Preface

My engagement with ACP-EU cooperation started as a narrow study on the legal scope of Article XXIV GATT in North-South regional trade agreements and has developed into a philosophical inquiry of the normative nature of ACP-EU relations, with law at the centre of its analysis. The transformative shift from preferential trade to reciprocity has been examined extensively in the literature of political science, international political economy and economics. While this body of scholarship is rich and diverse, ranging from the materialist focus of the rationalist theories to the normative approach of constructivism, I found the literature to be lacking in a critical perspective that conceives of regions as constituted through law. Analysing the regional agreements through a critical legal lens, and drawing insights from both the rationalist and constructivist schools of international political economy, this book offers a fresh perspective on the ACP-EU relationship.

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I have presented some of the ideas contained in this book in a variety of settings over the years. I would particularly like to extend my gratitude to my colleagues and friends in the GIFTA network. Through their constructive yet critical engagement with my work, I have been able to identify the conceptual gaps in the legal analysis and form better connections between the disciplines of law and political economy. I am especially thankful to Sangeeta Khorana, Maria Garcia and Jan Orbie for their support.
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