

Under natural circumstances, the less successful competitor rarely becomes extinct, but merely becomes rare. The **competitive exclusion principle** (or **Gaussian exclusion principle**) has since been confirmed in further animal experiments. Competitive exclusions have also been shown to occur in plant populations, such as in mixed cultures of duckweed (*Lemna*) species.

The study of natural populations is made more complex by the larger number of interacting populations and by the fact that the environmental variables such as temperature, moisture and food supply cannot be controlled.

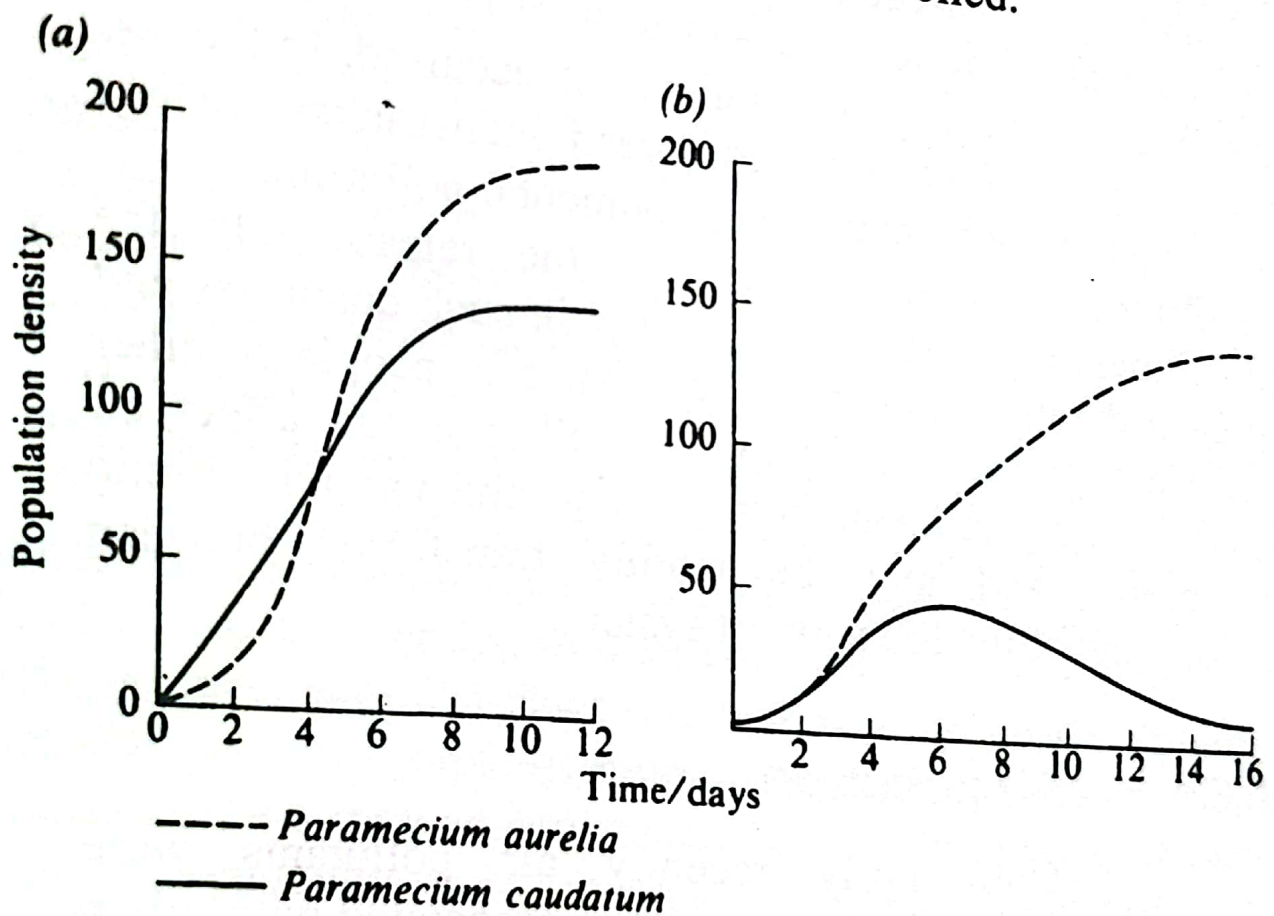


Fig 10.23 Population growth of two species of *Paramecium*, (a) cultured separately, (b) cultured together.