and grocery shopping, laundry, and housecleaning) is almost double that of men scientists (54 percent versus 28 percent). These tasks exhaust nearly twenty hours a week (as compared with four to five hours a week for more periodic tasks like yard and car care, house repair, and finances), meaning that women take on a significantly larger share of the most time-intensive jobs.1 Men and women also employ others to help with household labor, a point to which we return below.

We examined variations in household labor by partner’s employment status (figure 2). It comes as no surprise that men scientists with stay-at-home partners do the least core housework. The division of labor for academic couples is similar to that of other dual-career couples.

Figure 2
Division of Labor in Scientists’ Homes, by Partner Employment Status

Men scientists with stay-at-home partners do the least core housework. The division of labor for academic couples is similar to that of other dual-career couples.

of core domestic work. Only thirteen women scientists in our sample have a stay-at-home partner, while these women take on proportionately less work than their partners, they still assume a greater share of core tasks than do most men scientists.

Does the division of household labor vary between academic couples (where both partners are academics—and in this sample at least one is a scientist) and other dual-career couples (where one partner is a scientist and one is employed outside the home)? We found few differences between these households. In the main, the woman does substantially more work than her male partner, regardless of the type of couple.

Interestingly, men scientists with academic partners have found their way into the kitchen and currently take on 41 percent of cooking and grocery shopping (figure 2).