Abstract
Most family research has studied intact or first families. However, there is a growing number of remarried families which include children from a previous marriage. In the complex process of family adjustment some common sources of stress have been pointed out connected with the formation of a new family system. The aim of this article is to make a first approach to the experiences of stepfathers and stepmothers, and to the facts that influence their psychological wellbeing and distress within these new family structures. On a first stage of the project, 20 in-depth interviews with stepmothers and stepfathers were carried out for a qualitative analysis. On a second phase, a questionnaire was applied to a sample of 77 stepmothers and stepfathers in order to explore the relationship between some of the most relevant variables in this kind of families.

Keywords
Stepfamilies, Role strain, Marital adjustment, Gender role.