

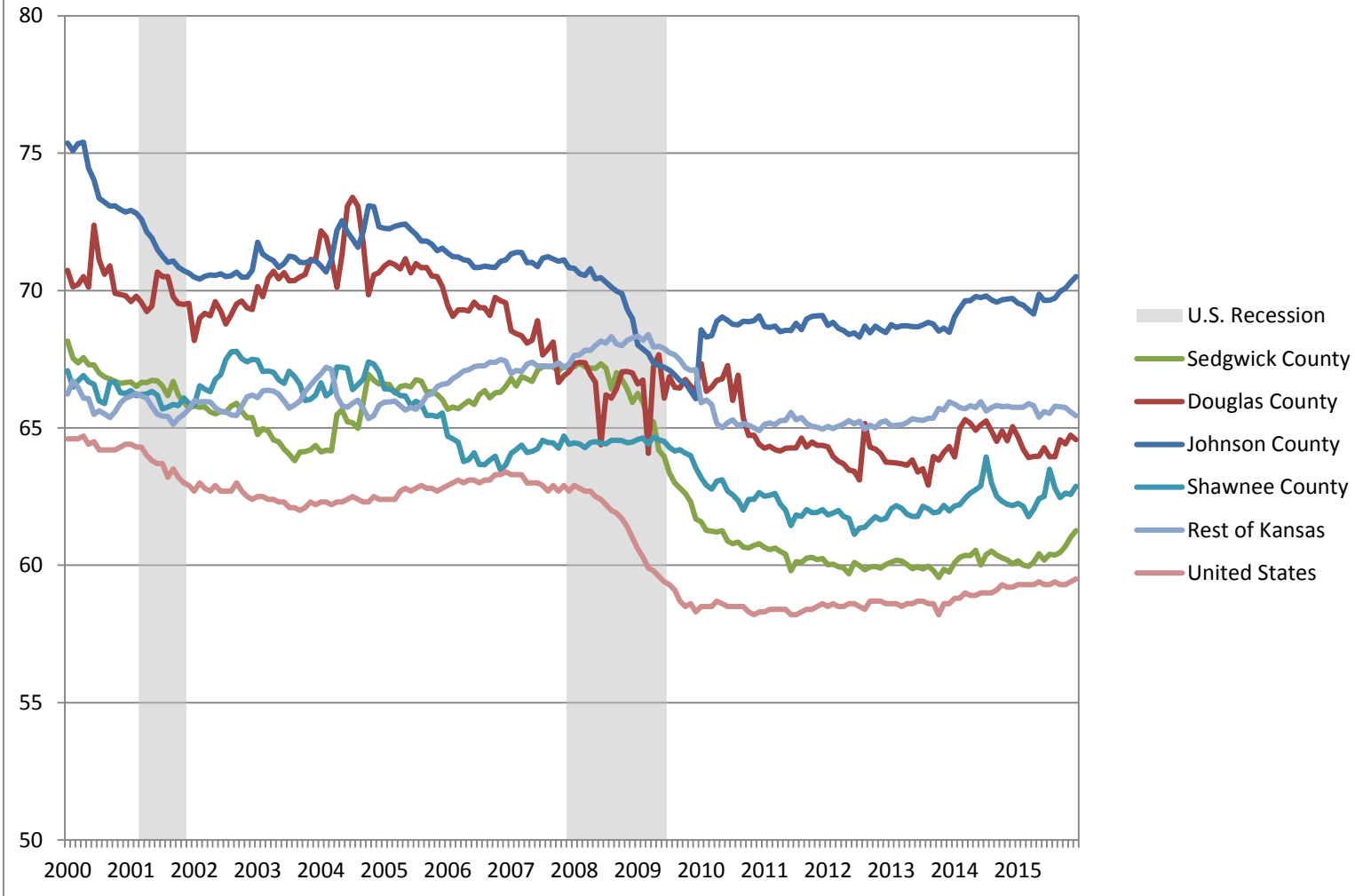
Employment-Population Ratio across Kansas

The employment-population ratio has varied significantly across different areas in Kansas over the last fourteen years. Some counties have seen sharp declines, while others have been slowly growing. The employment-population ratio is a measure of labor market strength; it is calculated by dividing the number of employed workers in an area by the total civilian non-institutionalized population aged 16 and over in that region. Typically, the employment-population ratio will decline in recessionary periods and increase during expansionary periods.

The graph below presents the employment-population ratio for Sedgwick County, Johnson County, Douglas County, Shawnee County, and an aggregated line for all other Kansas counties. United States recessionary periods are highlighted in grey.

- All four Kansas counties included below have higher employment-population ratios than the United States average for this period. While the ideal employment-population ratio depends on a variety of characteristics, such as the demographic makeup of the region and fraction of the workforce that is retired, a higher employment-population ratio is generally better for an economy since it means more of the population is working in the labor force.
- Sedgwick County's employment-population ratio had the largest drop during the 2008 recession of any population center in Kansas, dropping 8.9 percentage points, and has recovered 1.1 percentage points since it reached its trough in 2014.
- Johnson County has recovered strongly from the 2008 recession, with an employment-population ratio in 2015 that was only 2 percentage points lower than its pre-recession peak. Johnson County has consistently had the highest employment-population ratio of the major population centers in Kansas.
- Douglas County has experienced a long-term decline in its employment-population ratio since 2000. In 2014 and 2015, the ratio has remained relatively flat.
- Shawnee County's employment-population ratio has had the least variation since 2000. It experienced minimal decline in the 2008 recession, remaining relatively constant since then.
- The rest of Kansas, outside of the major population centers, has maintained a largely constant employment-population ratio since the recession. The level of the ratio is very similar to the pre-recessionary period from 2002 to 2005. From 2005 to 2008 the employment-population ratio rose, and then following the recession it returned to the 2002 to 2005 level.

Employment-Population Ratio for Major Kansas Population Centers



Methodology

The employment-population ratio is calculated by dividing the number of civilian employed workers by the civilian non-institutionalized population, ages 16 and over, in a region. For this study, the source for the number of civilian employed workers is the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). The source for the civilian non-institutionalized population data is the U.S. Census Bureau's annual population estimates.