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Sommario/riassunto	Patent offices around the world have granted millions of patents to multinational companies. Patent offices are rarely studied and yet they are crucial agents in the global knowledge economy. Based on a study

of forty-five rich and poor countries that takes in the world's largest and smallest offices, Peter Drahos argues that patent offices have become part of a globally integrated private governance network, which serves the interests of multinational companies, and that the Trilateral Offices of Europe, the USA and Japan make developing country patent offices part of the network through the strategic fostering of technocratic trust. By analysing the obligations of patent offices under the patent social contract and drawing on a theory of nodal governance, the author proposes innovative approaches to patent office administration that would allow developed and developing countries to recapture the public spirit of the patent social contract.
