

Employment-Population Ratio across Kansas

2016 Update

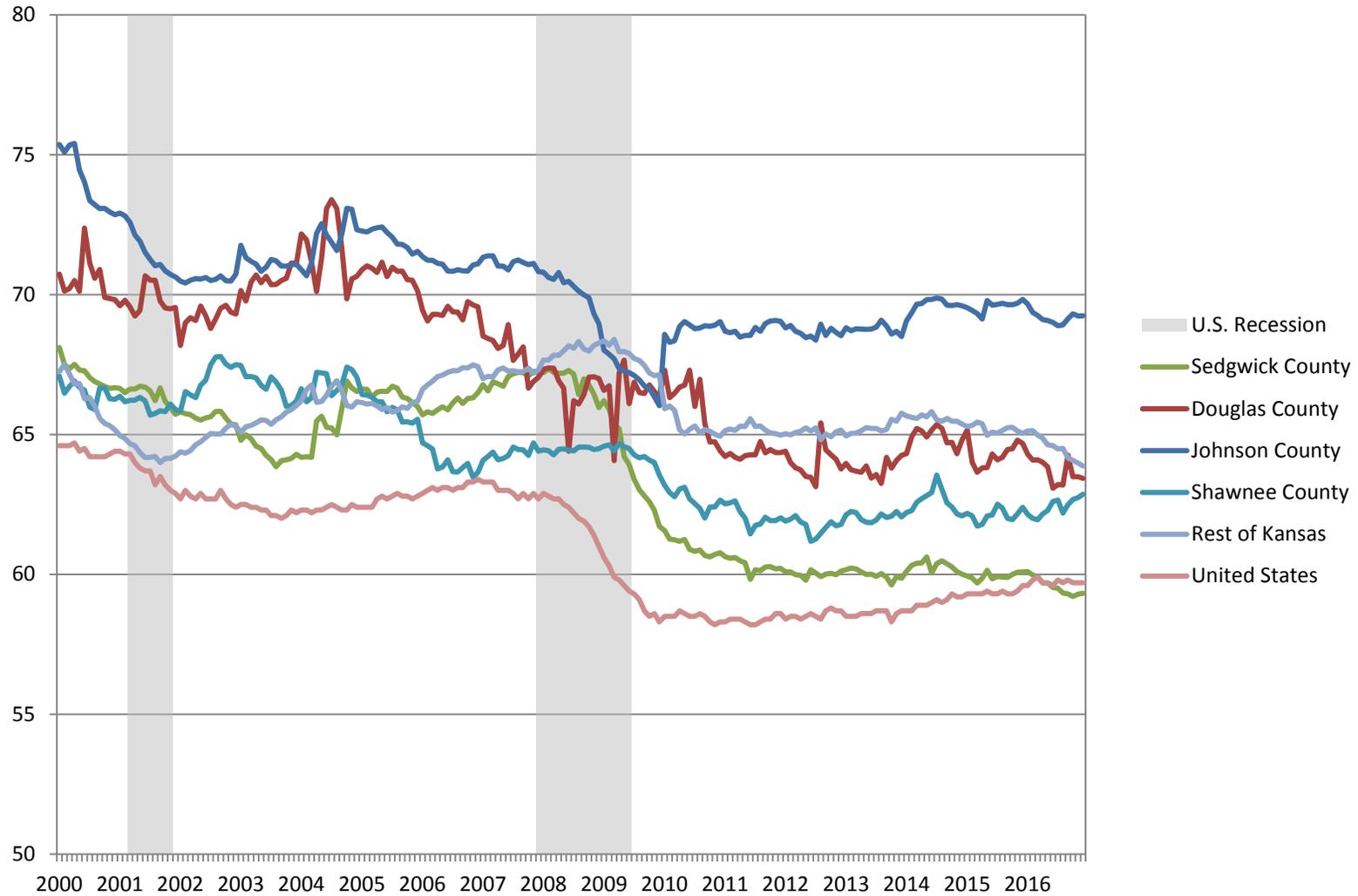
The employment-population ratio is a measure of labor market strength; it is calculated by dividing the number of employed workers in an area by the total civilian non-institutionalized population aged 16 and over in that region. Typically, the employment-population ratio will decline in recessionary periods and increase during expansionary periods. 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.

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.

- All four Kansas counties included below have higher employment-population ratios than the United States average for much of this period. Sedgwick County's employment-population ratio dropped 7.9 percentage points from 2008 to 2010, and since 2010 has dropped an additional 0.5 percentage points.
- Johnson County has recovered strongly from the 2008 recession, with an employment-population ratio in 2016 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 2004. Since the 2008 recession, its employment-population ratio has continued to modestly decline, with a 0.2 percentage point decline in 2016.
- Shawnee County experienced the smallest decline in its ratio during the 2008 recession, and since its 2012 trough, the employment-population ratio has increased by 1.6 percentage points.
- The rest of Kansas, outside of the major population centers, experienced a sharp decline in its ratio in 2016, declining 1.1 percentage points. Following the 2008 recession, the ratio had remained approximately flat from 2010 to 2015.

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.

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.