A GAS-POOR PLANETESIMAL FEEDING MODEL FOR THE FORMATION OF GIANT PLANET SATELLITE SYSTEMS: CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ATMOSPHERE OF TITAN. P. R. Estrada, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field CA 94035, USA, (estrada@cosmic.arc.nasa.gov), I. Mosqueira, NASA Ames Research Center/SETI Institute, Moffett Field CA 94035, USA (mosqueir@cosmic.arc.nasa.gov).

Given our presently inadequate understanding of the turbulent state of the solar and planetary nebulae, we believe the way to make progress in satellite formation is to consider two-end member models that avoid over-reliance on specific choices of the turbulence (α), which is essentially a free parameter. The first end member model [1,2] postulates turbulence decay once giant planet accretion ends. If so, Keplarian disks must eventually pass through quiescent phases, so that the survival of satellites (and planets) ultimately hinges on gap-opening. In this scenario, the criterion for gap-opening itself sets the value for the gas surface density of the satellite disk [2].

In the second end member model [3,4], which will be the focus of this abstract, we assume that steady hydrodynamic turbulence is sufficiently strong to cause the evolution of the circumplanetary gas disk on a shorter timescale than that for satellite accretion. This approach uses steady turbulence to remove the gas from the circumplanetary disk but not to fine-tune conditions of the subnebular environment. Giant planet satellite formation is then understood in terms of planetesimal dynamics that are largely uncoupled from the gas with the gas surface density left unspecified. However, we do allow for the presence of some gas to help explain the observations. This second of the two-end member models thus constitutes a gas-poor model, where satellites form in a manner somewhat analogous to the terrestrial planets.

Some of the plausible features of this model (see Figure 1) are: (1) late-arriving planetesimals colliding within the vicinity of the giant planet may create a disk of prograde and retrograde objects extending out to as far as 0.1RJ [5,6], where RJ is the Hill radius of the giant planet. We initially assume a power-law mass distribution of planetesimals n(m) \propto m^{-q} with an exponent q = 11/6 (see footnote 2) characteristic for a fragmented population [6]; (2) the net specific angular momentum \langle \ell_z \rangle of the circumplanetary swarm is initially very small; (3) close to the planet, hypervelocity impacts can ultimately lead to a variety of outcomes (i.e., Jovian-like versus Saturnian-like satellite systems); (4) once the density of solids in the swarm becomes sufficiently large, the removal of material from the outer disk is balanced by planetesimal capture by larger swarm particles. We rely on fragmentation to decrease the sizes of incoming planetesimals, but not coming into the swarm to capture them. Excluding satellite embryos, at any given time the disk mass is less than a galilean satellite (~ 10^{20} g); (5) the satellite formation timescale of 10^5 – 10^6 years (presumably consistent with Callisto’s partially differentiated state [7]) is controlled by the feeding of planetesimals onto the circumplanetary disk [8]. We first construct a model for Jovian system in which the distribution of satellite density with distance from the primary is quite uniform, and then adapt and draw conclusions for the Saturnian case.

There are several outstanding issues that this model must address in order to provide a viable alternative to the model of [1,2]. In particular, one must demonstrate that it is possible to deliver enough mass and angular momentum to the circumplanetary disk to form the regular satellites. From point (2) above, the net angular momentum of the circumplanetary swarm, which will determine the size of the disk from which the satellites will accrete, can be estimated from \langle \ell_z \rangle = \int \ell_z \Phi(\ell_z) d\ell_z / \int \Phi(\ell_z) d\ell_z where \Phi(\ell_z) is a distribution function that describes the accretion of mass and angular momentum [9]. We will show that the size of the disk can be large enough provided that most of the mass that goes into making the satellites originated from the outermost regions of the planet’s feeding zone. Using a distribution of semi-major axes depleted inside an annulus of width \sim 2R_H centered on the planet, we find

\langle \ell_z \rangle \sim 0.36 \Omega_R R_D \rightarrow R_D = \frac{\langle \ell_z \rangle^2}{GM} \sim 30R_J. \quad (1)

Point (5) above provides another constraint given that an accretion time \tau_{acc} \sim \rho r c / \Omega r d \sim 10^5 – 10^6 years implies an inner disk mass (excluding embryos) of

\begin{align*}
M_D \sim \frac{P_C}{\tau_{acc}} & \left( \frac{\pi \rho_c}{3} \right)^{2/3} \left( \frac{M_C}{4} \right)^{1/3} R_D^2 \ll M_C, \quad (2)
\end{align*}

where \( M_C, \rho_C, \text{ and } P_C \) are the mass, density, and orbital period of Callisto. This yields a surface density of solids \( \sigma_D \sim 10 – 100 \text{ g cm}^{-2} \). In the outer disk where the bulk of

![Figure 1](https://ntrs.nasa.gov/search.jsp?R=20050166876)

**Figure 1**: Graphic representation of some of the characteristics of the circumplanetary swarm from which the satellites of the giant planets will eventually form.
material is captured, a mass $M_D$ must be delivered to the inner disk and also replenished to the swarm in a "collisional cycle" 
\[ \tau_{coll} \sim \frac{P_0}{P_2} \frac{M_T}{M_D} \sim 5 \times 10^{-4}, \]  
(3)
where quantities with subscript "2" refer to the outer disk, $\rho_2$ is the satellitesimal density, $r_2$ is the cutoff size of the distribution of swarm particles, and $M_T$ is the final mass of the system. The surface density needed in the outer disk is $\sigma_2 \sim 100$ g cm$^{-2}$. Hence, for Jupiter, a constant surface density (solids) disk may satisfy the system constraints.

Given these assumptions, we can analytically estimate the amount of mass deposition per unit time into the circumplanetary swarm $\dot{M}$ using a mass inflow rate $I$ and probability of capture $p$ [5]

\[ \dot{M} = 2\pi \int I(R)p(R) R dR \]  
(4)
where $\rho_1$, $v_1$, and $r_1$ are the satellitesimal volume density, mean velocity, and cutoff size (quantities with subscript "1" refer to the solar nebula). During each collisional cycle, we require a mass $\sim \dot{M} \times \tau_{coll}$ be provided to the inner disk. The total mass delivered over $\sim 10^5$ years for a reasonable choice of parameters is $\sim 10^{20}$ g [3,10]. However, a caveat here is that the power-law index $q$, and the upper size cutoff of the circumplanetary swarm $r_2$ are not well constrained at this time. Furthermore, this calculation does not take into account the clearing of Jupiter’s feeding zone in $\sim 10^5$ years (which may be replenished with sufficiently small particles).

Applying this approach for Saturn, we find that the gas-poor planetesimal model may be consistent with the mass and angular momentum of Titan. However, low density Iapetus is difficult to reconcile. If Iapetus formed at its present location, we would expect it to have a density like that of Phoebe [4], because the angular momentum of material fed from heliocentric orbit strongly implies that Iapetus (like Callisto) should be of roughly solar composition. A plausible scenario is that Iapetus formed closer in [11,12].

\textit{Ar/N$_2$ in Titan’s atmosphere}: The Galileo probe found that the heavy volatile element global abundances, excluding neon and oxygen, are about 3 times solar [13,14]. At this time there are two approaches in trying to account for this observation. The first idea relies on delivery of volatiles that were trapped in amorphous ice and then incorporated in planetesimals. This approach, which is based on laboratory work [15], initially led to the expectation that, since planetesimals forming near the snowline (taken by some models to be located at $3-5$ AU) likely dominated the delivery of heavy elements to planets forming at that location, Jupiter might not be enhanced in volatile elements such as Ar that condense at much lower temperatures $< 30$ K. It is important to note, however, that to form the clathrate of Ar, the model of [16] requires a very low solar nebula temperature $T \sim 36$ K. Since even passive disk models of T Tauri stars [17,18] may be too warm at the location of Jupiter for the incorporation of Ar into planetesimals, it is difficult to explain why there is any enrichment of Ar in either model.

However, it cannot be assumed that material condenses from a cooling protoplanetary nebula at its solar abundance and remains in place. Significant radial migration of solids will take place. Indeed there is compelling observational evidence that disks around T Tauri stars can be $\sim 100$ AU or more [19,20]. Furthermore, some gas disks around young stars show flat density distributions [21,22], implying that a significant fraction of the mass of the disk is located at large distances from the star. Since an ice grain may retain its amorphous state for the lifetime of the nebula ($\sim 10^7$ years) provided the temperature is $< 85$ K [23], it may be possible for planetesimals that trapped argon either as clathrate or in amorphous ice in cold regions of the disk to preserve them as they migrate to warmer regions. If so, our planetesimal collisional capture formation model would appear to imply $\text{Ar/N}_2 \approx 0.06$ [24] and that the molecular nitrogen in Titan’s atmosphere was delivered as trapped $\text{N}_2$. However, before such a conclusion can be reached one must first gain an understanding of the consequences of planetesimal collisional grinding on trapped volatiles.

This work is supported by the National Research Council, and a NASA PGG grant.