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An analysis of the administrative assistant classification in the Atlanta city government

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT CLASSIFICATION IN THE ATLANTA CITY GOVERNMENT

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THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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MAY 1983
ABSTRACT
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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B.S., University of Oklahoma, 1978

An Analysis of the Administrative Assistant Classification in the Atlanta City Government

Adviser: Professor George O. Kugblenu

Degree Paper dated December 1982

The primary intent of this study is to examine the effects of informal job analysis procedures on the Administrative Assistant Classification in the Atlanta City Government. An attempt has been made to analyze the effects of informal job analysis procedures on the validity of job information, contents of job descriptions and the recruitment of qualified individuals in the Administrative Assistant Classification.

Job analysis is presented as pivotal to providing dependable accurate information about each job which is needed for many personnel functions and decisions, such as recruitment, selection, placement, classification and evaluation. With increasing demands that employment procedures be job related and meet certain validity standards, it is imperative that formal procedures for analyzing jobs be developed for use in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources in Atlanta City Government. This study is significant because without dependable, accurate job information, valid and acceptable decisions about jobs cannot be made.
The main sources of data were obtained from interviews conducted with members of the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources and with Administrative Assistants in Atlanta City Government. Secondary data from books, government documents, journals, pamphlets, reports and studies were also used.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Position Classification is the process of identifying and describing the various kinds of work in an organization, and then classifying similar positions on the basis of duties performed and responsibilities exercised. The 1940 Personnel Report of the City of Atlanta stressed the importance of position classification by stating that:

The proper classification of positions is the foundation upon which a sound civil service system is built. The payment of equitable salaries, the establishment of minimum qualifications for entrance to civil service examinations, the preparation of valid examinations, the use of common terminology in all of the various personnel transactions, all depend in the first instance on a correct classification of positions.¹

In 1912, the City of Chicago became the first city in the United States to officially adopt a position classification plan. Between 1915 and 1920, position classification plans were adopted in several major cities as the recognition of position classification as a necessary base for improved personnel administration spread rapidly.² In the years to follow, the expansion of merit system operations by states and

¹City of Atlanta Personnel Board, City of Atlanta 1940 Annual Report (Atlanta: City of Atlanta Personnel Board, 1940), p. 2.

localities, in compliance with federal regulation, included the development and adoption of position classification plans as a basis for efficient personnel administration.

The first position classification plan was developed and adopted by the City of Atlanta in connection with the implementation of the Merit System in 1940. Since that time, the City of Atlanta Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources (previously referred to as the Bureau of Personnel Operations) has grown from a relatively simple organization with 2,858 classified employees in 350 job classes to an intricate organization with approximately 8,590 classified employees in 844 job classes in 40 agencies, bureaus, and departments located at more than 300 work sites throughout the city. Effective management of day-to-day operations is pivotal to the administration of the City of Atlanta Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources. The Administrative Assistant Classification is an administrative management series designed to facilitate the administration of department services, programs and operations. The series is comprised of four positions: Administrative Assistant I, Administrative Assistant II, Administrative Assistant III, and Administrative Assistant IV. The Series is hierarchial; the complexity of the tasks performed increases through progression from the lowest level to the highest.

Presently, there are no formal job analysis procedures in the City of Atlanta Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources; consequently, a majority of the existing job information about the Administrative Assistant Classification is invalid.
Therefore, the information of little use to managers because they cannot readily use it for recruitment, orientation or goal setting. The lack of valid job information has significantly affected the overall structure of the Administrative Assistant Classification, the individuals who occupy Administrative Assistant positions and the duties they perform.

The precise problem to be dealt with in this study is: the lack of formal job analysis procedures and its effect on the validity of job information, contents of job descriptions and recruitment of qualified individuals in the Administrative Assistant Classification in Atlanta City Government.
II. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

The City of Atlanta Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources was inaugurated with the implementation of the Merit System on June 1, 1939. Prior to June 1, 1939, all city jobs were controlled by elected officials and salaries were based primarily on political influence rather than on duties and responsibilities. There was no established pay plan with rates of pay based on the values of the jobs; and there was no systematic classification of jobs based on duties and responsibilities. Under the Merit System employees hired are: (1) recruited and selected through competitive examination, (2) appointed to jobs classified according to duties, responsibilities, and degree of difficulty, (3) paid salaries equivalent to those paid for jobs of equivalent responsibility and difficulty, (4) eligible for promotion based on capacity and performance.

The Administrative Assistant Classification, which is the focus of this study, is composed of fifty individuals.

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3 City of Atlanta Personnel Department, City of Atlanta Personnel Department 1964 Annual Report (Atlanta: City of Atlanta Personnel Department, 1964), p. 2.

4 Ibid.

There are 14 individuals in Administrative Assistant I positions, 18 in Administrative Assistant II positions, 10 in Administrative Assistant III positions and 8 in Administrative Assistant IV positions. The Administrative Assistants are located in 24 bureaus and departments in Atlanta City Government (see Appendix A). The primary purpose of the Administrative Assistant Classification is to facilitate the administration of department services, programs and operations.

The writer served as an intern in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources, the City of Atlanta, from February 1982 to June 1982. As an intern, the writer served as a research assistant for the Evaluation Division. The writer conducted an analysis of the Administrative Assistant Classification. The analysis consisted of: (1) identifying all numbered positions and occupants of the Administrative Assistant Classification, (2) extracting data from history files regarding education, prior work history and career history with the City of Atlanta on all such individuals, (3) reviewing the data obtained from position questionnaires that were administered by Yarger and Associates in 1980 and making comparisons of the data with the actual duties specified in the respective job descriptions, (4) identifying the range of education and experience, and the career patterns of the individuals in the classification, (5) compiling a report of the findings and presenting possible solutions to problems discovered as a result of the analysis.
Statement of the Problem

The lack of formal job analysis procedures in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources has greatly affected the validity of job information concerning the Administrative Assistant Classification. Job analysis is crucial to any personnel organization. Unless dependable accurate information about a job can be obtained, there can be no job facts, nor can sound acceptable decisions about jobs be made. Because there are no formal procedures for analyzing jobs in the City of Atlanta Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources, most of the job information concerning the Administrative Assistant Classification is invalid. This invalid information has created significant problems in the Administrative Assistant Classification; it has hampered the recruitment process for Administrative Assistants and in turn has limited the degree to which Administrative Assistants assist in the administration of department services, programs and operations.

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III. METHODOLOGY

An exploratory method of research was utilized to assess the effects of informal job analysis procedures on the Administrative Assistant Classification in Atlanta City Government. Exploratory studies are most typically done for three purposes: (1) to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding, (2) to determine the feasibility of undertaking a more careful study, and (3) to develop the methods to be utilized in a more careful study. The exploratory method of research enabled the writer to gain a fundamental understanding of the Administrative Assistant Classification, its structure and purpose in Atlanta City Government. Further, the writer was able to develop a profile of the individuals who occupy positions in the classification (see Appendix B).

The data gathered were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained from interviews held with the Chief of Recruitment, two Personnel Analysts and eight Administrative Assistants. Both the Personnel Analysts and Administrative Assistants were selected randomly. The interviews consisted of open ended questions concerning the job descriptions, job duties and the perceived problems of the Administrative Assistant Classification (see Appendix C).

Further, the interviews provided an opportunity to identify problems caused by informal job analysis procedures on the Administrative Assistant Classification. In addition to the primary data, secondary data were obtained from books, government documents, journals, pamphlets, reports and studies.
IV. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Job Information

The demands that employment procedures from establishing the knowledges, skills and abilities of a position to the actual selection of the employees be job related and meet certain validity standards have increased. The starting point in all cases is a job analysis. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, job analysis may be defined as:

... the process of determining by observation and study ... the tasks that comprise the job and the skills, knowledge, abilities and responsibilities required of the worker for successful performance.

The person who typically performs a job analysis is commonly referred to as a job analyst. In order for a job analyst to effectively conduct a job analysis, the purposes for which the job analysis data will be used must be determined. If the data are to be used for a variety of purposes, the analysis must be more comprehensive than if the data are to be used for

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9 Ibid.

only one or two purposes. However, in the views of Adolph Langsner and Herbert Zollitsch, in general, the information that needs to be collected for every job analysis can be grouped into six areas: (1) Identifying Job Information, (2) Job Summary, (3) Description of the Work Performed, (4) Equipment, Tools and Materials Used on the Job, (5) Job Requirements, and (6) Performance Standards for Job Success. The authors further explain the various functions of the six areas as follows:

**Identifying Job Information.** This section of the job analysis identifies relevant information about the job title, location in the organization, salary, etc.

**Job Summary.** This is the statement of the purpose of the job, how it is done and why.

**Description of the Work Performed.** This involves the identification of both the major and minor duties of the job.

**Equipment, Tools, and Materials Used on the Job.** The necessary equipment, tools, and materials that are to be used on the job are identified in this section.

**Job Requirements.** This segment of the job analysis specifies the minimum requirements of the (job specification), in terms of skill, effort, responsibility and conditions of work.

**Performance Standards for Job Success.** The criteria

that will be used to evaluate the performance of an employee performing the job is identified.

Job information must be as accurate as possible. In addition, these authors maintain that:

... the gathering of factual information (job review) serves the purpose of making a correct job analysis, preparing permanent job descriptions and thereafter, objectively evaluating and rating jobs.12

There are four basic methods by which data are collected for job analysis: (1) interview, (2) direct observation, (3) use of a questionnaire, and (4) participant logs.13

Interviews.-Experience has proved that personal interviews with employees tend to be beneficial. Interviews alone are sufficient for desk jobs and other jobs with a limited amount of observable physical activity. Personal interviews allow the analyst to obtain information concerning the nature of the job from the employee perspective. However, the interview method is costly and not being within the environs of the job, the job analyst is unfamiliar with the working conditions. This unfamiliarity can place the analyst at a disadvantage, especially if unfavorable conditions exist.

Direct Observation.-Direct observation is more appropriate for jobs consisting primarily of observable physical activities such as jobs in technical classes. Direct

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12 Ibid., p. 281.

observation allows the analyst to actually observe the worker as the job is being performed; through direct observation the analyst gains a better understanding of the job. However, the direct observation method is very expensive and it is not applicable to all positions. Additionally, Robert D. Lee, Jr. maintains that the observation method presumes that the analyst can accurately interpret what work is being done by simply observing an employee; in actuality, the use of the observation method alone may not be enough to allow the analyst to comprehend the types of problems being handled by the worker.14

**Questionnaires.**-Questionnaires ask certain identifying information concerning the job and job duties. The questionnaires also allow employees to describe their positions in their own words. The results obtained from the questionnaire method assumes that the worker will interpret the questions accurately. In reality, misinterpreting the questions can affect the validity of job information and considerably delay the process of collecting job information.

**Participant Logs.**-This data gathering technique requires the worker to log his tasks and duties over a specified period of time and note any consistencies or changes that may occur. However, this method relies on the honesty of the worker in recording his duties and tasks. A worker may amplify the nature of his job tasks and duties in an effort to enhance his position.

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After the data have been collected, preliminary checks must be made to verify that the collected data is complete, accurate and dependable. According to the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the reasons for verification are obvious, the more people that are knowledgeable about the job who view and evaluate the analysis, the more likely it is to be objective. Verification of the data can be accomplished by simply using a different data gathering technique. By using a different technique, the analyst can more readily detect any discrepancies in the data. After the data has been collected and verified, it is ready for use. Job analysis typically results in job descriptions and job specifications; the descriptions and specifications resulting from job analysis can serve very useful purposes in various aspects of personnel management such as recruitment, labor relations, salary administration and in clarifying organizational relationships.

Job Description and Job Specification

Job descriptions and job specifications are pivotal to identifying and describing the contents and essential requirements of jobs. According to Adolph Langsner and Herbert C. Zollitsch:

A job description consists of a body of informational data compiled from a job analysis, presented in organized statements that identify and describe the

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contents of a specific job or position.\textsuperscript{16} On the other hand, a job specification consists of data compiled from a job analysis and a job description, formulated into statements that specify the minimum requirements in terms of skill, effort, responsibility, and conditions of work. The style and format of a job description are determined by the use of the description and the preference of the organization. Although the style and format of job descriptions may differ, nearly all job descriptions contain a job summary and a place for listing the major job duties.

The statements contained in each of these areas should utilize a standard form. "They should at least tell what is to be done, how it is to be done and why it is to be done."\textsuperscript{17} The What identifies the object of the duty and denotes the final results that are to be achieved; in essence, the What connotes what the employee is actually paid to do. The How denotes the means that is being used to achieve the What. The Why justifies the reason for performing the duty.

The contents of job specifications (specs) are primarily determined by the form of job evaluation for which the job specification will be used. The job specification contains many of the facts contained in the job description; however, the specification emphasizes the specific qualifications required of job holders. Also, job specs are usually written in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16}Langsner and Zollitsch, p. 291.
\item \textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 297.
\end{itemize}
a concise style, with a uniformity of organization that may not characterize job descriptions.18 The principle personal qualifications noted in job specs include sex; age; skill or skills; training; experience; any unusual physical characteristics, such as strength of arms, legs or back, or particular physical conditions to be avoided ....19

Richard Leukert and Joy L. Otis maintain that, frequently, a job changes enough so that it is judged to be different from what it was initially, perhaps sufficiently different to place it in another job classification or wage bracket.20 It is imperative to know not only the details of job as it is presently, but also the details of the job before it changed. If the job has changed substantially in content, skill and responsibility, a revision of the job description is necessary. A revision of the job specification may also be needed. In the views of Kenneth Byers, M. Robert Montillia and Elmer V. Williams, jobs are seldom status, they change for many reasons and under many circumstances; therefore, position classification plans must change to reflect the changes in jobs.21 Some factors that lead to position classification

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19Ibid., p. 211.


changes include:

a) addition of new job tasks,

b) changes in the procedures for performing a job function,

c) growth of a position through an increase or change in job duties and responsibilities.

d) reorganization of a function that consists of several activities,

e) abolishment of a job function, and

f) change in structure in the organization

In as much as jobs change, the necessary skills and abilities needed to perform the jobs also change. Therefore class specifications may also require amendments. Some factors leading to changes in class specifications include:

a) increase in personal standards to improve the quality of applicants,

b) change in the professional credentials required, and

c) change in the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform the job.

It is imperative that a position classification plan be kept up to date. Unless the classification plan reflects the jobs as they actually exist, it fails to justify its existence.\(^{22}\) In order to ensure that a classification plan remains current, job analysis should be conducted on a regular basis. Through the job analysis process, the classifier is able to keep abreast of any changes in work performed by all agencies in the organization that will affect the

\(^{22}\)Ibid.
classification plan. In addition, each department head, as a matter of policy, should be required to report any changes in the duties of positions within the organization. These procedures will help to identify classifications, positions, job descriptions and job specifications that are in need of re-evaluation.

Recruitment

The accuracy of the job analysis data is reflected in the resulting job descriptions and job specifications. It is imperative that job analysis data be as accurate as possible because the resulting job descriptions and job specifications significantly effect the overall recruitment process. Recruitment may be defined as the process of setting out and developing favorable contacts with people who can be expected to fill an organization's personnel needs both quantitatively and qualitatively.23

Successfully recruiting qualified individuals is largely dependent on how effective the recruiting program in the organization has been. In order for an effective selection system to operate, it is imperative that a large number of qualified job applicants be recruited for available positions. "The personnel administrator cannot be selective enough in his choice of a candidate if he does not have a large applicant pool."24


24Erwin S. Staton, Successful Personnel Recruiting and
The first step in inaugurating an effective recruitment program is to determine the organization's needs. The needs must be made explicitly clear in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Additionally, there are two other personnel related functions that provide significant input into the recruitment process, namely:

1. Manpower planning, including manpower forecasts and the identification of manpower requirements, from which are derived recruiting quotas. Recruiting quotas determine in fairly general terms the quantitative goals of recruiting efforts.

2. Job analysis, including the development of job descriptions, from which are derived job specifications. Job specifications determine the qualitative goals of recruiting efforts.25

After the organization's needs have been determined and the recruiting quotas have been established, the sources of manpower necessary to fill the organization's needs should be identified. The nature of job being filled will determine the sources that will be utilized. However, some effective recruiting sources include: colleges and universities, job banks, newspaper advertisements and professional societies.


25 American Society for Public Administration, pp.89-90.
V. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM AND DATA FINDINGS

Research findings revealed that the lack of formal job analysis procedures poses three significant problems for the Administrative Assistant Classification in Atlanta City Government.

First, the research findings revealed that the lack of formal job analysis procedures has affected the validity of job information concerning the classification. The last formal job analysis was conducted in 1978 by Public Research and Management (PRM) and the resulting job information was used in designing the job descriptions presently utilized for the Administrative Assistant Classification. Since that time, the information contained in the job description has remained unchanged. Consequently, a significant portion of the job information is no longer relevant. According to Carroll Shartle, job information is ever changing; jobs are created and phased out daily. Hiring requirements for jobs change with the supply and demand for labor. A new, cancelled or modified contract changes the occupational structure of an organization; therefore, unless job analyses are conducted on a regular basis, the job information quickly becomes obsolete.²⁶

Each time a job is requisitioned by a department in the Atlanta City Government, a requisition form containing questions regarding the nature of the job and the necessary skills and abilities needed to perform the job must be completed. After the form is completed, it is forwarded to a Personnel Analyst in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources. Upon receiving the requisition form, the Personnel Analyst compares the information contained on the form with the respective job description. If the nature of the job has changed significantly, as well as the necessary skills and abilities needed to perform the job, a job analysis is performed. Although the person who typically performs a job analysis is commonly referred to as a Job Analyst, in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources, the Personnel Analysts are responsible for performing job analyses. Because there are no formal procedures for analyzing jobs in the Bureau, each Personnel Analyst may use his discretion in determining which procedures should be utilized to perform the analysis as well as the types of information that will be collected. Consequently, the procedures utilized in conducting job analyses as well as the types of information collected varies significantly.

Richard Dixon, a Personnel Analyst III in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources, contends that a job analysis is conducted each time a job is requisitioned; this is the process not only for Administrative Assistant positions, but also for all other positions. However, Mr. Dixon further maintains

27 Interview with Richard Dixon, Bureau of Personnel and
that because there are no formal procedures for analyzing jobs, there is a certain amount of individualism employed in conducting job analyses in the Bureau. Whether or not interviews, direct observation, questionnaires and participant logs are used to collect job information is primarily a matter of preference among the Analysts in the Bureau. Additionally, whether or not information is collected by the Analysts in the six primary areas, namely: identifying job information, job summary, job description, equipment, tools and materials, job requirements and performance standards is also a matter of individual preference. The absence of formal and standardized procedures for conducting job analyses in the Bureau has contributed toward the existence of variations in job descriptions for the Administrative Assistant Classification. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, "job information is the basic data used by industry, governmental and private agencies and employee organizations for manpower programs," therefore, it is imperative that formal procedures be utilized in conducting job analyses to ensure that the data is accurate, inclusive and omits nothing that is pertinent to the program.

Secondly, the study revealed that the lack of formal job analyses procedures has caused the contents of the job descriptions for the Administrative Assistant Classification to become

Human Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, 29 October 1982.

28Ibid.

invalid. The first job descriptions and specifications were
developed for the Administrative Assistant Classification in
connection with the implementation of the Classification in
the Atlanta City Government in 1972. Both the job description
and job specification are combined into one form and referred
to as a job description in the Bureau of Personnel and Human
Resources (see Appendix D). Although the job descriptions for
the Administrative Assistant Classification have been revised
several times since 1972, the last revisions were made in 1978.
In an interview with Edwin Pritchett, a Personnel Analyst IV in
the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources, he expressed the
opinion that the job title, Administrative Assistant, is a very
nebulous title which fails to represent the main function of
the job; therefore, the Classification should be given a title
that is more representative of the job duties. Further, unlike
the job descriptions for the respective positions in the Ad-
ministrative Assistant Classification suggest there is no cen-
tralization of job duties. The actual job duties will depend
on where the jobs are located; consequently, each time a depart-
ment announces a vacancy for an Administrative Assistant, the
respective job description must be rewritten to meet the par-
ticular departments needs.30

Many of the Administrative Assistants interviewed felt
that the job title, Administrative Assistant, is not an

30 Telephone interview with Edwin Pritchett, Bureau of
Personnel and Human Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, 7 September
1982.
accurate title because it does not provide an insight into the actual duties of the job. At the Administrative Assistant I and II levels, the interviewees felt that although the job title is not an adequate title it should not be changed; rather, the job descriptions should be rewritten in a fashion that would be more inclusive of the actual job duties. However, at the Administrative Assistant III and IV levels, the interviewees generally felt that the job title is not adequate and it should be changed to a title more reflective of their job duties. The job title is an important element of the job description. Adolph Langsner and Herbert Zollitsch maintain that the title used should be one that is widely accepted by most employees as indicative of the nature of the job. Job titles become meaningless if they are used carelessly. A majority of the Administrative Assistants felt that the job descriptions for their respective positions did not accurately reflect their primary job duties. Many felt that the job descriptions tended to only include secondary tasks that are performed on an inconsistent or irregular basis. An analysis of the results of a study conducted by Yarger and Associates in 1980, indicated that in general Administrative Assistants at all levels spent a majority of their time performing tasks that were not listed on their respective job descriptions. Additionally, these tasks tended to be highly specialized differing significantly in

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31 See Appendix D for questions posed to Administrative Assistants.

32 Langsner and Zollitsch, p. 297.
scope and complexity. 33 Interviews conducted by the writer corroborated these findings; 80 percent of the Administrative Assistants interviewed by the writer indicated that they performed tasks which are not listed in their respective job descriptions. Because there is little uniformity among the tasks performed by the Administrative Assistants at each level, the degree to which they assist in the administration of department services, programs and operations varies significantly. The lack of uniformity in procedures for analyzing jobs in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources contributes to this anomaly. Although a crisis could occur within the Bureau because Administrative Assistants may refuse to perform tasks that are not listed on their respective job descriptions; yet, the Bureau has been able to prevent this from happening by inserting in each job description for the Administrative Assistant Classification that "any one position may not include all of the tasks listed, nor do the examples necessarily include all of the tasks performed" (see Appendix D).

Thirdly, the lack of formal job analysis procedures hampers the recruitment of qualified individuals for the Administrative Assistant Classification. Because there are no formal job analysis procedures in the City of Atlanta Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources, a majority of the job information concerning the Administrative Assistant Classification

is not very useful to the Bureau. Consequently, the job information and the resulting job descriptions and job specifications are of little use to department heads and managers for recruitment purposes. Each time a department notifies the Bureau of a vacancy for an Administrative Assistant, the respective job description must be rewritten according to the needs of the department. This process delays recruitment activities. Recruitment is further delayed because of the fact that the Bureau relies primarily on bulletins mailed to colleges and universities and walk-in applicants to meet department personnel needs.\(^\text{34}\)

There exists within the Bureau a recruitment program; however, the staff is limited and the level of funding for advertising is very low. According to Emanuel Jones, Chief of Recruitment in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources, because of the limited staff and the low level of funding, the recruitment program is not as comprehensive as it should be nor does the program impact upon the establishment of eligible applicants lists as significantly as it should. However, Mr. Jones feels that the recruitment program does have more of an impact on the establishment of eligible applicant lists for administrative positions (such as Administrative Assistant positions) than it does for technical positions.\(^\text{35}\)


\(^{35}\) Telephone interview with Emanuel Jones, Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, 15 November 1982.
The recruitment process in Atlanta City Government is similar to that of other governments operating under the Merit System. Vacancies in the classified service in Atlanta City Government are normally filled from eligible lists resulting from open competitive examinations, unless the department heads announcing the vacancies determine that such vacancies should be filled by transfer, promotion, demotion, reassignment, or through any other authorized and established non-competitive process. The Evaluation Division of the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources is responsible for screening applications and setting up testing devices, such as performance tests, written tests and interview boards to assess the applicants' fitness for City positions. After the screening process has been completed, qualified applicants are placed on eligible lists in rank order, and the lists are forwarded to the respective departments. The actual selection of the employee is made by the department. There are three types of eligible lists:

1. Original appointment: a listing of persons in rank order as a result of an open-competitive examination process to be used in making an applicant's first appointment to the classified service.

2. Promotional: a listing of persons in rank order as a result of a city-wide competitive examination, or a department competitive examination (limited competition).

36 City of Atlanta Personnel Department, Civil Service Rules and Regulations as Excerpted from Code of Ordinances City of Atlanta (Atlanta: City of Atlanta Personnel Department, 1978), p. 5024.
(3) Reemployment: a listing of persons who have been separated from the classified service as a result of a reduction in force or resignation ....37

Of the fifty individuals occupying Administrative Assistant positions in Atlanta City government, 99 percent of them held positions in Atlanta City Government prior to becoming Administrative Assistants. Only 1 percent of the Administrative Assistants were hired from outside Atlanta City Government (see Appendix E).

In the view of Arthur M. Whitehill, Jr., one of the most important purposes for which the results of job analysis may be used is that of increasing the effectiveness in recruiting new workers and correctly placing all employees. If the job analysis data is accurate it is an invaluable guide in bringing together the right worker and the right job.38 Further, the job descriptions and job specifications resulting from the job analysis data will help to insure that the job applicants possess the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the job. Matching the right worker with the right job often requires exploring recruiting sources. For many organizations, one of the most commonly used sources is the roster of present employees. There are several reasons why this practice is so common. Certain agreements, rules and regulations governing personnel practices may require that consideration must first

37Ibid.

be given to current employees. Dale Yoder maintains that "a single job opening may become the basis for a whole chain of promotions and transfers, thus permitting advancement for a number of employees." This process is assumed to stimulate high performance and boost the morale among employees. There is a hazard in limiting recruitment to present employees. There is the danger of inbreeding. The practice of inbreeding can cause agencies to become enclosed domains that are not receptive to new ideas nor even exposed to them. Further, this practice may tend to perpetuate policies and practices that are no longer useful to the organization.

In addition to these problems, Administrative Assistants at all levels, generally considered the level of pay to be a primary problem of the Classification. Many felt that they were performing the work of an Administrative Assistant of the next higher level; therefore, they should be paid accordingly. In order to determine if the duties and responsibilities of a job have changed significantly enough to place a job in a different classification or wage bracket, a job analysis must be conducted. It is imperative that personnel organizations operating under the Merit System conduct job analyses on a regular basis to ensure that each employee receives equal pay for equal work and that their pay rates remain competitive with other governmental and private organizations.

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40 Lee, pp. 164-165.
VI. CONCLUSION

The Administrative Assistant Classification is part of the Managerial, Professional and Scientific Branch of the position and salary classification plan in Atlanta City Government. The Administrative Assistant Classification is designed to aid department, bureau and agency heads in the implementation and management of programs and services by assisting in the administration of such programs and services. However, the lack of formal job analysis procedures limits the degree to which the Classification is able to accomplish these objectives. The lack of formal procedures for analyzing jobs has caused a significant portion of the job information concerning the Classification to become obsolete. Consequently, the job information, job descriptions and job specifications concerning the Administrative Assistant Classification are of little use to the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources and to department heads and managers in personnel related functions. As a result, the overall recruitment process for Administrative Assistants is significantly delayed. Each time a vacancy for an Administrative Assistant becomes available, rather than initiate recruitment activities immediately, the activities must be delayed until the respective job description is tailored to meet the needs of the department announcing the vacancy.
Interviews conducted with Personnel Analyst in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources and with Administrative Assistants confirm that the lack of formal procedures for analyzing jobs does pose some significant problems for the Administrative Assistant Classification. However, there are no immediate plans within the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources to develop formal job analysis procedures to address these problems.
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the fact that the lack of formal job analysis procedures results in not only the problems identified in this study, but has equally affected the efficient utilization of human resources, the following recommendations are made, in order to hopefully address the existing problems in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources:

(1) Formal procedures for analyzing jobs should be developed for use in the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resources. These procedures should be utilized by each Personnel Analyst.

(2) Job analyses should be conducted on a consistent and regular basis and the resulting data should be used to update the job information concerning the Administrative Assistant Classification (and other classifications as well) and the respective job descriptions and specifications.

(3) Increased efforts should be made to recruit qualified individuals from outside Atlanta City Government to fill Administrative Assistant vacancies.

(4) The classification title, "Administrative Assistant," should be changed to Office Manager in order to be more reflective of the actual job duties.
APPENDIX A

LOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITIONS
## LOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITIONS

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<tr>
<th>BUREAU/DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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APPENDIX B

CHARACTERISTICS OF OCCUPANTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITIONS
CHARACTERISTICS OF OCCUPANTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITIONS

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<thead>
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<td>Sociology</td>
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APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you feel the title Administrative Assistant is an adequate title for your position? Please explain your answer.

2. Do you feel that the job description for your position accurately describes your current job duties? Please explain your answer.

3. What problems, if any, do you see with the Administrative Assistant Classification?
APPENDIX D

MANAGERIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC BRANCH
ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION SERIES
CLASS TITLE: ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT I

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF CLASS:

Purpose: Assists in the administration of departmental programs, services and operations; and performs related work as required.

Supervision given and provided: Under general supervision of an administrative officer such as a bureau director or division chief; supervises clerical personnel such as Stenographer II or Clerk III and other assigned personnel.

Products of work: Correspondence, memoranda, reports, work plans.

EXAMPLES OF TASKS PERFORMED WITHIN CLASS: (Any one position may not include all of the tasks listed, nor do the examples necessarily include all of the tasks performed.)

Primary Tasks: As assigned, assists with budget preparation, compilation and presentation; analyzes budgetary expenditure and makes recommendations; handles routine purchasing requests; maintains stockroom inventories; schedules facilities and keeps activity and usage records; maintains capital and/or maintenance contract records assisting in coordination of work and approving payments; audits invoices and financial statements; reconciles bank accounts; does relatively simple cost analyses; inspects facilities and equipment to see if in good operating condition; supervises contract cleaning work; assists in departmental personnel administration, processing applicants, maintaining staffing controls, placement and transfer; handles special projects and functions for meetings, events and celebrations; maintains statistical records relating to traffic engineering and prepares variety of technical reports thereon; supervises clerical staff and day-to-day office administrative work; prepares billings, invoices and charges for services; prorates costs and allocates proportionate shares of expenses; prepares annual report; maintains variety of records, statistics, reports and information for departmental use; prepares correspondence, memorandums and reports; may assist in departmental public information program.

Occasional Tasks: Acts for supervisor in supervisor's absence, handling and directing assignments.

Equipment operated: Adding machine; calculator; typewriter.

QUALIFICATIONS OF CLASS:

Education: Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in business or public administration, political science, industrial management or related field; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Skills, knowledge and abilities: Good knowledge of modern principles and practices of business and public administration; good knowledge of general business procedures; some knowledge of standard methods and techniques of administrative analysis.

Ability to speak and write clearly and concisely; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others.

Special Requirements: None.

TRAINING:

No formal training program.
CLASS TITLE: ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT II

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF CLASS:

Purpose: Assists in the administration of departmental services, programs and operations; and performs related work as required.

Supervision given and received: Under direction of an administrative officer such as a bureau director or division chief; supervises clerical personnel such as Stenographer II or Clerk III and other assigned personnel.

Products of work: Correspondence; analytical reports, memoranda, project files.

EXAMPLES OF TASKS PERFORMED WITHIN CLASS: (Any one position may not include all of the tasks listed, nor do the examples necessarily include all of the tasks performed.)

Primary Tasks: Directs varied administrative services, including clerical, bookkeeping, office machine maintenance, building maintenance and utilization; budget preparation and purchasing; supervises payroll and routine personnel transactions; participates in recruitment of personnel, placement and transfers; supervises work of subordinate technical and clerical employees; reviews work methods and initiates changes to improve effectiveness; studies various administrative procedures, methods and processes and recommends improvements; monitors departmental activities through reports, inspections and meetings with operating personnel; writes and prepares reports, memoranda and correspondence; prepares specifications for equipment usage and maintenance records; sets up and administers public auctions; assists in management of surplus property; maintains accounts payable records, purchase orders and appropriation accounts; prepares annual reports, brochures and other descriptive literature; attends meetings and conferences as a representative of the agency; coordinates dedications and groundbreaking ceremonies; supervises the technical and operational activities of a division during evening shift.

Equipment operated: Adding machine, calculator, typewriter.

Working conditions: Not adverse.

QUALIFICATIONS OF CLASS:

Education: Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in business or public administration, political science, industrial management or related field; and

Experience: One year of general administrative experience including experience in at least one of the following specializations: budget analysis and control, management level general administrative procedures, purchasing and inventory control, personnel services, or the analysis and implementation of systems and procedures; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Knowledge, skills and abilities: Good knowledge of modern principles and practices of business and public administration, including finance and accounting, data processing, purchasing, personnel administration and maintenance services; good knowledge of standard methods and techniques of administrative analysis; some knowledge of governmental services and programs.

Analytical ability; ability to speak and write clearly and concisely; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others.

Special Requirements: None

TRAINING: No formal training program.
CLASS TITLE: ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT III

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF CLASS:

Purpose: Performs responsible work of considerable difficulty in assisting in the administration of departmental services, programs and operations; supervises professional and technical administrative staff; and performs related work as required.

Supervision Received and Provided: Under direction of Department Head, Bureau Director, or Commissioner; supervises administrative, technical and clerical personnel such as Administrative Assistants II and I, Storekeepers and clerks.

Products of Work: Production reports, work status reports, communications, memoranda, management studies, ordinances and resolutions, Council Committee agenda and follow up, budgets.

EXAMPLES OF TASKS PERFORMED WITHIN CLASS: (Any one position may not include all of the tasks listed, nor do the examples necessarily include all of the tasks performed.)

Primary Tasks: Assists in the direction and administration of important functions and departmental activities, such as study, preparation and presentation of large grant requests, the organization, staffing, and budgeting of programs and services, the supervision of departmental administrative procedures; studies, analyses and prepares reports and communications on departmental affairs; organizes and directs, through subordinates, clerical and office management functions; handles day-to-day administration of departmental affairs; participates in discussions, conferences and routine meetings with City officials and other governmental representatives relative to planning, development and implementation of departmental programs; represents department as requested; maintains variety of operating, financial and/or confidential records; prepares agendas for Council Committees and provides follow up.

Occasional Tasks: Answers inquiries; assists in the absence of supervisor.

Equipment Operated: Adding machine, calculator; typewriter.

Working Conditions: Not adverse.

QUALIFICATIONS OF CLASS:

Education: Graduation from college or university with a bachelor's degree in business or public administration, political science, industrial management or a related field; and

Experience: Two years of general administrative experience including experience in at least one of the following specializations: budget analysis and control, direction of management level general administrative procedures, purchasing and inventory control, personnel services, or the analysis and implementation of systems and procedures; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: Considerable knowledge of modern principles and practices of business and public administration, including finance and accounting, data processing, purchasing, personnel administration and maintenance services; considerable knowledge of standard methods and techniques of administrative analysis; good knowledge of governmental services and programs. Considerable analytical ability; ability to speak and write clearly and concisely; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others.

Special Requirements: None.

TRAINING: No formal training program.
CLASS TITLE: ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT IV

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF CLASS:

Purpose: Performs very responsible work of considerable difficulty in developing, coordinating and assisting in the administration of municipal services and programs; and performs related work as required.

Supervision Received and Provided: Under direction of top management officials such as a Commissioner or Bureau Directors; supervises Administrative Assistants and other technical and clerical personnel such as Personnel Assistants, Storekeepers, Clerks, Stenographers and Typists.

Products of Work: Budget presentations, cost benefit analyses.

EXAMPLES OF TASKS PERFORMED WITHIN CLASS: (Any one position may not include all of the tasks listed, nor do the examples necessarily include all of the tasks performed.)

Primary Tasks: Supervises technical staff responsible for managerial systems analysis, financial analysis, research and planning, safety and training, performance standards, budget preparation, and accounting work; studies proposals, existing services, applicable ordinances, codes and statutes and other factors pertaining to the discussion, study and formulation of important policies and programs affecting city services; initiates grant requests and establishes contact with Federal, State or private organizations; reviewing or granting aid for municipal projects; plans and carries out assigned administrative projects for city managers, promotes and supports low income housing developments; supervises City Services Coordinator staff; investigates a variety of problems, complaints and proposals at the request of the Mayor; carries out long-term administrative analyses of city services to assess effectiveness; represents the City as requested; participated in discussions, conferences and meetings with business, community and governmental representatives relative to all facets of urban government; writes correspondence, memoranda, reports; speaks before groups.

Occasional Tasks: Prepares administrative manuals; performs internal management analysis.

Equipment Operated: Calculator.

Working Conditions: Not adverse.

QUALIFICATIONS OF CLASS:

Education: Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in business or public administration, political science, industrial management or related fields; and

Experience: Three years of general administrative experience including experience in at least one of the following specializations: budget analysis and control, direction of management level general administrative procedures, purchasing and inventory control, personnel services, or the analysis and implementation of systems and procedures; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: Considerable knowledge of modern principles and practices of business and public administration, including finance and accounting, data processing, purchasing, personnel administration and maintenance services; considerable knowledge of standard methods and techniques of administrative analysis; considerable knowledge of governmental services and programs.

Considerable analytical ability; ability to speak and write clearly and concisely; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others.

Special Requirements: None.

TRAINING:

No formal training program.
APPENDIX E

CLASSIFICATION HELD PRIOR TO MOVEMENT INTO
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION
CLASSIFICATION HELD PRIOR TO MOVEMENT INTO
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION

<table>
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


City of Atlanta Personnel Board. City of Atlanta 1940 Annual Report. Atlanta: City of Atlanta Personnel Board, 1940.


