

## **Humanitarian NGOs and Security Management: An Epistemic Community as Engine of Change**

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Over the past decade humanitarian NGOs - defined as not-for-profit non-governmental organizations delivering humanitarian assistance - have changed how they deal with security. Instead of relying on being protected if only they adhere to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence, a lot of NGOs have established an internal organizational security management. Such a process requires that NGOs rethink the principles underlying their work which is not obvious in a sector that is generally proud of its traditions. This paper explains organizational changes within international humanitarian NGOs through the work of an epistemic community composed of dedicated security professionals within the humanitarian community. The analysis thereby contributes to the emerging literature on the redefinition of the concept of epistemic communities (for example Cross 2013) as it was defined especially by Peter Haas (1992a). It demonstrates that identity is crucial to explain the internal cohesion of an epistemic community as well as the acceptance of its authority by external actors.