

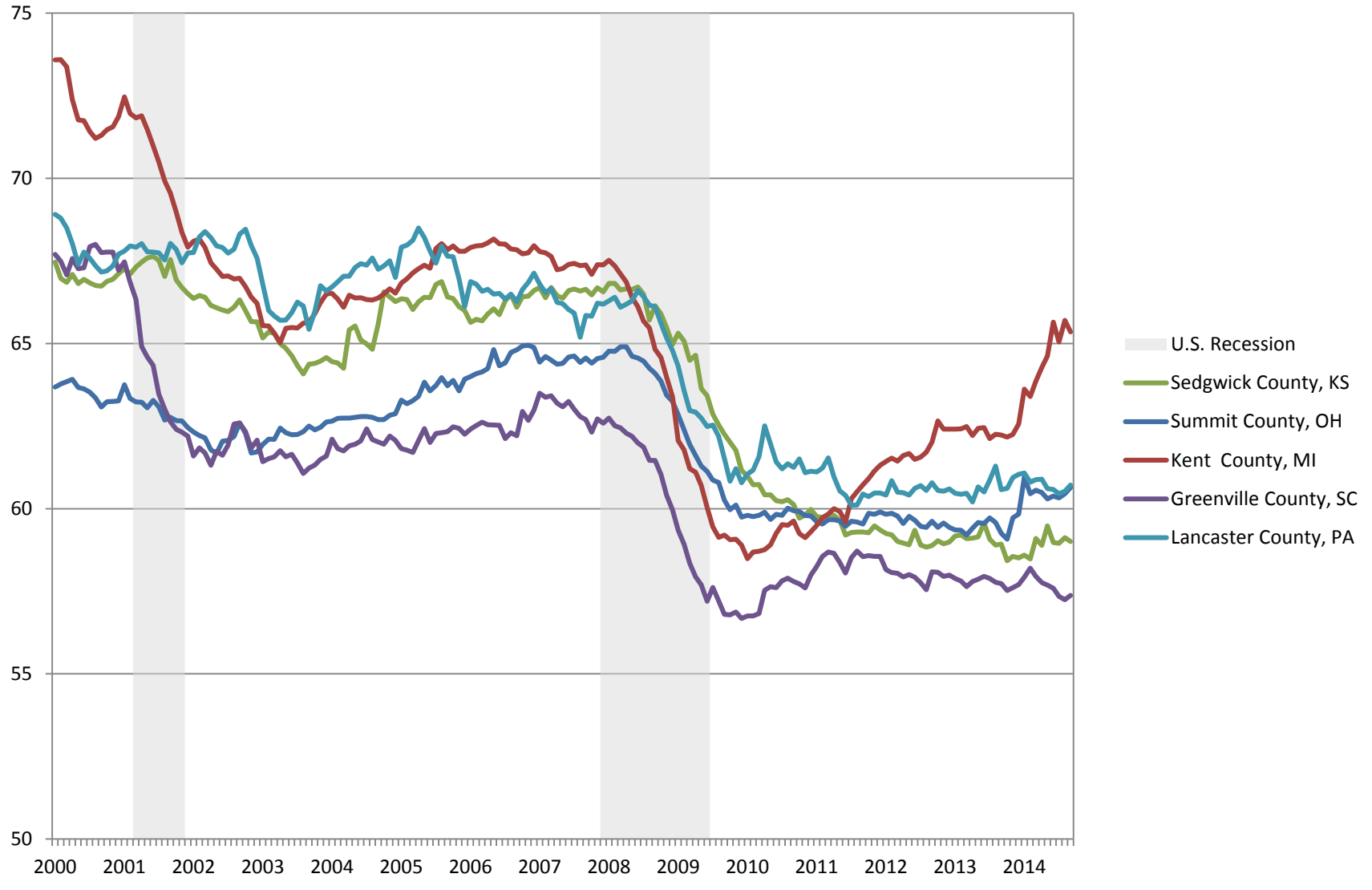
## Employment-Population Ratio in Wichita and Peer Cities

Wichita and similar cities have seen large changes, mostly declines, in their 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.

- All five counties experienced a decline in their employment-population ratios in both the 2001 and 2008 recessions. In both 2001 and 2008, Kent County, Michigan, experienced the largest drop in their employment-population ratio. Summit County, Ohio, had the least affected employment-population ratio among these five counties in both recessions.
- 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 2014, a contraction of 7.8 percentage points. Kent County had a larger initial decline from January 2008 to January 2010 of 8.1 percentage points, 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. In 2014, Sedgwick County's ratio began to increase consistently for the first time since the recession.
- In 2014, Greenville County was the only county to experience a decline in their employment-population ratio. The other counties' ratios grew by 0.2 to 0.5 percentage point throughout 2014.

**Figure 1: Employment-Population Ratio for Select Peer Counties**



## **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.