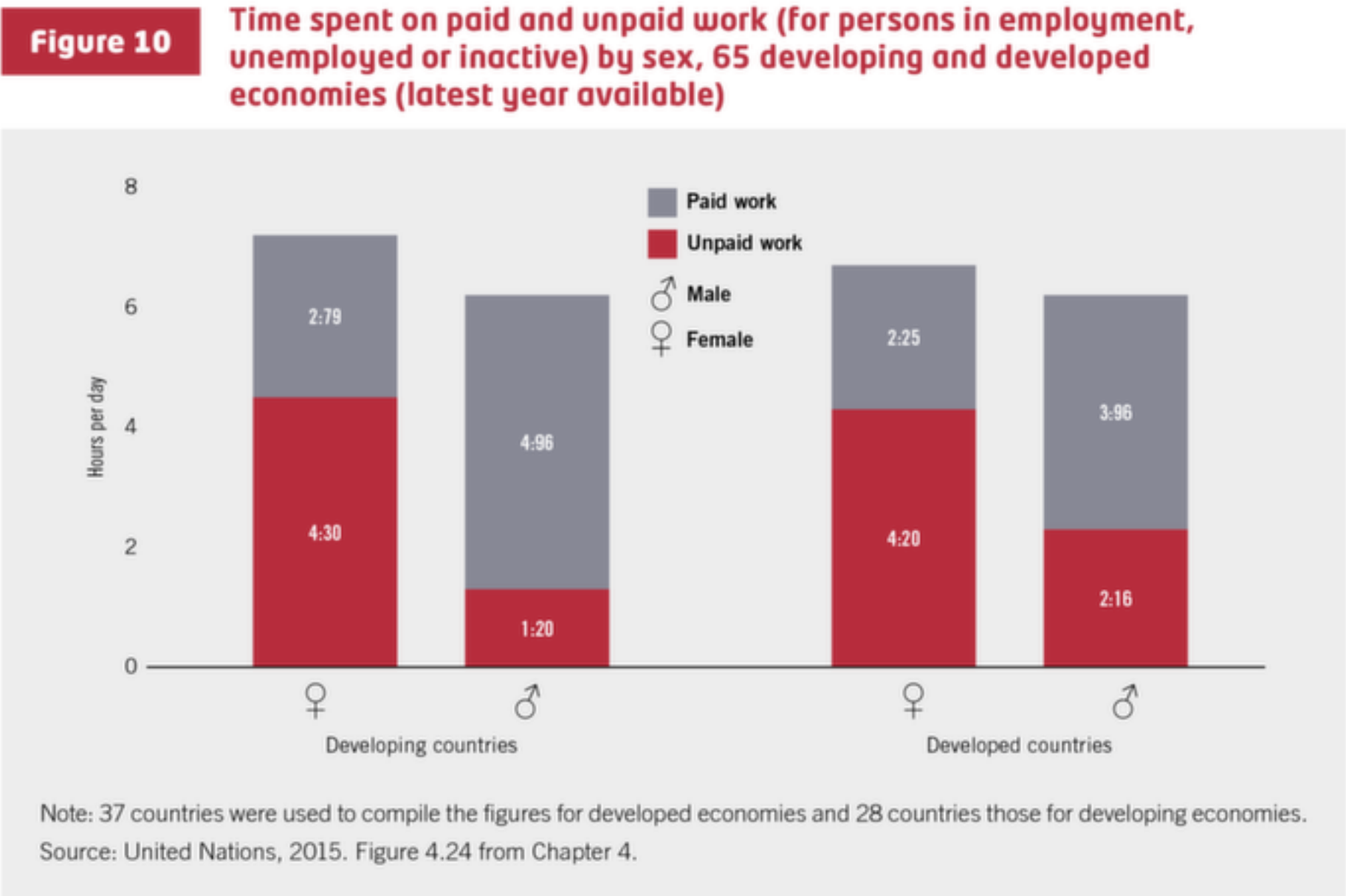


unpaid household and care work than men (see figure 10, dark red). In developed countries, women spend an average of 4 hours and 20 minutes on unpaid care work while men spend 2 hours and 16 minutes per day. In developing countries, women spend 4 hours and 30 minutes per day on unpaid care work compared to 1 hour 20 minutes for men. The reasons for these gender gaps are related to the lack of services and infrastructure to reduce unpaid household and care work, along with gender-based and social norms under which women are considered to be the primary care providers. In particular, in lower-income countries, inadequate access to water supply, sanitation, electricity, roads, safe transportation, health care and other social care services is a key factor in explaining the amount of time spent by women on unpaid work (ADB, 2015b).

Focusing on employed women (either in self-employment or wage and salaried employment), the average working day is even longer. In developed economies employed women work 8 hours and 9 minutes, compared to the 7 hours and 36 minutes worked by men. In developing economies, women in employment spend 9 hours and 20 minutes in paid and unpaid work, whereas men spend 8 hours and 7 minutes in such work (figure 11, United Nations, 2015). This also reflects the results of ILO studies showing that a substantial proportion of wage and salaried workers spend very long hours in paid work (defined as being more than 48 hours per week). As mentioned above, the incidence of very long hours in paid work is also quite high among the self-employed (ILO, 2015c).

Over time, the gender difference in time spent on unpaid work has narrowed (United Nations, 2015). Based on related time-series data from 23 countries and territories on time spent on unpaid work by employed women and men, the gender difference has decreased over time (figure 12).¹⁶ This is mostly due to the reduction in time spent on housework for women, as opposed to significant reductions in their time spent on childcare (ibid.).¹⁷ The reduction in time spent on unpaid work could be attributed to a number of factors, including higher women’s labour force participation, smaller family size, the growing economic capacity of women to outsource domestic work, and the use of time-saving infrastructure and technologies that reduce the time required for fetching water or household tasks. To a lesser extent this reduction is also the result of an increase in the amount of time spent by men on childcare (ibid.).



16. Calculations are based on figures for the earliest and latest years available for Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France (and also Réunion), Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and United States of America. This is based on the dataset compiled by the UN (2015) from Eurostat (2011), OECD (2014), UNECE (2014), UNECLAC (2014).

17. A 2004 study showed that, in 16 countries over the period 1971–1998, time spent on childcare by parents has actually increased over time, although the increase is largely due to the greater amount of time spent in interactive activities such as play, as opposed to mere child-minding (Gauthier et al., 2004).