

51st IAA HISTORY OF ASTRONAUTICS SYMPOSIUM (E4)
Memoirs & Organisational Histories (1)Author: Ms. Julie Patarin-Jossec
University of Bordeaux, FranceA HISTORY OF HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT “FROM THE BELOW”: THE PART OF BLACK WOMEN
IN THE AMERICAN SPACE EFFORT**Abstract**

The contribution of black women in the launching of the American space program has recently been put under media projectors. If such a media coverage was possible, it is precisely thanks to the acknowledgment of an invisibilisation of a certain part of the population which contributed to the development of space activities, which cannot be understood without a historical contextualization. In the late 1960, social movements of identical claim erupt in the United States, carried by ethnical minorities looking for civic empowerment. Within these racial mobilizations, a Black feminist movement emerged, highlighting the gender oppression laying in racial categories and the need for a renewal of the political thought as well as of the transformation of traditional institutions. This communication aims to provide some theoretical and practical tools of understanding of the invisibilisation of Black women in the early space history, putting it back in its social, cultural and political context. Indeed, from Black feminism linking different categories of power relations to subaltern studies focusing on ethnoracial experience, political sociology provides plenty of reflexive tools to understand why this invisibilisation was possible, through which mechanisms, and how it has been maintained until recent history. Such an understanding benefits not only to . . . , but it also allows bringing a fresh perspective at the history of human space activities and the conditions of its technical, scientific and political breakthrough since the Mercury program.