

Abstract

The gerbils of the subfamily Gerbillinae represent an important taxon of rodents that includes a wide range of species inhabiting arid regions of the Old World. These species exhibit remarkable inter- and intraspecific variation in social behaviour, which is reflected in their mating systems, aggressive and territorial behaviour. It is still a matter of research whether external or internal factors are responsible for this variability. This thesis aims to compile knowledge on the social organization of selected representatives of a given subfamily, compare them with each other and offer insights into the possible cause of these differences. This thesis suggests that the conclusions cannot be drawn simply from phylogenetical or ecological factors and there must be either their combination or some unexplored factor, which affects the differences of social behavior in gerbils.

Key words: Gerbillinae, gerbils, sociality, coloniality, territoriality, mating systems