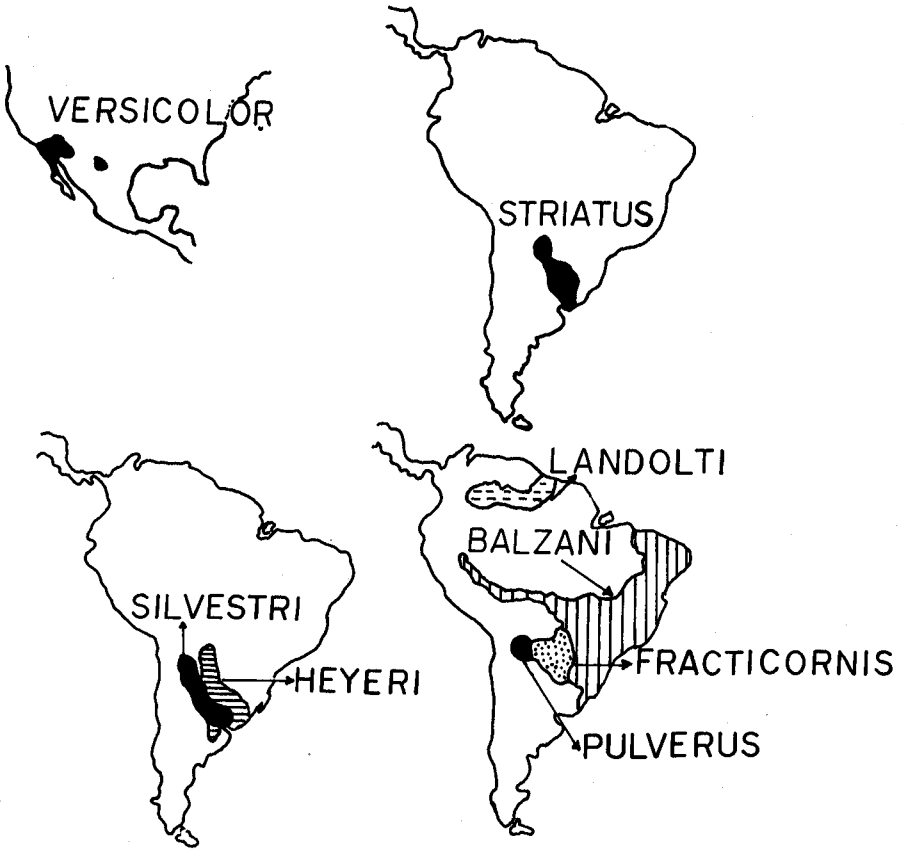

FIG. 6. The geographic distribution of taxa of *Acromyrmex (Moellerius)*.

Examining the contemporary distribution of the taxa of *Acormyrmex (Moellerius)* (Fig. 6), the Pleistocene caatinga refuge model is strongly supported, as all existant taxa are found in areas that were within the natural domains of the caatinga 13,000 to 18,000 B.P.[3]. As these expansive enclaves of caatinga shrunk, the stage was then set for classical allopatric speciation. The marked congruence of the Neotropical taxa with Pleistocene caatinga suggest the pattern, and additional collections from northeastern Argentina, eastern Paraguay, southeastern Bolivia, and the states of Mato Grosso, Pará, and other savanna areas from the Amazon could provide definitive proof of the refuge model, or suggest alternative explanations. By considering the potential geographic barriers, notably the Andes and the Amazon rain forest, it seems highly unlikely that populations freely interbreed, and that the taxa recognized here are valid.