

Sweden is generally considered to be world leading when it comes to equality between men and women. This situation was reached during the seventies, when the position of women was strengthened through a series of political reforms. Among other things, the expansion of daycare, paid paternal leave and improved conditions for single mothers, meant that women no longer were as dependent on their husbands to support the family.

But it wasn't the (mostly male) politicians' keen devotion to equality issues that made it possible for "the Swedish model" to be realized.

The spark that set it off was actually the anger of eight young women in Stockholm, who were tired of the unfair situation and decided to take up the fight with the "house wife trap" and, as they saw it, the slave-like conditions of women's existence.

The film "Mitt liv som rödstrumpa" tells the story of how a few friends managed to force those in power to change their whole political agenda.

Through loud actions in the streets and leaflets, they managed to engage tens of thousands of women who felt the same way, and soon Group 8, as they called themselves, was a nationwide mass movement. Soon they were so many and so loud that the political establishment started to perceive them as a real threat, and they began to take the equality issues seriously. A few years later, all of Group 8's demands were met.

Gunilla Thorgren was one of the original Group 8 members. Today she is 59 years old and a writer. In the film she remembers the overwhelming years in the beginning of the seventies with pride and joy, but also with a certain amount of concern for what her fight has resulted in. What is the situation like for her grown-up daughters today? Has she contributed to putting a double burden on women? Are women now expected to both have a career and take care of the home?

Or as Gunilla has a grown-up daughter tell her mother in the play "Garderoben": "The truth about your famous struggle is that every woman has to work like a man, and at the same time be horny and sweet."

So the Swedish women's movement continues, although the young feminists of today are fighting with different means, and are focusing on different issues than in the seventies. This is also a subject that is covered in "Mitt liv som rödstrumpa".