Organizations as Designed Islands Pasquale Gagliardi Catholic University, Milan, Italy & Secretary General, Giorgio Cini Foundation Venice, Italy

Abstract: The literature and practice of organizational design are mostly based on simplistic conceptions which ignore recent theoretical developments in organizational studies. Conceiving of organizations as 'designed islands', it is argued, can contribute to a more solid theoretical foundation to organization theory, viewed as normative science. Relying on the work of Peter Sloterdijk, who describes the forms of life in space in terms of spheres, the heuristic power of the island metaphor is explored. What can be learnt from the art of isolating in order to construct lived organizational environments is then discussed, and the paradoxical relationship between connection and isolation is highlighted. Keywords: connection, islands, isolation, organization, Sloterdijk, spheres

© 2009 – Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

P. Gagliardi Organizations as Designed Islands PAGE 52 PAGE 51 Island Studies Journal, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2009, pp. 43-52

pasquale.gagliardi@cini.it