

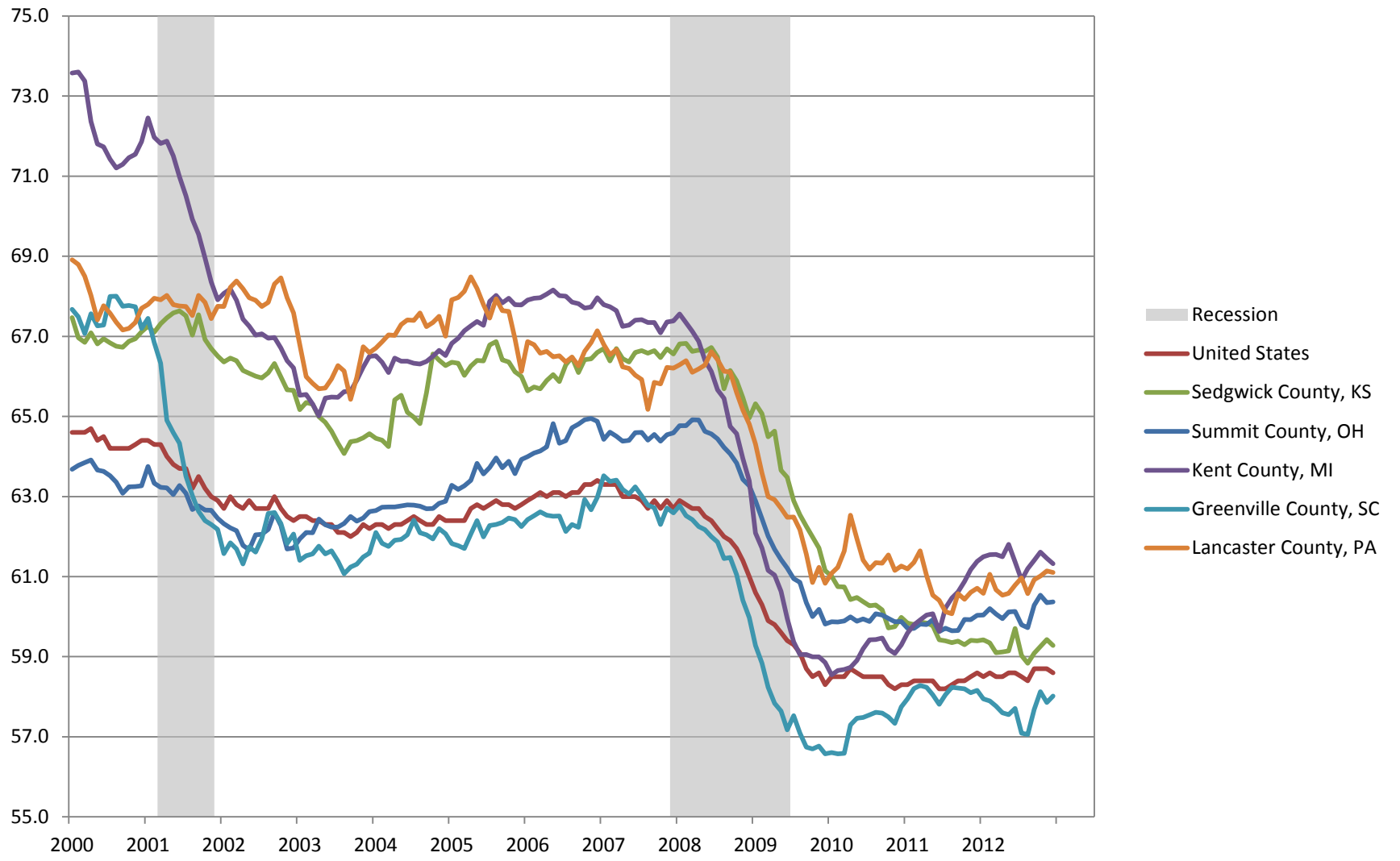
## Employment-Population Ratio in Wichita and Peer Cities

Wichita and similar cities have seen large changes in the employment-population ratio over the last decade. Many have been more strongly affected by the 2008 recession than the rest of the United States. 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 increase during expansionary periods and decline during recessionary periods.

Figure 1, below, presents the employment-population ratio for Sedgwick County, KS, home of Wichita; Summit County, OH, home of Akron; Kent County, MI, home of Grand Rapids; Greenville County, SC, home of Greenville; Lancaster County, PA, home of Lancaster; and the United States. United States recessionary periods are highlighted in grey.

- Each of these five counties experienced a decline in the employment-population ratio during the 2008 recession, but only Kent and Greenville counties saw sizable declines in their ratios during the 2001 recession. Sedgwick County experienced a three percentage point decline in its ratio in the year after the 2001 recession ended, but only a small decrease during that recession.
- The average decline in the employment-population ratio among these counties, due to the 2008 recession, was roughly six percentage points.
- Sedgwick County experienced the largest drop in its employment-population ratio from January 2008 to December 2012. Kent County had a larger initial decline from January 2008 to January 2010, but has since recovered some from that drop.
- Sedgwick County continued to decline longer after the official end of the 2008 recession than any of the four peer counties.
- Greenville County was the only county among these five to experience a larger drop following the 2001 recession than the 2008 recession. Lancaster County was the only county to see an increase in its employment-population ratio during the 2001 recession.
- Sedgwick County had the second largest decline among these counties in its employment-population ratio from 2000 to 2012. Kent County experienced the largest decline.
- Kent County was the only county among these five to have a substantial increase in the employment-population ratio after the 2008 recession. The other counties' employment-population ratios have mostly remained constant, while Sedgwick County's has fallen.

# Figure 1: Employment-Population Ratio in Selected Peer Counties & US



## **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.