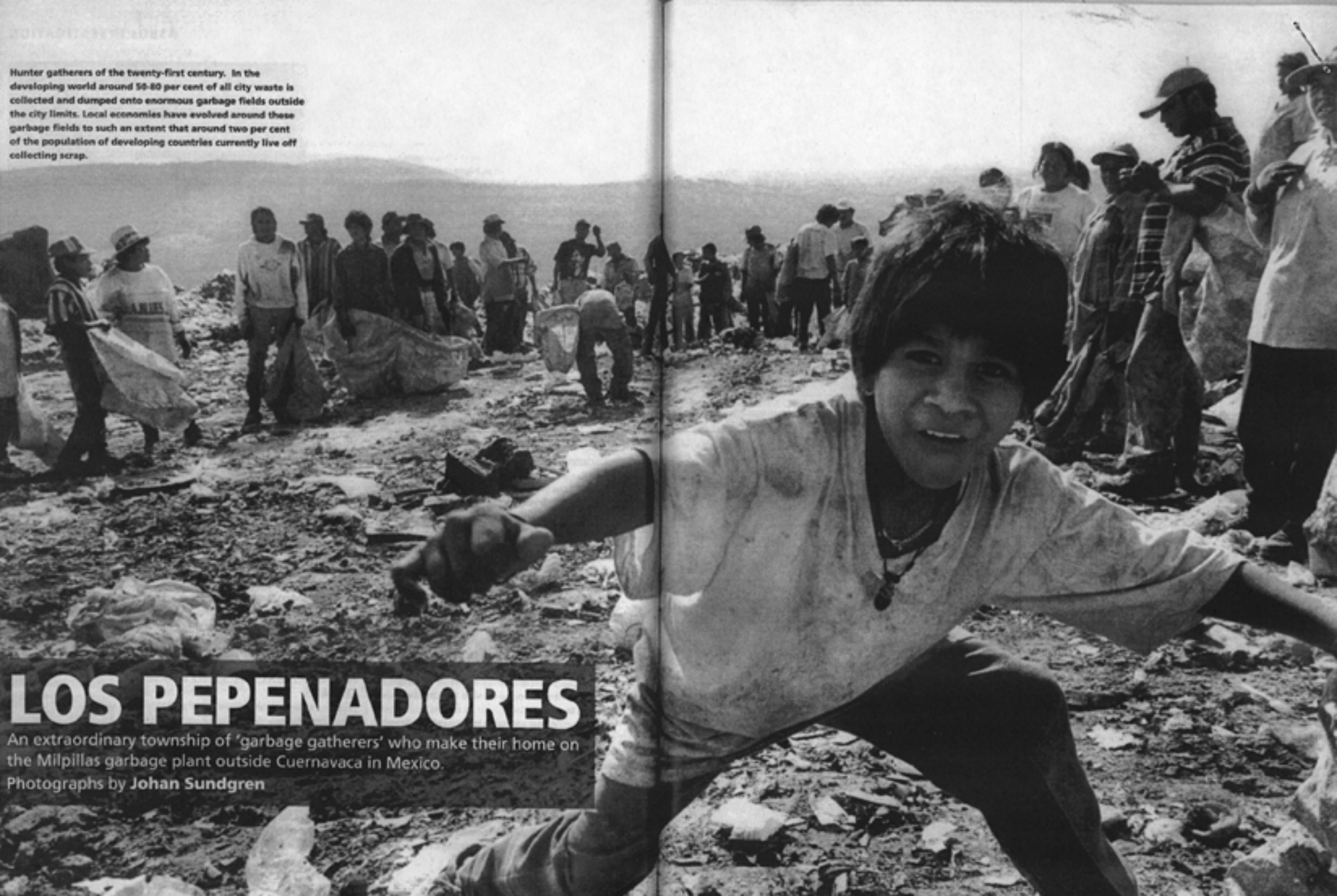
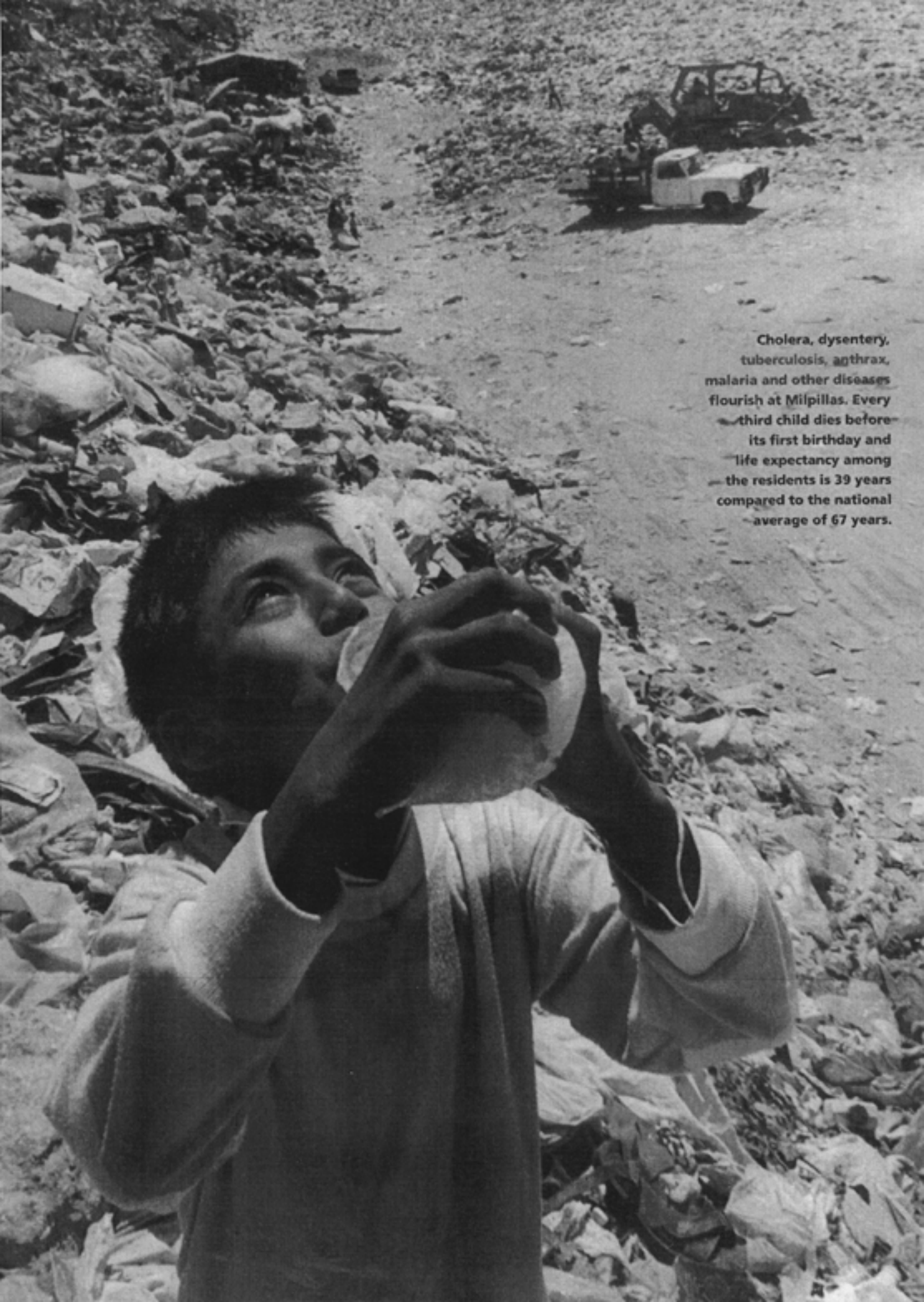


Hunter gatherers of the twenty-first century. In the developing world around 50-80 per cent of all city waste is collected and dumped onto enormous garbage fields outside the city limits. Local economies have evolved around these garbage fields to such an extent that around two per cent of the population of developing countries currently live off collecting scrap.



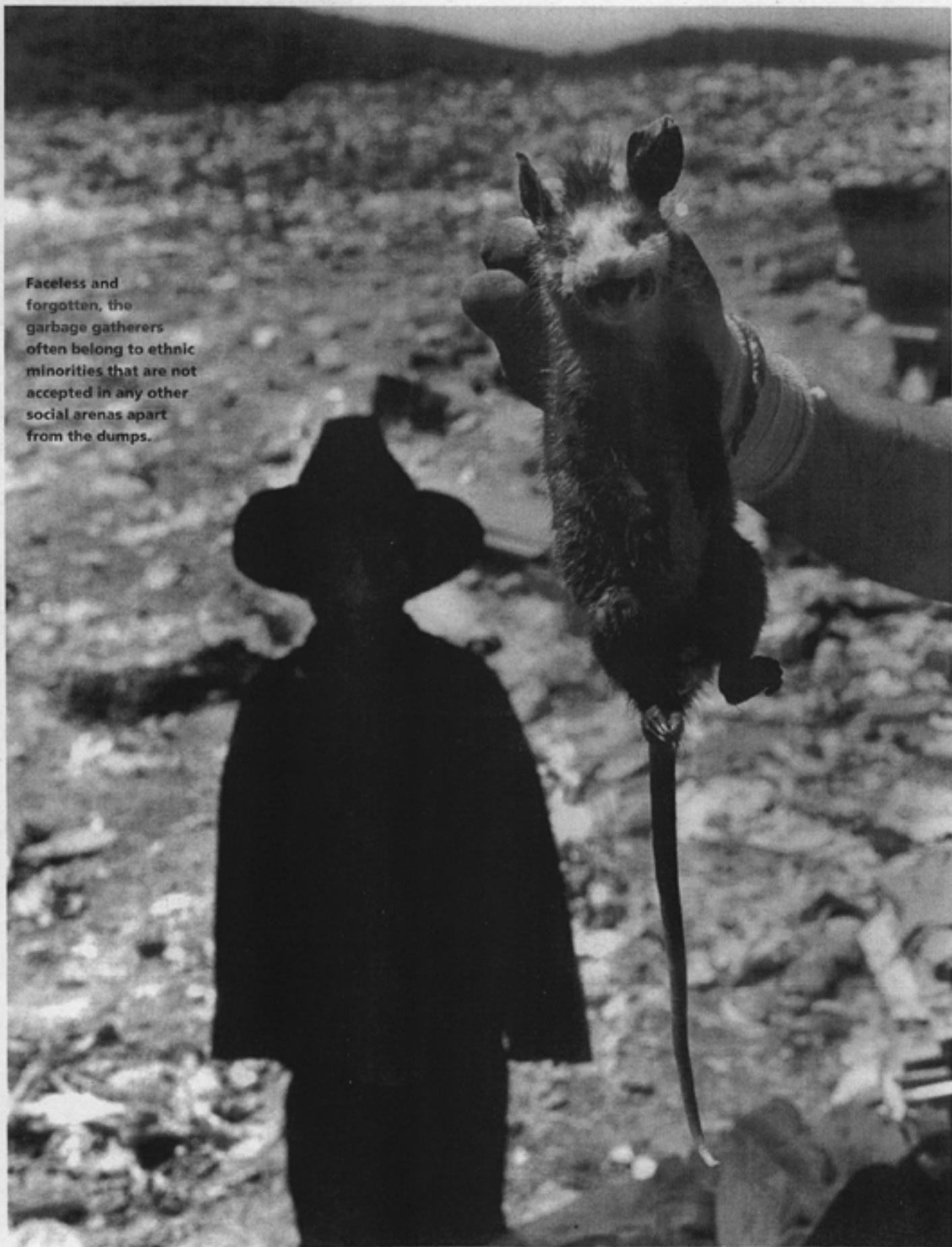
# LOS PEPENADORES

An extraordinary township of 'garbage gatherers' who make their home on the Milpillas garbage plant outside Cuernavaca in Mexico.  
Photographs by Johan Sundgren



Cholera, dysentery, tuberculosis, anthrax, malaria and other diseases flourish at Milpillas. Every third child dies before its first birthday and life expectancy among the residents is 39 years compared to the national average of 67 years.

Faceless and forgotten, the garbage gatherers often belong to ethnic minorities that are not accepted in any other social arenas apart from the dumps.



## LOS PEPENADORES

Bag after bag is collected and sorted. Clothes, shoes and appliances such as irons and kitchen devices as well as bottles and perfumes can all turn a profit. So can scrap metals. The gatherers get four pesos (22 pence) for aluminium, six pesos (33 pence) for copper, five pesos (27 pence) for bronze, and 15 centavos (less than one pence) for a kilo of tin.



**A dead body rests on a frail bunk bed in the middle of the dump with a parasol to shade his head and a tattered cover for his body. Most pepenadores are born and die on the dump.**

