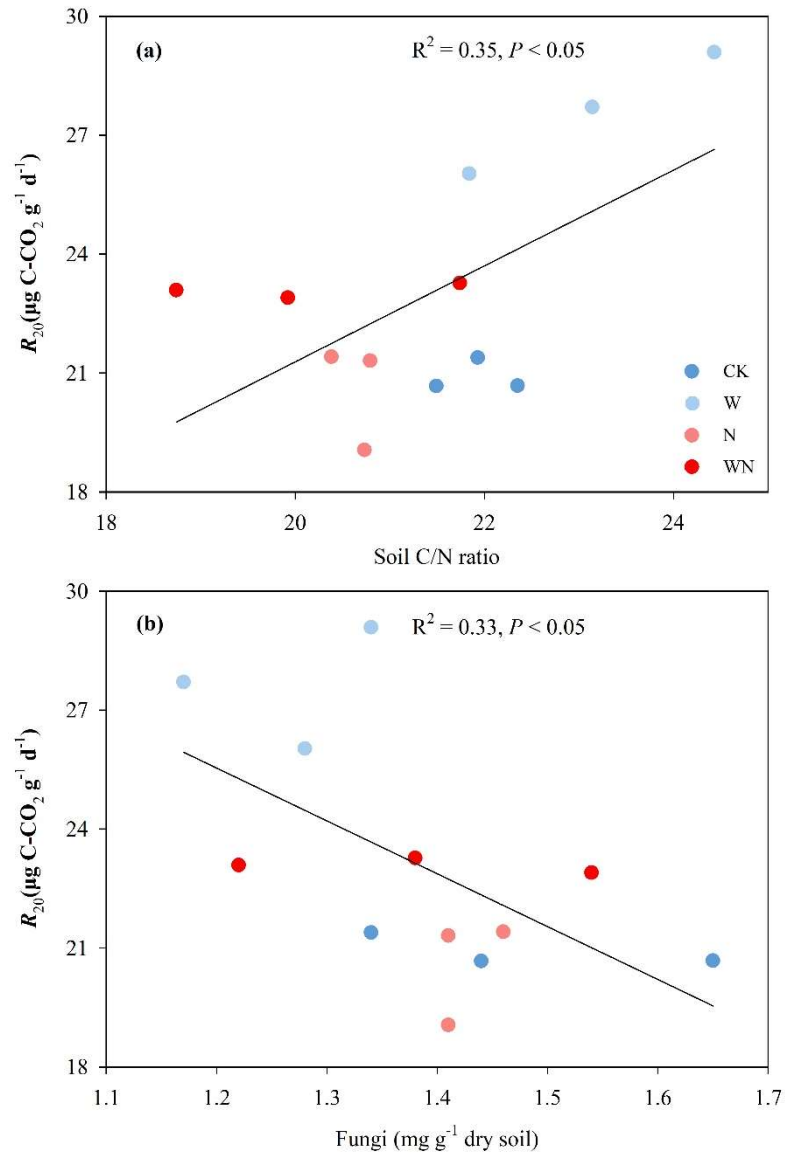
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596 Figure 1



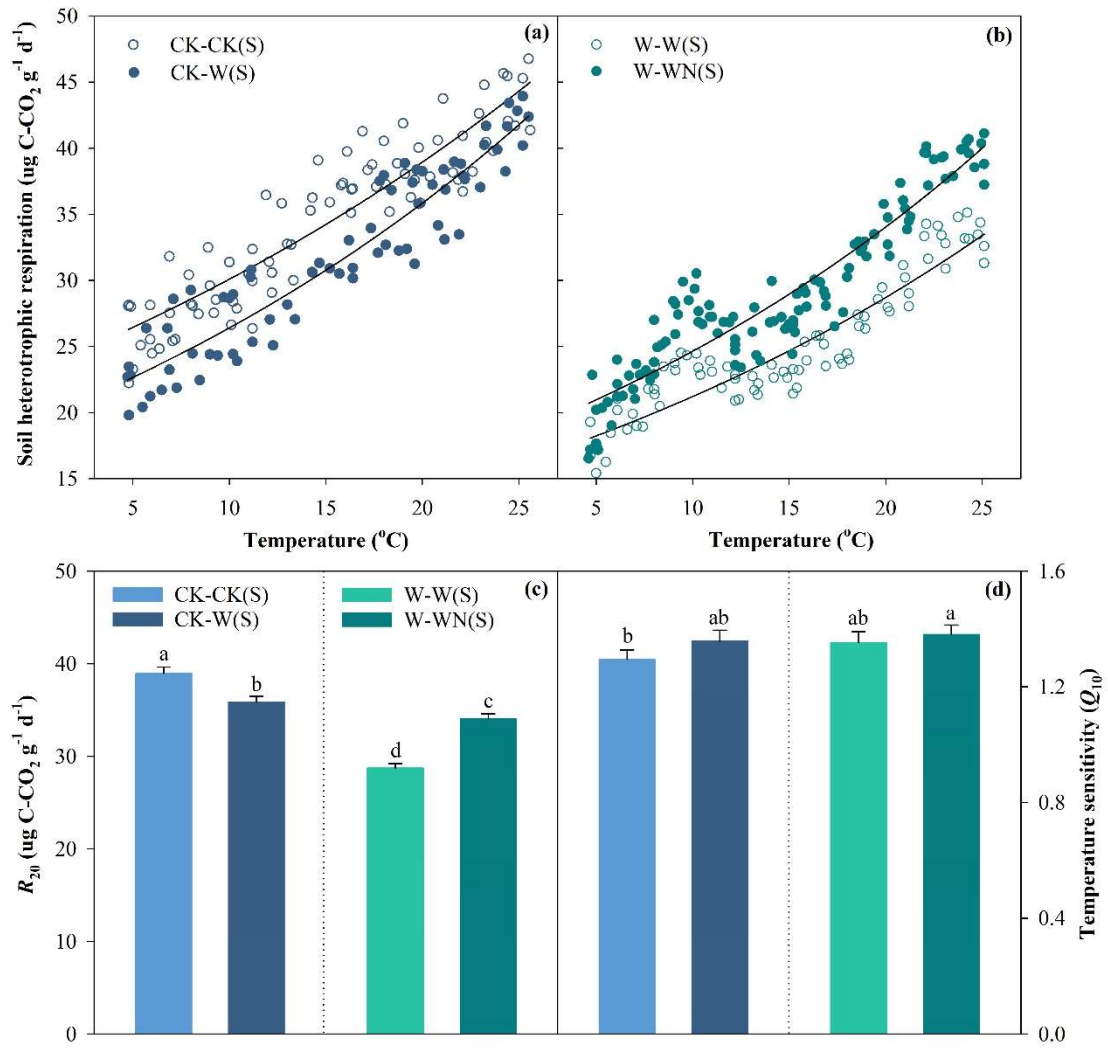
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598 Figure 2



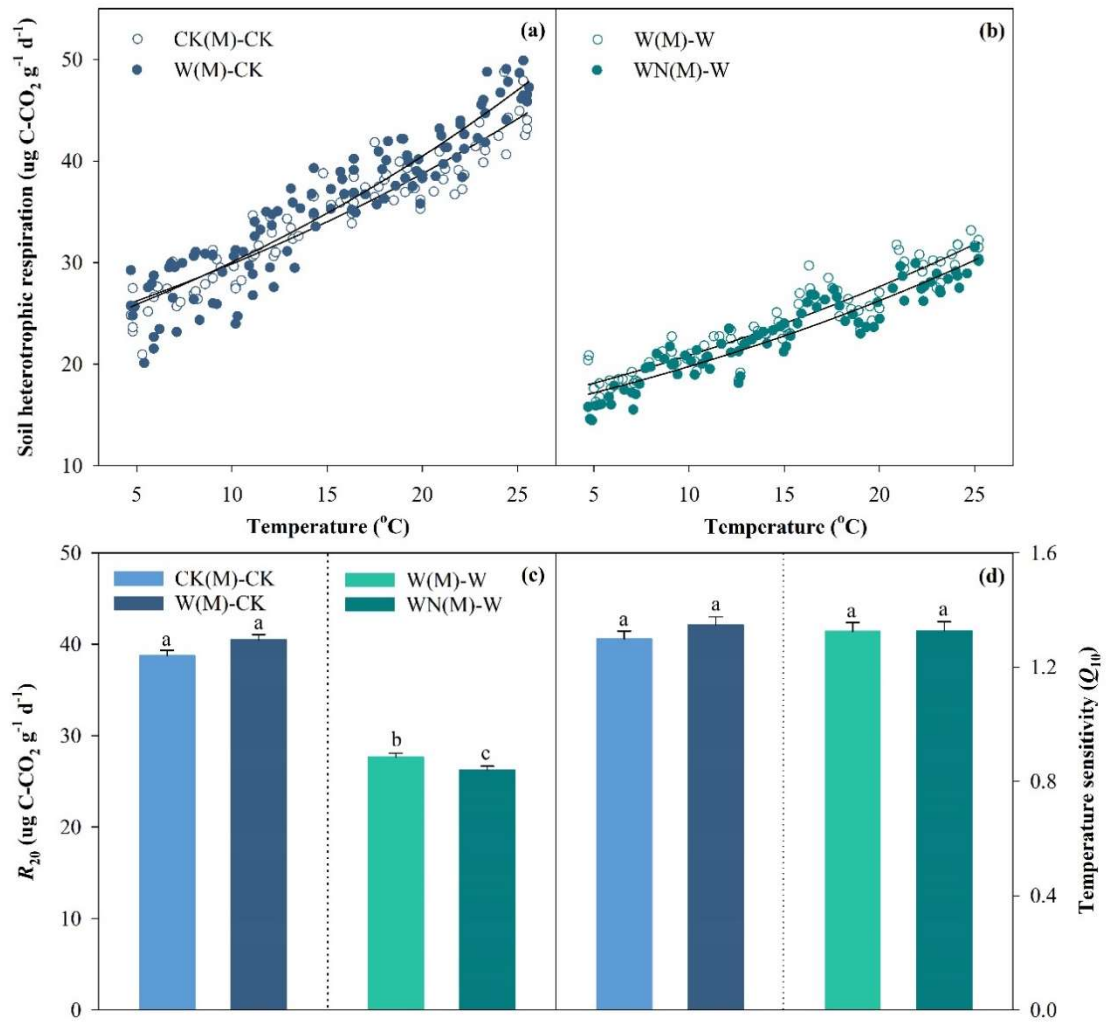
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600 Figure 3



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602 Figure 4



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604 Figure 5