

Bachelor thesis

# RIGHT-ANGLED COXETER GROUPS ARE RFRS

NICLAS RIST

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Prof. Dr. Claudio Llosa Isenrich

Department of Mathematics

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

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SUPERVISOR: Jprof. Dr. Claudio Llosa Isenrich

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION



Part I

PRELIMINARIES





# 2 | PRELIMINARIES

## 2.1 COXETER GROUPS

First of all, we define the main object of interest we want to study.

**Definition 2.1.1.** Let  $S$  be a set consisting of elements  $s_i$  indexed by an index set  $I$  with  $|I| = n < \infty$ . Let  $(m_{ij}) = M$  be a symmetrical matrix in  $(\mathbb{N} \cup \{\infty\})^{n \times n}$ , where  $m_{ii} = 1$  for all  $i$  and  $m_{ij} \geq 2$  for  $i \neq j$ . Define a group  $W$  via the following presentation:

$$W := \langle S \mid (s_i s_j)^{m_{ij}} = 1 \text{ for all } i, j \in I \rangle.$$

The pair  $(W, S)$  is called a Coxeter System and  $M$  is called the corresponding Coxeter Matrix. A Coxeter group is a group isomorphic to a group  $W$ , corresponding to a Coxeter System  $(W, S)$ . It is generated by the set  $S$ .

In this work we will be particularly interested in a special class of Coxeter groups that we call right-angled. They are defined as follows, by imposing significant constraints on the entries of the Coxeter matrix.

**Definition 2.1.2.** A Coxeter System  $(W, S)$  is right-angled if, for all distinct  $i, j \in I$ , the condition  $m_{ij} \in \{2, \infty\}$  is satisfied. In this context, the group  $W$  is then called a right-angled Coxeter group (RACG).

We give some important examples of Coxeter groups as well as right-angled Coxeter groups.

- Example 2.1.3.**
1. Dihedral groups,  $D_{2m} \cong \langle s_1, s_2 \mid s_1^2 = s_2^2 = 1, (s_1 s_2)^m = 1 \rangle$  are Coxeter groups for all  $m \in \mathbb{N}$ .
  2. The triangle groups,  $\Delta(l, m, n) \cong \langle r, s, t \mid r^2 = s^2 = t^2 = (rs)^l = (st)^m = (tr)^n = 1 \rangle$  with  $l, m$  and  $n$  integers greater or equal to 2 are Coxeter groups.
  3. The infinite Dihedral group,  $D_\infty \cong \langle s, t \mid s^2 = t^2 = 1 \rangle$  is a right-angled Coxeter group.
  4. The free product,  $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} * \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} * \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z} \cong \langle r, s, t \mid r^2 = s^2 = t^2 = 1 \rangle$  is a right-angled Coxeter group.

We can define a special type of subgroup, called a parabolic subgroup, within a Coxeter group  $W$ . These subgroups are constructed from a subset of the index set  $I$ . The definition is as follows:

**Definition 2.1.4.** Let  $(W, S)$  be a Coxeter System as above with finite index set  $I$ , and  $J$  be a subset of the index set  $I$ . The group  $W_J := \langle \{s_j \mid j \in J\} \rangle$ , generated by the  $s_j$  in  $S$  is then called a parabolic subgroup of  $W$ . Moreover, we call any conjugate of  $W_J$  a parabolic subgroup as well.

Once we have constructed the representation of Coxeter groups on a vector space as well as the Tits cone in the coming section, the parabolic subgroups will be a useful tool to form a deeper understanding of these objects. We will extensively use them in sections 2.4 and 2.5.

## 2.2 REPRESENTATION OF COXETER GROUPS

Given a Coxeter System  $(W, S)$ , let  $V$  be a real vector space with basis  $\{e_1, \dots, e_n\}$ , where  $n = |I| = |S|$ . This provides a natural identification,  $GL_n(V) \cong GL_n(\mathbb{R})$ . We define a bilinear form  $B_W$  on  $V$  as follows:

$$B_W := \begin{cases} -\cos\left(\frac{\pi}{m_{ij}}\right) & , m_{ij} < \infty \\ -1 & , m_{ij} = \infty \end{cases}.$$

By Definition 2.1.1, it is assured that  $m_{ij} \geq 2$  for distinct  $i, j$ , ensuring the cosine term is non-positive. Consequently, we have  $B_W(e_i, e_j) \leq 0$  for distinct  $i, j$ . Furthermore, from  $m_{ii} = 1$ , it follows that  $B_W(e_i, e_i) = 1$ . Using this bilinear form, we define hyperplanes with corresponding reflections for each basis element  $e_i$  as follows:

$$H_i := \{v \in V \mid B_W(e_i, v) = 0\}, \quad \sigma_i : V \rightarrow V, \quad v \mapsto v - 2B_W(e_i, v)e_i.$$

**Theorem 2.2.1.** The map given by:

$$\rho : W \rightarrow GL_n(V) \cong GL_n(\mathbb{R}), \quad s_i \mapsto \sigma_i$$

is an injective homomorphism and therefore a faithful representation of  $W$ .

Before we prove the homomorphism property, we want to recall: A map  $\varphi : S \rightarrow G$  from a set  $S$  to a group  $G$  extends to a homomorphism  $\hat{\varphi} : \langle S \mid R \rangle \rightarrow G$ , if and only if the induced homomorphism  $\bar{\varphi} : F_S \rightarrow G$  from the free group over  $S$  satisfies  $\bar{\varphi}(r) = e_G$  for every  $r \in R$ .

*Proof.* Observe that  $\sigma_i^2 = \text{id}$  in  $GL_n(V)$  and thus, by applying the above to our situation we see that it suffices to show that the product  $\sigma_i \sigma_j$  has order  $m_{ij}$  in  $GL_n(V)$  for distinct  $i, j \in I$ . To do so, consider the two-dimensional subspace  $V_{ij}$  spanned by  $e_i$  and  $e_j$  in  $V$ . We take a general element  $v = \lambda e_i + \mu e_j$ ,  $\lambda, \mu \in \mathbb{R}$  in  $V_{ij}$  and distinguish the two cases in the definition of  $B_W$ :

1)  $m_{ij} < \infty$ : In this case  $B_W$  is positive definite, since for  $v \neq 0$

$$B_W(v, v) = \lambda^2 - 2\lambda\mu \cos\left(\frac{\pi}{m_{ij}}\right) + \mu^2 = \left(\lambda - \mu \cos\left(\frac{\pi}{m_{ij}}\right)\right)^2 + \mu^2 \sin^2\left(\frac{\pi}{m_{ij}}\right) > 0.$$

Up to a change of basis, we identify  $(V_{ij}, B_W|_{V_{ij}})$  with the euclidean plane  $(\mathbb{R}^2, \langle \cdot, \cdot \rangle)$ . Now  $\sigma_i$  and  $\sigma_j$  act on  $V_{ij}$  by orthogonal reflections in the hyperplanes  $H_i, H_j$  intersected with  $V_{ij}$ . We take a look at the inner product of  $e_i, e_j$

$$B_W(e_i, e_j) = -\cos\left(\frac{\pi}{m_{ij}}\right) = \cos\left(\pi - \frac{\pi}{m_{ij}}\right)$$

and obtain that the angle between them in  $V_{ij}$  is given by  $\pi - \frac{\pi}{m_{ij}}$ . Thus, the angle between the reflecting lines is  $\frac{\pi}{m_{ij}}$  and the product  $\sigma_i \sigma_j$  turns out to be a rotation by  $\frac{2\pi}{m_{ij}}$ , showing that  $\sigma_i \sigma_j$  has order  $m_{ij}$  in the subspace  $V_{ij}$ . And since  $\sigma_i \sigma_j$  fixes the orthogonal complement of  $V_{ij}$  by definition of the  $\sigma_i$ , it has order  $m_{ij}$  on the whole vector space  $V$ .

2)  $m_{ij} = \infty$  : By the following, we now have to deal with a non-positive definite form:

$$B_W(v, v) = \lambda^2 - 2\lambda\mu + \mu^2 = (\lambda - \mu)^2 \geq 0.$$

Indeed, we can only expect it to be positive semidefinite on  $V_{ij}$ . Using the calculation

$$(\sigma_i \sigma_j)(e_i) = \sigma_i(e_i + 2e_j) = e_i + 2(e_i + e_j),$$

together with an induction argument, we get that  $(\sigma_i \sigma_j)^n(e_i) = e_i + 2n(e_i + e_j)$ . Therefore, the concatenation has infinite order on  $V_{ij}$  and in particular on the whole of  $V$ .

This proves that  $\rho$  extends to a homomorphism. It remains to show the injectivity of  $\rho$ . This will be a consequence of a bigger result in section 2.4, see Corollary 2.4.4.  $\square$

**Remark 2.2.2.** *It is worth to note that in the above proof, we have seen that two-generator subgroups of Coxeter groups are dihedral. Either of order  $2m_{ij}$  or infinite order.*

We want to extend the action of  $W$  to the dual of the vector space  $V$ . This is achieved by acting on  $V^*$  via the dual representation of  $\rho$ , which we define by

$$\rho^* : W \rightarrow GL_n(V^*), \quad w \mapsto (\rho^*(w)(\varphi))(v) = \varphi(\rho(w^{-1})(v)), \quad w \in W, \varphi \in V^*, v \in V.$$

Notation wise, we will simply write  $w(v)$ , when  $w \in W$  acts on  $v \in V$  via  $\rho(w)(v)$ . Similarly, we write  $w(\varphi)$  when we mean that  $w \in W$  acts on some element  $\varphi \in V^*$  of the dual space, via the dual representation  $\rho^*(w)(\varphi)$ . As in the case of the vector space  $V$ , we want to give a definition for the notion of a hyperplane with corresponding reflection in the dual space  $V^*$  as well. By dual hyperplane, we mean a subspace  $H_i^* := \{\varphi \in V^* \mid \varphi(e_i) = 0\}$ , and the corresponding dual reflections will be a map from  $V^*$  to  $V^*$ , given by:

$$\sigma_i^* : V^* \rightarrow V^*, \quad \varphi \mapsto \varphi \circ \sigma_i = \varphi - 2B_W(e_i, \cdot)\varphi(e_i).$$

To further explore Coxeter groups and their action via this representation, we need some more notation. In particular, we want a so-called *chamber*. This should be thought of as a cone over a polytope with finitely many faces such that the reflections in its codimension one faces correspond to the generators of  $W$  under the representation.

**Definition 2.2.3.** *The fundamental chamber  $C$  of the dual representation is the set, given by*

$$C := \{\varphi \in V^* \mid \varphi(e_i) \geq 0 \ \forall i \in I\} \subset V^*.$$

Denote by  $\{e_1^*, \dots, e_n^*\}$  the dual basis of  $V^*$  corresponding to the standard basis  $\{e_1, \dots, e_n\}$  of  $V$ . Then we calculate, using the  $\sigma_i^*$  from above:

$$\sigma_i^*(e_j^*) = e_j^* - 2B_W(e_i, \cdot)e_j^*(e_i) = \begin{cases} e_j^* & \text{for } i \neq j \\ e_j^* - 2B_W(e_j, \cdot) & \text{for } i = j \end{cases},$$

which implies that each reflection  $\sigma_i^*$  fixes all the hyperplanes  $H_j^*$ , for distinct indices  $i$  and  $j$ . Moreover, note that the fundamental chamber can be written of the form

$$C = \bigcap_{i \in I} \{\varphi \in V^* \mid \varphi(e_i) \geq 0\} = \bigcap_{i \in I} (H_i^* \cup \{\varphi \in V^* \mid \varphi(e_i) > 0\}),$$

where we observe that the  $H_i^*$  form the pairwise distinct codimension one faces of the chamber  $C$ . The open halfspaces  $\{\varphi \in V^* \mid \varphi(e_i) > 0\}$  in the latter term will be called  $A_i^*$  and using these, we define the open fundamental chamber to be the intersection of the open halfspaces:

$$\text{int}(C) = \mathring{C} = \bigcap_{i \in I} A_i^*.$$

As mentioned above, we want to study the action of our Coxeter group via the dual representation, acting by reflection in the faces  $H_i^*$ . However, in general the translates of the chamber under the group action won't cover the whole of  $V^*$ , which motivates the following definition:

**Definition 2.2.4.** *The Tits cone is the union of all  $W$ -translates of the chamber,  $WC := \bigcup_{w \in W} wC \subset V^*$ .*

As the name suggests, the fundamental chamber is a fundamental domain for the action of  $W$  on the Tits cone  $WC$  under the dual representation  $\rho^*$ . This will be proved in Theorem 2.5.7. While the formal definition of the Tits cone provides a rigorous foundation, it is not very insightful from a geometric perspective. As one can think about the Tits cone quite geometrically, especially in low dimensions, we will take a closer look at an explicit example in the following section. Before doing so, we end this section with the following remark.

**Remark 2.2.5.** *One may ask why we transport everything to the dual space, instead of working in the standard representation  $\rho$ . For this, consider the infinite dihedral group  $D_\infty \cong \langle s, t \mid s^2 = t^2 = 1 \rangle$ . We fix a basis  $\{e_1, e_2\}$  of  $V$  and obtain that the bilinear form in this basis is given by the matrix*

$$B_W = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

*We observe that  $H_1 = \text{span}\{e_1 + e_2\} = H_2$ , which implies that  $\sigma_1$  and  $\sigma_2$  fix the same hyperplane, despite having different  $(-1)$ -Eigenspaces (namely the span of  $e_1$ , resp.  $e_2$ ). Therefore, in general, working in the standard representation won't result in a chamber, giving rise to the existence of the Tits*

cone. Now, passing to the dual space  $V^*$  by fixing the dual basis  $\{e_1^*, e_2^*\}$ , consider the dual reflections  $\sigma_i^*$  as discussed before. By the more general calculation earlier, we obtain

$$\sigma_1^*(H_2^*) = H_2^* \quad \text{and} \quad \sigma_2^*(H_1^*) = H_1^*.$$

And furthermore, we note that for all  $i, j \in \{1, 2\}$

$$\sigma_i^*(B_W(e_j, \cdot)) = B_W(e_j, \cdot) - 2B_W(e_i, \cdot)B_W(e_j, e_i) = -B_W(e_j, \cdot),$$

using that  $B_W(e_j, \cdot) = -B_W(e_i, \cdot)$ . This shows that both dual reflections have the same  $(-1)$ -Eigenspace, but fix different hyperplanes (i. e., have different  $(+1)$ -Eigenspaces), resulting in a chamber as wished.

## 2.3 THE TITS CONE - AN EXAMPLE

As an example we take a closer look at the free product  $W \cong \langle r, s, t \mid r^2 = s^2 = t^2 = 1 \rangle$ , a right-angled Coxeter group from Example 2.1.3. We fix the basis  $\{e_1, e_2, e_3\}$  and identify  $V$  with  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . In this basis, the bilinear form  $B_W$  is given by the matrix

$$B_W = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

By the spectral theorem we find a basis of orthonormal Eigenvectors, in which  $B_W$  is a diagonal matrix with its eigenvalues as entries. Using the Gram-Schmidt procedure, we get

$$\begin{pmatrix} -\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & 0 & \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \\ -\frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} & \frac{2}{\sqrt{6}} & -\frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} & \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} & \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} -\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & -\frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} & \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \\ 0 & \frac{2}{\sqrt{6}} & \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & -\frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} & \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

In other words, we have  $V^T B_W V = D$  with  $V \in O(n)$  and  $D = \text{diag}(2, 2, -1)$ . Now, since we have a diagonal matrix, we can multiply the entries by squares, since the resulting matrix will be congruent to the given one:

Let  $A = \text{diag}(\mu_1, \dots, \mu_n) \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ ,

$$S = \text{diag}(\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n) \in (\mathbb{R} \setminus \{0\})^{n \times n} \implies S^T A S = \text{diag}(\lambda_1^2 \mu_1, \dots, \lambda_n^2 \mu_n).$$

To apply this and further transform our matrix  $D$ , define the invertible matrix  $T$  as follows

$$T = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

which then implies  $\tilde{D} := T(V^T B_W V)T = \text{diag}(1, 1, -1)$ . The images of the basis vectors  $\{e_1, e_2, e_3\}$  are given by the three columns of the matrix  $TV^T$ , namely:

$$\tilde{e}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} -\frac{1}{2} \\ -\frac{\sqrt{3}}{6} \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \end{pmatrix}, \quad \tilde{e}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \tilde{e}_3 = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{2} \\ -\frac{\sqrt{3}}{6} \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{3}} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Note that we have  $V \cong \mathbb{R}^3$ , equipped with the inner product

$$\langle x, y \rangle_{2,1} := x^T \tilde{D} y = x_1 y_1 + x_2 y_2 - x_3 y_3.$$

Since  $\langle \tilde{e}_i, \tilde{e}_i \rangle_{2,1} = 0$  for all  $i \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ , we have that these three vectors span an ideal triangle in the hyperboloid model of  $\mathbb{H}^2$ , given by  $\langle x, y \rangle_{2,1} = -1$ . One gets the ideal triangle by intersecting the hyperboloid with the hyperplanes spanned by each two of the  $\tilde{e}_i$  (they will only intersect in the surrounding cone of the hyperboloid).

Given these new coordinates under the transformation  $TV^T$ , the Tits cone will be given by  $x_1^2 + x_2^2 - x_3^2 < 0$  union the images of  $\tilde{e}_1, \tilde{e}_2$  and  $\tilde{e}_3$  under the reflection in the sides of the chamber i.e., in the sides of the ideal triangle. Moreover, we get a subgroup of  $O(2, 1)_+$  generated by the three matrices

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & -\frac{5}{3} & -\frac{4}{3} \\ 0 & \frac{4}{3} & \frac{5}{3} \end{pmatrix}, \quad \begin{pmatrix} -1 & \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} & -\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} \\ \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{2}{3} \\ \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} & -\frac{2}{3} & \frac{5}{3} \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \begin{pmatrix} -1 & -\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} & \frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} \\ -\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} & \frac{1}{3} & \frac{2}{3} \\ -\frac{2}{\sqrt{3}} & -\frac{2}{3} & \frac{5}{3} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Each of the above matrices corresponds to one of the generators  $r, s$  and  $t$  of the right angled Coxeter group  $W$  under the transformation  $TV^T$ , constructed above.

## 2.4 THE WORD METRIC AND THE FAITHFUL REPRESENTATION

Recall that for any finitely generated group  $W = \langle S \rangle$ , its Cayley graph induces a metric on  $W$ , relative to the generating set  $S$ . We call it the *word metric* of  $W$  relative to  $S$  and denote it by  $d_S$ . Also note that the word metric is left-invariant, meaning that for group elements  $u, v, w \in W$ , we have the equality  $d_S(uv, uw) = d_S(v, w)$ . Now, define the *word length* of an element  $w \in W$  to be  $\ell(w) := d_S(w, 1_W)$ , the distance of an element to the neutral element of the group. Note that  $\ell(w) = 0$  if and only if  $w = 1_W$ .

**Lemma 2.4.1.** *We collect some properties of the length function we will use later on.*

1.  $\forall w \in W : \ell(w) = \ell(w^{-1})$
2.  $\forall s \in S : \ell(s) = 1 \text{ and } \ell(w) = 1 \iff w \in S^{\pm 1}$
3.  $\forall v, w \in W : \ell(vw) \leq \ell(v) + \ell(w)$
4.  $\forall v, w \in W : \ell(v) - \ell(w) \leq \ell(vw)$

$$5. \forall w \in W, s \in S^{\pm 1} : \ell(w) - 1 \leq \ell(ws) \leq \ell(w) + 1$$

*Proof.* All of the above statements follow from the fact that  $d_S$  is a left-invariant metric.  $\square$

Coming back to Coxeter groups, by definition each generator  $s \in S$  has order 2 in  $W$ . Therefore, we can write every non-trivial element in  $W$  as a sequence of generators in  $S$ . Note that in this sequence there might be redundencies, so that the following definition makes sense. We call an expression  $w = s_{i_1} \cdots s_{i_r}$  for  $i_1, \dots, i_r \in I$  and  $r \in \mathbb{N}$  *reduced*, if  $\ell(w) = r$ , i.e.  $w$  cannot be represented by a shorter word. These reduced expressions have the caveat of not being unique by any means.

Given a parabolic subgroup  $W_J$  of a Coxeter group  $W$ , it admits its own word metric with respect to  $J \subset I$ . Therefore each parabolic subgroup admits its own length function, which we denote by  $\ell_J(w)$  for words  $w$  in  $W_J$ . In the following we will make use of the general fact that we have  $\ell(w) \leq \ell_J(w)$  for all  $w \in W_J$ .

The length function turns out to be an important and powerful tool in studying Coxeter groups. Indeed, its role will be demonstrated in several of the forthcoming proofs, beginning with the following theorem which is a key step in proving faithfulness of our previously defined representation.

**Theorem 2.4.2.** *Let  $w \in W$  and  $s_i \in S$  for  $i \in I$ . Then  $\ell(ws_i) > \ell(w)$  implies that  $w(e_i) > 0$ .*

The proof is by induction on the word length  $\ell(w)$ . The central idea to apply induction is, to decompose  $w$  suitably and then check the conditions for the induction hypothesis.

*Proof.* The base case is trivial, as  $\ell(w) = 0$  implies  $w = 1_W$  and thus  $w$  fixes every basis element. Therefore, assume  $w$  is non-trivial and in reduced form. We state the induction hypothesis.

**(IH)** Let  $v \in W$ , so that  $\ell(v) < \ell(w)$  and  $\ell(vs_i) > \ell(v)$ , then we have  $v(e_i) > 0$ .

**Claim 1:** There is a  $j \in I$  such that  $s_i \neq s_j$  and  $\ell(ws_j) = \ell(w) - 1$ .

*Proof of Claim 1.* Since  $w$  is in reduced form, write  $w = s_{i_1} \cdots s_{i_k}$  and set  $s_j = s_{i_k}$ . This implies

$$\ell(ws_i) > \ell(w) > \ell(w) - 1 = \ell(ws_j),$$

and in particular  $s_j \neq s_i$ . This proves the first Claim.  $\blacksquare$

Consider the parabolic subgroup  $\langle s_i, s_j \rangle \leq W$ , generated by these two distinct elements in  $S$ . Set  $J := \{i, j\}$  in  $I$  and denote the subgroup by  $W_J$ . We use the decomposition  $W = W/W_J \cdot W_J$  to decompose  $w$  into two parts, each living in one component. For this, consider a specific subset of the coset  $wW_J$ , given by

$$A := \{v \in W \mid vW_J = wW_J \text{ and } \ell(v) + \ell_J(v^{-1}w) = \ell(w)\}.$$

By definition,  $w \in A$ . With regard to the following, we choose  $v \in A$  such that its length  $\ell(v)$  is minimal. Now set  $v_J = v^{-1}w$ , which is equivalent to writing  $w = vv_J$ , giving us a

decomposition of  $w$  as desired. Due to this decomposition, our analysis of  $w$  now boils down to studying the separate actions of  $v$  and  $v_J$  on  $V$ . First note that  $ws_j$  is contained in  $A$  as well. Clearly,  $s_j^{-1} = s_j$  and thus

$$s_j w^{-1} w = s_j \in W_J \text{ and } \ell(ws_j) + \ell_J(s_j) = \ell(w) - 1 + 1 = \ell(w).$$

By the choice of  $\ell(v)$  to be minimal, we have  $\ell(v) \leq \ell(ws_j) = \ell(w) - 1$ . Thus, we are almost set up to apply the induction hypothesis to  $v$  and  $s_i$ . The last ingredient for this is the following

**Claim 2:** For the lengths of  $vs_i$  and  $v$ , we have the relation:  $\ell(vs_i) \geq \ell(v)$ .

*Proof of Claim 2.* Assume towards contradiction:  $\ell(vs_i) < \ell(v)$ , equivalently  $\ell(vs_i) = \ell(v) - 1$ . Then:

$$\begin{aligned} \ell(w) &= \ell(vv_J) = \ell(vs_i s_i v^{-1} w) \leq \ell(vs_i) + \ell(s_i v^{-1} w) \\ &\leq \ell(v) - 1 + \ell_J(v^{-1} w) + 1 = \ell(v) + \ell_J(v^{-1} w) = \ell(w). \end{aligned}$$

This means equality holds throughout and in particular  $\ell(w) = \ell(vs_i) + \ell_J(s_i v^{-1} w)$ . But this implies  $vs_i$  belongs to  $A$ , contradicting the minimality of  $\ell(v)$ . Thus, the claim holds. ■

Applying the induction hypothesis **(IH)** to  $v$  and  $s_i$  leaves us with  $v(e_i) > 0$ . The exact same argument applied to  $v$  and  $s_j$  shows  $v(e_j) > 0$ , so that we omit this here. Thus, we are now reduced to the rank two situation, where we observe how  $v_J$  acts on  $e_i$ . First of all, we have

**Claim 3:** For  $v_J s_i$  and  $v_J$ , we have the relation:  $\ell_J(v_J s_i) \geq \ell(v)$ .

*Proof of Claim 3.* Assume towards contradiction, that  $\ell_J(v_J s_i) < \ell(v_J)$  holds. Then:

$$\ell(ws_i) = \ell(vv_J s_i) \leq \ell(v) + \ell(v_J s_i) \leq \ell(v) + \ell_J(v_J s_i) < \ell(v) + \ell_J(v_J) = \ell(w),$$

which contradicts the assumption of the theorem, that  $\ell(ws_i) > \ell(w)$ . ■

Moreover, this shows that all reduced expressions of  $v_J$  in the parabolic subgroup  $W_J$  have to end in  $s_j$ . Else we would have  $\ell(v_J) > \ell(v_J s_i)$ , contradicting *Claim 3*. It remains to show

**Claim 4:**  $s_i s_j$  maps  $e_i$  to a non-negative linear combination of  $e_i$  and  $e_j$ .

*Proof of Claim 4.* We already know that  $W_J$  is dihedral, either of order  $2m_{ij}$  or infinite order. As pointed out above, every reduced expression of  $v_J$  - an alternating product of  $s_i$  and  $s_j$  - in  $W_J$  has to end in  $s_j$ . Using this, we distinguish the two cases.

- 1)  $m_{ij} < \infty$ :  $W_J$  is dihedral of order  $2m_{ij}$ . Thus, any element is of length  $< m_{ij}$  and has a unique word corresponding to the edge labels in the Cayley graph. Note that the maximum length of  $w \in W_J$  is precisely  $m_{ij}$  (as the Cayley graph is a cycle of length  $2m_{ij}$ ). The element of length  $m_{ij}$  is represented by the reduced expressions  $s_i s_j \cdots s_j$  and  $s_j s_i \cdots s_i$ . This implies that  $v_J$  has to have length strictly smaller  $m_{ij}$ , else it would have a reduced expression ending in  $s_i$ , contradicting the above. Then  $v_J$  is a product of less than  $\frac{m_{ij}}{2}$  terms  $s_i s_j$ , and each of the products  $s_i s_j$  is a counterclockwise rotation about  $\frac{2\pi}{m_{ij}}$ . So  $v_J$  rotates  $e_i$  at most about  $\pi - \frac{2\pi}{m_{ij}}$ , which still lies inside the cone spanned by  $e_i$  and  $e_j$ . In particular the resulting vector is a non-negative linear combination of  $e_i$  and  $e_j$ .



- 2)  $m_{ij} = \infty$ : In the case of the infinite dihedral group, we already have seen in the proof of Theorem 2.2.1 that  $(s_i s_j)^n(e_i) = e_i + 2n(e_i + e_j)$ . This is again a non-negative linear combination of  $e_i$  and  $e_j$ .

This proves the last Claim. ■

Since  $v_j$  and  $v$  both map  $e_i$  to a non-negative linear combination of  $e_i$  and  $e_j$ , so does  $w$  due to its decomposition. Therefore, the proof is now complete. □

The result of the previous theorem readily extends to its converse, offering valuable insights as well. We shall formally record this implication as a corollary.

**Corollary 2.4.3.** *In the previous theorem, set  $w = \tilde{w}s_i$  for  $i \in I$ . Then  $\ell(\tilde{w}s_i) < \ell(w)$  implies  $\ell(\tilde{w}s_i s_i) > \ell(\tilde{w}s_i)$ . Thus we have  $(ws_i)(e_i) = -w(e_i) > 0$ , or equivalently  $w(e_i) < 0$ .*

With Corollary 2.4.3 and Theorem 2.4.2 in hand, we will finally be able to deduce the injectivity and thus faithfulness of our representation  $\rho$ .

**Corollary 2.4.4.** *The homomorphism of Theorem 2.2.1 is injective and thus a faithful representation.*

*Proof.* Assume  $w \in \ker\{\rho\}$  non-trivial. Then there is an  $i \in I$  with corresponding  $s_i \in S$ , such that  $\ell(ws_i) < \ell(w)$ . Now Corollary 2.4.3 implies  $w(e_i) < 0$ , but  $w(e_i) = e_i > 0$  as  $\rho(w) = \text{id}_V$ , which is a contradiction and thus, the statement holds. □

## 2.5 THE FUNDAMENTAL DOMAIN AND STABILIZERS

In this section, we will prove that the fundamental chamber  $C \subset V^*$  is indeed a fundamental domain for the action of  $W$  on its Tits cone  $WC$ . Moreover, we will work out how stabilizers of points look like and then show that the Tits cone is really a convex cone in the dual space  $V^*$ .

We start by translating the results of the previous section to the language of chambers and halfspaces. The following two lemmas capture this essence.

**Lemma 2.5.1.** *Let  $w \in W$  and  $i \in I$ . The relation  $\ell(s_i w) > \ell(w)$  is equivalent to saying that  $w$  leaves the open chamber  $\mathring{C}$  inside the open halfspace  $A_i^*$ , corresponding to the generator  $s_i$ . Put more formally, this states that the set  $w(\mathring{C})$  is a subset of the open halfspace  $A_i^*$ .*

*Proof.* Observe that  $\ell(s_i w) > \ell(w)$  is equivalent to  $\ell(w^{-1}s_i) > \ell(w^{-1})$ . Then by Theorem 2.4.2, we have that  $w^{-1}(e_i) > 0$ . Take an arbitrary point  $\varphi \in \mathring{C}$  in the open fundamental chamber, then we have that  $w(\varphi)(e_i) = \varphi(w^{-1}(e_i))$ . Since the chamber  $C$  lies in  $A_i^*$  for all  $i \in I$  and  $\varphi \in \mathring{C}$ , we see that  $w(\varphi) > 0$  is equivalent to  $w^{-1}(e_i) > 0$ . But this is true by assumption and since  $\varphi$  is arbitrary, we conclude that  $w(\mathring{C}) \subset A_i^*$ . □

Of course this lemma also has a corresponding converse result as in the previous section.

**Lemma 2.5.2.** *Let  $w \in W$  and  $i \in I$ . The relation  $\ell(s_i w) < \ell(w)$  is equivalent to saying that  $w$  now moves the open chamber  $\mathring{C}$  inside the open halfspace, complementary to  $A_i^*$ . More formally, this states that the set  $w(\mathring{C})$  is a subset of the open halfspace  $s_i(A_i^*)$ , as the  $s_i$  permute  $A_i^*$  and its corresponding complementary halfspace.*

*Proof.* Take  $w' = s_i w$  for some  $i \in I$  and  $w \in W$  so that  $\ell(s_i w) > \ell(w)$ . Then we have that the length of  $s_i w' = w$  is strictly smaller than the length of  $w'$ . By applying above lemma we get that  $w(\mathring{C}) \subset A_i^*$ , which is equivalent to  $s_i w'(\mathring{C}) \subset A_i^*$ . Apply  $s_i$  to both sides leaves us with  $w'(\mathring{C}) \subset s_i(A_i^*)$ , which proves the lemma.  $\square$

Building onto this insight, we now want to study the action of parabolic subgroups on the Tits cone to get an understanding of the stabilizers of points. To do so, decompose the fundamental chamber into subsets corresponding to the parabolic subgroups of  $W$  as follows.

**Definition 2.5.3.** *Given a parabolic subgroup  $W_J$  corresponding to  $J \subset I$ , set*

$$C_J := \bigcap_{j \in J} H_j^* \cap \bigcap_{k \notin J} A_k^*.$$

*We call these the corresponding parabolic subsets (of the fundamental chamber).*

**Example 2.5.4.** 1. *When the set  $J$  is empty, the corresponding parabolic subset  $C_\emptyset$  coincides with the entire chamber  $C$ . Conversely, when  $J$  contains all indices,  $C_J$  reduces to the singleton  $\{0\}$ .*

2. *If  $J$  is a proper subset of  $I$  with cardinality one, then the corresponding subset  $C_J$  coincides with a codimension-one face of the chamber  $C$ .*

**Theorem 2.5.5.** *Let  $w \in W$  and  $J, K \subset I$  be subsets. Then  $w(C_J) \cap C_K \neq \emptyset$  implies  $J = K$ ,  $w \in W_J$  and thus  $w(C_J) = C_J$ . In particular, the isotropy groups of the sets  $C_J$  are the parabolic subgroups  $W_J$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $w \in W$  and  $J, K \subset I$  be subsets, such that  $w(C_J) \cap C_K \neq \emptyset$ . The proof is by induction on the length of  $w$ . The base case  $\ell(w) = 0$  is trivial, as then  $w$  is trivial.

Assume that  $\ell(w) > 0$  and choose  $i \in I$ , such that  $\ell(s_i w) < \ell(w)$ . Writing  $w = s_i(s_i w)$ , by Lemma 2.5.2 we know that  $w$  moves the open chamber  $\mathring{C}$  into the open halfspace  $s_i(A_i^*)$ , i.e.  $w(\mathring{C}) \subset s_i(A_i^*)$ . Now using the continuity of the group action, we note that  $w(C) \subset \overline{s_i(A_i^*)}$ . Recall that by definition, the fundamental chamber  $C$  lies in the halfspaces  $\overline{A_i^*}$  for all  $i \in I$ . Thus, we record that  $w(C) \cap C \subset H_i^*$  and since  $s_i$  fixes the corresponding  $H_i^*$  by definition, it fixes every point in the intersection of  $C$  and its translate  $w(C)$ . Note that the sets  $C_J$  and  $C_K$  are subsets of the fundamental chamber  $C$  and therefore,  $s_i$  fixes every point in the non-empty set  $w(C_J) \cap C_K$ . But if  $s_i$  fixes some point  $\varphi$  in  $C_K$ , we calculate

$$\varphi(e_i) = s_i(\varphi)(e_i) = \varphi(s_i(e_i)) = -\varphi(e_i) \implies \varphi(e_i) = 0 \iff \varphi \in H_i^*.$$

We deduce  $i \in K$ , respectively  $s_i \in W_K$ . Using this together with the assumption, we get that  $s_i w(C_J) \cap C_K = s_i(w(C_J) \cap C_K)$  is non-empty. We apply the induction hypothesis to the element  $s_i w$ , to see that  $J = K$  and  $s_i w \in W_J$ . Finally, since  $s_i \in W_J = W_K$ , we have that  $s_i w \in W_J$  implies  $w \in W_J$ , proving the theorem.  $\square$

Before proceeding with proving that the fundamental chamber lives up to its name, we want to clearly state what is meant by a fundamental domain.

**Definition 2.5.6.** *Let  $G$  be a group, acting on a topological space  $X$ . We call a closed subset  $F \subset X$  a (strict) fundamental domain, if for each  $x \in F$  its orbit  $\text{Orb}(x)$  intersects  $F$  in exactly one point.*

Note that, by definition of the Tits cone  $WC$ , every  $W$ -orbit of a point  $\varphi \in C$  meets the fundamental chamber  $C$  in at least one point, namely  $\varphi$ . Thus, it suffices to prove that each  $W$ -orbit meets  $C$  in at most one point, to prove the following theorem.

**Theorem 2.5.7.** *The fundamental chamber is a fundamental domain for the action of the Coxeter group  $W$  on its Tits cone  $WC$ , justifying its name.*

*Proof.* Assume that  $\varphi, \psi \in C$  lie in the same  $W$ -orbit, but in different parabolic subsets  $C_J$ , respectively  $C_K$  of the fundamental chamber. Since they lie in the same orbit, there is a  $w \in W$  with  $\varphi = w(\psi)$ . Thus, the intersection  $w(C_J) \cap C_K$  is non-empty and Theorem 2.5.5 implies equality of  $J$  and  $K$ , as well as  $w \in W_J$ . We deduce  $\varphi = w(\psi) = \psi$ . Thus, every  $W$ -orbit of a point  $\varphi \in C$  meets the fundamental chamber  $C$  at most in  $\varphi$ , proving the theorem.  $\square$

Define a set  $\mathcal{C}$  as the union of all translates of possible parabolic subsets  $W_J$  i. e., define  $\mathcal{C}$  by

$$\mathcal{C} := \bigcup_{J \subset I} \bigcup_{w \in W/W_J} w(C_J).$$

We want to emphasize here that by Theorem 2.5.5 the sets of the form  $w(C_J)$  in the Tits cone  $WC$  are all disjoint for different  $J \subset I$  and  $w$  ranging over the coset  $W/W_J$ . Thus, the sets of  $\mathcal{C}$  form a decomposition of the Tits cone. This decomposition (although not into chambers) is a key component in the following theorem.

**Theorem 2.5.8.** *The Tits cone  $WC$  is a convex cone, and every closed line segment in the Tits cone meets only finitely many of the sets in  $\mathcal{C}$ .*

*Proof.* First note that the fundamental chamber is a convex cone as the intersection of the finitely many closed halfspaces  $\overline{A_i^*}$ . This implies that the Tits cone is a cone as well. We will prove the convexity by showing that every closed segment between any two points in the Tits cone is contained in it. Furthermore, we will prove that these segments can be covered by finitely many of the sets in the above defined union  $\mathcal{C}$ , implying latter statement.

Consider the closed segment  $[\varphi, \psi]$  with  $\varphi, \psi \in WC$  and assume the endpoints lie in different chambers. Proceed by induction on the word length  $\ell(w)$ . The base case  $\ell(w) = 0$  reduces to  $\varphi, \psi \in C$ . Since  $C$  is convex and can trivially be covered by finitely many of the  $C_J$ , this case has been dealt with.

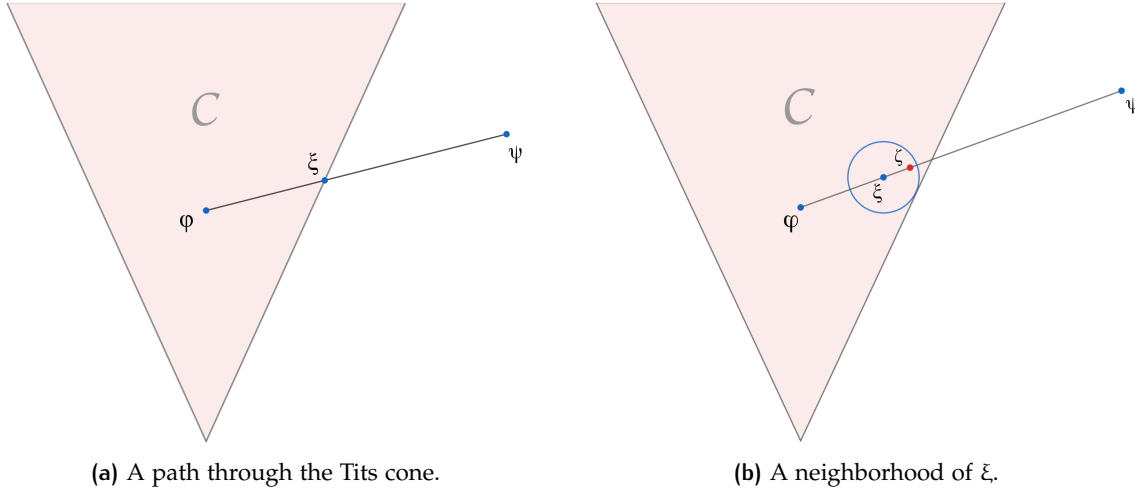
Therefore, we now assume  $\ell(w) > 0$ . Intersect the segment  $[\varphi, \psi]$  with the fundamental chamber  $C$ , to receive two new segments  $[\varphi, \xi]$  and  $[\xi, \psi]$  (cf. Figure 2.1a). The first segment can be covered by finitely many of the sets in  $\mathcal{C}$ , as it lies inside the fundamental chamber  $C$ . Thus, we need to show that we can cover the second segment  $[\xi, \psi]$  by finitely many of these

sets. Assume further, we have a  $J \subset I$ , such that  $\psi \in s_i(A_i^*)$  for an  $i \in J$  and  $\psi \in \overline{A_i^*}$  for all  $i \notin J$ . Then we have that  $\psi \notin C$ .

**Claim 1:**  $\xi$  has to lie in one of the codimension-one faces  $H_i^*$ ,  $i \in J$ .

*Proof of Claim 1.* Assume that  $\xi$  lies in the open halfspace  $A_i^*$  for some  $i \in J$ . Then every point  $\zeta$  in the intersection of a neighborhood of  $\xi$ , contained in  $A_i^*$ , with the segment  $[\xi, \psi]$  has to also lie in  $A_i^*$ . Clearly,  $\zeta \in \overline{A_i^*}$  for  $i \notin J$  holds as well, implying that  $\zeta \in C$ . But this is a contradiction to the decomposition of the initial segment  $[\varphi, \psi]$ . Thus,  $\xi$  has to lie in one of the  $H_i^*$ . ■

Using the assumptions  $\psi \in s_i(A_i^*)$  and  $\psi \in w(C)$ , we deduce  $w(C) \subset \overline{s_i(A_i^*)}$ , hence by continuity of the action  $w(\hat{C}) \subset s_i(A_i^*)$ . By Lemma 2.5.2 this is equivalent to  $\ell(s_i w) < \ell(w)$  and we are set up to apply the induction hypothesis to  $\xi$  and  $s_i(\psi) \in s_i w(C)$ . This produces a covering of  $[\xi, s_i(\psi)]$  by finitely many sets in  $\mathcal{C}$ . But since we established that  $\xi$  has to lie in  $H_i^*$ , translation by  $s_i$  gives  $[s_i(\xi), s_i^2(\psi)] = [\xi, \psi]$ , and thus we can cover this segment by finitely many sets as well. The result follows. □



To summarize, the essence of this section is that first of all the fundamental chamber is indeed a fundamental domain of the action of a Coxeter group on its Tits cone. This was shown in Theorem 2.5.7. Furthermore, we want to emphasize that each point in the fundamental chamber has trivial stabilizer, which is a consequence of Theorem 2.5.5. Moreover, every point in a set  $C_J$ , for  $J$  a subset of  $I$ , is stabilized by the corresponding parabolic subgroup  $W_J$ .

## 2.6 COVERING ACTIONS – A TOOLBOX

In this section we will assemble a set of tools, mostly coming from algebraic topology, connecting group actions to the notion of coverings. They will be somewhat essential in the proof of the main theorem in forthcoming chapter. We start by saying what is meant by a covering.

**Definition 2.6.1.** Let  $X, Y$  be topological spaces. A continuous map  $p : Y \rightarrow X$  is a covering map and  $Y$  a covering space for  $X$ , if every point  $x$  in  $X$  has an open neighborhood  $\mathcal{U}$ , such that the preimage of

$U$  under  $p$  is a disjoint union of open sets  $U_i$  in  $Y$  for an index set  $I$ . Furthermore, the map  $p$  has to be a local homeomorphism, meaning the restriction of  $p$  to the  $U_i$  is a homeomorphism. Then,  $U$  is called evenly covered and  $|I|$  the degree of the covering, while the open sets  $U_i$  are called the sheets over  $U$  and the preimage of an  $x$  in  $X$  is called a fiber of  $x$ .

It turns out that restricting the action of a group on a topological space in the right way will give coverings by quotienting out the action. We make this precise in the following.

**Definition 2.6.2.** Let  $G$  be a group, acting on a space  $X$ . The action is said to be properly discontinuous, if every point in  $X$  has a neighborhood  $U$  such that the set  $\{g \in G \mid g(U) \cap U \neq \emptyset\}$  is finite.

**Definition 2.6.3.** Let  $G$  be a group, acting on a space  $X$ . The action is said to be a covering (space) action if every point has a neighborhood  $U$  such that the set  $\{g \in G \mid g(U) \cap U \neq \emptyset\}$  consists only of the neutral element.

Obviously, this last condition is even more restrictive. Yet, at least for Hausdorff spaces, there is a connection between the two. In addition to acting properly discontinuously, we have to demand the action to be free.

**Lemma 2.6.4.** Let  $G$  be a group, that acts freely and properly discontinuously on a Hausdorff space  $X$ . Then the action is a covering action in the above sense.

*Proof.* Let  $X$  be a Hausdorff space and  $G$  be a group acting freely, properly discontinuously on  $X$ . Then for a open Neighborhood  $U$  of  $x \in X$ , the set  $M := \{g \in G \mid gU \cap U \neq \emptyset\}$  is finite. For these  $g \in M$  we pick pairwise disjoint Neighborhoods  $V_g$  of  $gx$ , which is possible since  $X$  is Hausdorff and  $G$  acts freely (thus  $gx \neq x$ ). Finally, set  $V = \bigcap_{g \in M} g^{-1}V_g \cap U$ , which is open as finite intersection of open sets and by definition a Neighborhood of  $x$ .  $\square$

To finally construct coverings from group actions and connect them in some sense, we need a last condition on the space the group acts on.

**Definition 2.6.5.** A path-connected topological space  $X$  is called simply connected, if  $\pi_1(X) \cong \{1\}$ .

**Lemma 2.6.6.** Let  $G$  be a group, acting by covering action on a simply connected topological space  $X$ . Then the quotient map  $p_G : (X, x_0) \rightarrow (G \backslash X, G \cdot x_0)$  is a covering map and  $\pi_1(G \backslash X, G \cdot x_0) \cong G$ .

*Proof.* Let  $U$  be an open neighborhood of  $x \in X$ , such that  $\{g \in G \mid gU \cap U \neq \emptyset\} = \{1\}$ .

**Claim 1:** The map  $p_G$  restricted to  $U$  is a continuous bijection.

*Proof of Claim 1.*

- Continuity:  $V \subset G \backslash X$  is open if and only if  $p_G^{-1}(V)$  is open and thus  $p_G$  is continuous
- Surjectivity: Since orbits of points are non-empty,  $p_G$  is surjective

- **Injectivity:** Assume  $x, y \in X$  distinct with  $p_G(x) = p_G(y)$ , i.e.  $\text{Orb}(x) = \text{Orb}(y)$ . But then there is a non-trivial element  $g \in G \setminus \{1\}$  with  $gx = y$ , implying  $gU \cap U \neq \emptyset$ . This is a contradiction to  $G$  acting by covering action. ■

**Claim 2:** Every point  $\text{Orb}(x) \in G \backslash X$  has a neighborhood  $V \subset G \backslash X$  with  $p_G^{-1}(V) = \bigsqcup_{i \in I} U_i$ .

*Proof of Claim 2.* By assumption the sets  $gU$  are all disjoint neighborhoods of  $gx \in X$  for all  $g \in G$ . Moreover, for  $V := p_G(U) \subset G \backslash X$ , we have  $p_G^{-1}(V) = \bigsqcup_{g \in G} gU$ , proving the Claim. ■

**Claim 3:** The map  $p_G|_{gU} \rightarrow V = p_G(U)$  is an homeomorphism for all  $g \in G$ .

*Proof of Claim 3.* Note that the action of  $G$  on  $X$  is by homeomorphisms and  $U \subset X$  is open. Then the union  $\bigsqcup_{g \in G} gU$  is open as well and since  $p_G^{-1}(V) = \bigsqcup_{g \in G} gU$ , the set  $V$  is open in the quotient topology of  $G \backslash X$ . Therefore, the map  $p_G$  restricted to  $gU$  for  $g \in G$  is an open map and hence, by *Claim 1* a local homeomorphism. ■

Now all conditions in Definition 2.6.1 are satisfied, so  $p_G$  is a covering map. For the last part of the statement, take a homotopy class of loops  $[\gamma] \in \pi_1(G \backslash X, Gx_0)$  with representative  $\gamma$ . Define a map  $\varphi : \pi_1(G, x_0) \rightarrow G$  on homotopy classes  $[\gamma]$ , such that  $\varphi([\gamma])$  takes  $\tilde{\gamma}(0) = x_0$  to  $\tilde{\gamma}(1)$ , where  $\tilde{\gamma} : [0, 1] \rightarrow X$  is a lift of  $\gamma$ . Now if  $\gamma'$  is another representative of  $[\gamma]$  then,  $\widetilde{\gamma'} \cdot \gamma$  is the lift of a contractible curve in  $G \backslash X$ . □

# 3 | THE MAIN THEOREM

## 3.1 CONSTRUCTING THE COVER

The goal now is to show that, if we have a Coxeter group  $W$  and its Tits cone  $WC$ , then there is a finite index subgroup  $H \leq W$ , such that  $WC/H$  is a manifold. For this we will extensively make use of the tools constructed in section 2.6.





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