LOT Summerschool 2003 Tilburg
Typology: interpreting world-wide patterns of variation
Michael Cysouw
cysouw@zas.gwz-berlin.de

Monday: On establishing a typology
Tuesday: What it means to be rare
Wednesday:What can typology tell us about possible languages?
Thursday: What do numbers mean?
Friday: Towards a (dia)chronic typology

1   What does a typology describe?

What does genetic independence mean?
What is the relation between the actual variation and the possible variation?
Is there large-areal consistency, and what does it imply?

2   Why sample by genetic relationship?

– Genetic families are always a scientifically debated subject: there are large differences in sampling depending on who you believe (cf. Rijkhoff *et al.* 1993)
– Genetic families are defined by particular criteria (sound change, non-borrowed lexemes/constructions, etc.). The feature of the typological investigation does not have to be distributed accordingly
– E.g. Haspelmath (1997) finds a large variation in indefinites in Europe alone.
– Using genetic diversity is only a bottom-line criterium for succes of a typology.

# 3   What is the relation between the actual and the possible variation?

– The world's languages might not represent all possible types.
– If true, than a sample would only represent the actual languages, not the possible ones.
– E.g. Nichols (1992) assumes this.
– Maslova (2000) can be read as giving some theoretical backing to this idea.

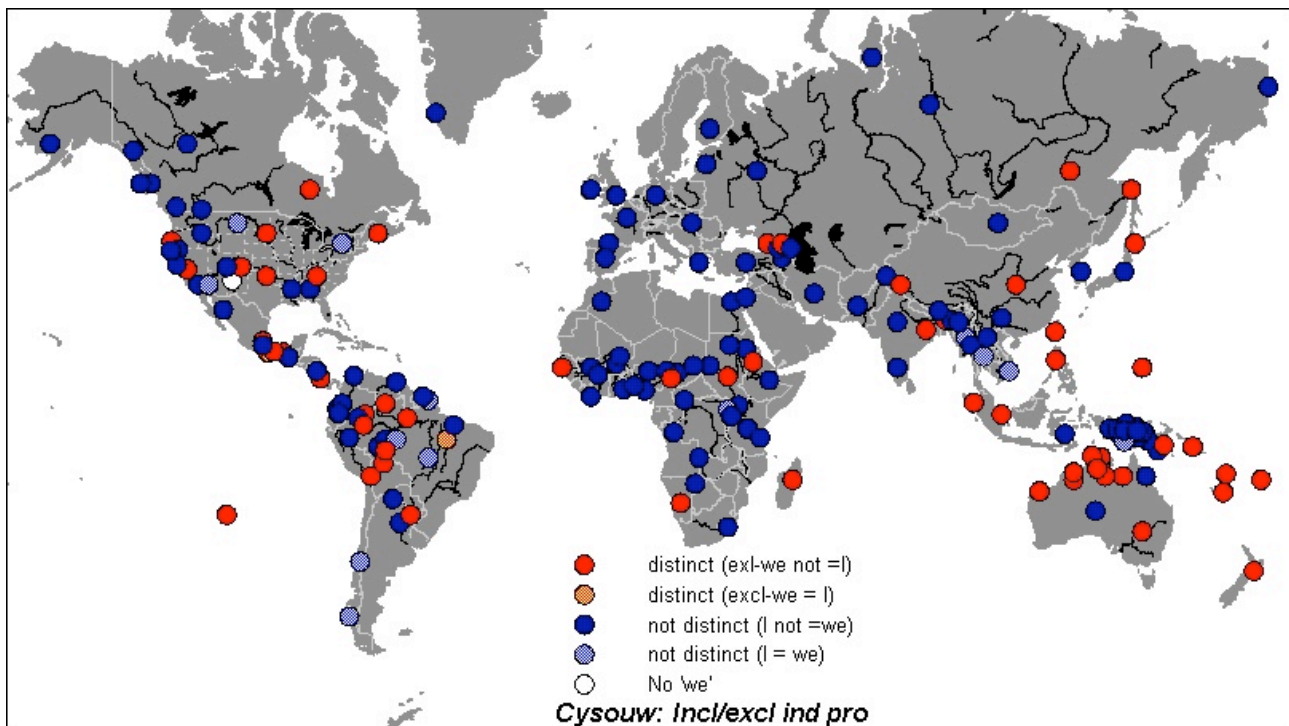# 4 Is there large-areal consistency, and what does it imply?

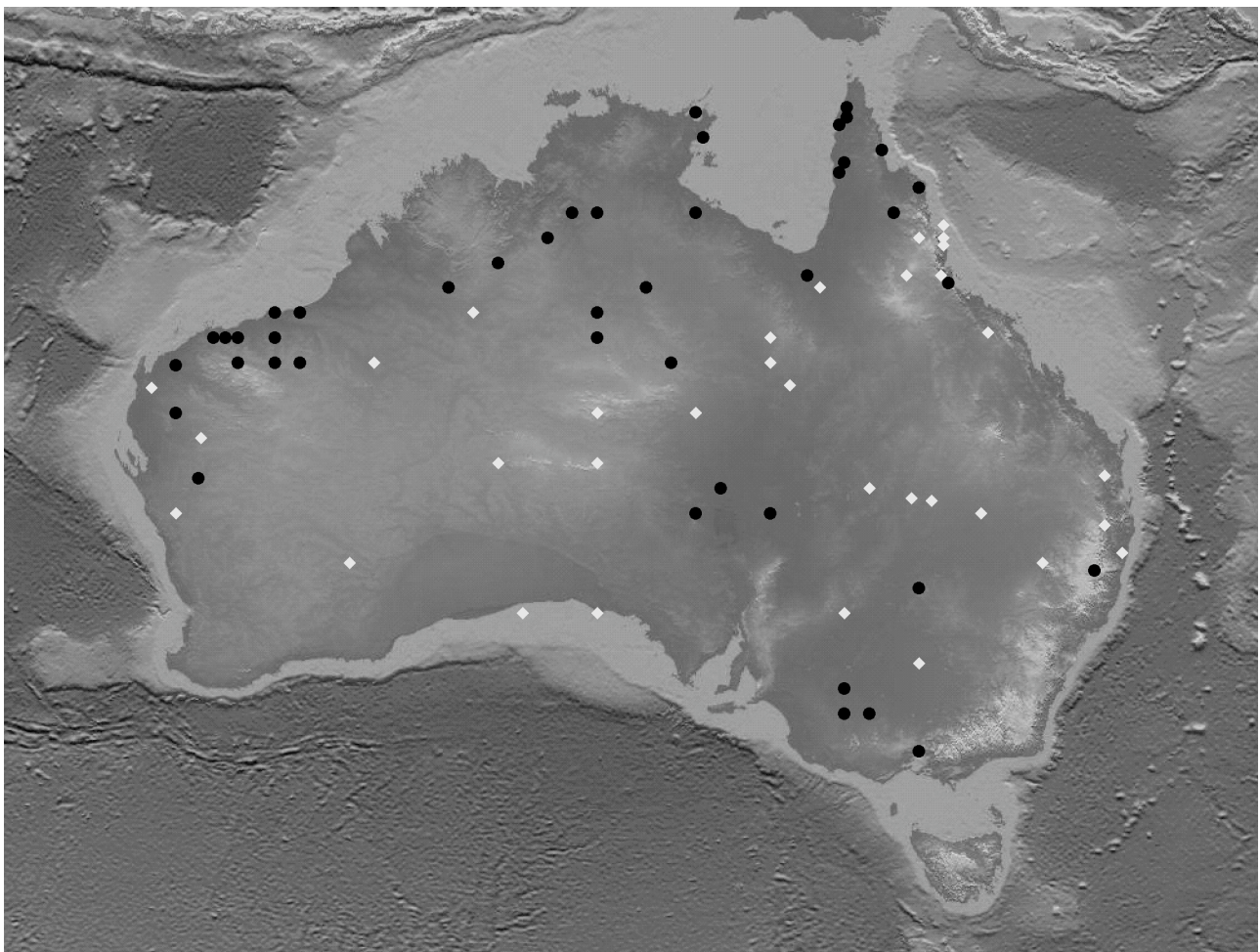Inclusive/exclusive in verb inflection shows large areas
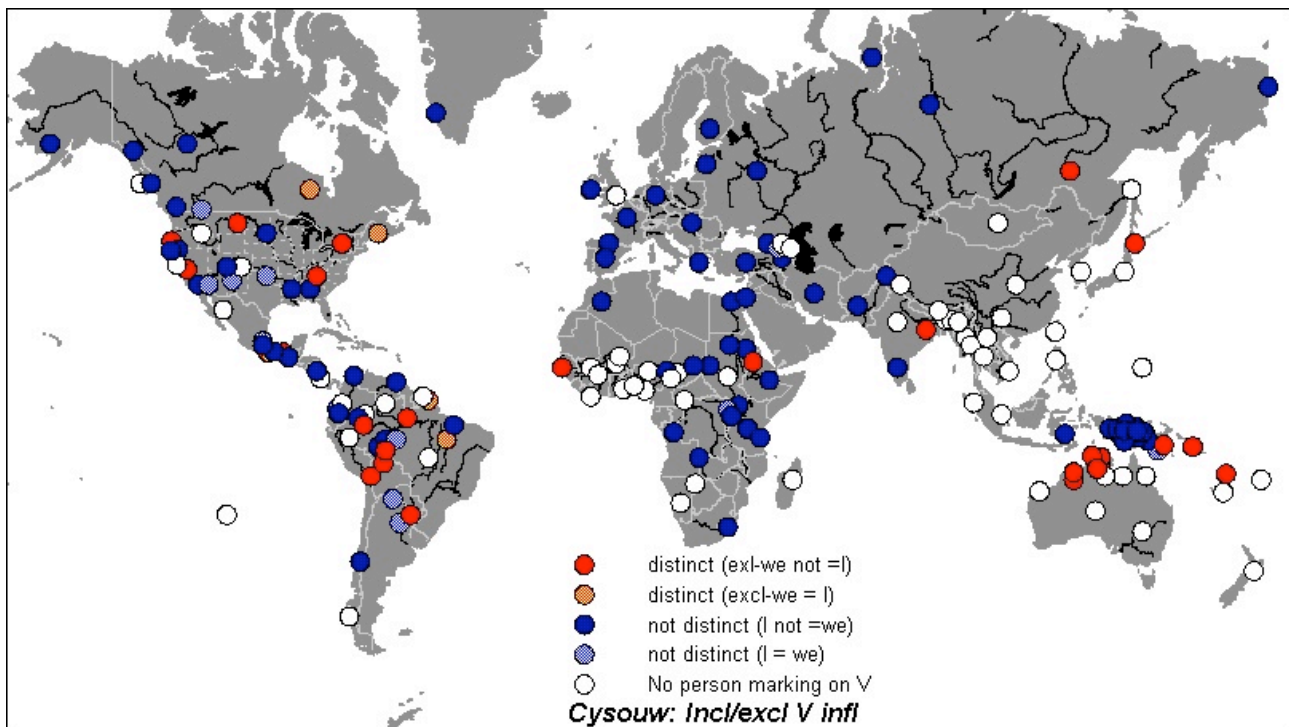
Another areal example are the number of genders
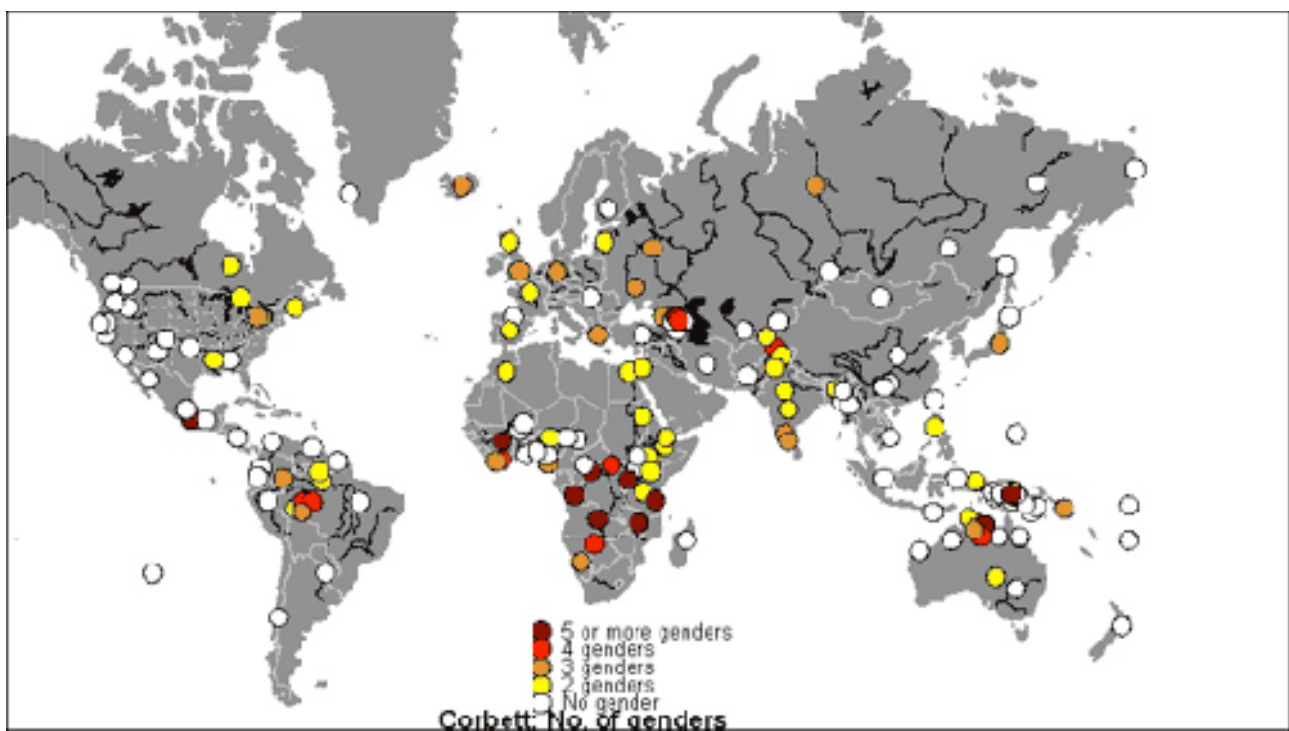
Inclusive/exclusive opposition appears to be relatively well spread.

However, the areality is probably only on a lower scale.

5   Nichols' head/dependent data.

Showing large areal patterns (see Cysouw 2002)

6   Dryer's test for areality

Table 1. Order of noun and relative clause (reproduced from Dryer 1992: 86)

	Africa	Eurasia	SEAsia&Oc	Aus-NG	NAmer	SAmer	Total
OV&RelN	5	11	2	2	3	3	26
OV&NRel	9	5	2	6	12	3	37
VO&RelN	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
VO&NRel	21	8	12	3	11	5	60

Table 2. Proportions of genera containing RelN languages as opposed to NRel (Dryer 1992: 87)

	Africa	Eurasia	SEAsia&Oc	Aus-NG	NAmer	SAmer	Average
OV	.36	.69	.50	.25	.20	.50	.42
VO	.00	.00	.08	.00	.00	.00	.01

Table 3. Statistical evaluation of the data from Table 1, correlating NRel with VO

	Africa	Eurasia	SEAsia&Oc	Aus-NG	NAmer	SAmer	Total
Fisher's Exact	** .0062	** .0017	.11	.51	.18	.12	.0000
φ	.50	.62	.47	.29	.31	.56	.48

Table 4. Statistical evaluation of the data from Dryer (1992: 95, Table 17), correlating AdjN–VO

	Africa	Eurasia	SEAsia&Oc	Aus-NG	NAmer	SAmer	Total
Fisher's Exact	.081	.17	.38	* .026	* .044	.33	.11
φ	-.22	-.21	-.037	.47	.35	.010	.0053

References

Cysouw, Michael (2002). Interpreting Typological Clusters. *Linguistic Typology* 6 (1): 69-93.

Dryer, Matthew S. (1992). The Greenbergian Word Order Correlations. *Language* 68 (1): 80-138.

Haspelmath, Martin (1997). *Indefinite Pronouns.* (Oxford Studies in Typology and Linguistic Theory). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Maslova, Elena (2000). A dynamic approach to the verification of distributional universals. *Linguistic Typology* 4 (3): 307-333.

Nichols, Johanna (1992). *Linguistic Diversity in Space and Time.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rijkhoff, Jan, Dik Bakker, Kees Hengeveld & Peter Kahrel (1993). A method of language sampling. *Studies in Language* 17 (1): 169-203.