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W-rigidity for products of hyperbolic 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 direct product of $n \geq 2$ hyperbolic ICC groups which is W^* -equivalent to Λ , then Λ decomposes as an n -fold direct 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 two of two talks on this result; the first part will be given by Rolando de Santiago. This is joint work with Ionut Chifan and Rolando de Santiago. (Received August 24, 2015)