

1113-47-277

Rolando de Santiago* (rolando-desantiago@uiowa.edu), 14 MacLean Hall, Department of Mathematics, Iowa City, IA 52242, and **Ionut Chifan** and **Thomas Sinclair**. *W** rigidity for products of hyperbolic ICC groups.

Two groups are said to be W^* -equivalent if they give rise to isomorphic von Neumann algebras. We show that if $\Gamma = \Gamma_1 \times \cdots \times \Gamma_n$ is a product of $n \geq 2$ hyperbolic ICC groups that is W^* -equivalent to Λ , then Λ decomposes as an n -fold product as well. This strengthens Ozawa and Popa's unique prime decomposition theorem by removing all assumptions on the target group Λ . This is part one of two talks on this result; the second part will be given by Thomas Sinclair. This is joint work with Ionut Chifan and Thomas Sinclair. (Received August 24, 2015)