The tendency to wear out and change is inherent in most materials, but – aside from a few exceptions – has been considered to be undesirable by both the industry and consumers. The work presented in this licentiate thesis suggests that, due to change in some form being an inherent property of textiles, it may be viable to look for alternative ways of designing and perceiving textiles that accept change as one of their qualities.

The experimental work explores change as a quality in textiles from the perspective of the textile material, and examines irreversible changes in textiles from three different perspectives: form, use, and teaching changeability in the field of textile design. Changes in colour, pattern, texture, and structure were explored by developing knitted and woven textiles using materials with pronounced changeable properties, and exposing these to various stimuli, such as outdoor conditions and use in workshops.

The experiments suggest that the combination of material and structure defines how textiles change when exposed to various stimuli. A material's properties define what the textile reacts to and how, while the structure of the textile influences how it changes through the amount and placement of materials. In addition, time and the handling of a textile shape the exact changes that take place.

Designing with changeability as a quality in textiles opens up for alternative possibilities as regards creating expressions, wherein time and change are design variables alongside more traditional qualities, and could encourage a diversity of lifespans and changes over various timescales, better connecting textiles to the properties of their raw materials. This may mean that an alternative method for evaluating quality based on change instead of permanence could be viable, wherein the notion of permanence as a sign of quality in textiles is questioned.