3. GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED IN THE PRCS

Data from the Puerto Rico Community Survey (PRCS) are tabulated for a variety of geographic areas ranging from the Commonwealth to municipios, barrios, and subbarios. For reporting purposes, Puerto Rico (like the United States as a whole) is subdivided into two main types of geographic areas, legal and statistical. Municipios are the primary legal divisions of Puerto Rico. For data presentation purposes, the U.S. Census Bureau treats a municipio as the equivalent of a county in the United States.

The Census Bureau recognizes barrios and barrios-pueblo as the primary legal divisions of municipios. These entities are similar to the minor civil divisions used for reporting data in 29 states of the United States. Subbarios are subdivisions of barrios and barrios-pueblo.
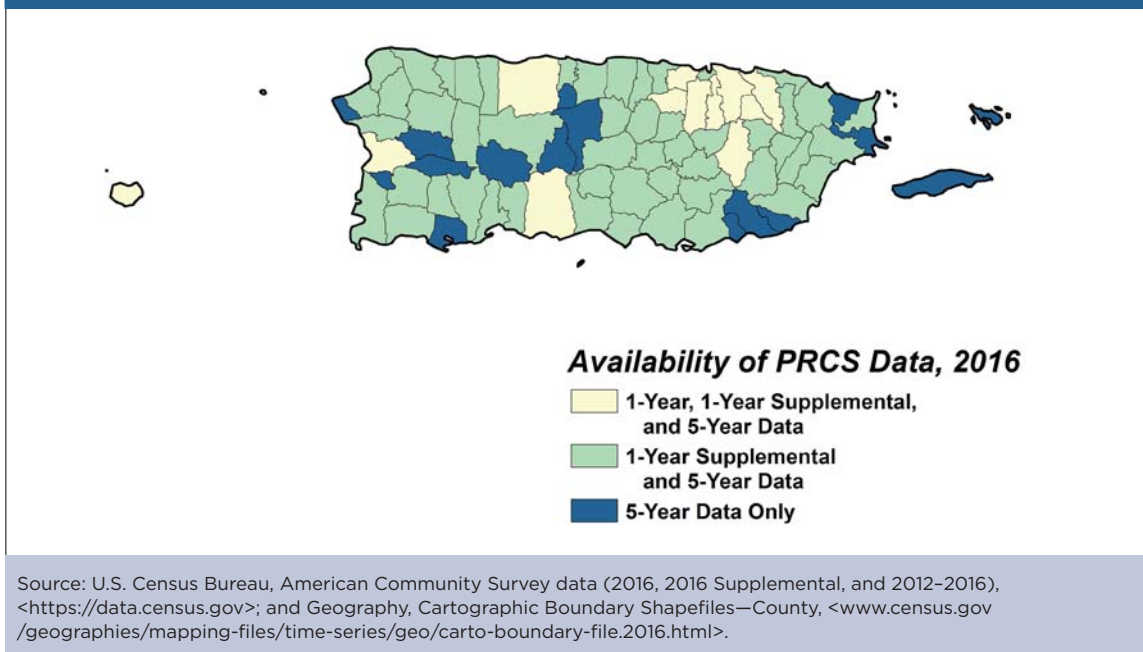
Statistical areas in Puerto Rico are defined by the Census Bureau in partnership with officials in Puerto Rico and include areas like metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, urban areas, census tracts, and zonas urbanas. The primary purpose of statistical areas is to tabulate and present decennial census and ACS/PRCS data. An example of a statistical area is the San Juan-Carolina-Caguas Metropolitan Statistical Area.

There are no incorporated places in Puerto Rico; instead, the Census Bureau provides data for two types of "census designated places": zonas urbanas, representing the governmental center of each municipio, and comunidades, representing other settlements.

Figures 3.1 through 3.4 display sample maps of several key geographic areas available through the PRCS: municipios, Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), comunidades, and census tracts.
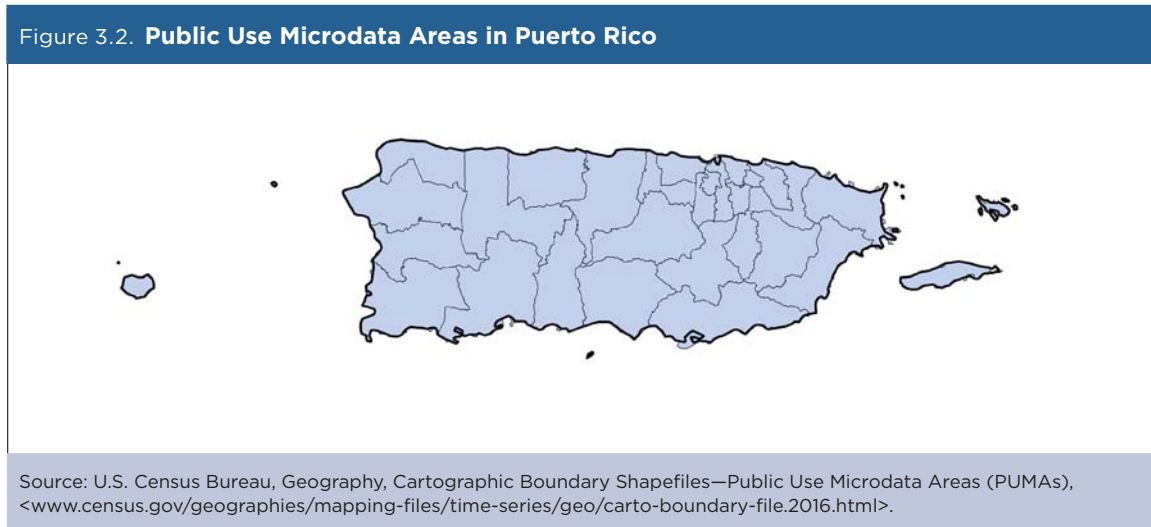
There are 78 municipios in Puerto Rico, all of which are functioning governmental entities. PRCS 1-year estimates are currently available for 11 of Puerto Rico's 78 municipios—those with populations of 65,000 or more in 2016 (see Figure 3.1). Puerto Rico has 62 municipios with populations of at least 20,000 people that receive 1-year Supplemental Estimates. The 16 municipios in Puerto Rico with fewer than 20,000 people only receive 5-year estimates.

Figure 3.1. **Municipios in Puerto Rico by Availability of PRCS Estimates in 2016**

Availability of PRCS Data, 2016
- 1-Year, 1-Year Supplemental, and 5-Year Data
- 1-Year Supplemental and 5-Year Data
- 5-Year Data Only

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey data (2016, 2016 Supplemental, and 2012–2016), <https://data.census.gov>; and Geography, Cartographic Boundary Shapefiles—County, <www.census.gov /geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/carto-boundary-file.2016.html>.
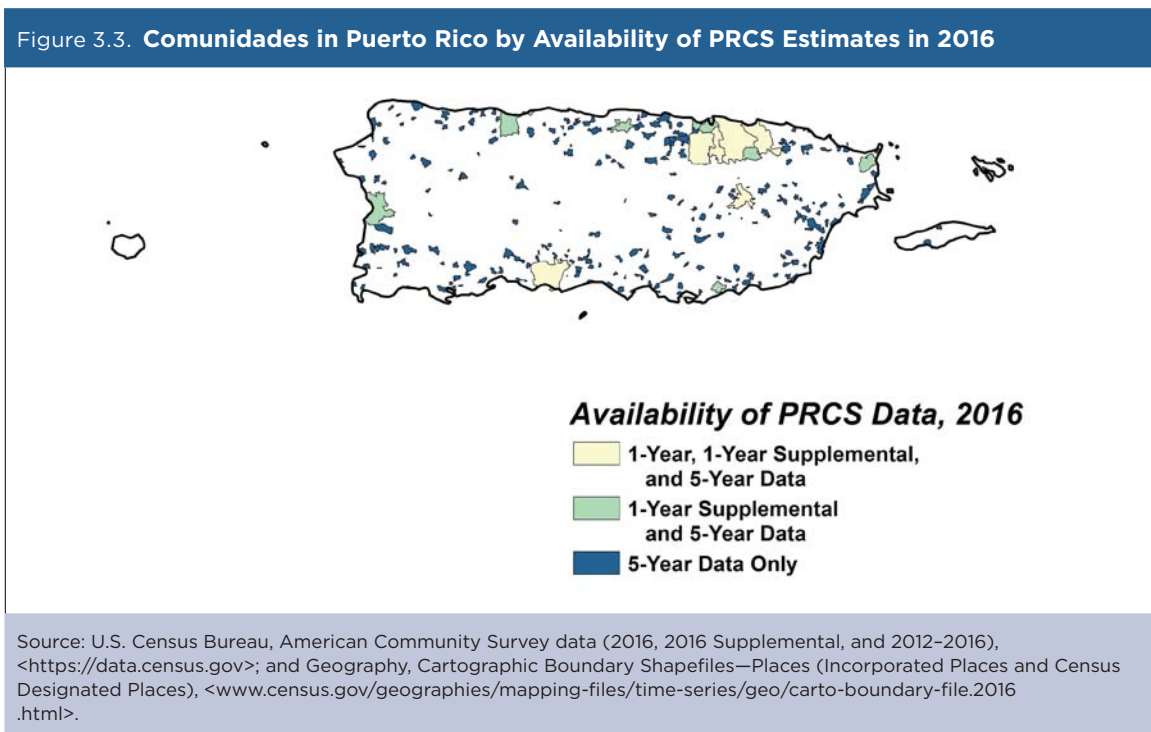
As with each state, the Census Bureau works with the Puerto Rico State Data Center to divide Puerto Rico into a series of PUMAs with minimum populations of 100,000. PUMAs are constructed based on municipio and census tract boundaries. Typically, municipios with large populations are subdivided into multiple PUMAs, while PUMAs in more rural areas are made up of groups of adjacent municipios. PUMAs defined in Puerto Rico for the 2010 Census and beyond nest within the boundaries of the 11 municipio-based planning regions used to tabulate and disseminate Economic Census data for Puerto Rico.
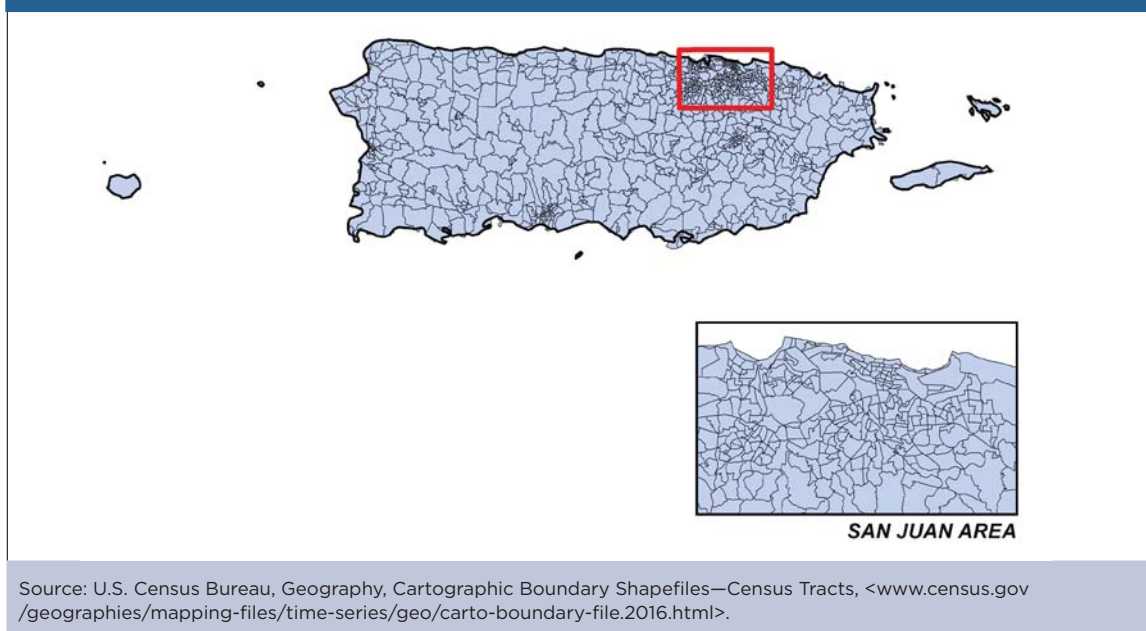
Puerto Rico's PUMAs are shown below in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2. **Public Use Microdata Areas in Puerto Rico**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Geography, Cartographic Boundary Shapefiles—Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), <www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/carto-boundary-file.2016.html>.

Puerto Rico also contains 253 census designated places, referred to as "comunidades" and "zonas urbanas." As Figure 3.3 shows, 94 percent of these places have fewer than 20,000 people and thus will receive only 5-year estimates; in contrast, 1-year estimates are available for only six of these places.

Figure 3.3. **Comunidades in Puerto Rico by Availability of PRCS Estimates in 2016**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey data (2016, 2016 Supplemental, and 2012–2016), <https://data.census.gov>; and Geography, Cartographic Boundary Shapefiles—Places (Incorporated Places and Census Designated Places), <www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/carto-boundary-file.2016 .html>.

Census tracts—small subdivisions of counties that typically have between 1,200 and 8,000 residents, with an optimum population of 4,000,—are commonly used to present information for areas approximately the size of neighborhoods. Puerto Rico currently has 945 census tracts (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4. **Census Tracts in Puerto Rico**

SAN JUAN AREA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Geography, Cartographic Boundary Shapefiles—Census Tracts, <www.census.gov /geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/carto-boundary-file.2016.html>.

There are also more than 300 PRCS data tables available for block groups—subdivisions of census tracts—that include between 600 and 3,000 people each. In the PRCS, block groups are the lowest (smallest) level of geography published. Block group data are only available in the PRCS 5-year data products.

For more information about geographic areas covered by PRCS and ACS data, see the Census Bureau's handbook on *Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What All Data Users Need to Know*.[17]

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[17] U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey, Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What All Data Users Need to Know*, <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/handbooks/general.html>.