Are more institutionalized international organizations more effective in mitigating militarized interstate disputes? Realists expect no independent effect of international organizations on such disputes, regardless their level of institutionalization. Liberals, on the other hand, offer several mechanisms by which international organizations may alleviate violent conflict. These mechanisms depend on the institutionalization of these organizations in important ways. I empirically evaluate the claims of these contending perspectives with respect to regional integration arrangements (RIAs). These organizations display a great deal of variation in their institutional design and the implementation thereof. Employing an event count model with a panel-data set up and controlling for several alternative explanations, the empirical analysis indicates that higher levels of regional institutionalization tend to reduce violent conflict at the regional level, but that this effect is rather weak.

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