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Graduate Employability, Human Development And The Fourth Industrial Revolution: Tracing The Career Paths Of Sociology Alumnus At The University Of Johannesburg

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Graduate unemployment is rapidly becoming a rising concern in South Africa. Graduates tend to experience obstacles during the employment phase largely due to the lack of required labour market skills. While the envisaged fourth industrial revolution (4IR) is perceived to promote unemployment for soft-skilled professions, it is widely applauded by highly skilled technological careers. Given the broad career and employment possibilities of Sociology, the aim of this study is to provide an advanced understanding into the experiences of former Sociology graduates with an advanced qualification in the labour market. This article trace the career paths of 130 Sociology alumnus who completed an honour's degree in Sociology between 2013 and 2017 at the University of Johannesburg. Data was collected through qualitative emailed questionnaires. Research participants were either unemployed graduates or recently employed graduates. The findings reveal important insights into (a) their level of employment, (b) the value of an honours degree in Sociology to find employment and (c) preparedness for technological aspects required in their current employment. The findings have important implications for educational institutions and companies to consider possible solutions to resolve the causes of graduate unemployment. The findings also contribute to a better understanding of the skills needed to better prepare current honours students in Sociology for the fourth industrial revolution and how this may advance youth development. It provides a rich platform for further studies and replication in other sectors, especially within the African region.

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