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Antonin Jacquet

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# Geodesics in first-passage percolation cross any pattern

Antonin Jacquet\*

## Abstract

In first-passage percolation, one places nonnegative i.i.d. random variables  $(T(e))$  on the edges of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ . A geodesic is an optimal path for the passage times  $T(e)$ . Consider a local property of the time environment. We call it a pattern. We investigate the number of times a geodesic crosses a translate of this pattern. Under mild conditions, we show that, apart from an event with exponentially small probability, this number is linear in the distance between the extremities of the geodesic.

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\*Institut Denis Poisson, UMR-CNRS 7013, Université de Tours, antonin.jacquet@univ-tours.fr

# 1 Introduction and main result

## 1.1 Settings

Fix an integer  $d \geq 2$ . In this article, we consider the model of first passage percolation on the hypercubic lattice  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ . We denote by  $0$  the origin of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  and by  $\mathcal{E}$  the set of edges in this lattice. The edges in  $\mathcal{E}$  are those connecting two vertices  $x$  and  $y$  such that  $\|x - y\|_1 = 1$ . A finite path  $\pi = (x_0, \dots, x_k)$  is a sequence of adjacent vertices of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ , i.e. for all  $i = 0, \dots, k - 1$ ,  $\|x_{i+1} - x_i\|_1 = 1$ . We say that  $\pi$  goes from  $x_0$  to  $x_k$ . Sometimes we identify a path with the sequence of the edges that it visits, writing  $\pi = (e_1, \dots, e_k)$  where for  $i = 1, \dots, k$ ,  $e_i = \{x_{i-1}, x_i\}$ . We say that  $k$  is the length of  $\pi$  and we denote  $|\pi| = k$ .

The basic random object consists of a family  $T = \{T(e) : e \in \mathcal{E}\}$  of i.i.d. non-negative random variables defined on a probability space  $(\Omega, \mathcal{F}, \mathbb{P})$ , where  $T(e)$  represents the passage time of the edge  $e$ . Their common distribution is denoted by  $F$ . The passage time  $T(\pi)$  of a path  $\pi = (e_1, \dots, e_k)$  is the sum of the variables  $T(e_i)$  for  $i = 1, \dots, k$ .

For two vertices  $x$  and  $y$ , we define the geodesic time

$$t(x, y) = \inf\{T(\pi) : \pi \text{ is a path from } x \text{ to } y\}. \quad (1.1)$$

A path  $\gamma$  such that  $T(\gamma) = t(x, y)$  is called a geodesic between  $x$  and  $y$ .

For the following and for the existence of geodesics, we need some assumptions on  $F$ . Let  $t_{\min}$  denote the minimum of the support of  $F$ . We recall a definition introduced in [10]. A distribution  $F$  with support in  $[0, \infty)$  is called useful if the following holds:

$$\begin{aligned} F(t_{\min}) &< p_c \text{ when } t_{\min} = 0, \\ F(t_{\min}) &< \vec{p}_c \text{ when } t_{\min} > 0, \end{aligned}$$

where  $p_c$  denotes the critical probability for the Bernoulli bond percolation model on  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $\vec{p}_c$  the critical probability for the oriented Bernoulli bond percolation.

In the whole article, we assume that  $F$  has support in  $[0, \infty)$ , is useful, and that

$$\mathbb{E} \min [T_1^d, \dots, T_{2d}^d] < \infty, \quad (1.2)$$

where  $T_1, \dots, T_{2d}$  are independent with distribution  $F$ .

As  $F$  is useful,  $F(0) < p_c$ . By Proposition 4.4 in [2], we thus know that geodesics between any points exist with probability one.

## 1.2 Patterns

Let  $\ell^\Lambda \geq 1$  be an integer. We fix  $\Lambda = \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d = B_\infty(0, \ell^\Lambda)$  and  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  two points on the boundary of  $\Lambda$ , i.e. on the set  $\{y \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \|y\|_\infty = \ell^\Lambda\}$ . These points  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  are called endpoints. Then we fix an event  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$ , with positive probability, only depending on the passage time of the edges joining two vertices of  $\Lambda$ . We say that  $\mathfrak{P} = (\Lambda, u^\Lambda, v^\Lambda, \mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$  is a pattern. Let  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ . Define:

- for  $y \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ ,  $\theta_x y = y - x$ ,
- for  $e = \{u, v\}$  an edge connecting two vertices  $u$  and  $v$ ,  $\theta_x e = \{\theta_x u, \theta_x v\}$ .

Similarly, if  $\pi = (x_0, \dots, x_k)$  is a path, we define  $\theta_x \pi = (\theta_x x_0, \dots, \theta_x x_k)$ . Then  $\theta_x T$  denotes the environment  $T$  translated by  $-x$ , i.e. the family of random variables indexed by the edges of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  defined for all  $e \in \mathcal{E}$  by

$$(\theta_x T)(e) = T(\theta_{-x} e).$$

Let  $\pi$  be a path and  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ . We say that  $x$  satisfies the condition  $(\pi; \mathfrak{P})$  if these two conditions are satisfied:

1.  $\theta_x \pi$  visits  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$ , and the subpath of  $\theta_x \pi$  between  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  is entirely contained in  $\Lambda$ ,
2.  $\theta_x T \in \mathcal{A}^\Lambda$ .

Note that, if  $x$  satisfies the condition  $(\pi; \mathfrak{P})$  when  $\pi$  is a geodesic, then  $(\theta_x \pi)_{u^\Lambda, v^\Lambda}$  is one of the optimal paths from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$  entirely contained in  $\Lambda$  in the environment  $\theta_x T$ . When the pattern is given, we also say " $\pi$  takes the pattern in  $\theta_{-x} \Lambda$ " for " $x$  satisfies the condition  $(\pi; \mathfrak{P})$ ". We denote:

$$N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi) = \sum_{x \in \mathbb{Z}^d} \mathbb{1}_{\{x \text{ satisfies the condition } (\pi; \mathfrak{P})\}}. \quad (1.3)$$

Note that the number of terms in this sum is actually bounded from above by the number of vertices in  $\pi$ . If  $N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi) \geq 1$ , we say that  $\pi$  takes the pattern. The aim of the article is to investigate, under reasonable conditions on  $\mathfrak{P}$ , the behavior of  $N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\gamma)$  for all geodesics  $\gamma$  from 0 to  $x$  with  $\|x\|_1$  large. The first step is to determine these reasonable conditions, that is why we define the notion of valid patterns.

**Definition 1.1.** *We say that a pattern is valid if the following two conditions hold:*

- $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  has a positive probability,
- the support of  $F$  is unbounded or  $u^\Lambda = -\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$  and  $v^\Lambda = \ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$ , where  $\varepsilon_i$  is the  $i$ -th coordinate vector.

**Remark 1.2.** *In the case where the support of  $F$  is bounded, the condition on the endpoints of the pattern can be relaxed. See Lemma 4.1 and subsequent remarks.*

### 1.3 Main result

The main result of this paper is the following.

**Theorem 1.3.** *Let  $\mathfrak{P} = (\Lambda, u^\Lambda, v^\Lambda, \mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$  be a valid pattern and assume that  $F$  is useful and satisfies (1.2). Then there exist  $\alpha > 0$ ,  $\beta_1 > 0$  and  $\beta_2 > 0$  such that for all  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ ,*

$$\mathbb{P}(\exists \text{ a geodesic } \gamma \text{ from } 0 \text{ to } x \text{ such that } N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\gamma) < \alpha \|x\|_1) \leq \beta_1 e^{-\beta_2 \|x\|_1}.$$

The first result of this kind appears in an article by van den Berg and Kesten [10]. Let us recall their setting. Let  $F$  be a finite mean distribution on  $[0, +\infty)$ . Denote by  $\mu(F)$  the associated time constant, that is

$$\mu(F) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\mathbb{E}[t(0, n\varepsilon_1)]}{n}$$

where  $t$  is a first-passage percolation model associated with  $F$  and where  $\varepsilon_1$  is the first vector of the canonical basis of  $\mathbb{R}^d$ . Let  $\tilde{F}$  be another finite mean distribution on  $[0, +\infty)$ . Assume  $F$  useful,  $F \neq \tilde{F}$  and  $d \geq 2$ . If  $\tilde{F}$  is more variable<sup>1</sup> than  $F$ , then  $\mu(\tilde{F}) < \mu(F)$ . This is the main result of [10]. One of the key intermediate results is the existence of a constant  $c > 0$  such that, for all large  $n$ ,

$$\mathbb{E}[N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(n))] \geq cn \quad (1.4)$$

where  $\mathfrak{P}$  is a properly designed pattern and where  $\pi(n)$  is the first geodesic from 0 to  $n\varepsilon_1$  (geodesics are ordered in an arbitrary way). This is the content of Proposition 5.22 in [10]. The proof relies on a modification argument.

Estimates similar to (1.4) are established, for different patterns, in [9] (see Lemma 1 in [9] which is used to prove Theorem 1) and in [6] (see Sections 5 and 6). We give more details on the latter below as we wish to strengthen some of their results to illustrate the use of Theorem 1.3.

Establishing the above mentioned results is rather technical and sometimes quite involved. Theorem 1.3 thus answers a need for a result handling any valid pattern. It is moreover stronger on two aspects:

1. It provides an at least linear growth of the number of crossed patterns out of an event of exponentially small probability,
2. It gives the result for all geodesics and not only for a specific geodesic (see Theorem 1.7 for an example where this is useful).

---

<sup>1</sup>One says that  $\tilde{F}$  is more variable than  $F$  if there exists two random variables  $T$  – with distribution  $F$  – and  $\tilde{T}$  – with distribution  $\tilde{F}$  – such that  $\mathbb{E}[\tilde{T}|T] \leq T$ . See Definition (2.1) and Theorem 2.6 in [10].

A result fulfilling both items above appears in an article by Andjel and Vares [1] for the number of edges with large time crossed by a geodesic.

**Theorem 1.4** (Theorem 2.3 in [1]). *Let  $F$  be a useful distribution on  $[0, +\infty)$  with unbounded support. Then, for each  $M$  positive there exists  $\varepsilon = \varepsilon(M) > 0$  and  $\alpha = \alpha(M) > 0$  so that for all  $x$ , we have*

$$\mathbb{P} \left( \exists \text{ geodesic } \pi \text{ from } 0 \text{ to } x \text{ such that } \sum_{e \in \pi} \mathbb{1}_{T(e) > M} \leq \alpha \|x\|_1 \right) \leq e^{-\varepsilon \|x\|_1}.$$

Theorem 1.3 is a generalization of this theorem since, for example, we can take the pattern  $\mathfrak{P} = (\{-1, 0, 1\}^d, -\varepsilon_1, \varepsilon_1, \mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$  with  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  the event on which each edge of  $\{-1, 0, 1\}^d$  has a passage time greater than  $M$  to get this result. The proof of Theorem 1.3 is partly inspired by the proof of this theorem and by the proof of (1.4) in [10].

## 1.4 Some applications

Several of the main results recently obtained in [6] are based on modification arguments leading to results of the type (1.4). We take advantage of Theorem 1.3 to slightly improve some of these results. The purpose of this section is primarily to illustrate the use of Theorem 1.3, the details of the proofs are postponed to the next section.

### Euclidean length of geodesics

Consider the following two assumptions<sup>2</sup> on the distribution  $F$ :

(H1) There exist strictly positive integers  $k$  and  $\ell$  and atoms  $r'_1, \dots, r'_{k+2\ell}, s'_1, \dots, s'_k$  (not necessarily distinct) such that

$$\sum_{i=1}^{k+2\ell} r'_i = \sum_{j=1}^k s'_j. \quad (1.5)$$

(H2) There exist strictly positive integers  $k$  and  $\ell$  and atoms  $r < s$  such that  $(k + 2\ell)r = ks$ .

Note that (H2) is stronger than (H1) and that (H1) holds as soon as 0 is an atom. For  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , we denote by  $\underline{L}_{0,x}$  (resp.  $\overline{L}_{0,x}$ ) the minimal (resp. maximal) Euclidean length of self-avoiding geodesics from 0 to  $x$ . In [6], Krishnan, Rassoul-Agha and Seppäläinen prove the following theorem (Theorem 6.2 in [6]).

**Theorem 1.5** (Theorem 6.2 in [6]). *Assume that  $\mathbb{P}(T(e) = t_{\min}) < p_c$  and  $\mathbb{E} \min [T_1^p, \dots, T_{2d}^p] < \infty$  with  $p > 1$ . Furthermore, assume one of the following two assumptions:*

- *the support of  $F$  is unbounded and (H1) is satisfied,*
- *the support of  $F$  is bounded (H2) is satisfied.*

*Then, there exist constants  $0 < D, \delta, M < \infty$  such that*

$$\mathbb{P}(\overline{L}_{0,x} - \underline{L}_{0,x} \geq D \|x\|_1) \geq \delta \text{ for } \|x\|_1 \geq M. \quad (1.6)$$

We use Theorem 1.3 to prove the following result. It generalizes in a way Theorem 1.5 since in the case of bounded support, we have a less restrictive assumption and since the lower bound in (1.7) is exponentially close to one in the distance instead of the uniform lower bound in (1.6). However, the assumption on the moment is less restrictive in Theorem 1.5.

**Theorem 1.6.** *Assume that  $F$  is useful and  $\mathbb{E} \min [T_1^d, \dots, T_{2d}^d] < \infty$ . Furthermore, assume (H1). Then there exist constants  $0 < \beta_1, \beta_2, D < \infty$  such that*

$$\mathbb{P}(\overline{L}_{0,x} - \underline{L}_{0,x} \geq D \|x\|_1) \geq 1 - \beta_1 e^{-\beta_2 \|x\|_1}. \quad (1.7)$$

The proof of this theorem is the aim of Section 2.1.

---

<sup>2</sup>Assuming that  $\mathbb{P}(T(e) = t_{\min}) < p_c$ , the assumption (i) or (ii) or (iii) in Assumption 6.1 in [6] is equivalent to the assumption (H1) or (H2). We prove that by distinguishing the case where 0 is an atom or not.

## Strict concavity of the expected passage times as a function of the weight shifts

For  $b \in \mathbb{R}$ , define the  $b$ -shifted weights by

$$T^{(b)} = \{T^{(b)}(e) : e \in \mathcal{E}\} \text{ with } T^{(b)}(e) = T(e) + b \text{ for all } e \in \mathcal{E}.$$

Following the notations of [6] (see Section 2.2 in [6]), all the quantities associated with the passage times  $T^{(b)}$  acquire the superscript. For example,  $t^{(b)}(x, y)$  is the geodesic time between  $x$  and  $y$  defined at (1.1), where the infimum is only on self-avoiding paths. Theorem A.1 in [6] gives the existence of a constant  $\varepsilon_0 > 0$  with which we have an extension of the Cox-Durrett shape theorem for the shifted weights  $T^{(-b)}$  for  $b < t_{\min} + \varepsilon_0$  (note that here the weights can be negative). Note that (ii) in Theorem A.1 in [6] guarantees that  $\mathbb{E}[t_{0,x}^{(-b)}]$  is finite if  $b \in (0, t_{\min} + \varepsilon_0)$ .

**Theorem 1.7.** *Assume  $F$  useful. Furthermore, assume that the support of  $F$  is bounded and that it contains at least two strictly positive reals. Then, there exists a finite positive constant  $M$  and a function  $D(b) > 0$  of  $b > 0$  such that the following bounds hold for all  $b \in (0, t_{\min} + \varepsilon_0)$  and all  $\|x\|_1 \geq M$ :*

$$\mathbb{E}[t_{0,x}^{(-b)}] \leq \mathbb{E}[t_{0,x}] - b\mathbb{E}[\overline{L}_{0,x}] - D(b)b\|x\|_1. \quad (1.8)$$

**Remark 1.8.** *In Theorem 1.7, we strengthen very slightly Theorem 5.4 in [6] in the bounded case. Indeed,  $\mathbb{E}[\underline{L}_{0,x}]$  in [6] is replaced by  $\mathbb{E}[\overline{L}_{0,x}]$  in (1.8). This strengthening is made possible by the fact that Theorem 1.3 gives a result for all geodesics and thus, in particular, for the geodesic of maximal Euclidean length. We focus on the bounded case in Theorem 1.7 since Theorem 5.4 in [6] already contains (1.8) in the unbounded case.*

## 1.5 Sketch of the proof

Although they share some similarities, the proofs of Theorem 1.3 differ according to whether the support of  $F$  is bounded or unbounded. As the proof is easier in the unbounded case, we decide to first give the proof in the unbounded case in Section 3 and then give the proof in the bounded case in Section 4. In both cases, the aim is to prove the following proposition which gives us the main result by a standard re-normalization argument.

**Proposition 1.9.** *Let  $\mathfrak{P} = (\Lambda, u^\Lambda, v^\Lambda, \mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$  be a valid pattern and assume that  $F$  is useful and satisfies (1.2). Then there exist  $C > 0$  and  $D > 0$  such that for all  $n \geq 0$ , for all  $x$  such that  $\|x\|_1 = n$ ,*

$$\mathbb{P}(\exists \text{ a geodesic } \gamma \text{ from } 0 \text{ to } x \text{ such that } N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\gamma) = 0) \leq De^{-Cn^{\frac{1}{d}}}. \quad (1.9)$$

In what follows we give an informal sketch of the proof of Proposition 1.9. First, assume that we are in the case where geodesics between all points exist with probability one and are unique. We fix 0 and  $x$  and we denote by  $\gamma$  the geodesic between 0 and  $x$ . We begin by associating to  $\gamma$  a sequence of  $q = C\|x\|_1$  disjoint boxes crossed by  $\gamma$  (for a suitable constant  $C > 0$ ). Out of a very low probability event, we can ensure that these boxes are typical in the sense that the passage time are particularly well controlled by  $\mu$  (see (1.14)). The initial naive intuition is the following.

1. In every such box, the probability that  $\gamma$  takes the pattern is bounded away from 0.
2. Since there are  $C\|x\|_1$  boxes, the probability that  $\gamma$  does not take the pattern in any box is exponentially small in  $\|x\|_1$ .

Let us be slightly more formal. For all  $\ell \in \{1, \dots, q\}$ , we define the event:

$$\mathcal{M}(\ell) = \{\text{the geodesic from } 0 \text{ to } x \text{ does not take the pattern in the first } \ell \text{ boxes of the sequence}\}.$$

Then, it is sufficient to prove, for all  $\ell \geq 1$  and for a constant  $\eta > 0$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{M}(\ell)) \leq \frac{1}{1 + \eta} \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{M}(\ell - 1)). \quad (1.10)$$

Indeed, by induction and as there are  $q$  boxes, this yields

$$\mathbb{P}(\gamma \text{ does not take the pattern}) \leq \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{M}(q)) \leq \left(\frac{1}{1+\eta}\right)^q$$

and thus the result is established. Since  $\mathcal{M}(\ell) \subset \mathcal{M}(\ell-1)$ , (1.10) is equivalent to:

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell)) \geq \eta \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{M}(\ell)). \quad (1.11)$$

So it remains to prove (1.11). Here we use a modification argument. The idea is, starting from an initial environment  $T$ , to build a new environment  $T^*$  – with the same distribution as  $T$  – by resampling the passage time of some edges of the  $\ell$ -th box. The aim is to get:

$$\mathbb{P}(T^* \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell) | T) \geq \eta \text{ on } \{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}, \quad (1.12)$$

where we use the notation  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(j)\}$  to denote "the event  $\mathcal{M}(j)$  holds with respect to the environment  $T$ ". The inequality (1.11) is a direct consequence of (1.12) by integrating. Thus the aim is to bound from below the probability, conditionally to  $T$ , to have the two following properties on the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ :

1.  $T^* \notin \mathcal{M}(\ell)$ ,
2.  $T^* \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1)$ .

In particular, even for the first item, if we denote the  $\ell$ -th box by  $B$ , it is not sufficient to prove that, in the environment  $T^*$  (that is, after the modification in the  $\ell$ -th box), the geodesic takes the pattern in  $B$ . Indeed, we still need  $B$  to be the  $\ell$ -th box. Thus, one need to be able to get a global control of how the geodesic is modified in the environment  $T^*$ . In particular, one need to control the location of the sequence of boxes and this becomes significantly more difficult when there is no uniqueness of the geodesics and if we want a result valid for all geodesics. To overcome this difficulty, in the definition of the sequence of boxes, we define and use concentric annuli (see Section 3.1).

**Comparison with the plan of the proof of Proposition 5.22 in [10].** Let us compare the above strategy with the plan used in [10] to prove Proposition 5.22. Fix  $x$  in  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ . We shorten geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in geodesic. In [10], van den Berg and Kesten also start by associating with some specific geodesic  $\gamma$  some sequence of  $q = C\|x\|_1$  typical boxes. By simple geometric arguments, they then get some family  $\mathcal{B}$  of boxes such that

$$\mathbb{E}[\text{number of boxes of } \mathcal{B} \text{ which are typical and crossed by } \gamma] \geq c\|x\|_1$$

where  $c$  is a positive constant. Fix some box  $B \in \mathcal{B}$ . Then they also define a new environment  $T^*$  by resampling the times of the edges in  $B$ . It is then sufficient (this is the technical part of the proof in the bounded case) to prove

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{every geodesic in } T^* \text{ crosses the pattern in } B | \text{in the environment } T, \gamma \text{ crosses } B \text{ and } B \text{ is typical}) \geq \eta$$

for some positive constant  $\eta > 0$ . In particular, and contrary to what happens in our framework, it is not necessary in this setting to control what happens to geodesic(s) outside the considered box when we resample the times of the edges in the box.

**Comparison with the plan of the proof of Theorem 2.3 in [1].** In [1], the main difference with the strategy described above is the use of penalized geodesics. Indeed, Andjel and Vares only consider geodesics which do not take edges whose passage time is greater than  $M$  and it allows them to get a result on all geodesics from 0 to  $x$  thanks to the modification argument. However, it seems difficult to use penalized geodesics with the patterns, that is why we use the strategy of concentric annuli developed in Section 3.1.

## 1.6 Some tools and notations

In this subsection, we recall some results and fix some notations. First, we denote by  $\mathbb{N}$  the set of all non-negative integers, by  $\mathbb{N}^*$  the set  $\mathbb{N} \setminus \{0\}$ , and by  $\mathbb{R}_+$  the set of all  $x \in \mathbb{R}$  such that  $x \geq 0$ .

For a self-avoiding<sup>3</sup> path  $\pi = (x_0, \dots, x_k)$  going from  $x_0$  to  $x_k$ , we say that  $x_i$  is visited by  $\pi$  before  $x_j$  if  $i < j$ ; we say that an edge  $\{x_i, x_{i+1}\}$  is visited before an edge  $\{x_j, x_{j+1}\}$  if  $i < j$ . A subpath of  $\pi$  going from  $x_i$  to  $x_j$  (where  $i, j \in \{0, \dots, k\}$  and  $i < j$ ) is the path  $(x_i, \dots, x_j)$  and is denoted by  $\pi_{x_i, x_j}$ .

Then, we define different balls in  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  or  $\mathbb{R}^d$ . Note that all of these balls (or their intersections with  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ ) are defined as sets of vertices but sometimes, we also want to say that an edge is contained in one of these balls. So, we say that an edge  $e = \{u, v\}$  is contained in a ball if  $u$  and  $v$  are in this ball. For all  $c \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $r \in \mathbb{R}_+$ , we denote

$$\begin{aligned} B_\infty(c, r) &= \{u \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \|u - c\|_\infty \leq r\}, \\ B_1(c, r) &= \{u \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \|u - c\|_1 \leq r\}, \end{aligned}$$

and for  $n \in \mathbb{N}^*$ , we denote by  $\Gamma_n$  the boundary of  $B_1(0, n)$ , i.e.

$$\Gamma_n = \{u \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \|u\|_1 = n\}. \quad (1.13)$$

Also for  $c \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $r \in \mathbb{R}_+$ , we denote by  $B(c, r)$  the random ball

$$B(c, r) = \{u \in \mathbb{Z}^d : t(c, u) \leq r\}.$$

Then, for  $x$  and  $y$  in  $\mathbb{R}^d$ , we define  $t(x, y)$  as  $t(x', y')$  where  $x'$  is the unique vertex in  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  such that  $x \in x' + [0, 1)^d$  (similarly for  $y'$ ). For  $c \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $r \in \mathbb{R}_+$ , we denote by  $\tilde{B}(c, r)$  the random ball

$$\tilde{B}(c, r) = \{y \in \mathbb{R}^d : t(c, y) \leq r\}.$$

Let  $x$  in  $\mathbb{R}^d$ . Thanks to (1.2), we can define

$$\mu(x) = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \frac{t(0, nx)}{n} \text{ a.s.} \quad (1.14)$$

Thanks to the hypothesis (1.2) and since  $F(0) < p_c(\mathbb{Z}^d)$ , for all  $x \in \mathbb{R}^d \setminus \{0\}$ , we have  $\mu(x) \in (0, \infty)$ . Furthermore,  $\mu$  is a norm on  $\mathbb{R}^d$  and describes the first order of approximation of  $\tilde{B}(0, r)$  when  $r$  goes to infinity. For  $c \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $r \in \mathbb{R}_+$ , we denote

$$B_\mu(c, r) = \{y \in \mathbb{R}^d : \mu(c - y) \leq r\}.$$

Fix  $\mathbf{B} = B_\mu(0, 1)$ , then the Cox-Durrett shape theorem (Theorem 2.16 in [2]) guarantees that for each  $\varepsilon > 0$ ,

$$\mathbb{P} \left( (1 - \varepsilon)\mathbf{B} \subset \frac{\tilde{B}(0, t)}{t} \subset (1 + \varepsilon)\mathbf{B} \text{ for all large } t \right) = 1. \quad (1.15)$$

Since  $\mu$  is a norm, we can fix two constants  $c_\mu > 0$  and  $C_\mu > 0$  such that for all  $y$  in  $\mathbb{R}^d$ ,

$$c_\mu \|y\|_1 \leq \mu(y) \leq C_\mu \|y\|_1.$$

Finally, since  $F$  is useful, by Lemma 5.5 in [10], there exist  $\delta = \delta(F) > 0$  and  $D_0 = D_0(F)$  fixed for the remaining of the article such that for all  $u, v \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(t(u, v) \leq (t_{\min} + \delta)\|u - v\|_1) \leq e^{-D_0\|u - v\|_1}. \quad (1.16)$$

## 2 Proofs of generalizations of modification arguments in [6]

### 2.1 Modification proof for the Euclidean length of geodesics

To prove Theorem 1.6, we begin by defining the valid pattern in three different cases. Recall that  $k$  and  $\ell$  are given by the assumptions of this theorem and that  $(\varepsilon_i)_{i \in \{1, \dots, d\}}$  are the vectors of the canonical basis

<sup>3</sup>The definition can be extended to not necessarily self-avoiding paths by saying that a vertex  $x$  is visited by  $\pi$  before  $y$  if there exists  $i_0 \in \{0, \dots, k\}$  such that  $x_{i_0} = x$  and for all  $j \in \{0, \dots, k\}$ ,  $x_j = y$  implies that  $j > i_0$ .



**Case where zero is an atom.** In addition to the assumptions of Theorem 1.6, we assume that zero is an atom for  $F$ . We set  $\ell^\Lambda = \max\left(\left\lceil \frac{k}{2} \right\rceil + 1, \ell + 1\right)$  and we define a pattern in  $\Lambda = \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d$ .

We denote by  $\pi^+$  the path going from  $-\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$  to  $\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$  by  $2\ell^\Lambda$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$  and by  $\pi^{++}$  the path going from  $-\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$  to  $(-\ell^\Lambda + 1)\varepsilon_1$  by one step in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ , then to  $(-\ell^\Lambda + 1)\varepsilon_1 + \ell \varepsilon_2$  by  $\ell$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$ , then to  $(-\ell^\Lambda + k + 1)\varepsilon_1 + \ell \varepsilon_2$  by  $k$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ , then to  $(-\ell^\Lambda + k + 1)\varepsilon_1$  by  $\ell$  steps in the direction  $-\varepsilon_2$  and then to  $\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$  by  $2\ell^\Lambda - k - 1$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ . We define  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  as follows:

- for all  $e \in \pi^+ \cup \pi^{++}$ ,  $T(e) = 0$ ,
- for all  $e \in \Lambda$  which is not in  $\pi^+ \cup \pi^{++}$ ,  $T(e) > 0$ .

Note that  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  has a positive probability. Then,  $\pi^+$  and  $\pi^{++}$  are the only two optimal paths from  $u$  to  $v$  entirely contained in the pattern.

**Unbounded case.** Here, in addition to the assumptions of Theorem 1.6, we assume that zero is not an atom and that the support of  $F$  is unbounded. We set  $\ell^\Lambda$  as in the previous case and we define a pattern in  $\Lambda = \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d$ . We also build  $\pi^+$  and  $\pi^{++}$  as in the previous case. Let  $u'$  denote the vertex  $(-\ell^\Lambda + 1)\varepsilon_1$  and  $v'$  the vertex  $(-\ell^\Lambda + k + 1)\varepsilon_1$ . Then, we index the edges of  $\pi_{u',v'}^+$  and the ones of  $\pi_{u',v'}^{++}$  in the order in which they are taken by these paths. We respectively denote them by  $(e_i^1)_{i \in \{1, \dots, k\}}$

and  $(e_i^2)_{i \in \{1, \dots, k+2\ell\}}$ . We fix  $M > (2\ell^\Lambda - k)s'_1 + \sum_{j=1}^k s'_j$  and we define  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  as follows:

- for all  $e \in \pi_{-\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1, u'}^+ \cup \pi_{v', \ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1}^+$ ,  $T(e) = s'_1$ ,
- for all  $i \in \{1, \dots, k\}$ ,  $T(e_i^1) = s'_i$  and for all  $i \in \{1, \dots, k+2\ell\}$ ,  $T(e_i^2) = r'_i$ , thus

$$T(\pi^+) = T(\pi^{++}),$$

- for all  $e \in \Lambda$  which are not in  $\pi^+$  or  $\pi^{++}$ ,  $T(e) > M$ .

Since the support of  $F$  is unbounded,  $\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$  is positive. Note that  $M > T(\pi^+)$ , thus the optimal paths from  $u$  to  $v$  entirely contained in the pattern can not take other edges than those in  $\pi^+ \cup \pi^{++}$ . Hence  $\pi^+$  and  $\pi^{++}$  are the only two optimal paths from  $u$  to  $v$  entirely contained in the pattern.

**Bounded case.** In addition to the assumptions of Theorem 1.6, we assume that zero is not an atom and that the support of  $F$  is bounded. We set  $t_{\max} = \sup(\text{support}(F))$ . We denote  $a_{\min} = \min(r'_1, \dots, r'_{k+2\ell}, s'_1, \dots, s'_k)$  and  $a_{\max} = \max(r'_1, \dots, r'_{k+2\ell}, s'_1, \dots, s'_k)$ . Then, there are at least  $2\ell$  integers  $j \in \{1, \dots, k+2\ell\}$  such that  $r'_j < a_{\max}$ . Indeed, assume that this is not the case. Then, we have

$$\sum_{i=1}^{k+2\ell} r'_i \geq (k+1)a_{\max} > ka_{\max} \geq \sum_{j=1}^k s'_j,$$

and this contradicts (1.5). Thus, even if it means changing the indexes, we can assume that there exists  $i_0 \in \{1, \dots, 2\ell\}$  such that  $r'_{i_0} < a_{\max}$  and we denote  $t_w = a_{\max} - r'_{i_0} > 0$ . We fix  $\alpha > 0$  an even integer such that:

$$\alpha > \frac{2ka_{\max}}{t_w}. \quad (2.1)$$

We set  $k' = \alpha k$ ,  $\ell' = \alpha \ell$  and  $\ell^\Lambda = \max\left(\left\lceil \frac{k'}{2} \right\rceil + 1, \ell' + 1\right)$ . Now, we define a pattern in  $\Lambda = \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d$ . Let  $\pi^+$  be the path going from  $u = -\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$  to  $v = \ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$  by  $2\ell^\Lambda$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$  and  $\pi^{++}$  be the path going from  $u$  to  $u_1 = (-\ell^\Lambda + 1)\varepsilon_1$  by one step in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ , then to  $u_2 = (-\ell^\Lambda + 1)\varepsilon_1 + \ell' \varepsilon_2$  by  $\ell'$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$ , then to  $u_3 = (-\ell^\Lambda + k' + 1)\varepsilon_1 + \ell' \varepsilon_2$  by  $k'$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ , then to  $u_4 = (-\ell^\Lambda + k' + 1)\varepsilon_1$  by  $\ell'$  steps in the direction  $-\varepsilon_2$  and then to  $v$  by  $2\ell^\Lambda - k' - 1$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ . Note that  $\pi^+$  and  $\pi^{++}$  share  $2\ell^\Lambda - k'$  edges. Then we index the

edges of  $\pi_{u_1, u_4}^+$ ,  $\pi_{u_1, u_2}^{++}$  and  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$  in the order in which they are taken by these paths. We respectively denote them by  $(e_i^1)_{i \in \{1, \dots, k'\}}$ ,  $(e_i^2)_{i \in \{1, \dots, \ell'\}}$  and  $(e_i^3)_{i \in \{1, \dots, k'\}}$ . Finally, we index the edges in  $\pi_{u_3, u_4}^{++}$  in the reverse order in which they are taken by this path. We denote them by  $(e_i^4)_{i \in \{1, \dots, \ell'\}}$ . The idea for the event  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  is just to alternate the atoms on every boundary of the rectangle whose vertices are  $u_1$ ,  $u_2$ ,  $u_3$  and  $u_4$ . It allows us a better control of the time of a path taking both vertices of  $\pi_{u_1, u_4}^+$  and vertices of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$ . Furthermore, we manage that each edge of  $\pi_{u_1, u_2}^{++}$  has the same passage time as the edge of  $\pi_{u_3, u_4}^{++}$  with which it shares the coordinates in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$ . So, we define  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  as follows :

- for all  $i \in \{1, \dots, k'\}$ ,  $T(e_i^1) = s'_{i[k]}$  and  $T(e_i^3) = r'_{2\ell+i[k]}$  where  $i[k]$  is the integer in  $\{1, \dots, k\}$  such that  $i - i[k]$  is divisible by  $k$ ,
- for all  $i \in \{1, \dots, \ell'\}$ ,  $T(e_i^2) = r'_{i[2\ell]}$  and  $T(e_i^4) = r'_{i[2\ell]}$ ,
- for all  $e \in \pi_{u, u_1}^+ \cup \pi_{u_4, v}^+$ ,  $T(e) = a_{\min}$ ,
- for all other edges  $e \in \Lambda$ ,  $T(e) = a_{\max}$ .

Note that  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  has a positive probability and that on this event,  $T(\pi^+) = T(\pi^{++})$ .

**Lemma 2.1.** *The paths  $\pi^+$  and  $\pi^{++}$  belong to the family of optimal paths from  $u$  to  $v$  which are entirely contained in the pattern.*

*Proof of Lemma 2.1.* Let us begin by introducing some notations. For  $i \in \{1, \dots, d\}$  and a path  $\pi$ ,  $T_i(\pi)$  denotes the sum of the passage times of the edges of  $\pi$  which are in the direction  $\varepsilon_i$ . So we have  $T(\pi) = T_1(\pi) + \dots + T_d(\pi)$ . Furthermore, for  $j \in \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}$ , we denote by  $S_2^j$  the set of edges which can be written  $\{x, x + \varepsilon_2\}$  where the second coordinate of  $x$  is equal to  $j$ .

Now, let us make a remark useful for the proof. For every vertex  $w \in \pi_{u_1, u_2}^{++}$ , there is no geodesic from  $u$  to  $w$  taking edges in  $\pi_{u_1, u_4}^+$  or in  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$ . Let us prove it. Assume for a contradiction the existence of such a geodesic. Denote it by  $\pi$ . Then  $T_1(\pi_{u, w}^{++}) < T_1(\pi)$ . Indeed,  $\pi$  must make at least two steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ . The travel time of one of them is at least  $a_{\min}$  and the travel time of the other is positive. Furthermore,  $T_2(\pi_{u, w}^{++}) < T_2(\pi)$ . Indeed, for each  $j \in \{0, \dots, \ell' - 1\}$ ,  $\pi$  has to take an edge in  $S_2^j$ . By the definition of the pattern, each edge of  $\pi_{u_1, u_2}^{++}$  has the same passage time as the edge of  $\pi_{u_3, u_4}^{++}$  with which it shares the coordinates in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$ , and edges in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$  which are not in  $\pi^{++}$  have a passage time greater than or equal to  $a_{\max}$ . Hence, since  $\pi_{u, w}^{++}$  only takes edges in the directions  $\varepsilon_1$  and  $\varepsilon_2$ ,  $T(\pi_{u, w}^{++}) < T(\pi)$ . Note that, with the same proof, we have that for every vertex  $w \in \pi_{u_3, u_4}^{++}$ , there is no geodesic from  $w$  to  $v$  taking edges in  $\pi_{u_1, u_4}^+$  or in  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$ .

Now, to prove the lemma, assume for a contradiction that there exists an optimal path  $\pi$  entirely contained in  $\Lambda$  such that

$$T(\pi) < T(\pi^+) = T(\pi^{++}). \quad (2.2)$$

Assume that  $\pi$  does not take edges in  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$ . Then

$$T(\pi) \geq T_1(\pi) \geq T_1(\pi^+) = T(\pi^+),$$

which contradicts (2.2). Note that the second inequality comes from the fact that edges in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$  whose passage time is strictly smaller than those in  $\pi^+$  must belong to  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$ . Hence  $T_2(\pi) \geq T_2(\pi^{++})$ . Indeed, since  $\pi$  takes edges in  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$ ,  $\pi$  has to take at least two edges in  $S_2^j$  for all  $j \in \{0, \dots, \ell' - 1\}$ . However, for all  $j \in \{0, \dots, \ell' - 1\}$ , the two edges whose passage time is the smallest are those in  $\pi^{++}$ . Thus we have  $T(\pi) < T(\pi^{++}) = T_1(\pi^{++}) + T_2(\pi^{++})$  and  $T_2(\pi) \geq T_2(\pi^{++})$ , so  $T_1(\pi) < T_1(\pi^{++})$ . Hence,  $\pi$  has to take edges in  $\pi_{u_1, u_4}^+$ .

Then, we order the elements of the set of edges of  $\pi_{u_1, u_4}^+$  and  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$  taken by  $\pi$  in the order in which  $\pi$  visits them. We have just proved that there exists at least one couple of consecutive edges in this set such that one belongs to  $\pi_{u_1, u_4}^+$  and the other to  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$ . We consider the first such couple of edges and we denote the edge in  $\pi_{u_1, u_4}^+$  by  $e^+ = \{u^+, v^+\}$  and the one in  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$  by  $e^{++} = \{u^{++}, v^{++}\}$  where  $u^+$  (resp.  $u^{++}$ ) is visited by  $\pi$  before  $v^+$  (resp.  $v^{++}$ ). There are two cases.

- The first one is that  $\pi$  visits  $e^+$  before  $e^{++}$ . The aim is to prove that  $T(\pi_{u, u^{++}}) > T(\pi_{u, u^+}^{++})$ , which contradicts the optimality of  $\pi$ . First,  $\pi_{v^+, u^{++}}$  can not take any edge in  $\pi_{u_1, u_2}^+$ . Indeed,

if it were the case, then  $\pi_{u,u^{++}}$  would be a geodesic from  $u$  to a vertex of  $\pi_{u_1,u_2}^{++}$  taking an edge in  $\pi_{u_1,u_4}^+$ , and this would contradict the remark made at the beginning of the proof. The same argument gives us that  $\pi_{v^+,u^{++}}$  can not take any edge in  $\pi_{u_3,u_4}^+$ . So,  $\pi_{v^+,u^{++}}$  has to take  $\ell'$  edges in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$  whose time is greater than or equal to  $a_{\max}$ , therefore

$$T_2(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) \geq \ell' a_{\max}.$$

By the construction of the pattern,  $\pi_{u,u^{++}}$  saves a time greater than or equal to  $\frac{\alpha t_w}{2}$  in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$  compared with  $\pi_{u,u^{++}}$ , that is

$$T_2(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) \leq \ell' a_{\max} - \frac{\alpha t_w}{2}.$$

Furthermore, for each edge  $e$  in  $\pi_{u_2,u^{++}}^{++}$ ,  $\pi_{u,u^{++}}$  has to take an edge in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$  such that this edge is the edge  $e - \ell' \varepsilon_2 \in \pi_{u_1,u_4}^+$  or such that its passage time is equal to  $a_{\max}$ . Since  $\pi_{u,u^{++}}$  also has to take an edge which has the same coordinates in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$  as those of  $\{u, u_1\}$ , and thus whose passage time is greater than or equal to  $a_{\min}$ , we get

$$T_1(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) \geq a_{\min} + \left\lfloor \frac{\|u_2 - u^{++}\|_1}{k} \right\rfloor \sum_{i=1}^k s'_i.$$

Hence,

$$T(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) \geq T_1(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) + T_2(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) \geq a_{\min} + \ell' a_{\max} + \left\lfloor \frac{\|u_2 - u^{++}\|_1}{k} \right\rfloor \sum_{i=1}^k s'_i,$$

and

$$T(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) \leq a_{\min} + \ell' a_{\max} - \frac{\alpha}{2} t_w + \left\lceil \frac{\|u_2 - u^{++}\|_1}{k} \right\rceil \sum_{i=1+2\ell}^{k+2\ell} r'_i.$$

Since  $\sum_{i=1+2\ell}^{k+2\ell} r'_i \leq \sum_{i=1}^k s'_i$ , we have that

$$T(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) - T(\pi_{u,u^{++}}) \leq \sum_{i=1}^k s'_i - \frac{\alpha t_w}{2} \leq k a_{\max} - \frac{\alpha t_w}{2} < 0 \text{ by (2.1).}$$

- The second case is that  $\pi$  visits  $e^{++}$  before  $e^+$  and the aim is to prove that  $T(\pi_{u,u^+}^+) < T(\pi_{u,u^+})$ , which contradicts (2.2). First,  $\pi_{v^+,u^+}$  can not take any edge in  $\pi_{u_3,u_4}^{++}$ . Indeed, if it were the case, then  $\pi_{v^+,v}$  would be a geodesic from a vertex of  $\pi_{u_3,u_4}^{++}$  to  $v$  containing an edge in  $\pi_{u_1,u_4}^+$  and this would contradict the remark made at the beginning of the proof. So, since for all  $j \in \{0, \dots, \ell' - 1\}$ ,  $\pi_{u,u^+}$  has to take at least two edges in  $S_2^j$ , there are at least  $\ell'$  edges in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$  taken by  $\pi_{u,u^+}$  with a passage time greater than or equal to  $a_{\max}$ . So we have

$$T_2(\pi_{u,u^+}) \geq \ell' a_{\max} + \frac{\alpha}{2} \sum_{i=1}^{2\ell} r'_i \geq \frac{\alpha t_w}{2} + \alpha \sum_{i=1}^{2\ell} r'_i,$$

where the last inequality comes from the fact that  $2\ell a_{\max} \geq t_w + \sum_{i=1}^{2\ell} r'_i$ . Furthermore, since for each edge in  $\pi_{u_2,u^+}^{++}$ ,  $\pi_{u,u^+}$  has to take this edge or an edge whose time is greater than or equal to  $a_{\max}$ ,

$$T_1(\pi_{u,u^+}) \geq a_{\min} + \left\lfloor \frac{\|u^+ - u_1\|_1}{k} \right\rfloor \sum_{i=2\ell+1}^{k+2\ell} r'_i.$$

Thus, since  $\alpha \geq \left\lfloor \frac{\|u^+ - u_1\|_1}{k} \right\rfloor$ , we get

$$T(\pi_{u,u^+}) \geq T_1(\pi_{u,u^+}) + T_2(\pi_{u,u^+}) \geq a_{\min} + \frac{\alpha t_w}{2} + \left\lfloor \frac{\|u^+ - u_1\|_1}{k} \right\rfloor \sum_{i=1}^{k+2\ell} r'_i. \quad (2.3)$$

Furthermore, we have

$$T(\pi_{u,u^+}^+) \leq a_{\min} + \left\lfloor \frac{\|u^+ - u_1\|_1}{k} \right\rfloor \sum_{i=1}^k s'_i. \quad (2.4)$$

Combining (2.3) and (2.4), and using the equality (1.5) yields

$$T(\pi_{u,u^+}) - T(\pi_{u,u^+}^+) \geq \frac{\alpha t_w}{2} - \sum_{i=1}^k s'_i \geq \frac{\alpha t_w}{2} - k a_{\max} > 0 \text{ by (2.1).}$$

□

### Conclusion in the three cases.

*Proof of Theorem 1.6.* For  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , we denote by  $\pi(x)$  the first self-avoiding geodesic in the lexicographical order<sup>4</sup> among those who have the minimal number of edges. We say that two patterns are disjoint if they have no vertex in common. We denote by  $\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x))$  the maximum number of disjoint patterns defined above in the three cases visited by  $\pi(x)$ . Simple geometric considerations provide a constant  $c > 0$  such that for all path  $\pi$ ,  $\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi) \geq c \mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi)$ . Further, note that, in each pattern visited by  $\pi(x)$ ,  $\pi(x)$  takes the  $\pi^+$  segment since the  $\pi^+$  segment belongs to the set of optimal paths entirely contained in the pattern and is the only optimal path for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$ . We can define a self-avoiding path  $\widehat{\pi}(x)$  from 0 to  $x$  by replacing each  $\pi^+$  segment of  $\pi(x)$  with the  $\pi^{++}$  segment in each disjoint pattern visited by  $\pi(x)$ . This path  $\widehat{\pi}(x)$  has the same passage time and hence both  $\pi(x)$  and  $\widehat{\pi}(x)$  are geodesics. Note that in the case where zero is not an atom,  $\widehat{\pi}$  is obviously self-avoiding (since every geodesic is self avoiding), and in the case where zero is an atom,  $\widehat{\pi}$  is self-avoiding since in the patterns, the passage times of all edges which are not in the  $\pi^+$  or  $\pi^{++}$  segments are strictly positive, and thus  $\pi(x)$  can not visit vertices in the  $\pi^{++}$  segments except those which also belong to the corresponding  $\pi^+$  segment. We have:

$$|\widehat{\pi}(x)| \geq |\pi(x)| + 2\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)).$$

Finally, we get:

$$\overline{L}_{0,x} \geq |\widehat{\pi}(x)| \geq |\pi(x)| + 2\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)) \geq \underline{L}_{0,x} + 2\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)). \quad (2.5)$$

The hypothesis of Theorem 1.3 are satisfied, thus there exist  $\alpha > 0$ ,  $\beta_1 > 0$  and  $\beta_2 > 0$  such that for all  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(\exists \text{ a geodesic } \gamma \text{ from } 0 \text{ to } x \text{ such that } N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\gamma) < \alpha \|x\|_1) \leq \beta_1 e^{-\beta_2 \|x\|_1}.$$

Then, taking  $D = 2\alpha c$ , we get by (2.5),

$$\mathbb{P}(\overline{L}_{0,x} - \underline{L}_{0,x} \geq D \|x\|_1) \geq \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)) \geq c\alpha \|x\|_1) \geq \mathbb{P}(N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)) \geq \alpha \|x\|_1) \geq 1 - \beta_1 e^{-\beta_2 \|x\|_1}.$$

□

## 2.2 Modification proof for the strict concavity of the expected passage times as a function of the weight shifts

*Proof of Theorem 1.7.* Recall that we assume that the support of  $F$  is bounded and that there are two different positive points in this support. We set  $t_{\max} = \sup(\text{support}(F))$ . Let  $0 < r < s$  be two points in the support of  $F$ . Fix  $b \in (0, r)$ . Applying Lemma 5.5 in [6], we get positive integers  $k, \ell$  fixed for the rest of the proof such that

$$k(s + \delta) < (k + 2\ell)(r - \delta) < (k + 2\ell)(r + \delta) < k(s - \delta) + (2\ell - 1)b \quad (2.6)$$

<sup>4</sup>The lexicographical order is based on the directions of the consecutive edges of the geodesics.

holds for sufficiently small  $\delta > 0$ . Fix  $\ell_0^\Lambda = \max\left(\left\lceil \frac{k}{2} \right\rceil + 1, \ell + 1\right)$  and an integer  $\ell^\Lambda$  such that

$$\ell^\Lambda > (2d + 1)\ell_0^\Lambda. \quad (2.7)$$

We define  $\Lambda = \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d$ ,  $u^\Lambda = -\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$  and  $v^\Lambda = \ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_1$ . We take  $\pi^+$  the path going from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$  by  $2\ell^\Lambda$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ , and  $\pi^{++}$  the one going from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $u_1 = (-\ell_0^\Lambda + 1)\varepsilon_1$  by  $\ell^\Lambda + 1 - \ell_0^\Lambda$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ , then going to  $u_2 = (-\ell_0^\Lambda + 1)\varepsilon_1 + \ell\varepsilon_2$  by  $\ell$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$ , then to  $u_3 = (-\ell_0^\Lambda + k + 1)\varepsilon_1 + \ell\varepsilon_2$  by  $k$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_2$ , then to  $u_4 = (-\ell_0^\Lambda + k + 1)\varepsilon_1$  by  $\ell$  steps in the direction  $-\varepsilon_2$ , and then to  $v^\Lambda$  by  $\ell^\Lambda + \ell_0^\Lambda - k - 1$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$ .

For a family  $(t_e)_{e \in \mathcal{E}_\Lambda}$  of passage times on the edges of  $\Lambda$  and for a path  $\pi$ , we use the abuse of writing  $T(\pi)$  to denote  $\sum_{e \in \pi} t_e$ . For all  $\delta \geq 0$ , we consider the set  $G(\delta)$  of families  $(t_e)_{e \in \mathcal{E}_\Lambda}$  of passage times on the edges of  $\Lambda$  which satisfy the following two conditions:

- for all  $e \in \pi^{++}$ ,  $t_e \in [r - \delta, r + \delta]$ ,
- for all other edges  $e$  in  $\Lambda$ ,  $t_e \in [s - \delta, s + \delta]$ .

Then, consider the set  $H$  of families  $(t_e)_{e \in \mathcal{E}_\Lambda}$  such that:

- (P1)  $\pi^+$  is the unique optimal path from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$  among the paths entirely contained in  $\Lambda$ ,
- (P2) for all path  $\pi_1$  from a vertex  $w_1$  of the boundary of  $\{-\ell_0^\Lambda, \dots, \ell_0^\Lambda\}^d$  to a vertex of the boundary of  $\{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d$ , for all  $w_2$  in  $\{-\ell_0^\Lambda, \dots, \ell_0^\Lambda\}^d$ , for all path  $\pi_2$ , optimal for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$ , going from  $w_1$  to  $w_2$ , we have  $T(\pi_2) < T(\pi_1)$ .

Note that for all  $\delta > 0$ , since  $r$  and  $s$  belong to the support of  $F$ , we have that  $\mathbb{P}((T(e))_{e \in \mathcal{E}_\Lambda} \in G(\delta)) > 0$ . Then we have  $G(0) \subset H$ . Indeed, consider a family  $(t_e)_{e \in \mathcal{E}_\Lambda} \in G(0)$ . So there are only two different passage times in  $\Lambda$  which are  $r$  and  $s$ . Assume for a contradiction that (P1) does not hold. Then there exists an optimal path  $\pi$  going from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$ , different from  $\pi^+$ . Recall the notation  $T_i$  for  $i \in \{1, \dots, d\}$  introduced in the proof of Lemma 2.1. Since  $\pi^+$  is the unique path taking only edges in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$  and since there is no passage time equal to zero in  $\Lambda$ , we have  $T_1(\pi) < T(\pi)$ . Hence

$$T_1(\pi^+) = T(\pi^+) \geq T(\pi) > T_1(\pi).$$

Since the only edges in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$  whose passage time is smaller than  $s$  are in  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$ ,  $\pi$  takes an edge of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}^{++}$  and thus  $T_2(\pi) \geq 2\ell r$ . Furthermore

$$T_1(\pi) \geq T_1(\pi^+) - k(s - r).$$

Hence we get

$$T(\pi) \geq T_1(\pi) + T_2(\pi) \geq T_1(\pi^+) + 2\ell r - k(s - r) > T_1(\pi^+) = T(\pi^+),$$

where the strict inequality comes from (2.6). Thus, it contradicts the fact that  $\pi$  is an optimal path and (P1) holds.

Now, to prove that (P2) holds, let  $\pi_1$  be a path from a vertex  $w_1$  of the boundary of  $\{-\ell_0^\Lambda, \dots, \ell_0^\Lambda\}^d$  to a vertex of the boundary of  $\{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d$  and let  $w_2$  a vertex of  $\{-\ell_0^\Lambda, \dots, \ell_0^\Lambda\}^d$ . Let  $\pi_2$  be an optimal path for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  going from  $w_1$  to  $w_2$ . Then  $\pi_1$  has to take at least  $\ell^\Lambda - \ell_0^\Lambda$  edges whose passage time is equal to  $s$  although  $\pi_2$  takes at most  $2d\ell_0^\Lambda$  edges whose passage time is smaller than or equal to  $s$ . Thus

$$T(\pi_1) \geq (\ell^\Lambda - \ell_0^\Lambda)s > 2d\ell_0^\Lambda s \geq T(\pi_2),$$

where the strict inequality comes from (2.7). Hence (P2) holds and  $G(0) \subset H$ .

Furthermore,  $H$  is an open set since for a family  $(t_e)_{e \in \mathcal{E}_\Lambda}$  to belong to  $H$ , it is required that the time of a finite family of paths is strictly smaller than the time of every path of another finite family of paths. Hence, for  $\delta > 0$  small enough, we have

$$G(\delta) \subset H. \quad (2.8)$$

Fix  $\delta > 0$  such that (2.6) and (2.8) hold. Now, we denote by  $\pi(x)$  the first geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the lexicographical order among those of maximal Euclidean length and we denote by  $\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x))$  the maximum number of disjoint patterns visited by  $\pi(x)$ . Recall the existence of a constant  $c > 0$  small enough such that for all path  $\pi$ ,  $\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi) \geq cN^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi)$ . Consider the pattern  $\mathfrak{P} = (\Lambda, u^\Lambda, v^\Lambda, \mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$  with  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda = \{(T(e))_{e \in \mathcal{E}_\Lambda} \in G(\delta)\}$ . Since  $\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{A}^\Lambda) > 0$ , we can apply Theorem 1.3. Let  $\alpha, \beta_1, \beta_2 > 0$  be the constants given by Theorem 1.3. Then, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x))] &\geq \lfloor c\alpha\|x\|_1 \rfloor \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)) \geq c\alpha\|x\|_1) \\ &\geq \lfloor c\alpha\|x\|_1 \rfloor \mathbb{P}(N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)) \geq \alpha\|x\|_1) \geq \lfloor c\alpha\|x\|_1 \rfloor (1 - \beta_1 e^{-\beta_2\|x\|_1}) \geq C\|x\|_1. \end{aligned}$$

Now, let us follow the end of Stage 3 of the proof of Theorem 5.4 in [6]. By (P1),  $\pi(x)$  takes the  $\pi^+$  segment in each pattern that it takes. Furthermore, by (P2),  $\pi(x)$  does not take any edge in the  $\pi^{++}$  segment which is not in the  $\pi^+$  segment. So, we can define a self-avoiding path  $\widehat{\pi}(x)$  from 0 to  $x$  by replacing each  $\pi^+$  segment with the  $\pi^{++}$  segment in each pattern visited by  $\pi(x)$ . Reduce the weights on each edge  $e$  from  $T(e)$  to  $T^{(-b)}(e) = T(e) - b$ . By the definition of the pattern, the  $T^{(-b)}$ -passage times of the segments  $\pi^+$  and  $\pi^{++}$  obey the inequality:

$$T^{(-b)}(\pi^{++}) = T(\pi^{++}) - b|\pi^{++}| < T(\pi^+) + (2\ell - 1)b - b|\pi^{++}| = T^{(-b)}(\pi^+) - b.$$

Then, following the proof of Theorem 5.4 in [6], we get

$$\begin{aligned} t^{(-b)}(0, x) &\leq T^{(-b)}(\widehat{\pi}(x)) < T^{(-b)}(\pi(x)) - b\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)) \\ &= T(\pi(x)) - b|\pi(x)| - b\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)) \\ &= t(0, x) - b\overline{L}_{0,x} - b\mathcal{N}^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi(x)). \end{aligned} \tag{2.9}$$

Since  $b \in (0, t_{\min} + \varepsilon_0)$ ,  $\mathbb{E}[t_{0,x}^{(-b)}]$  is finite. Thus, taking expectation in (2.9), we get the result.  $\square$

## 3 Unbounded case

### 3.1 Proof of Proposition 1.9 in the unbounded case

Let  $\mathfrak{P} = (\Lambda, u^\Lambda, v^\Lambda, \mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$  be a valid pattern. Let us begin with the definitions of a typical box and of a successful box. To this end, we have to fix some constants.

**Boxes and constants.** Recall that  $t_{\min}$ ,  $\ell^\Lambda$  and  $\delta$  have been fixed in the introduction. The minimum of the support of  $F$  is denoted by  $t_{\min}$ ,  $\ell^\Lambda$  denotes the size of the pattern and  $\delta$  comes from (1.16). Since

$$\lim_{M \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{A}^\Lambda \text{ is realized and for all edges } e \in \Lambda, T(e) \leq M) = \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{A}^\Lambda) > 0,$$

there exists a positive constant  $M^\Lambda$  fixed for the rest of the proof such that

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{A}^\Lambda \text{ is realized and for all edges } e \in \Lambda, T(e) \leq M^\Lambda) > 0.$$

Even if it means replacing  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  by  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda \cap \{\forall e \in \Lambda, T(e) \leq M^\Lambda\}$ , we can assume that

$$\mathcal{A}^\Lambda \subset \{\forall e \in \Lambda, T(e) \leq M^\Lambda\}.$$

We fix

$$\tau^\Lambda = M^\Lambda \|u^\Lambda - v^\Lambda\|_1, \tag{3.1}$$

which is an upper bound for the travel time of an optimal path (for the passage time) going from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$  and entirely contained in  $\Lambda$  on the event  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$ .

For  $i \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ ,  $B_{i,s,N}$  is the ball in  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  of radius  $r_i N$  for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  centered at the point  $sN$  where the constants  $r_i$  are defined as follows. We fix  $r_1 = d$ . Denote by  $K$  the number of edges in  $B_\infty(0, \ell^\Lambda + 2)$ . Then, fix  $r_2$  an integer such that

$$r_2\delta - r_1(t_{\min} + \delta) - Kt_{\min} - \tau^\Lambda > 0. \tag{3.2}$$

Let  $r_{2,3}$  be a positive real such that

$$B_{2,0,1} \subset B_\mu \left( 0, \frac{r_{2,3}}{2} \right) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d,$$

then we fix  $r_3$  an integer such that

$$B_\mu(0, 9r_{2,3}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d \subset B_{3,0,1}.$$

We use the word "box" to talk about  $B_{3,s,N}$ . We denote by  $\partial B_{i,s,N}$  the boundary of  $B_{i,s,N}$ , that is the set of points  $z \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  such that  $\|z - sN\|_1 = r_i N$ . For  $u$  and  $v$  two vertices contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$ , we denote by  $t_{3,s,N}(u, v)$  the minimum of the times of all paths entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$  and going from  $u$  to  $v$ .

**Crossed boxes and weakly crossed boxes.** We say that a path

- crosses a box  $B_{3,s,N}$  if it visits a vertex in  $B_{1,s,N}$ ,
- weakly crosses a box  $B_{3,s,N}$  if it visits a vertex in  $B_{2,s,N}$ .

**Typical boxes.** We define a sequence  $(\nu(N))_{N \in \mathbb{N}^*}$  such that for all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ ,  $\nu(N) > M^\Lambda$  and

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P} \left( \sum_{e \in B_{2,0,N}} T(e) \geq \nu(N) \right) = 0. \quad (3.3)$$

Note that  $F((\nu(N), +\infty)) > 0$  for all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$  since the support of  $F$  is unbounded.

We can now define typical boxes. A box  $B_{3,s,N}$  is typical if it verifies the following properties:

- (i)  $\mathcal{T}(s; N)$  is realized, where  $\mathcal{T}(s; N)$  is the following event:

$$\left\{ \sup_{z \in B_{2,s,N}} t_{3,s,N}(Ns, z) \leq r_{2,3}N \right\} \cap \left\{ \inf_{z \in \partial B_{3,s,N}} t_{3,s,N}(Ns, z) \geq 4r_{2,3}N \right\},$$

- (ii) every path  $\pi$  entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$  from  $u_\pi$  to  $v_\pi$  with  $\|u_\pi - v_\pi\|_1 \geq (r_2 - r_1)N$  has a passage time verifying:

$$t(\pi) \geq (t_{\min} + \delta) \|u_\pi - v_\pi\|_1, \quad (3.4)$$

- (iii)  $\sum_{e \in B_{2,0,N}} T(e) < \nu(N)$ .

**Lemma 3.1.** *We have these three properties about typical boxes.*

1. Let  $s \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ . If  $B_{3,s,N}$  is a typical box, for all points  $u_0$  and  $v_0$  in  $B_{2,s,N}$ , every geodesic from  $u_0$  to  $v_0$  is entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$ .
2. Let  $s \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ . The typical box property only depends on the edges in  $B_{3,s,N}$ .
3. We have

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(B_{3,0,N} \text{ is a typical box}) = 1.$$

This lemma guarantees that the properties of a typical box are indeed typical ones and that they are also local ones. Its proof is in Section 3.2. Let us now introduce some further definitions.

**Successful boxes.** For a fixed  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , a box  $B_{3,s,N}$  is successful if every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  takes a pattern which is entirely contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ , i.e. if for every geodesic  $\gamma$  going from 0 to  $x$ , there exists  $x_\gamma \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  satisfying the condition  $(\gamma; \mathfrak{F})$  and such that  $B_\infty(x_\gamma, \ell^\Lambda)$  is contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . Note that the notion of successful box depends on some fixed  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ .

**Annuli.** Now, we define the annuli introduced in Section 1.5. Fix

$$r = 2(r_1 + r_3 + 1), \quad (3.5)$$

and for all integers  $i \geq 1$ , let us define

$$A_{i,N} = \{y \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \|y\|_1 \in [(i-1)rN, irN)\}.$$

For any annulus  $A_{i,N}$ , we call  $\{y \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \|y\|_1 = (i-1)rN\}$  its inner sphere and  $\{y \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \|y\|_1 = irN\}$  its outer sphere. Then, we give two definitions about these annuli which are useful in the proof of Lemma 3.3.

- For  $i > 1$ , we say that a path from 0 to a vertex of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  crosses (resp. weakly crosses) a box  $B_{3,s,N}$  in the annulus  $A_{i,N}$  if the two following conditions are satisfied:
  - it crosses (resp. weakly crosses) this box before it visits for the first time the outer sphere of  $A_{i,N}$ ,
  - $B_{3,s,N}$  is entirely contained in the annulus, i.e. every vertex of  $B_{3,s,N}$  is in  $A_{i,N}$ .
- We also say that a path takes a pattern in the annulus  $A_{i,N}$  if it takes a pattern which is entirely contained in  $A_{i,N}$ , i.e. if every vertex of this pattern is in  $A_{i,N}$ . Here, we do not require that the path takes a pattern before it visits the outer sphere of  $A_{i,N}$  for the first time.

Note that the choice of  $r$  guarantees that every path passing through an annulus has to cross a box in this annulus.

For all integer  $p \geq 2$  and all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ , we denote by  $\mathcal{G}^p(N)$  the event on which for all  $x$  in the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus, every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  crosses a typical box in at least  $\lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor$  annuli. The following lemma, whose proof is given in Section 3.2, gives us an exponential decrease of the probability of the complement of  $\mathcal{G}^p(N)$ .

**Lemma 3.2.** *There exist two positive constants  $C_1$  and  $D_1$ , and an integer  $N_0 \geq 1$  such that for all  $p \geq 1$  and  $N \geq N_0$ ,*

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) \leq D_1 e^{-C_1 p^{\frac{1}{d}}}.$$

**Setup for the proof of Proposition 1.9.** For the rest of the proof, we fix  $C_1$ ,  $D_1$  and  $N_0$  given by Lemma 3.2. Recall that  $K$  is the number of edges in  $B_\infty(0, \ell^\Lambda + 2)$ . Then we fix  $\delta' > 0$  such that

$$r_2(\delta - \delta') - r_1(t_{\min} + \delta) - K(t_{\min} + \delta') - \tau^\Lambda > 0. \quad (3.6)$$

Note that it is possible since we have taken  $r_2$  large enough (see (3.2)). Then, fix

$$N \geq \max(N_0, \ell^\Lambda + 2), \quad n \geq 2rN \text{ and } x \in \Gamma_n, \quad (3.7)$$

(where  $\Gamma_n$  is defined at (1.13)). Fix  $p = \lfloor \frac{n}{rN} \rfloor$  and  $q = \lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor$ . Note that  $x$  belongs to the  $(p+1)$ -th annulus.

**M-sequences.** Let us now define some random sets and variables which are useful for stability questions for the modification argument. Unless otherwise specified, in the remaining of this section, we write geodesic as a shorthand for geodesic from 0 to  $x$ .

First, let us associate a sequence of 0 to  $p-1$  typical boxes to every geodesic from 0 to  $x$ . For a geodesic  $\gamma$ , the deterministic construction is what follows.

Initialize the sequence as an empty sequence. For  $j$  from 1 to  $p-1$ , do:

- let  $a_j(\gamma)$  be the index of the first annulus such that  $\gamma$  crosses a typical box in this annulus and such that  $a_j(\gamma) > a_{j-1}(\gamma)$  (where  $a_0(\gamma) = 1$ ). If there is no such annulus, then we stop the algorithm.



- Add the first typical box crossed <sup>5</sup> by  $\gamma$  in the annulus  $A_{a_j(\gamma),N}$  to the sequence. Note that, since this typical box is crossed before  $\gamma$  leaves  $A_{a_j(\gamma),N}$  by the outer sphere for the first time, the  $j$ -th box of the sequence is crossed by  $\gamma$  after the  $(j-1)$ -th one.

So, we get a sequence of at most  $p-1$  boxes crossed by the geodesic. These boxes are all in different annuli. Furthermore, every box of this sequence is crossed by  $\gamma$  before  $\gamma$  leaves the annulus containing it for the first time by the outer sphere. If the event  $\mathcal{G}^p(N)$  occurs, we know that all these sequences have at least  $q$  elements. For  $j \in \{1, \dots, p-1\}$ , we define a set of geodesics  $\Gamma^j$ . A geodesic  $\gamma$  from 0 to  $x$  belongs to  $\Gamma^j$  if:

- the length of its sequences defined above is greater than or equal to  $j$ ,
- $\gamma$  does not take the pattern in any annuli  $A_{k,N}$  with  $k \leq a_j(\gamma)$ .

We call the the sequences defined above the  $M$ -sequences.

**Selected geodesic and  $S$ -variables.** Then, for  $j \in \{1, \dots, p-1\}$ , if  $\Gamma^j$  is not empty, we define the selected geodesic among the geodesics of  $\Gamma^j$  as the one which minimizes the index of the annulus containing the  $j$ -th box of its sequence. If there are several such geodesics, the selected one is the first in the lexicographical order. Then, the random variable  $S_j$  is equal to the vertex  $s$  corresponding to the box  $B_{3,s,N}$  where  $B_{3,s,N}$  is the  $j$ -th box of the selected geodesic. When  $j$  is fixed, we say that the box  $B_{3,S_j,N}$  is the selected box. Finally, if  $\Gamma^j$  is empty, set  $S_j = 0$  and there is no selected geodesic.

**Modification argument.** Finally, for  $j \in \{1, \dots, p-1\}$ , we define  $\mathcal{M}(j)$  as the event on which every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  has at least  $j$  typical boxes in its  $M$ -sequence and there exists one geodesic which does not take the pattern in any annuli  $A_{k,N}$  with  $k \leq a_j(\gamma)$ . We also define  $\mathcal{M}(0)$  as the event on which there exists a geodesic from 0 to  $x$ . Its probability is equal to 1 (see Section 1.1). Now, the aim is to bound from above  $\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{M}(q))$  independently of  $x$  since we have:

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{there exists a geodesic } \gamma \text{ from 0 to } x \text{ such that } N^{\mathfrak{A}}(\gamma) = 0) \leq \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) + \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(q)). \quad (3.8)$$

In the sequel, we introduce an independent copy  $T'$  of the environment  $T$ , the two being defined on the same probability space. It is thus convenient to refer to the considered environment when dealing with the objects defined above. To this aim, we shall use the notation  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(j)\}$  to denote that the event  $\mathcal{M}(j)$  holds with respect to the environment  $T$ . In other words,  $\mathcal{M}(j)$  is now seen as a subset of  $(\mathbb{R}_+)^{\mathcal{E}}$ , where  $\mathcal{E}$  is the set of all the edges. Similarly, we denote  $S_j(T')$  the random variable defined above but in the environment  $T'$ .

Fix  $\ell \in \{1, \dots, q\}$ . On  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ ,  $\Gamma^\ell \neq \emptyset$  and  $B_{3,S_\ell(T),N}$  is a typical box crossed by the selected geodesic. We get a new environment  $T^*$  defined for all edge  $e$  by:

$$T^*(e) = \begin{cases} T(e) & \text{if } e \notin B_{2,S_\ell(T),N} \\ T'(e) & \text{else.} \end{cases}$$

For  $y$  and  $z$  in  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ , we denote by  $t^*(y, z)$  the geodesic time between  $y$  and  $z$  in the environment  $T^*$ .

**Lemma 3.3.** *There exists  $\eta = \eta(N) > 0$  such that for all  $\ell$  in  $\{1, \dots, q\}$ , there exist measurable functions  $E_+^* : \mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}} \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$  and  $E_-^* : \mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}} \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$  such that:*

(i)  $E_+^*(T) \cap E_-^*(T) = \emptyset$  and  $E_+^*(T) \cup E_-^*(T) \subset B_{2,S_\ell(T),N}$ ,

(ii) on the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ , we have  $\mathbb{P}(T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)|T) \geq \eta$  where  $\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}$  is a shorthand for

$$\{\forall e \in E_+^*(T), T'(e) \geq \nu(N), \forall e \in E_-^*(T), T'(e) \leq t_{\min} + \delta', \theta_{N S_\ell(T)} T' \in \mathcal{A}^\Lambda\},$$

(iii)  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\} \subset \{T^* \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ .

<sup>5</sup>If a path crosses two boxes  $B_{3,s_1,N}$  and  $B_{3,s_2,N}$ , we say that it crosses  $B_{3,s_1,N}$  before  $B_{3,s_2,N}$  if it visits a vertex of  $B_{1,s_1,N}$  before one of  $B_{1,s_2,N}$ .

**Remark 3.4.** We have  $E_+^*(T) \cup E_-^*(T) \cup (NS_\ell(T) + \Lambda) = B_{2,S_\ell(T),N}$ . Note that since  $r_1 = d$  and  $N \geq \ell^\Lambda + 2$ , we have that  $(NS_\ell(T) + \Lambda) \subset B_{1,S_\ell(T),N}$ .

Lemma 3.3 is a consequence of Lemma 3.5 whose proof is given in Section 3.3.

**Lemma 3.5.** *There exists  $\eta = \eta(N) > 0$  such that for all  $\ell$  in  $\{1, \dots, q\}$ , there exist measurable functions  $E_+^* : \mathbb{R}_+^\mathcal{E} \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$  and  $E_-^* : \mathbb{R}_+^\mathcal{E} \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$  such that (i) and (ii) of Lemma 3.3 are satisfied and such that if the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}$  occurs, then we have the following properties in the environment  $T^*$ :*

- (i) every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  takes the pattern inside  $B_{2,S_\ell(T),N}$ ,
- (ii) there exists two distinct vertices  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  contained in  $B_{2,S_\ell(T),N}$  such that for all geodesic  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  from 0 to  $x$ ,  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  in that order, and there exists a geodesic  $\bar{\gamma}$  from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T$  such that  $\bar{\gamma}$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  and such that  $\bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1}^* = \bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1}$ ,  $\bar{\gamma}_{s_2,x}^* = \bar{\gamma}_{s_2,x}$  and  $\bar{\gamma}_{s_1,s_2}^* \subset B_{3,S_\ell(T),N}$ ,
- (iii) for the same vertices  $s_1$  and  $s_2$ , we have that the selected geodesic  $\gamma$  in the environment  $T$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  in that order, and there exists a geodesic  $\gamma^*$  in  $T^*$  from 0 to  $x$  such that  $\gamma^*$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  and such that  $\gamma_{0,s_1} = \gamma_{0,s_1}^*$  and  $\gamma_{s_2,x} = \gamma_{s_2,x}^*$ .

*Proof of Lemma 3.3.* Let  $\ell \in \{1, \dots, q\}$ . Consider  $E_+^*$  and  $E_-^*$  given by Lemma 3.5. Let  $s \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and assume that the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{S_\ell(T) = s\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}$  occurs. To prove that the event  $\{T^* \in \mathcal{M}(\ell - 1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$  occurs, it is sufficient to prove that we have the three following points in the environment  $T^*$ :

1. every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  has at least  $\ell - 1$  typical boxes in its  $M$ -sequence,
2. there exists a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  which does not take the pattern in the annuli until the one containing its  $(\ell - 1)$ -th box,
3. every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  whose  $M$ -sequence contains at least  $\ell$  elements takes the pattern in an annulus whose index is smaller than or equal to the one containing its  $\ell$ -th box.

Let us start with a few remarks. We denote by  $a_\ell$  the index of the annulus which contains  $B_{3,S_\ell(T),N}$ .

- (a) The environments  $T$  and  $T^*$  coincides outside the box  $B_{2,S_\ell(T),N}$ . As this box is included in the annulus  $A_{a_\ell,N}$ , the environments  $T$  and  $T^*$  are the same in all the other annuli. In particular, any box contained in an annulus  $A_{i,N}$  for  $i \neq a_\ell$  is typical in  $T$  if and only if it is typical in  $T^*$ .
- (b) Similarly, for any path  $\pi$  and any  $i \neq a_\ell$ , the path  $\pi$  takes the pattern in the annulus  $A_{i,N}$  in the environment  $T$  if and only if it takes the pattern in the annulus  $A_{i,N}$  in the environment  $T^*$ .
- (c) Let  $\bar{\gamma}$  and  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  be as in item (ii) of Lemma 3.5. Then  $\bar{\gamma}$  and  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  coincide except maybe for the part between  $s_1$  and  $s_2$ . Moreover the part of  $\bar{\gamma}$  between  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  is contained in  $B_{3,S_\ell,N}$ . Indeed this part is a geodesic (in the environment  $T$ ) between two points of  $B_{2,S_\ell,N}$  and  $B_{3,S_\ell,N}$  is typical (in the environment  $T$ ). This is then a consequence of the first item of Lemma 3.1. In addition, the part of  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  between  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  is also contained in  $B_{3,S_\ell,N}$  as stated in item (ii) of Lemma 3.5. To sum up:

$$\bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1} = \bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1}^* \text{ and } \bar{\gamma}_{s_2,x} = \bar{\gamma}_{s_2,x}^* \text{ and } \bar{\gamma}_{s_1,s_2} \subset B_{3,S_\ell,N} \subset A_{a_\ell,N} \text{ and } \bar{\gamma}_{s_1,s_2}^* \subset B_{3,S_\ell,N} \subset A_{a_\ell,N}. \quad (3.9)$$

Furthermore, by remark (b), we have that for any  $i \neq a_\ell$ ,  $\bar{\gamma}$  takes the pattern in the annulus  $A_{i,N}$  in the environment  $T$  if and only if  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  takes the pattern in the annulus  $A_{i,N}$  in the environment  $T^*$ . The same property holds for the selected geodesic  $\gamma$  and for the associated geodesic  $\gamma^*$  (in the environment  $T^*$ ) given by item (iii) of Lemma 3.5.

- (d) Let again  $\bar{\gamma}$  and  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  be as in item (ii) of Lemma 3.5. Let us compare the  $M$ -sequence of  $\bar{\gamma}$  (which is built in the environment  $T$ ) with the  $M$ -sequence of  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  (which is built in the environment  $T^*$ ). By (a) and (3.9), we get that any box which belongs to the  $M$ -sequence of  $\bar{\gamma}$ , with the possible exception of a box contained in  $A_{a_\ell,N}$ , also belongs to the  $M$ -sequence of  $\bar{\gamma}^*$ .

Let us now proceed to the proof of item 1. We assume  $\ell \geq 2$  otherwise there is nothing to prove. Let  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^*$ . Let  $\bar{\gamma}$  be the associated geodesic in the environment  $T$  given by item (ii) of Lemma 3.5. Since the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$  occurs, the  $M$ -sequence (in the environment  $T$ ) of  $\bar{\gamma}$  contains at least  $\ell$  typical boxes. By remark (d) above, the  $M$ -sequence (in the environment  $T^*$ ) of  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  contains at least  $\ell - 1$  typical boxes.

Let us consider item 2. We can again assume  $\ell \geq 2$ . Let  $\gamma^*$  be the geodesic given by item (iii) of Lemma 3.5. Recall that  $\gamma$  is the selected geodesic and that its  $M$ -sequence belongs to  $M_\ell$ . In particular, we have the following properties: its  $M$ -sequence contains at least  $\ell$  boxes; the  $\ell$ -th box of its  $M$ -sequence belongs to  $A_{a_\ell, N}$ ;  $\gamma$  does not take the pattern in any annulus whose index is smaller than or equal to  $a_\ell$ . Therefore, by remark (d) above, the first  $\ell - 1$  boxes of the  $M$ -sequence of  $\gamma$  and  $\gamma^*$  are the same. By remark (c) above, we conclude that  $\gamma^*$  does not take the pattern (in the environment  $T^*$ ) in any annulus whose index is smaller than the one containing its  $(\ell - 1)$ -th box.

Let us prove item 3. Let  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  be such a geodesic. Assume that the  $\ell$ -th box of the  $M$ -sequence of  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  is in an annulus whose index is strictly smaller than  $a_\ell$ . Let  $\bar{\gamma}$  be a geodesic in the environment  $T$  given by item (ii) of Lemma 3.5. Assume, aiming at a contradiction, that  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  does not take the pattern in an annulus until the one containing its  $\ell$ -th box. By remark (d), the  $\ell$  first boxes of the  $M$ -sequences of  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  and  $\bar{\gamma}$  are the same. By remark (c),  $\bar{\gamma}$  does not take the pattern until the annulus containing its  $\ell$ -th box. This contradicts the definition of  $S_\ell$ , so it is impossible. Thus the  $\ell$ -th box of the  $M$ -sequence of  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  is in an annulus whose index is greater than or equal to  $a_\ell$ . By item (i) of Lemma 3.5,  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  takes the pattern in the annulus whose index is  $a_\ell$ . Therefore it takes the pattern in an annulus whose index is smaller than or equal to the one containing its  $\ell$ -th box and the third point is satisfied.  $\square$

Now, thanks to Lemma 3.3, we can adapt Lemma 3.8 from [1].

**Lemma 3.6.** *There exists  $\lambda \in (0, 1)$ , which does not depend on  $x$ , such that*

$$\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(q)) \leq \lambda^q.$$

*Proof.* Let  $\ell$  be in  $\{1, \dots, q\}$ . Writing with indicator functions the result of Lemma 3.3, we have:

$$\mathbb{1}_{\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}} \leq \mathbb{1}_{\{T^* \in (\mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell))\}}.$$

We compute the expectation on both sides. The right side yields

$$\mathbb{P}(T^* \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell)) = \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell)) = \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1)) - \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)),$$

since  $\mathcal{M}(\ell) \subset \mathcal{M}(\ell-1)$ . For the left side, we have

$$\mathbb{E} [\mathbb{1}_{\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}}] = \mathbb{E} [\mathbb{1}_{\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}} \mathbb{E} [\mathbb{1}_{\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}} | T]].$$

Since on the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ , we have  $\mathbb{P}(T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T) | T) \geq \eta$ , the left side is bounded from below by  $\eta \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell))$ . Thus,

$$\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)) \leq \lambda \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1)),$$

where  $\lambda = \frac{1}{1 + \eta} \in (0, 1)$  does not depend on  $x$ .

Hence, using  $\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(0)) = 1$ , we get by induction

$$\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(q)) \leq \lambda^q.$$

$\square$

*Proof of Proposition 1.9.* Recall that  $N, x$  (and then  $n$  and  $p$ ) are fixed at (3.7) but that  $C_1, D_1$  and  $\lambda$  does not depend on  $x, n$  and  $p$ . Then, by Lemma 3.2 and Lemma 3.6, using the inequality (3.8),

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(\text{there exists a geodesic } \gamma \text{ from } 0 \text{ to } x \text{ such that } N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\gamma) = 0) &\leq \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) + \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(q)) \\ &\leq D_1 e^{-C_1 p^{\frac{1}{d}}} + \lambda \lfloor \frac{q}{2} \rfloor. \end{aligned}$$

As  $C_1 > 0$  and  $\lambda \in (0, 1)$ , and as this inequality holds for any  $n \geq 2rN$  and any  $x \in \Gamma_n$ , we get the existence of two constants  $C > 0$  and  $D > 0$  such that for all  $n$ , for all  $x \in \Gamma_n$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{there exists a geodesic } \gamma \text{ from } 0 \text{ to } x \text{ such that } N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\gamma) = 0) \leq D \exp(-Cn^{\frac{1}{2}}).$$

□

### 3.2 Typical boxes crossed by geodesics

Let us first begin with the proof of the lemma stated in the paragraph of typical boxes in Section 3.1.

*Proof of Lemma 3.1.*

1. Let  $B_{3,s,N}$  be a typical box. Then the event  $\mathcal{T}(s, N)$  occurs. Let  $u_0$  and  $v_0$  be two vertices in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . We have

$$t_{3,s,N}(u_0, v_0) \leq 2 \sup_{z \in B_{2,s,N}} t_{3,s,N}(Ns, z) \leq 2r_{2,3}N.$$

Let  $\pi_0$  be a path from  $u_0$  to  $v_0$  which is not entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$ . Let  $z_0$  denote the first vertex on the boundary of  $B_{3,s,N}$  visited by  $\pi_0$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned} T(\pi_0) &\geq t_{3,s,N}(u_0, z_0) \geq t_{3,s,N}(z_0, Ns) - t_{3,s,N}(u_0, Ns) \\ &\geq \inf_{z \in \partial B_{3,s,N}} t_{3,s,N}(Ns, z) - \sup_{z \in B_{2,s,N}} t_{3,s,N}(Ns, z) \geq 3r_{2,3}N > 2r_{2,3}N \geq t_{3,s,N}(u_0, v_0). \end{aligned}$$

Hence, every geodesic from  $u_0$  to  $v_0$  has to be entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$ .

2. The properties (ii) and (iii) only depend on the time of edges in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . The event  $\mathcal{T}(s; N)$  only depends on edges in  $B_{3,s,N}$  by the definition of  $t_{3,s,N}$ .
3. First,

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{T}(0; N)) = 1.$$

Indeed, by (1.15),

$$\mathbb{P}\left(B_\mu\left(0, \frac{r_{2,3}}{2}N\right) \subset \tilde{B}(0, r_{2,3}N) \text{ for all large } N\right) = 1,$$

and

$$\mathbb{P}\left(\tilde{B}(0, 4r_{2,3}N) \subset B_\mu(0, 8r_{2,3}N) \text{ for all large } N\right) = 1.$$

Thus, since  $B_{2,0,1} \subset B_\mu\left(0, \frac{r_{2,3}}{2}\right) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $B_\mu(0, 9r_{2,3}) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d \subset B_{3,0,1}$ , almost surely there exists  $N_0 \in \mathbb{N}^*$  such that for all  $N \geq N_0$ ,

$$B_{2,0,N} \subset B(0, r_{2,3}N), B(0, 4r_{2,3}N) \subset B_{3,0,N} \text{ and for all } y \in \partial B_{3,0,N}, y \notin B(0, 4r_{2,3}N).$$

So, for all  $N \geq N_0$ ,

$$\sup_{z \in \partial B_{2,0,N}} t_{3,0,N}(0, z) \leq r_{2,3}N \quad \text{and} \quad \inf_{z \in \partial B_{3,0,N}} t_{3,0,N}(0, z) \geq 4r_{2,3}N.$$

Note that, for the first inequality, we use the fact that for all  $z \in B_{2,0,N}$ ,  $t_{3,0,N}(0, z) = t(0, z)$  thanks to the first point of Lemma 3.1 proved above.

The probability that (iii) is satisfied by  $B_{3,0,N}$  goes to 1 by (3.3). Then, let us prove that the probability that (ii) is satisfied by  $B_{3,0,N}$  goes to 1. Let  $|B_{3,0,N}|$  denote the number of vertices in  $B_{3,0,N}$  and  $\Pi_0$  denote the set of self-avoiding paths entirely contained in  $B_{3,0,N}$ . Then, using (3.2), we have that  $r_2 > r_1$ , and by (1.16),

$$\begin{aligned}
& \mathbb{P}(B_{3,0,N} \text{ does not satisfy (ii)}) \\
& \leq \sum_{\substack{u_\pi, v_\pi \in B_{3,0,N} \\ \|u_\pi - v_\pi\|_1 \geq (r_2 - r_1)N}} \mathbb{P}((3.4) \text{ is not satisfied by a path of } \Pi_0 \text{ whose endpoints are } u_\pi \text{ and } v_\pi) \\
& \leq \sum_{\substack{u_\pi, v_\pi \in B_{3,0,N} \\ \|u_\pi - v_\pi\|_1 \geq (r_2 - r_1)N}} \mathbb{P}((3.4) \text{ is not satisfied by a path whose endpoints are } u_\pi \text{ and } v_\pi) \\
& \leq |B_{3,0,N}|^2 e^{-D_0(r_2 - r_1)N} \xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} 0,
\end{aligned}$$

since  $|B_{3,0,N}|$  is bounded by a polynomial in  $N$ .

□

*Proof of Lemma 3.2.* To begin this proof, one need an upper bound on the Euclidean length of geodesics. When 0 is not an atom, we can use Theorem 4.6 in [2]. However, when 0 is an atom, geodesics are not necessarily self-avoiding. In this case, we use Theorem A.1 which gives a result on the size of lattice animals (see Appendix A). Thus, using Theorem A.1, we have two positive constants  $K_1$  and  $C_2$  such that for all  $y \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(m(y) \geq K_1 \|y\|_1) \leq e^{-C_2 \|y\|_1^{\frac{1}{d}}},$$

where  $m(y) = \max\{|\sigma|_e : \sigma \text{ is a geodesic from } 0 \text{ to } y\}$  and where for a path  $\sigma$ ,  $|\sigma|_e$  means the number of different edges taken by  $\sigma$  (each edge of  $\sigma$  taken several times is counted once). For all  $p \in \mathbb{N}^*$ , we define the event  $\mathcal{N}^p(N)$  on which every geodesic from 0 to the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus takes less than  $K_1 p r N$  distinct edges. Note that  $r = 2(r_1 + r_3 + 1)$  is fixed at (3.5) and  $rN$  corresponds to the widths of the annuli. Then,

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^p(N)^c) \leq \sum_{y: \|y\|_1 = p r N} \mathbb{P}(m(y) \geq K_1 \|y\|_1) \leq (2p r N + 1)^d e^{-C_2 (p r N)^{\frac{1}{d}}}.$$

Hence, we obtain two positive constants  $C_3$  and  $D_3$  only depending on  $r$ ,  $d$  and  $F$  such that for all  $p \in \mathbb{N}^*$ , for all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^p(N)^c) \leq D_3 e^{-C_3 p^{\frac{1}{d}}}.$$

Now, we assume that the event  $\mathcal{N}^p(N) \cap \mathcal{G}^p(N)^c$  occurs. So, every geodesic from 0 to the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus takes a number of distinct edges which is between  $p r N$  and  $K_1 p r N$ . Let us consider a re-normalized model. We introduce the meta-cubes

$$B_{s,N}^\infty = \left\{ w \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \left( s - \frac{1}{2} \right) N \leq w < \left( s + \frac{1}{2} \right) N \right\}, \text{ for all } s \in \mathbb{Z}^d,$$

(where  $v \leq w$  means  $v_i \leq w_i$  for  $1 \leq i \leq d$  and  $v < w$  means  $v_i < w_i$  for  $1 \leq i \leq d$ .) These meta-cubes form a partition of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ . Furthermore, the meta-cubes and the boxes defined above have the same centers (which are the vertices  $Ns$  for  $s \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ ), and for all  $s \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ ,  $B_{s,N}^\infty \subset B_{1,s,N}$ . So, we can define typical meta-cubes. A meta-cube  $B_{s,N}^\infty$  is typical if  $B_{3,s,N}$  is a typical box.

For a geodesic  $\gamma$  from 0 to the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus, we associate the set of meta-cubes visited by  $\gamma$ , that is

$$\mathfrak{A}(\gamma) = \{B_{s,N}^\infty \mid \gamma \text{ visits at least one vertex of } B_{s,N}^\infty\}.$$

This set can be identify with the subset of the re-normalized graph  $N\mathbb{Z}^d$ :

$$\mathfrak{A}_v^R(\gamma) = \{sN \mid B_{s,N}^\infty \in \mathfrak{A}(\gamma)\}.$$

Note that, if we consider the set  $\mathfrak{A}_e^R(\gamma)$  of edges of  $N\mathbb{Z}^d$  linking vertices which are both in  $\mathfrak{A}_v^R(\gamma)$ , then the pair of sets  $(\mathfrak{A}_v^R(\gamma), \mathfrak{A}_e^R(\gamma))$  forms a lattice animal, denoted by  $\mathfrak{A}^R(\gamma)$ . Recall that a lattice animal  $\mathfrak{A}$  in  $N\mathbb{Z}^d$  is a finite connected sub-graph of  $N\mathbb{Z}^d$  that contains 0. We denote by  $\mathcal{A}^R$  the set of lattice animals in  $N\mathbb{Z}^d$  associated with a geodesic going from 0 to the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus.

Let us bound the size of these lattice animals. By the size of a lattice animal  $\mathfrak{A}^R$ , denoted by  $|\mathfrak{A}^R|_v$ , we mean its number of vertices in the re-normalized model. Recall that, since the event  $\mathcal{N}^p(N)$  occurs, every geodesic from 0 to the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus takes a number of distinct edges which is between  $prN$  and  $K_1prN$ . Then, in the meta-cube set  $\mathfrak{A}(\gamma)$  associated to such a geodesic  $\gamma$ , since  $r_1 = d$  and thanks to the choice of  $r$ , there are  $p - 1$  meta-cubes associated to boxes crossed by  $\gamma$  in distinct annuli. In particular (considering also the meta-cube centered at the origin), the size of every lattice animal  $\mathfrak{A}^R \in \mathcal{A}^R$  is bounded from below by  $p$ . For an upper bound, we use the inequality

$$|\gamma|_e \geq \frac{N}{2} \left( \frac{|\mathfrak{A}^R(\gamma)|_v}{3^d} - 1 \right), \quad (3.10)$$

for all not necessarily self-avoiding geodesic  $\gamma$  from 0 to the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus, where  $|\gamma|_e$  has already been defined at the beginning of this proof and is the number of different edges taken by  $\gamma$  and where  $|\mathfrak{A}^R(\gamma)|_v$  is the number of vertices of  $\mathfrak{A}^R(\gamma)$ . Let us prove this inequality. Let  $\gamma$  be a geodesic from 0 to the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus. First, there exists a path  $\pi$  such that

1.  $\pi$  takes exactly the same edges as  $\gamma$ ,
2.  $\pi$  takes each edge at most twice.

To get such a path, it is sufficient to consider a path which minimizes the number of steps among those verifying the first item above. Such a path can not take three times the same edge. Indeed, if this path takes at least three times an edge  $e$ , by decomposing this path into maximal sub-paths which does not take the edge  $e$ , and then by recomposing differently this path, we get a path which contradicts the minimality of the considered path. Fix such a path  $\pi$  for the following.

Denote by  $\pi = (v_0, \dots, v_m)$  the sequence of vertices visited by  $\pi$ . For all  $v \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , denote by  $s(v)$  the unique  $s \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  such that  $v$  belongs to  $B_{s,N}^\infty$ . We define by induction a strictly increasing sequence  $i_0, \dots, i_\kappa$  by setting  $\kappa = 0$  and  $i_0 = 0$  and then applying the following algorithm:

- (a) If there exists  $i \in \{i_\kappa + 1, \dots, m\}$  such that  $s(v_i)$  is at distance at least 2 for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_\infty$  from  $s(v_{i_\kappa})$ , we denote by  $i_{\kappa+1}$  the smaller of this  $i$ , then we increment  $\kappa$  and go back to (a).
- (b) Otherwise we stop the algorithm.

Then, we necessarily have  $3^d(\kappa + 1) \geq |\mathfrak{A}^R(\gamma)|_v$ . Furthermore, for all  $k \in \{0, \dots, \kappa - 1\}$ , we have  $\|v_{i_{k+1}} - v_{i_k}\|_1 \geq N$ . Hence, since  $\pi$  takes each edge at most twice, we get

$$|\gamma|_e = |\pi|_e \geq \frac{\kappa}{2} \geq \frac{N}{2} \left( \frac{|\mathfrak{A}^R(\gamma)|_v}{3^d} - 1 \right),$$

and (3.10) is proved.

Now, using (3.10), writing  $K_2 = \lceil 3^d(2K_1r + 1) \rceil$  (which does not depend on  $p$  and  $N$ ), for every lattice animal  $\mathfrak{A}^R \in \mathcal{A}^R$ ,  $|\mathfrak{A}^R|_v$  is bounded from above by  $K_2p$ . Furthermore, for  $j \in \{p, \dots, K_2p\}$ , using (4.24) in [4], we have that

$$|\{\mathfrak{A}^R \in \mathcal{A}^R : |\mathfrak{A}^R|_v = j\}| \leq |\{\text{lattice animals in } \mathbb{Z}^d \text{ of size } j\}| \leq 7^{dj}. \quad (3.11)$$

Let us consider the random variables  $(X_\ell^N)_{\ell \in \mathbb{Z}^d}$  such that  $X_\ell^N = 1$  if the meta-cube  $B_{\ell,N}^\infty$  is typical and  $X_\ell^N = 0$  otherwise. By Lemma 3.1, there exists a positive constant  $K_3$  such that  $X_\ell^N$  is independent from the sigma-algebra generated by  $\{X_k^N, k \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \|k - \ell\|_1 \geq K_3\}$ . Furthermore, also by Lemma 3.1,

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(X_\ell^N = 1) = 1.$$

Thus, by Corollary 1.4 in [8], there exists  $\eta_1 = \eta_1(N) > 0$  such that

$$\eta_1(N) \xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} 0,$$

and there exist i.i.d. random variables  $(Y_\ell^N)_{\ell \in \mathbb{Z}^d}$  such that  $(X_\ell^N)_\ell \geq (Y_\ell^N)_\ell$  and  $Y_0^N$  has a Bernoulli distribution of parameter  $(1 - \eta_1(N))$ . Finally, we have

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^p(N) \cap \mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) \leq \mathbb{P} \left( \exists \mathfrak{A}^R \in \mathcal{A}^R \text{ such that } p \leq |\mathfrak{A}^R|_v \leq K_2p \text{ and } \sum_{\ell \in \mathfrak{A}^R} X_\ell^N \leq |\mathfrak{A}^R|_v + 1 - \frac{p}{2} \right).$$

Indeed, on  $\mathcal{G}^p(N)^c$ , there exists a geodesic  $\gamma$  from 0 to the outer sphere of the  $p$ -th annulus which crosses a typical box in strictly less than  $\lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor$  annuli, and thus there are strictly more than  $\lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor - 1$  annuli  $A_{i,N}$  with  $i > 1$  such that  $\gamma$  does not cross a typical box in them. Furthermore, there are  $p - 1$  meta-cubes in  $\mathfrak{A}(\gamma)$  such that each of them is associated to a box crossed by  $\gamma$  in one of the  $p - 1$  distinct annuli  $A_{i,N}$  with  $1 < i \leq p$ . Thus, there are strictly more than  $\lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor - 1$  of these specified meta-cubes which are not typical. Hence the number of typical meta-cubes in  $\mathfrak{A}(\gamma)$  is strictly smaller than  $|\mathfrak{A}^R|_v - \lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor + 1$ . Then, using the random variables  $(Y_\ell^N)_{\ell \in \mathbb{Z}^d}$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^p(N) \cap \mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) &\leq \mathbb{P}\left(\exists \mathfrak{A}^R \in \mathcal{A}^R \text{ such that } p \leq |\mathfrak{A}^R|_v \leq K_2 p \text{ and } \sum_{\ell \in \mathfrak{A}^R} Y_\ell^N \leq |\mathfrak{A}^R|_v - \lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor + 1\right) \\ &\leq \sum_{p \leq j \leq K_2 p} |\{\text{lattice animals in } \mathbb{Z}^d \text{ of size } j\}| \mathbb{P}\left(\text{binomial}(j, \eta_1) \geq \lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor - 1\right) \\ &\leq \sum_{p \leq j \leq K_2 p} 7^{dj} \mathbb{P}\left(\text{binomial}(j, \eta_1) \geq \lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor - 1\right) \text{ (by (3.11))} \\ &\leq K_2 p 7^{dK_2 p} \mathbb{P}\left(\text{binomial}(K_2 p, \eta_1) \geq \lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor - 1\right). \end{aligned}$$

Then, for  $p \geq 4$  and  $N$  large enough to have  $\eta_1(N) < \frac{1}{4K_2}$ , using a Chernov bound for the binomial distribution (see Section 2.2 in [3]), we get

$$\mathbb{P}\left(\text{binomial}(K_2 p, \eta_1) \geq \lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor - 1\right) \leq \mathbb{P}\left(\text{binomial}(K_2 p, \eta_1) \geq \frac{p}{4}\right) \leq \exp\left(-K_2 p h_{\eta_1}\left(\frac{1}{4K_2}\right)\right),$$

where for  $x \in (\eta_1, 1)$ ,

$$h_{\eta_1}(x) = (1-x) \ln\left(\frac{1-x}{1-\eta_1}\right) + x \ln\left(\frac{x}{\eta_1}\right).$$

Thus, since we can take  $\eta_1$  as small as we want by taking  $N$  large enough,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^p(N) \cap \mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) &\leq K_2 p \left[7^{dK_2} \exp\left(-K_2 h_{\eta_1}\left(\frac{1}{4K_2}\right)\right)\right]^p \\ &\leq K_2 p \exp(-2p) \text{ for } N \text{ large enough} \\ &\leq \exp(-C_4 p). \end{aligned}$$

Finally, we have a constant  $N_0$  such that for all  $p \geq 4$ , for all  $N \geq N_0$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) \leq \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^p(N) \cap \mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) + \mathbb{P}(\mathcal{N}^p(N)^c) \leq e^{-C_4 p} + D_3 e^{-C_3 p^{\frac{1}{d}}}.$$

So, there exist two positive constants  $C_1$  and  $D_1$  such that for all  $p \geq 1$ , for all  $N \geq N_0$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{G}^p(N)^c) \leq D_1 e^{-C_1 p^{\frac{1}{d}}}.$$

□

### 3.3 Modification argument

The aim of this subsection is to prove Lemma 3.5. Let  $\ell \in \{1, \dots, q\}$ . On  $\{T \notin \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ , we set  $E_+^*(T) = \emptyset$  and  $E_-^*(T) = \emptyset$ . Let  $s$  be in  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ . We now define  $E_+^*$  and  $E_-^*$  on the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{S_\ell(T) = s\}$ . So assume that this event occurs. On the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ ,  $\Gamma^\ell$  is not empty and thus there is a selected geodesic. We denote this selected geodesic by  $\gamma$ . Let  $u$  denote the entry point of  $\gamma$  in  $B_{2,s,N}$  and  $v$  the exit point. Recall that the entry point and the exit point of the pattern centered in 0 are denoted by  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  in the introduction. With this modification, we want to put the pattern centered at  $sN$ . The vertex  $s$  being fixed, we keep the notation  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  to designate the entry and the exit points of  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ .

**Construction of  $\pi$ .**

We have the following inclusions:

- $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda) \subset B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda + 2) \subset B_{1,s,N}$  since  $r_1 = d$  and  $N \geq \ell^\Lambda + 2$  (see (3.7)),
- $B_{1,s,N} \subset B_{2,s,N}$  since  $r_2 > r_1$  by (3.2).

For the modification, we need a path  $\pi$ , constructed in a deterministic way and satisfying several properties, whose existence is guaranteed by the following lemma.

**Lemma 3.7.** *We can construct a path  $\pi$  in a deterministic way such that :*

- (i)  $\pi$  goes from  $u$  to  $u^\Lambda$  without visiting a vertex of  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ , then goes from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$  in a shortest way for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  (and thus being contained in  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ ) and then goes from  $v^\Lambda$  to  $v$  without visiting a vertex of  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ ,
- (ii)  $\pi$  is entirely contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$  and does not have vertices on the boundary of  $B_{2,s,N}$  except  $u$  and  $v$ ,
- (iii)  $\pi$  is self-avoiding,
- (iv) the length of  $\pi_{u,u^\Lambda} \cup \pi_{v^\Lambda,v}$  is bounded from above by  $2r_2N + K$ , where  $K$  is the number of edges in  $B_\infty(0, \ell^\Lambda + 2)$ .

The proof of this lemma is given in Appendix B but the idea is to construct two paths, one from  $u$  to  $sN$  and the other from  $sN$  to  $v$  which minimize the distance for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  and such that the only vertex belonging to both paths is  $sN$ . Then, we denote by  $u_0$  the first vertex of  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda + 2)$  visited by the path from  $u$  to  $sN$  and  $v_0$  the last vertex of  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda + 2)$  visited by the path from  $sN$  to  $v$ . We construct two paths from  $u_0$  to  $u^\Lambda$  and from  $v^\Lambda$  to  $v_0$  which do not take vertices of  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$  except  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  and which have no vertices in common and we consider the concatenation of the path from  $u$  to  $u_0$ , the one from  $u_0$  to  $u^\Lambda$ , a path from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$  in a shortest way, the path from  $v^\Lambda$  to  $v_0$  and the one from  $v_0$  to  $v$ .

Let  $\pi$  be the path given by Lemma 3.7.

**Definition of  $E_+^*$ ,  $E_-^*$  and  $\mathcal{B}^*$ .** Define  $E_-^*(T)$  as the set of edges  $e$  such that  $e \in \pi \setminus B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$  and  $E_+^*(T)$  as the set of edges which are in  $B_{2,s,N}$  but which are not in  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda) \cup \pi$ . Recall that  $\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}$  is a shorthand for

$$\{\forall e \in E_+^*(T), T'(e) \geq \nu(N), \forall e \in E_-^*(T), T'(e) \leq r + \delta', \theta_{NS_\ell(T)} T' \in \mathcal{A}^\Lambda\}.$$

Fix  $\eta = \tilde{p}^{|B_{2,s,N}|} \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$ , where  $\tilde{p} = \min(F([t_{\min}, t_{\min} + \delta']), F([\nu(N), t_{\max}]))$ . Thus,  $\eta$  only depends on  $F$ , the pattern and  $N$  and we have

$$\mathbb{P}(T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)|T) \geq \tilde{p}^{|B_{2,s,N}|} \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{A}^\Lambda) = \eta,$$

**Consequences of the modification.** We denote by  $\gamma^*$  the path  $\gamma_{0,u} \cup \pi \cup \gamma_{v,x}$ .

**Lemma 3.8.** *We have  $T^*(\gamma^*) < T(\gamma)$ .*

*Proof.* We have that  $\gamma_{u,v}$  visits at least one vertex in  $B_{1,s,N}$ . Denote by  $w$  the first of these vertices. Then,  $\gamma_{u,w}$  and  $\gamma_{w,v}$  are two geodesics, both between two vertices in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . Using item 1 in Lemma 3.1,  $\gamma_{u,w}$  and  $\gamma_{w,v}$  are entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$ . Thus, since  $B_{3,s,N}$  is a typical box, using (3.4) and the fact that  $\|u - w\|_1 \geq (r_2 - r_1)N$  and  $\|v - w\|_1 \geq (r_2 - r_1)N$ , we have

$$T(\gamma_{u,v}) \geq 2N(r_2 - r_1)(t_{\min} + \delta).$$

Then, by the construction of  $\pi$  and of  $\mathcal{B}^*(T)$ ,

$$T^*(\pi) \leq (2r_2N + K)(t_{\min} + \delta') + \tau^\Lambda,$$

where  $\tau^\Lambda$  is fixed at (3.1). Thus,

$$T(\gamma) - T^*(\gamma^*) \geq 2N(r_2(\delta - \delta') - r_1(t_{\min} + \delta)) - K(t_{\min} + \delta') - \tau^\Lambda.$$

By (3.6) and since  $2N \geq 1$ , we get  $T(\gamma) - T^*(\gamma^*) > 0$ . □



**Lemma 3.9.** *Let  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^*$ . Then  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  weakly crosses the box  $B_{3,s,N}$  and the first vertex of  $B_{2,s,N}$  visited by  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  is  $u$  and the last is  $v$ . Furthermore,  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  takes the pattern in  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ ,  $\bar{\gamma}_{u,u^\Lambda}^* = \pi_{u,u^\Lambda}$  and  $\bar{\gamma}_{v^\Lambda,v}^* = \pi_{v^\Lambda,v}$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^*$ . By Lemma 3.8,  $T^*(\bar{\gamma}^*) < T(\bar{\gamma}^*)$ . Thus  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  takes an edge of  $B_{2,s,N}$  and by item (iii) of the definition of a typical box and since there is no edge whose time has been modified outside  $B_{2,s,N}$ ,  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  can not take any edge of time greater than  $\nu(N)$  in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . Indeed, assume that  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  takes an edge  $e$  such that  $T^*(e) \geq \nu(N)$ . Then, denoting by  $\mathcal{E}(\bar{\gamma}^*)$  the edges of  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  and using (3.3),

$$\begin{aligned} T^*(\bar{\gamma}^*) &= \sum_{f \in \mathcal{E}(\bar{\gamma}^*) \cap B_{2,s,N}} T^*(f) + \sum_{f \in \mathcal{E}(\bar{\gamma}^*) \cap B_{2,s,N}^c} T^*(f) \geq \nu(N) + \sum_{f \in \mathcal{E}(\bar{\gamma}^*) \cap B_{2,s,N}^c} T(f) \\ &> \sum_{f \in B_{2,s,N}} T(f) + \sum_{f \in \mathcal{E}(\bar{\gamma}^*) \cap B_{2,s,N}} T(f) \geq \sum_{f \in \mathcal{E}(\bar{\gamma}^*) \cap B_{2,s,N}} T(f) + \sum_{f \in \mathcal{E}(\bar{\gamma}^*) \cap B_{2,s,N}^c} T(f) = T(\bar{\gamma}^*), \end{aligned}$$

which is impossible. Hence,  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  has to take edges of  $\pi$  or of the pattern and can not take other edges of  $B_{2,s,N}$ .

Since  $\pi$  does not visit any vertex on the boundary of  $B_{2,s,N}$  except  $u$  and  $v$ ,  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  has to visit  $u$  and  $v$  and to follow  $\pi$  between  $u$  and  $u^\Lambda$  and between  $v^\Lambda$  and  $v$ . If  $\bar{\gamma}_{u^\Lambda,v^\Lambda}^*$  leaves the pattern, it takes an edge whose time is greater than  $\nu(N)$ , which is impossible. So,  $\bar{\gamma}_{u^\Lambda,v^\Lambda}^*$  is a path entirely contained in  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$  and is optimal for the passage time since  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  is a geodesic.

To conclude, let us show that  $u$  is visited by  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  before  $v$ . Assume that it is not the case. Then, there exists  $\bar{\gamma}_1^*$  a geodesic from 0 to  $v$  and  $\bar{\gamma}_2^*$  a geodesic from  $u$  to  $x$  in the environment  $T^*$  which does not take any edge in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . Thus, there are also geodesics in the environment  $T$ . Then,

$$T(\bar{\gamma}_1^*) + T(\bar{\gamma}_2^*) \leq t^*(0, x) < t(0, x) \text{ by Lemma 3.8.}$$

By concatenating  $\gamma_{0,u}$  and  $\bar{\gamma}_2^*$ , we obtain a path from 0 to  $x$ . Thus,

$$T(\gamma_{0,u}) + T(\bar{\gamma}_2^*) \geq t(0, x).$$

So  $T(\bar{\gamma}_1^*) < T(\gamma_{0,u})$ , which implies

$$T(\bar{\gamma}_1^*) + T(\gamma_{v,x}) < T(\gamma_{0,u}) + T(\gamma_{v,x}) \leq t(0, x),$$

which is impossible since  $\bar{\gamma}_1^* \cup \gamma_{v,x}$  is a path from 0 to  $x$ .  $\square$

We can now prove Lemma 3.5. Indeed, by the previous lemma, every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  takes the pattern. Let us prove that the second and third points hold with  $s_1 = u$  and  $s_2 = v$ . If  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  is a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^*$ , then  $\bar{\gamma}_{s_1,s_2}^*$  is contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . Furthermore,

$$T(\gamma_{0,s_1}) = T^*(\gamma_{0,s_1}) \geq T^*(\bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1}^*) = T(\bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1}^*) \geq T(\gamma_{0,s_1}),$$

so  $T(\bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1}^*) = T(\gamma_{0,s_1})$  and  $\bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1}^*$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T$ . Similarly,  $\bar{\gamma}_{s_2,x}^*$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T$ . This proves (ii) by considering  $\gamma' = \bar{\gamma}_{0,s_1}^* \cup \gamma_{s_1,s_2} \cup \bar{\gamma}_{s_2,x}^*$ . For the third point, one can check that the concatenation of  $\gamma_{0,s_1}$ ,  $\pi_{u,u^\Lambda}$ , one of the optimal paths for the passage time between  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  entirely contained in  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ ,  $\pi_{v^\Lambda,v}$  and  $\gamma_{s_2,x}$  gives the result.

## 4 Bounded case

In this section, we consider that the support of  $F$  is bounded. In this case, Theorem 1.3 also follows from Proposition 1.9. Our proof of Proposition 1.9 still follows the strategy given in the preceding section, but the modification argument is more involved. Let  $\mathfrak{P} = (\Lambda, u^\Lambda, v^\Lambda, \mathcal{A}^\Lambda)$  be a valid pattern. Several parameters related to the support of  $F$  have to be introduced. We set  $t_{\max} = \sup(\text{support}(F))$ . Remark that, because of (1.16), we have  $t_{\min} + \delta < t_{\max}$ . We also fix a positive real  $\nu$  such that :

- $t_{\min} + \delta \leq \nu \leq t_{\max}$ ,
- the event  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda \cap \{\forall e \in \Lambda, t_e \leq \nu\}$  has a positive probability.

Notice that, if  $F$  has an atom, one could have  $\nu = t_{\max}$ .

## 4.1 Overlapping pattern

The proof in the bounded case uses a modification argument in which we have to connect the pattern into a straight path in a given direction. It is convenient to show the feasibility of this construction before starting the modification. The following lemma, whose proof is in Appendix C, shows that it is indeed feasible by proving that a pattern can be associated to  $d$  patterns (with a larger size), each having endpoints aligned in a distinct direction, and each having the original pattern as a sub-pattern. By direction, we mean one of the  $d$  directions of the canonical basis which is denoted by  $(\varepsilon_1, \dots, \varepsilon_d)$ .

**Lemma 4.1.** *There exists  $\ell_0 > \ell^\Lambda$  such that, for all  $j \in \{1, \dots, d\}$ , there exists an overlapping pattern on  $\Lambda_0 = \{-\ell_0, \dots, \ell_0\}^d$  having positive probability such that its endpoints are  $\ell_0 \varepsilon_j$  and  $-\ell_0 \varepsilon_j$ ,  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda$  holds and every path between the endpoints with the lowest passage time among the paths inside the overlapping pattern visits  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  and its portion between  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  is entirely contained in  $\Lambda = \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d$ .*

**Remark 4.2.** *One can check that the proof of this lemma can be adapted to prove that if the two endpoints of the original pattern belong to two different faces of  $\Lambda$ , then Lemma 4.1 is also satisfied and thus we can generalize the notion of valid pattern of Definition 1.1.*

From now on, thanks to Lemma 4.1, with no loss of generality we assume that the original pattern can be chosen with endpoints in any desired orientation and we talk about oriented pattern when its orientation is specified. For convenience, we keep the notation  $\ell^\Lambda$  for the size of such pattern (which thus now stands for the  $\ell_0$  of Lemma 4.1, and similarly  $\Lambda$  now stands for  $\Lambda_0$  in this lemma).

For  $j \in \{1, \dots, d\}$ , we denote by  $\mathcal{A}_j^\Lambda$  the event corresponding to the oriented pattern in the direction  $j$ . Formally, the counter  $N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi)$  in (1.3) is now understood as

$$N^{\mathfrak{P}}(\pi) = \sum_{x \in \mathbb{Z}^d} \mathbb{1}_{\{\text{there exists } j \in \{1, \dots, d\}, x \text{ satisfies the condition } (\pi; \mathfrak{P}_j = (\Lambda, \ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_j, -\ell^\Lambda \varepsilon_j, \mathcal{A}_j^\Lambda))\}}.$$

Even if it means replacing  $\mathcal{A}_j^\Lambda$  by  $\mathcal{A}_j^\Lambda \cap \{\forall e \in \Lambda, T(e) \leq \nu\}$ , we can assume that

$$\mathcal{A}_j^\Lambda \subset \{\forall e \in \Lambda, T(e) \leq \nu\}.$$

Further, we set  $\tau^\Lambda = 2\ell_0\nu$ , which can be interpreted as an upper bound for the passage time of an optimal path from  $\ell_0 \varepsilon_j$  to  $-\ell_0 \varepsilon_j$  on the event  $\mathcal{A}_j^\Lambda$ . Finally, we denote by  $T^\Lambda$  the constant  $K^\Lambda(t_{\max} - t_{\min})$  where  $K^\Lambda$  is the number of edges in an oriented pattern. We will use it as an upper bound for the time that a path can save using edges of a pattern after a modification.

## 4.2 Proof of Proposition 1.9 in the bounded case

The idea is to adapt the proof of the unbounded case. Unlike the unbounded case, we cannot use edges of prohibitive time and thus the modification argument is more elaborated here. This section follows the structure of Section 3.1 but the one step modification is replaced by a two steps modification. To this aim, we slightly change the structure of our boxes and our definition of typical boxes. Let us begin by fixing some constants.

**Constants.**

- We fix  $\delta' = \min\left(\frac{\delta}{8}, \frac{\delta}{1+d}\right)$ .
- We fix  $L_1$  given by Lemma 4.12 only depending on  $d$  et  $\ell^\Lambda$ , and  $L_2 = L_1 + (10 + 2d)\ell^\Lambda$ .
- One can check that Corollary 3.2 in [1] holds for  $F$  with bounded support, so there exists  $\alpha > 0$  and  $C$ , fixed for the rest of the proof, such that for all  $n \in \mathbb{N}^*$  and  $u, v \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  such that  $\|u - v\|_1 = n$ ,

$$\mathbb{P}\left(\exists \text{ a geodesic } \bar{\gamma} \text{ from } u \text{ to } v \text{ such that } \sum_{e \in \bar{\gamma}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T(e) \geq t_{\min} + \delta\}} \leq \alpha n\right) \leq e^{-Cn}. \quad (4.1)$$

- Fix  $\varepsilon > 0$  such that

$$\varepsilon < \min\left(\frac{1}{11}, \frac{\delta}{48C_\mu}, \frac{\delta}{4t_{\min} + 2\delta}\right).$$

- Fix  $\Delta > 0$  such that

$$\Delta \leq \frac{1}{2(t_{\min} + \delta)} \quad (4.2)$$

- Fix  $\nabla$  such that

$$\nabla > \max\left(\frac{4(1 + t_{\max})C_\mu}{\varepsilon c_\mu}, 6L_2C_\mu, 3\Delta C_\mu, \frac{16C_\mu T^\Lambda}{7\delta}, 4C_\mu(2t_{\max} + \tau^\Lambda)\right). \quad (4.3)$$

We give here other lower bounds for  $\nabla$  that we need for the sequel and which are consequences of (4.3).

- Using the fact that  $c_\mu \leq C_\mu$ , we get  $\nabla > \frac{3}{\varepsilon} > \frac{1}{\varepsilon}$  from the fact that  $\nabla > \frac{3C_\mu}{\varepsilon c_\mu}$ .
- Also from this inequality, using the fact that  $\varepsilon < \frac{1}{11}$ , we have  $1 - \varepsilon > 1 - 2\varepsilon > 1 - 10\varepsilon > \varepsilon$  and then  $\nabla > \frac{1 + 2t_{\max}}{1 - \varepsilon}$ ,  $\nabla > \frac{4(1 + t_{\max})}{1 - 10\varepsilon}$  and  $\nabla > \frac{3 + 2t_{\max}}{1 - 2\varepsilon}$ .
- Since  $\varepsilon < \frac{\delta}{48C_\mu}$  and  $\nabla > \frac{1}{\varepsilon}$ , we get  $\nabla > \frac{48C_\mu}{\delta}$ .
- Finally, since  $\delta - \delta' > \frac{7\delta}{8}$ , we have from  $\nabla > \frac{16C_\mu T^\Lambda}{7\delta}$  that  $\nabla > \frac{2C_\mu T^\Lambda}{\delta - \delta'}$ .

**Boxes.** With these constants, we can now define what a box is. For  $i \in \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ , as in the unbounded case,  $B_{i,s,N}$  is the ball of radius  $r_i$  for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  centered at the point  $sN$  with:

- $r_1 = d$ ,
- $r_2$  an integer such that

$$r_2 > \max\left(r_1 + \frac{2(\nabla + 2)}{c_\mu}, r_1 + L_1 + \frac{3\nabla}{c_\mu} + \frac{2t_{\max}(1 + (1 + d)\ell^\Lambda)}{\nu}\right), \quad (4.4)$$

- $r_3$  an integer such that

$$r_3 > \frac{7r_2(4t_{\max} + \alpha\delta)}{\alpha\delta},$$

- $r_4$  an integer such that

$$r_4 > \max\left(\frac{r_3(t_{\min} + \delta + t_{\max})}{t_{\min} + \delta}, r_3 + \Delta\right).$$

Note that we have  $r_1 < r_2 < r_3 < r_4$ . We use the word "box" to talk about  $B_{4,s,N}$ . We denote by  $\partial B_{i,s,N}$  the boundary of  $B_{i,s,N}$ , that is the set of points  $z \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  such that  $\|z - sN\|_1 = r_i N$ .

**Crossed boxes and weakly crossed boxes.** We say that a path

- crosses a box  $B_{4,s,N}$  if it visits a vertex in  $B_{1,s,N}$ ,
- weakly crosses a box  $B_{4,s,N}$  if it visits a vertex in  $B_{3,s,N}$ .

**Typical boxes.**  $B_{4,s,N}$  is called a typical box if it verifies the following properties:

- (i) every geodesic  $\gamma_{u,v}$  from  $u$  to  $v$  entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$  with  $\|u - v\|_1 \geq \Delta N$  has at least  $\alpha\|u - v\|_1$  edges whose time is greater than or equal to  $t_{\min} + \delta$ ,
- (ii) every path  $\pi$  from  $u$  to  $v$  entirely contained in  $B_{4,s,N}$  with  $\|u - v\|_1 \geq \Delta N$  has a passage time verifying:

$$t(\pi) \geq (t_{\min} + \delta) \|u - v\|_1, \quad (4.5)$$

- (iii) for all  $u$  and  $v$  in  $B_{3,s,N}$ , we have

$$(1 - \varepsilon)\mu(u - v) - N \leq t(u, v) \leq (1 + \varepsilon)\mu(u - v) + N.$$

As in the unbounded case, we need properties which are guaranteed with the definition of typical boxes. We state them in the following lemma whose proof is given in Section 4.3.

**Lemma 4.3.** *We have these three properties about typical boxes.*

1. If  $B_{4,s,N}$  is a typical box, for all points  $u_0$  and  $v_0$  in  $B_{3,s,N}$ , every geodesic from  $u_0$  to  $v_0$  is entirely contained in  $B_{4,s,N}$ .
2. The typical box property only depends on the time of the edges in  $B_{4,s,N}$ .
3. We have

$$\lim_{N \rightarrow \infty} \mathbb{P}(B_{4,0,N} \text{ is a typical box}) = 1.$$

**Successful boxes.** For a fixed  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , a box  $B_{4,s,N}$  is successful if every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  takes a pattern which is entirely contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ , i.e. if for every geodesic  $\gamma$  going from 0 to  $x$ , there exists  $x_\gamma \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  satisfying the condition  $(\gamma; \mathfrak{P})$  and such that  $B_\infty(x_\gamma, \ell^\Lambda)$  is contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ .

**Annuli.** To follow the proof of the unbounded case, we define the annuli  $A_{i,N}$  with  $r = 2(r_1 + r_4 + 1)$  and  $\mathcal{G}^p(N)$  as in Section 3.1. The bound on  $\mathbb{P}(\mathcal{G}^p(N)^c)$  of Lemma 3.2 also holds here. The proof is exactly the same in this case thanks to Lemma 4.3. For the rest of the proof, we fix  $C_1$ ,  $D_1$  and  $N_0$  given by Lemma 3.2.

**Modification argument.** Fix  $K' = T^\Lambda + 2(C_\mu L_1 + t_{\max}(\ell^\Lambda + 1))$ . Then, fix

$$N > \max\left(N_0, \frac{24C_\mu K'}{\delta \nabla}\right), \quad n \geq 2rN \text{ and } x \in \Gamma_n, \quad (4.6)$$

(where  $\Gamma_n$  is defined at (1.13)). Fix  $p = \lfloor \frac{n}{rN} \rfloor$  and  $q = \lfloor \frac{p}{2} \rfloor$ . For  $j \in \{1, \dots, q\}$ , we define  $\Gamma^j$ ,  $S_j$  and  $\mathcal{M}(j)$  as in Section 3.1 with the notion of typical box defined here. As in the unbounded case, the aim is to bound from above  $\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(q))$  independently of  $x$ . For the sequel, we use a two steps modification. So we introduce two independent copies  $T'$  and  $T''$  of the environment  $T$ , the three being defined on the same probability space.

Fix  $\ell \in \{1, \dots, q\}$ . On  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ ,  $B_{4,S_\ell(T),N}$  is a typical box crossed by the selected geodesic. From this configuration, as a first step, we shall associate a set of edges  $E_+^*(T)$  which is contained in  $B_{3,S_\ell(T),N} \setminus B_{2,S_\ell(T),N}$ . It corresponds to the edges for which we want to reduce the time. Then, we define a new environment:

$$T^* = \begin{cases} T'(e) & \text{if } e \in E_+^*(T) \\ T(e) & \text{else.} \end{cases} \quad (4.7)$$

From this environment, as a second step, we get three new subsets  $E_+^{**}(T, T')$ ,  $E_-^{**}(T, T')$  and  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  of edges of  $B_{2,S_\ell(T),N}$  which are respectively the edges for which we want to reduce the time, to increase time and the edges of the location where we want to put the pattern. We define a third environment:

$$T^{**} = \begin{cases} T''(e) & \text{if } e \in E_+^{**}(T, T') \cup E_-^{**}(T, T') \cup E_P^{**}(T, T') \\ T^*(e) & \text{else.} \end{cases} \quad (4.8)$$

For  $y$  and  $z$  in  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ , we denote by  $t^*(y, z)$  (resp.  $t^{**}(y, z)$ ) the geodesic time between  $y$  and  $z$  in the environment  $T^*$  (resp.  $T^{**}$ ). Similarly, we define for  $c \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $t \in \mathbb{R}_+$ :

$$B^*(c, t) = \{u \in \mathbb{Z}^d : t^*(c, u) \leq t\} \text{ and } B^{**}(c, t) = \{u \in \mathbb{Z}^d : t^{**}(c, u) \leq t\}.$$

We formalize this modification in the next lemma and we will describe precisely the construction of  $E_+^*$ ,  $E_+^{**}$ ,  $E_-^{**}$  and  $E_P^{**}$  in the next subsection.

**Lemma 4.4.** *There exists  $\eta = \eta(N)$  such that for all  $\ell$  in  $\{1, \dots, q\}$ , there exist measurable functions  $E_+^* : (\mathbb{R}_+)^{\mathcal{E}} \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$ ,  $E_+^{**} : (\mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}})^2 \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$ ,  $E_-^{**} : (\mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}})^2 \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$ ,  $E_P^{**} : (\mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}})^2 \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$  and  $\mathcal{O} : (\mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}})^2 \mapsto \{1, \dots, d\}$  such that:*

- (i)  $E_+^*(T)$ ,  $E_+^{**}(T)$ ,  $E_-^{**}(T)$  and  $E_P^{**}(T)$  are pairwise disjoint and are contained in  $B_{3, S_\ell(T)}$ ,
- (ii) on the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ ,  $\mathbb{P}(T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T) | T) \geq \eta$  and on the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}$ ,  $\mathbb{P}(T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T') | T, T') \geq \eta$ , where  $\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}$  is a shorthand for

$$\{\forall e \in E_+^*(T), T(e) \leq t_{\min} + \delta'\},$$

and  $\{T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T')\}$  is a shorthand for

$$\left\{ \forall e \in E_+^{**}(T, T'), T(e) \leq t_{\min} + \delta', \forall e \in E_-^{**}(T, T'), T(e) \geq \nu, \theta_{N, S_\ell(T)} T'' \in \mathcal{A}_{\mathcal{O}(T, T')}^\Delta \right\},$$

- (iii)  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\} \cap \{T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T')\} \subset \{T^{**} \in (\mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell))\}$ .

The proof of Lemma 4.4 is left to the reader. It is the same as the proof of Lemma 3.3, replacing the use of Lemma 3.5 by the following one.

**Lemma 4.5.** *There exists  $\eta = \eta(N)$  such that for all  $\ell$  in  $\{1, \dots, q\}$ , there exist measurable functions  $E_+^* : (\mathbb{R}_+)^{\mathcal{E}} \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$ ,  $E_+^{**} : (\mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}})^2 \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$ ,  $E_-^{**} : (\mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}})^2 \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$ ,  $E_P^{**} : (\mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}})^2 \mapsto \mathcal{P}(\mathcal{E})$  and  $\mathcal{O} : (\mathbb{R}_+^{\mathcal{E}})^2 \mapsto \{1, \dots, d\}$  such that items (i) and (ii) of Lemma 4.4 are satisfied and such that if the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\} \cap \{T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T')\}$  occurs, then we have the following properties in the environment  $T^{**}$ :*

- (i) every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  takes the pattern inside  $B_{2, S_\ell(T), N}$ ,
- (ii) there exists two distinct vertices  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  contained in  $B_{3, S_\ell(T), N}$  such that for all geodesic  $\gamma^{**}$  from 0 to  $x$ ,  $\gamma^{**}$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  in that order, and there exists a geodesic  $\gamma'$  from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T$  such that  $\gamma'$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  and such that  $\gamma_{0, s_1}^{**} = \gamma'_{0, s_1}$ ,  $\gamma_{s_2, x}^{**} = \gamma'_{s_2, x}$  and  $\gamma_{s_1, s_2}^{**} \subset B_{4, S_\ell(T), N}$ ,
- (iii) for the same vertices  $s_1$  and  $s_2$ , we have that the selected geodesic  $\gamma$  in the environment  $T$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  in that order, and there exists a geodesic  $\gamma^{**}$  in  $T^{**}$  from 0 to  $x$  such that  $\gamma^*$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  and such that  $\gamma_{0, s_1} = \gamma_{0, s_1}^{**}$  and  $\gamma_{s_2, x} = \gamma_{s_2, x}^{**}$ .

The proof of Lemma 4.5 is the aim of Section 4.4. We now conclude the proof of Proposition 1.9 in the bounded case. The following lemma is the counterpart of Lemma 3.6 in this case.

**Lemma 4.6.** *There exists  $\lambda \in (0, 1)$  which does not depend on  $x$  such that*

$$\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(q)) \leq \lambda^q.$$

*Proof.* Let  $\ell$  be in  $\{1, \dots, q\}$ . Writing with indicator functions the result (iii) of Lemma 4.4, we have:

$$\mathbb{1}_{\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T')\}} \leq \mathbb{1}_{\{T^{**} \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}}.$$

We take the expectation on both sides. The right side yields

$$\mathbb{P}(T^{**} \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell)) = \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1) \setminus \mathcal{M}(\ell)) = \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell-1)) - \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)),$$

since  $\mathcal{M}(\ell) \subset \mathcal{M}(\ell - 1)$ . For the left side, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E} [\mathbb{1}_{\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T')\}}] &= \mathbb{E} [\mathbb{E} [\mathbb{E} [\mathbb{1}_{\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}} \mathbb{1}_{\{T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T')\}} \mid T, T'] \mid T]] \\ &= \mathbb{E} [\mathbb{1}_{\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}} \mathbb{E} [\mathbb{1}_{\{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}} \mathbb{P}(T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T') \mid T, T') \mid T]]. \end{aligned}$$

Since on the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\}$ ,  $\mathbb{P}(T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T') \mid T, T')$  is bounded from below by  $\eta$ , the left side is bounded from below by

$$\eta \mathbb{E} [\mathbb{1}_{\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}} \mathbb{P}(T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T) \mid T)].$$

Then, on the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\}$ ,  $\mathbb{P}(T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T) \mid T)$  is bounded from below by  $\eta$ , so the left side is bounded from below by

$$\eta^2 \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)).$$

Thus,

$$\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)) \leq \lambda \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell - 1)),$$

where  $\lambda = \frac{1}{1 + \eta^2} \in ]0, 1[$  only depends on  $r_3$ ,  $r_4$  and  $N$ . Hence, since  $\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(0)) = 1$ , we get by induction

$$\mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{M}(q)) \leq \lambda^q.$$

□

From Lemma 4.6, the proof of Proposition 1.9 is the same as in the unbounded case.

### 4.3 Properties of a typical box

*Proof of Lemma 4.3.*

1. Let  $B_{4,s,N}$  be a typical box and  $u_0$  and  $v_0$  two points of  $B_{3,s,N}$ . Then, taking paths minimizing the distance for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  between  $u_0$  and  $sN$  and between  $v_0$  and  $sN$ , we have  $t(u_0, v_0) \leq 2r_3 N t_{\max}$ . Then, if a geodesic  $\gamma_{u_0, v_0}$  takes an edge which is not in  $B_{4,s,N}$ , since  $r_4 \geq r_3 + \Delta$ , using the item (ii) of the definition of a typical box leads to

$$T(\gamma_{u_0, v_0}) \geq 2(r_4 - r_3)N(t_{\min} + \delta),$$

which is impossible since  $r_4 > \frac{r_3(t_{\min} + \delta + t_{\max})}{t_{\min} + \delta}$ .

2. It is clear that the first property only depends on the time of edges in  $B_{3,s,N}$  and the second only depends on the time of edges in  $B_{4,s,N}$ . For the third property, by the preceding item, we know that for all points  $w_1$  and  $w_2$  in  $B_{3,s,N}$ , the knowledge of the time of all edges in  $B_{4,s,N}$  allows us to determine  $t(w_1, w_2)$ , so to know if the two inequalities are satisfied.
3. For each item of the definition of a typical box, we show that the probability that  $B_{4,0,N}$  satisfies this item goes to 1. To show that the probability that item (ii) of the definition of a typical box is satisfied goes to 1, we use the same proof as for (ii) in the proof of Lemma 3.1, replacing  $r_2 - r_1$  by  $\Delta$  and  $B_{3,s,N}$  by  $B_{4,s,N}$ .

Further, using (4.1) and a similar computation as for item (ii) in the proof of Lemma 3.1, we get:

$$\mathbb{P}(B_{4,0,N} \text{ satisfies (ii)}) \xrightarrow[N \rightarrow \infty]{} 1.$$

To prove that

$$\mathbb{P}(B_{4,0,N} \text{ satisfies (iii)}) \xrightarrow[N \rightarrow \infty]{} 1,$$

fix  $\varepsilon_0 = \frac{\varepsilon}{1 + \varepsilon}$  and  $\rho_0 = \min \left( \frac{1}{4dt_{\max}}, \frac{1}{2dC_\mu(1 + \varepsilon)}, \frac{2(t_{\min} + \delta) - C_\mu}{4dC_\mu t_{\max}} \right)$ . Recall that, for  $c \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  and  $t \geq 0$ ,  $\tilde{B}(c, t)$  is defined in Section 1.6. Let us consider the following property for  $N$  large enough to have  $\lfloor \rho_0 N \rfloor \neq 0$ :

$$\forall s' \in \lfloor \rho_0 N \rfloor \mathbb{Z}^d \cap B_{3,0,N}, \forall t \geq \frac{1}{2}, B_\mu(s', 1 - \varepsilon_0) \subset \frac{\tilde{B}(s', Nt)}{Nt} \subset B_\mu(s', 1 + \varepsilon_0). \quad (4.9)$$

For all  $s' \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , by (1.15) and by stationarity, we have

$$\mathbb{P} \left( \forall t > \frac{1}{2}, B_\mu(s', 1 - \varepsilon_0) \subset \frac{\tilde{B}(s', Nt)}{Nt} \subset B_\mu(s', 1 + \varepsilon_0) \right) \xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} 1.$$

Thus, since  $|\lfloor \rho_0 N \rfloor \mathbb{Z}^d \cap B_{3,0,N}|$  is uniformly bounded in  $N$ , we get  $\mathbb{P}((4.9) \text{ holds}) \xrightarrow{N \rightarrow \infty} 1$ .

Finally, the proof is completed by showing that (4.9) implies that  $B_{4,0,N}$  satisfies (iii). Assume (4.9) and let  $u$  and  $v$  be two vertices in  $B_{2,0,N}$ . There are two cases.

- First case:  $t(u, v) \geq (\frac{1}{2} + 2d\rho_0 t_{\max})N$ .

Let  $u' \in \lfloor \rho_0 N \rfloor \mathbb{Z}^d \cap B_{3,0,N}$  such that  $\|u - u'\|_1 \leq d\rho_0 N$ . Then

$$t(u', v) \geq t(u, v) - t(u, u') \geq \left( \frac{1}{2} + d\rho_0 t_{\max} \right) N > \frac{1}{2}. \quad (4.10)$$

By (4.9) with  $s' = u'$  and  $t = \frac{t(u', v)}{N}$ ,

$$\tilde{B}(u', t(u', v)) \subset B_\mu(u', (1 + \varepsilon_0)t(u', v)),$$

and then

$$\frac{1}{1 + \varepsilon_0} \mu(u' - v) \leq t(u', v). \quad (4.11)$$

By (4.10), there exists  $\lambda_0 < 1$  such that  $\lambda_0 t(u', v) \geq \frac{1}{2}$ . By (4.9), we get, for all  $\lambda_1 \in [\lambda_0, 1)$ ,

$$B_\mu(u', (1 - \varepsilon_0)\lambda_1 t(u', v)) \subset \tilde{B}(u', \lambda_1 t(u', v)).$$

Then, for all  $\lambda_1 \in [\lambda_0, 1)$ , since  $v \notin \tilde{B}(u', \lambda_1 t(u', v))$ ,

$$\mu(u' - v) > (1 - \varepsilon_0)\lambda_1 t(u', v).$$

So,

$$\frac{1}{1 - \varepsilon_0} \mu(u' - v) \geq t(u', v). \quad (4.12)$$

Recall that  $\varepsilon_0 = \frac{\varepsilon}{1 + \varepsilon}$ . Using (4.11) and (4.12) leads to

$$(1 - \varepsilon)\mu(u' - v) \leq t(u', v) \leq (1 + \varepsilon)\mu(u' - v).$$

Furthermore, since  $t(u', u) \leq d\rho_0 N t_{\max} \leq \frac{N}{2}$  and

$$\mu(u - u') \leq C_\mu \|u' - u\|_1 \leq C_\mu d\rho_0 N \leq \frac{N}{2(1 + \varepsilon)},$$

we get item (iii) of the definition of a typical box.

- Second case:  $t(u, v) < (\frac{1}{2} + 2d\rho_0 t_{\max})N$ .

– We have  $t(u, v) \leq N$ , which gives us the second inequality of item (iii).

– We also have

$$\|u - v\|_1 \leq \frac{\frac{1}{2} + 2d\rho_0 t_{\max}}{t_{\min} + \delta} N.$$

Indeed, otherwise, since (4.2) gives

$$\Delta \leq \frac{\frac{1}{2} + 2d\rho_0 t_{\max}}{t_{\min} + \delta},$$

we have by (4.5),

$$t(u, v) \geq \|u - v\|_1(t_{\min} + \delta) > \left(\frac{1}{2} + 2d\rho_0 t_{\max}\right) N,$$

and it contradicts the hypothesis. Hence, we get

$$\mu(u - v) \leq C_\mu \frac{\frac{1}{2} + 2d\rho_0 t_{\max}}{t_{\min} + \delta} N \leq N,$$

and then  $(1 - \varepsilon)\mu(u - v) - N \leq 0$ , which gives us the first inequality of item (iii).  $\square$

Now, we state a technical lemma which gives us properties of typical boxes useful for the modification argument.

**Lemma 4.7.** *If  $B_{4,s,N}$  is a typical box, we have the following properties.*

(i) *There exists  $K'' > 0$  such that for all  $u$  and  $v$  in  $B_{3,s,N}$  with  $\|u - v\|_1 \geq K''N$ ,*

$$(1 - 2\varepsilon)\mu(u - v) \leq t(u, v) \leq (1 + 2\varepsilon)\mu(u - v).$$

(ii) *For all  $z \in B_{3,s,N}$ , for all  $\bar{r} > 0$ , for all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ ,*

$$B_{3,s,N} \cap B(z, N\bar{r}) \subset B_{3,s,N} \cap B_\mu\left(z, \frac{N(\bar{r} + 1)}{1 - \varepsilon}\right),$$

and if  $\bar{r} \geq \frac{1}{\varepsilon} - 2$ ,

$$B_{3,s,N} \cap B_\mu\left(z, \frac{N(\bar{r} + 1)}{1 - \varepsilon}\right) \subset B_{3,s,N} \cap B_\mu\left(z, \frac{N\bar{r}}{1 - 2\varepsilon}\right).$$

(iii) *For all  $z \in B_{3,s,N}$ , for all  $\bar{r} > 0$ , for all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ ,*

$$B_{3,s,N} \cap B_\mu(z, N\bar{r}) \subset B_{3,s,N} \cap B(z, N((1 + \varepsilon)\bar{r} + 1)),$$

and if  $\bar{r} \geq \frac{1}{\varepsilon}$ ,

$$B_{3,s,N} \cap B(z, N((1 + \varepsilon)\bar{r} + 1)) \subset B_{3,s,N} \cap B(z, (1 + 2\varepsilon)N\bar{r}).$$

*Proof.* (i) Let us take  $K'' = \frac{1}{\varepsilon C_\mu}$ . Let  $u$  and  $v$  be in  $B_{3,s,N}$  with  $\|u - v\|_1 \geq K''N$ . Then, since  $B_{4,s,N}$  is a typical box, we have

$$(1 - \varepsilon)\mu(u - v) - N \leq t(u, v) \leq (1 + \varepsilon)\mu(u - v) + N.$$

The requirement on  $u$  and  $v$  implies

$$\frac{N}{c_\mu} \leq \varepsilon \|u - v\|_1,$$

so  $\varepsilon\mu(u - v) \geq N$ .

(ii) and (iii) In both cases, it is easy to check that the first inclusion follows from property (iii) of a typical box and an easy computation shows the second inclusion.  $\square$

#### 4.4 Modification argument

For the rest of the section, we fix  $\ell \in \{1, \dots, q\}$  and  $s \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , and we assume that the event  $\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{S_\ell(T) = s\}$  occurs. In particular,  $B_{4,s,N}$  is a typical box in the environment  $T$ .



#### 4.4.1 First modification

The first modification is used to connect any geodesic from 0 to  $x$  to the selected geodesic in  $B_{4,s,N}$ . We denote by  $\gamma$  the selected geodesic in the environment  $T$ . Let  $u$  denote the entry point of  $\gamma$  in  $B_{3,s,N}$  and  $v$  the exit point, and let  $u_0$  denote the entry point of  $\gamma$  in  $B_{2,s,N}$  and  $v_0$  its exit point. Then, we set

$$E_+^*(T) = \{\text{edges of } B_{3,s,N} \text{ that belong to } \gamma_{u,u_0} \text{ or } \gamma_{v_0,v} \text{ and satisfy } T(e) > t_{\min} + \delta'\}. \quad (4.13)$$

We denote the first edge of  $\gamma$  that belongs to  $E_+^*(T)$  by  $e_1$  and the last one by  $e_2$ . Moreover,  $s_1$  denote the first vertex of  $e_1$  visited by  $\gamma$  and  $s_2$  the last vertex of  $e_2$  visited by  $\gamma$ . Assume that the event

$$\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{S_\ell(T) = s\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\} \text{ occurs,}$$

where  $\mathcal{B}^*(T)$  is defined in (ii) of Lemma 4.4. Recall the definition of  $T^*$  in (4.7). In particular, we have  $T^*(e) < T(e)$  for edges of  $E_+^*(T)$ , and  $T^*(e) = T(e)$  if  $e \notin E_+^*(T)$ .

**Lemma 4.8.** *We have the following properties.*

- (i) *There are at least  $\alpha(r_3 - r_2)N$  edges of  $\gamma_{u,u_0}$  and  $\alpha(r_3 - r_2)N$  edges of  $\gamma_{v_0,v}$  that belong to  $E_+^*(T)$ . In particular,*

$$T(\gamma) - T^*(\gamma) \geq 2\alpha(r_3 - r_2)N(\delta - \delta').$$

- (ii) *In the environment  $T^*$ , every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  visits every edge of  $E_+^*(T)$ .*

- (iii) *In the environment  $T^*$ ,  $\gamma$  is a geodesic from 0 to  $x$ .*

*Proof.* (i) This item follows from the first property of a typical box applied to the portion of  $\gamma_{u,u_0}$  entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$  going from  $\partial B_{3,s,N}$  to  $u_0$  and to the portion of  $\gamma_{v_0,v}$  entirely contained in  $B_{3,s,N}$  going from  $v_0$  to  $\partial B_{3,s,N}$ .

- (ii) To prove the second point, let  $\gamma^*$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^*$ . Assume that there exists an edge of  $E_+^*(T)$  which is not an edge of  $\gamma^*$ . Then

$$T(\gamma^*) - T^*(\gamma^*) < T(\gamma) - T^*(\gamma).$$

Since  $\gamma$  is a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T$ , we have  $T(\gamma) \leq T(\gamma^*)$ , which implies

$$0 \leq T(\gamma^*) - T(\gamma) < T^*(\gamma^*) - T^*(\gamma).$$

Thus  $T^*(\gamma) < T^*(\gamma^*)$ , which contradicts the fact that  $\gamma^*$  is a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^*$ .

- (iii) Let us now assume that  $\gamma$  is not a geodesic in the environment  $T^*$ . Hence, if we denote by  $\gamma^*$  a geodesic from 0 to  $x$ , we have  $T^*(\gamma^*) < T^*(\gamma)$ . By item (ii),

$$T(\gamma^*) - T^*(\gamma^*) = T(\gamma) - T^*(\gamma).$$

Thus,  $T(\gamma^*) < T(\gamma)$ , which contradicts the fact that  $\gamma$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T$ . □

#### 4.4.2 Construction of $\pi$

Here, we shall identify an oriented path  $\pi$  between two vertices of  $\gamma$  in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . This oriented path is later used to place the pattern. Let  $c_0$  denote the entry point of  $\gamma$  in  $B_{1,s,N}$  and recall the definition of  $\nabla$  in (4.3). Since by (4.4),  $r_2 \geq r_1 + \frac{\nabla}{c_\mu}$ ,  $B_\mu(c_0, N\nabla) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d$  is entirely contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . We introduce

$$u_1 \text{ the entry point of } \gamma \text{ in } B_\mu(c_0, N\nabla) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d \text{ and } v_1 \text{ the exit point.} \quad (4.14)$$

**Lemma 4.9.** *We have  $\mu(u_1 - v_1) \geq N\nabla$  and  $\gamma_{u_1,v_1}$  is contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ .*

**Remark 4.10.** *The idea of the proof is that  $\mu(u_1 - v_1)$  is roughly equal to  $t(u_1, v_1)$ . Since  $\gamma$  is a geodesic visiting  $u_1$ ,  $c_0$  and  $v_1$  in this order,  $t(u_1, v_1) = t(u_1, c_0) + t(c_0, v_1) \approx 2N\nabla$ . Thus, we have a sufficient control over the approximations to guarantee a lower bound by  $N\nabla$ .*

*Proof.* Using item (ii) of Lemma 4.7 with  $z = c_0$  and  $\bar{r} = (1 - \varepsilon)\nabla - 1$ , and the fact that  $\nabla > \frac{1 + 2t_{\max}}{1 - \varepsilon}$  (by (4.3)) leads to

$$t(u_1, v_1) = t(u_1, c_0) + t(c_0, v_1) \geq 2N(\nabla(1 - \varepsilon) - 1) - 2t_{\max} > 0.$$

So, since  $\nabla > \frac{3 + 2t_{\max}}{1 - 2\varepsilon}$ , by the third item of the definition of a typical box,

$$\mu(u_1 - v_1) \geq \frac{N(2\nabla(1 - \varepsilon) - 3) - 2t_{\max}}{1 + \varepsilon} \geq N\nabla.$$

For the second part of the proof, using the third item of Lemma 4.7 with  $z = c_0$  and  $\bar{r} = \nabla$  leads to

$$B_\mu(c_0, N\nabla) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d \subset B(c_0, ((1 + \varepsilon)\nabla + 1)N).$$

Then, by (4.4) we have  $r_2 > r_1 + \frac{2(\nabla + 2)}{c_\mu}$ . So, for all  $z \in B_\mu(c_0, 2N(\nabla + 2))$ , we have

$$\|z - sN\|_1 \leq \|z - c_0\|_1 + \|c_0 - sN\|_1 \leq \left( \frac{2(\nabla + 2)}{c_\mu} + r_1 \right) N < r_2 N.$$

So, we have  $B_\mu(c_0, 2N(\nabla + 2)) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d \subset B_{2,s,N}$  and since  $\varepsilon < \frac{1}{3}$ , we have

$$B_\mu \left( c_0, N \frac{(1 + \varepsilon)\nabla + 2}{1 - \varepsilon} \right) \subset B_\mu(c_0, 2N(\nabla + 2)).$$

Thus, by the second item of Lemma 4.7 with  $z = c_0$  and  $\bar{r} = \nabla$ , we get

$$B(c_0, ((1 + \varepsilon)\nabla + N)) \subset B_\mu \left( c_0, N \frac{(1 + \varepsilon)\nabla + 2}{1 - \varepsilon} \right) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d \subset B_\mu(c_0, 2N(\nabla + 2)) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d.$$

To sum up,

$$B_\mu(c_0, N\nabla) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d \subset B(c_0, (1 + \varepsilon)N\nabla + N) \subset B_{2,s,N}.$$

Now, assume that  $\gamma_{u_1, v_1}$  visits a vertex which is not in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . Let denote by  $z$  such a vertex and assume for example that  $z$  is visited by  $\gamma_{u_1, c_0}$ . Then, we have, thanks to these inclusions,  $t(c_0, z) > t(c_0, u_1)$ , which is impossible since  $\gamma_{u_1, c_0}$  is a geodesic.  $\square$

**Lemma 4.11.** (i) *We have the following inclusions:*

$$B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1})) \subset B(0, t(0, u_1)) \text{ and } B^*(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1, x})) \subset B(x, t(v_1, x)).$$

(ii) *We have*

$$B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1})) \cap B^*(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1, x})) = \emptyset.$$

*Proof.* (i) Let  $s'$  be a vertex in  $B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1}))$ . The aim is to show

$$t(0, s') \leq t(0, u_1).$$

Let  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $s'$  in the environment  $T^*$ . We denote by  $s^*$  the last vertex visited by  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  among those visited by  $\gamma$  (note that 0 is such a vertex). First, since  $\bar{\gamma}_{s^*, s'}^*$  does not take an edge of  $\gamma$ ,  $T^*(\bar{\gamma}_{s^*, s'}^*) = T(\bar{\gamma}_{s^*, s'}^*)$ . Then, by Lemma 4.9,  $\gamma_{u_1, v_1}$  is entirely contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ , so  $T^*(\gamma_{u_1, v_1}) = T(\gamma_{u_1, v_1})$ . Thus, also by Lemma 4.9,  $T^*(\gamma_{u_1, v_1}) > 0$ . So  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  does not take an edge of  $\gamma_{v_1, x}$ . Otherwise, since  $\gamma$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^*$ ,  $t^*(0, s') \geq T^*(\gamma_{0, v_1}) > T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1})$ . Hence, the time saved by  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  after the modification comes only from the edges of  $\gamma_{0, u_1}$ . So,

$$T(\bar{\gamma}_{0, s^*}^*) - T^*(\bar{\gamma}_{0, s^*}^*) \leq T(\gamma_{0, u_1}) - T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1}). \quad (4.15)$$

Hence,

$$\begin{aligned}
t(0, s') &\leq T(\overline{\gamma}_{0,s^*}^*) + T(\overline{\gamma}_{s^*,s'}^*) \\
&\leq T(\gamma_{0,u_1}) - T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}) + \underbrace{T^*(\overline{\gamma}_{0,s^*}^*) + T^*(\overline{\gamma}_{s^*,s'}^*)}_{=t^*(0,s')} \text{ by (4.15),} \\
&= t^*(0, s') + T(\gamma_{0,u_1}) - T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}) \\
&\leq T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}) + T(\gamma_{0,u_1}) - T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}) \text{ since } s' \in B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1})), \\
&= t(0, u_1),
\end{aligned}$$

which proves the inclusion and the same proof gives us the second inclusion.

(ii) Let  $s'$  be a point of  $B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1})) \cap B^*(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1,x}))$ . Then

$$\begin{aligned}
t(0, x) &\leq t(0, s') + t(s', x) \\
&\leq t(0, u_1) + t(v_1, x) \text{ by (i)} \\
&< t(0, x)
\end{aligned}$$

since  $\gamma$  is a geodesic visiting  $0, u_1, v_1$  and  $x$  in this order and since  $t(u_1, v_1) > 0$ , which is a contradiction.  $\square$

Now, we can make the construction of  $\pi$ , which is the path on which we would like to put the pattern that the geodesics have to take. First, we construct an oriented path between  $u_1$  and  $v_1$  which is the concatenation of steps of length  $10\ell^\Lambda$ , where a step of length  $\ell$  is a path of  $\ell$  consecutive edges in the same direction. So, we consider  $\pi$  constructed with a deterministic rule satisfying the following conditions:

- (i)  $\pi$  is an oriented path connecting  $u_1$  and  $v_1$ ,
- (ii)  $\pi$  takes steps of length  $10\ell^\Lambda$  except in  $B_\infty(b_1, 10\ell^\Lambda)$ , where  $\pi$  takes steps of length 1.

One can check that the following lemma, useful for the sequel, holds.

**Lemma 4.12.** *There exists a constant  $L_1 \in \mathbb{R}_+$  only depending on  $\ell^\Lambda$  such that for all  $z \in \mathbb{Z}^d$  which is in  $\pi$ , the distance for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  between  $z$  and  $[u_1, v_1]$  is bounded by  $L_1$ , and for all  $y \in [u_1, v_1]$ , the distance for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  between  $y$  and  $\pi$  (seen as a part of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ ) is bounded by  $L_1$ .*

Then, we introduce

$$u_2 \text{ the first vertex of } \pi \text{ starting from } v_1 \text{ in } B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1})), \quad (4.16)$$

$$v_2 \text{ the first vertex of } \pi \text{ starting from } u_1 \text{ in } B^*(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1,x})). \quad (4.17)$$

Remark that  $t^*(0, u_2) \leq t^*(0, u_1)$  and  $t^*(v_2, x) \leq t^*(v_1, x)$ .

#### 4.4.3 Second modification

Now, let us define  $E_P^{**}$ ,  $E_+^{**}$ ,  $E_-^{**}$  and  $\mathcal{O}$ . Let  $c_1 \in \mathbb{R}^d$  denote the midpoint of  $[u_1, v_1]$  and let us consider the set of all vertices of  $\pi_{u_2, v_2}$  at distance at most  $L_1$  in norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  from  $c_1$ . This set is not empty, hence we can choose one such vertex with a deterministic rule. We choose the step of length  $10\ell^\Lambda$  containing this vertex to put the pattern. We denote the midpoint of this chosen step by  $c_P$ . Then,

$$\mathcal{O}(T, T') \text{ is equal to the direction of this step,} \quad (4.18)$$

$$\text{and } E_P^{**}(T, T') = \{\text{edges connecting vertices belonging to } B_\infty(c_P, \ell^\Lambda)\}. \quad (4.19)$$

If two steps of length  $10\ell^\Lambda$  contain the chosen vertex, we also choose one of them with a deterministic rule. Write  $L_2 = L_1 + (10 + 2d)\ell^\Lambda$ . Then for all vertex  $z$  in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ ,

$$\|z - c_1\|_1 \leq L_2.$$

The entry point in the oriented pattern is denoted by  $u_3$  and the exit point by  $v_3$ . (4.20)

Note that, thanks to the construction,  $u_3$  and  $v_3$  are two vertices of the chosen step of length  $10\ell^\Lambda$ . We denote by  $\gamma^\pi$  the path composed by the first geodesic in the lexicographic order from 0 to  $u_2$  in the environment  $T^*$ , then  $\pi_{u_2, v_2}$  and then the first geodesic in the lexicographic order from  $v_2$  to  $x$  in the environment  $T^*$ . Then, we have to define  $E_+^{**}(T, T')$  and  $E_-^{**}(T, T')$ :

$$E_+^{**}(T, T') = \{\text{edges of } \pi_{u_2, u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3, v_2} \text{ except the one connected to } u_2 \text{ and the one connected to } v_2\}, \quad (4.21)$$

$$E_-^{**}(T, T') = \{\text{edges in } B_{2, s, N} \text{ which are not in } E_P^{**}(T, T'), \pi_{u_2, u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3, v_2}, B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1})) \text{ or } B^*(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1, x}))\}. \quad (4.22)$$

For all the sequel, we assume that the event

$$\{T \in \mathcal{M}(\ell)\} \cap \{S_\ell(T) = s\} \cap \{T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T)\} \cap \{T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T')\} \text{ occurs.}$$

Recall the definition of the environment  $T^{**}$ . In particular,

- for all  $e \in E_+^*(T)$ ,  $T^{**}(e) = T^*(e) < T(e)$ ,
- for all  $e \in E_+^{**}(T, T')$ ,  $T^{**}(e) \leq r + \delta'$ ,
- for all  $e \in E_-^{**}(T, T')$ ,  $T^{**}(e) \geq \nu$ .

In what follows, when we talk about edges whose time has been reduced, it means the edges  $e$  such that  $T^{**}(e) < T(e)$ . Finally, fix  $\eta = \min_{j \in \{1, \dots, d\}} \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{A}_j^\Lambda) \tilde{p}^{|B_{3, s, N}|}$ , where

$$\tilde{p} = \min(F([t_{\min}, t_{\min} + \delta']), F([\nu(N), t_{\max}])) > 0.$$

Thus,  $\eta$  only depends on  $F$ , the pattern and  $N$  and we have that

$$\mathbb{P}(T' \in \mathcal{B}^*(T) | T) \geq \tilde{p}^{|B_{3, s, N}|} \geq \eta$$

and

$$\mathbb{P}(T'' \in \mathcal{B}^{**}(T, T') | T, T') \geq \min_{j \in \{1, \dots, d\}} \mathbb{P}(T \in \mathcal{A}_j^\Lambda) \tilde{p}^{|B_{3, s, N}|} = \eta.$$

Let us begin with some lemmas easy to prove and useful for the rest of the proof.

**Lemma 4.13.** *We have  $B^{**}(0, T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1})) = B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1}))$ ,  $B^{**}(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1, x})) = B^*(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1, x}))$  and there is no vertex of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  in any of these balls.*

*Proof.* We begin by proving that there is no vertex of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  in  $B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1}))$ . Let  $z$  be a vertex of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . Then,  $z \in B_\mu(c_1, C_\mu L_2)$ . Since by (4.3),  $\nabla \geq 2C_\mu L_2$ ,  $z \in B_\mu(c_1, \frac{N\nabla}{2})$ . Furthermore, since  $c_1$  is the midpoint of  $[u_1, v_1]$  and  $\mu(u_1 - v_1) \leq 2N\nabla$ , we have  $\mu(v_1 - c_1) \leq N\nabla$ . Thus, since  $\nabla \geq \frac{1}{\varepsilon}$  (by (4.3)), using the third item of Lemma 4.7 with  $z = v_1$  and  $\bar{r} = \frac{3\nabla}{2}$ , we have

$$z \in B_\mu\left(v_1, \frac{3N\nabla}{2}\right) \cap \mathbb{Z}^d \subset B\left(v_1, \frac{3N\nabla(1+2\varepsilon)}{2}\right).$$

Hence, since by (4.3),  $\nabla > \frac{4(1+t_{\max})}{1-10\varepsilon}$ , we have

$$t(0, v_1) - t(0, u_1) = t(u_1, v_1) \geq 2N(\nabla(1-\varepsilon) - 1) - 2t_{\max} > \frac{3N\nabla(1+2\varepsilon)}{2},$$

and thus

$$t(0, z) \geq t(0, v_1) - t(v_1, z) \geq t(0, v_1) - \frac{3N\nabla(1+2\varepsilon)}{2} > t(0, u_1).$$

The first item of Lemma 4.11 allows us to conclude.

Then, let us prove the first equality. The proof of the second one is the same. The inclusion  $B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1})) \subset B^{**}(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}))$  is easy to check. Let us take  $z \in B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}))$  and  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  a geodesic from 0 to  $z$  in the environment  $T^*$ . Then  $\bar{\gamma}^*$  is entirely contained in  $B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}))$  and there are no edges of  $E_-^{**}(T, T')$  or  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  in  $B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}))$ , so

$$t^{**}(0, z) \leq t^{**}(\bar{\gamma}^*) \leq t(\bar{\gamma}^*) \leq T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}).$$

For the other inclusion, assume that there exists a vertex  $z \in B^{**}(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1})) \setminus B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}))$  and let  $\bar{\gamma}^{**}$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $z$  in the environment  $T^{**}$ . Let  $\omega$  be the first vertex of  $\bar{\gamma}^{**}$  which is not in  $B^*(0, T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}))$ . By construction, there is no edge of  $\bar{\gamma}_{0,\omega}^{**}$  in  $E_+^{**}(T, T')$  or  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  and thus:

$$t^{**}(0, z) \geq t^{**}(0, \omega) \geq t^*(0, \omega) > T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}),$$

which is a contradiction.  $\square$

**Lemma 4.14.** *For all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ , we have*

$$T^*(\gamma) - T^{**}(\gamma^\pi) \geq \frac{N\nabla}{2C_\mu}(\delta - \delta') > T^\Lambda.$$

*Proof.* This result is an easy consequence of Lemma 4.9. Since  $\nabla \geq \Delta C_\mu$  (by (4.3)) and all edges of  $\gamma_{u_1, v_1}$  are contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ , which implies that there is no edge of  $\gamma_{u_1, v_1}$  whose time has been reduced between the environment  $T$  and  $T^*$ ,

$$T^*(\gamma) \geq T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1}) + \|u_1 - v_1\|_1(t_{\min} + \delta) + T^*(\gamma_{v_1,x}),$$

where we used (i) of the definition of a typical box. Further

$$T^{**}(\gamma^\pi) \leq T^{**}(\gamma_{0,u_2}^\pi) + \|u_2 - v_2\|_1(t_{\min} + \delta') + T^{**}(\gamma_{v_2,x}^\pi) + 2t_{\max} + \tau^\Lambda,$$

where the term  $2t_{\max}$  is an upper bound for the time for both, the edge connecting  $u_2$  to  $E_+^{**}(T, T')$  and the one connecting  $v_2$  to  $E_+^{**}(T, T')$ , and the term  $\tau^\Lambda$  is an upper bound for the time collected by  $\gamma^\pi$  in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . Since we have  $T^{**}(\gamma_{0,u_2}^\pi) \leq T^*(\gamma_{0,u_1})$ ,  $T^{**}(\gamma_{v_2,x}^\pi) \leq T^*(\gamma_{v_1,x})$ ,  $\|u_2 - v_2\|_1 \leq \|u_1 - v_1\|_1$  since  $\pi$  is an oriented path, and  $\nabla \geq 4C_\mu(2t_{\max} + \tau^\Lambda)$  (by (4.3)), and using Lemma 4.9, we obtain for all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ ,

$$T^*(\gamma) - T^{**}(\gamma^\pi) \geq \|u_1 - v_1\|_1(\delta - \delta') - \tau^\Lambda - 2t_{\max} \geq \frac{N\nabla}{2C_\mu}(\delta - \delta').$$

Finally, since by (4.3),  $\nabla > \frac{2C_\mu T^\Lambda}{\delta - \delta'}$  we have the result.  $\square$

**Lemma 4.15.** *For all  $N \in \mathbb{N}^*$ , for all  $w$  vertex of  $\pi_{v_3, v_2}$ , we have*

$$\|u_1 - w\|_1 \geq \frac{\|u_1 - v_1\|_1}{3}.$$

*Proof.* Let us note that since  $\pi$  is an oriented path, for all  $w$  vertex of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3, v_2}$  after  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ , we have  $\|u_1 - w\|_1 \geq \|u_1 - v_3\|_1$ . So

$$\|u_1 - w\|_1 \geq \|u_1 - c_1\|_1 - \|c_1 - v_3\|_1 \geq \frac{1}{2}\|u_1 - v_1\|_1 - L_2.$$

Then, since by (4.3),  $\nabla \geq 6L_2C_\mu$ , we have  $\frac{N\nabla}{6C_\mu} \geq L_2$  and using Lemma 4.9 leads to the result.  $\square$

#### 4.4.4 Proof of the second and third items of Lemma 4.5

The aim of this section is to prove that  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  defined during the first modification (after (4.13)) verify the following properties (which are the second and third items of Lemma 4.5):

- (ii) for all geodesic  $\gamma^{**}$  from 0 to  $x$ ,  $\gamma^{**}$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  in that order, and there exists a geodesic  $\gamma'$  from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T$  such that  $\gamma'$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  and such that  $\gamma_{0,s_1}^{**} = \gamma'_{0,s_1}$ ,  $\gamma_{s_2,x}^{**} = \gamma'_{s_2,x}$  and  $\gamma_{s_1,s_2}^{**} \subset B_{4,S_\ell(T),N}$ ,
- (iii) we have that the selected geodesic  $\gamma$  in the environment  $T$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  in that order, and there exists a geodesic  $\gamma^{**}$  in  $T^{**}$  from 0 to  $x$  such that  $\gamma^*$  visits  $s_1$  and  $s_2$  and such that  $\gamma_{0,s_1} = \gamma_{0,s_1}^{**}$  and  $\gamma_{s_2,x} = \gamma_{s_2,x}^{**}$ .

To prove this, we use the following sequence of lemmas.

**Lemma 4.16.** *Every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$  takes at least one edge of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3,v_2}$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\gamma^{**}$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$ . Since  $\gamma$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^*$ , we have the following inequalities

$$T^{**}(\gamma^{**}) \leq T^{**}(\gamma^\pi) < T^*(\gamma) \leq T^*(\gamma^{**}).$$

So, using Lemma 4.14,

$$T^*(\gamma^{**}) - T^{**}(\gamma^{**}) > T^\Lambda.$$

It means that  $\gamma^{**}$  has to take at least one edge whose time has been reduced during the second modification which is not in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . Hence, since the only edges which are not in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  whose time has been reduced are edges of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3,v_2}$ , the result follows.  $\square$

**Lemma 4.17.** *Every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$  takes at least one edge of  $\gamma$  whose time has been reduced before taking its first edge of  $B_{2,s,N}$ , and takes at least one edge of  $\gamma$  whose time has been reduced after taking its last edge of  $B_{2,s,N}$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\gamma^{**}$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$ . Let  $u^{**}$  be the first vertex in  $B_{2,s,N}$  that  $\gamma^{**}$  visits. Its existence is guaranteed by Lemma 4.16. The aim of the proof is to show

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0,u^{**}}^{**}) < T(\gamma_{0,u^{**}}^{**}).$$

Indeed, the definition of  $u^{**}$  and the fact that the only edges whose time has been reduced which are in  $B_{3,s,N}$  but not in  $B_{2,s,N}$  are edges of  $\gamma$  gives us the result. Recall that  $u_0$  is the entry point of  $\gamma$  in  $B_{2,s,N}$ . First, since  $\gamma^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$ ,

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0,u^{**}}^{**}) \leq T^{**}(\gamma_{0,u_0}) + 2r_2 N t_{\max}.$$

Then, using the first item of Lemma 4.8, we obtain

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0,u^{**}}^{**}) \leq T(\gamma_{0,u_0}) + 2r_2 N t_{\max} - \alpha(r_3 - r_2)N(\delta - \delta').$$

Finally, using the fact that  $\gamma$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T$  leads to

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0,u^{**}}^{**}) \leq T(\gamma_{0,u^{**}}^{**}) + 4r_2 N t_{\max} - \alpha(r_3 - r_2)N(\delta - \delta').$$

To conclude, it is sufficient to observe that the condition  $r_3 > \frac{7r_2(4t_{\max} + \alpha\delta)}{\alpha\delta}$  implies that  $\alpha(r_3 - r_2)N(\delta - \delta') - 4r_2 N t_{\max} > 0$ , so we have the desired strict inequality. The same proof gives us the second part of the lemma.  $\square$

**Lemma 4.18.** *Let  $\gamma^{**}$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$ . Then the first edge of  $\gamma^{**}$  whose time has been reduced is  $e_1$  and the last is  $e_2$ . Moreover, the first vertex of  $e_1$  taking by  $\gamma^{**}$  is  $s_1$  and the last of  $e_2$  is  $s_2$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\gamma^{**}$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$ . Let  $z^{**}$  denote the last vertex visited by  $\gamma^{**}$  before it takes for the first time an edge of  $\gamma$  whose time has been reduced. We know by the construction and by Lemmas 4.9 and 4.17 that  $z^{**}$  is a vertex visited by  $\gamma_{u,u_1}$  or  $\gamma_{v_1,v}$ , and visited by  $\gamma^{**}$  before it takes any edge whose time has been reduced (such an edge which is not in  $\gamma$  is in  $B_{2,s,N}$ ). Thus  $\gamma_{0,z^{**}}^{**}$  does not take an edge of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3,v_2}$ . Furthermore, all edges of  $\gamma_{v_1,x}$  are in  $B^*(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1,x}))$ . Hence, if  $z^{**}$  is visited by  $\gamma_{v_1,x}$ , since  $\gamma^{**}$  is a geodesic,  $\gamma_{z^{**},x}^{**}$  is entirely contained in  $B^{**}(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1,x}))$ ,

and thus  $\gamma_{z^{**},x}^{**}$  is entirely contained in  $B^*(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1,x}))$  by Lemma 4.13. However, since there is no edge of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3,v_2}$  in  $B^{**}(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1,x}))$ , we have that  $\gamma_{z^{**},x}^{**}$  does not take any edge of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3,v_2}$ . So  $\gamma^{**}$  does not take any edge of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3,v_2}$  and it makes a contradiction with Lemma 4.16. Thus  $z^{**}$  is a vertex visited by  $\gamma_{u,u_1}$ .

So, knowing this, we can complete the proof. By the definition of  $z^{**}$  and by Lemma 4.17, we have

$$T(\gamma_{0,z^{**}}^{**}) = T^{**}(\gamma_{0,z^{**}}^{**}).$$

Since  $\gamma^{**}$  is a geodesic,

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0,z^{**}}^{**}) \leq T^{**}(\gamma_{0,z^{**}}).$$

Now, let us assume  $z^{**}$  is not  $s_1$ . Then, by the definition of  $s_1$ ,  $z^{**}$  is visited by  $\gamma_{u,u_1}$  after  $s_1$  and thus,

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0,z^{**}}) < T(\gamma_{0,z^{**}}).$$

Combining these three inequalities yields

$$T(\gamma_{0,z^{**}}^{**}) < T(\gamma_{0,z^{**}}),$$

which is impossible because  $\gamma_{0,z^{**}}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T$ . So, the result is proved and the same proof leads to the second part of this lemma.  $\square$

We can now prove the two properties stated at the beginning of this subsection. For item (ii), let  $\gamma^{**}$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$ . By Lemma 4.17 and Lemma 4.18, like  $\gamma$ ,  $\gamma^{**}$  visits  $s_1$  and before that  $\gamma^{**}$  does not visit any edge whose time has been changed when replacing  $T$  by  $T^{**}$ . Hence,

$$T(\gamma_{0,s_1}) = T^{**}(\gamma_{0,s_1}) \geq T^{**}(\gamma_{0,s_1}^{**}) = T(\gamma_{0,s_1}^{**}) \geq T(\gamma_{0,s_1}). \quad (4.23)$$

This proves that  $T(\gamma_{0,s_1}) = T(\gamma_{0,s_1}^{**})$  and  $\gamma_{0,s_1}^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T$ . Similarly,  $\gamma_{s_2,x}^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T$  and the path  $\gamma' = \gamma_{0,s_1}^{**} \cup \gamma_{s_1,s_2} \cup \gamma_{s_2,x}^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T$  that satisfies (ii) in Lemma 4.5. It remains to prove that  $\gamma_{s_1,s_2}^{**}$  is contained in  $B_{4,s,N}$ . This comes from the fact that, in any environment, the geodesic time between two vertices of  $B_{3,s,N}$  is bounded by  $2r_3t_{\max}$ , and, since the edges in  $B_{4,s,N} \setminus B_{3,s,N}$  have the same times in the environments  $T$  or  $T^{**}$ , by property (i) of a typical box, the geodesic time to reach a vertex outside  $B_{4,s,N}$  and to come back in  $B_{3,s,N}$  is bounded from below by  $2(r_4 - r_3)(t_{\min} + \delta)$ . The condition on  $r_4$  insures that  $(r_4 - r_3)(t_{\min} + \delta) > r_3t_{\max}$ .

For item (iii), observe that from (4.23), we also get  $T^{**}(\gamma_{0,s_1}^{**}) = T^{**}(\gamma_{0,s_1})$  and  $T^{**}(\gamma_{s_2,x}^{**}) = T^{**}(\gamma_{s_2,x})$ . Thus, the path  $\gamma_{0,s_1} \cup \gamma_{s_1,s_2}^{**} \cup \gamma_{s_2,x}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$  that satisfies the requirement of (iii) in Lemma 4.5.

#### 4.4.5 Every geodesic takes the pattern.

The aim of this last subsection is to show that every geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$  takes the pattern in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . The proof is decomposed in two steps. The first step is to show that every geodesic takes an edge of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3}$  and an edge of  $\pi_{v_3,v_2}$ . The second step is to show that every geodesic verifying this property takes the pattern in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . We begin with a technical lemma.

**Lemma 4.19.** *For all  $w$  vertex of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3,v_2}$ ,*

$$|\mu(u_1 - w) + \mu(v_1 - w) - \mu(u_1 - v_1)| \leq 2C_\mu L_1.$$

*Proof.* Let  $w$  be a vertex of  $\pi_{u_2,u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3,v_2}$ . Then, by the construction of  $\pi$ , there exists a  $\bar{w} \in [u_1, v_1] \subset \mathbb{R}^d$  such that  $\|w - \bar{w}\|_1 \leq L_1$ . We have

$$\mu(u_1 - v_1) = \mu(u_1 - \bar{w}) + \mu(v_1 - \bar{w}).$$

Then

$$\begin{aligned} |\mu(u_1 - w) - \mu(u_1 - v_1) + \mu(v_1 - w)| &\leq |\mu(u_1 - w) - \mu(u_1 - \bar{w})| + |\mu(v_1 - w) - \mu(v_1 - \bar{w})| \\ &\leq 2C_\mu \|w - \bar{w}\|_1 \\ &\leq 2C_\mu L_1. \end{aligned}$$

$\square$

**Lemma 4.20.** *Every geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$  visits a vertex of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}$  and one of  $\pi_{v_3, v_2}$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\gamma^{**}$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$ . Assume that  $\gamma^{**}$  does not visit any vertex of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}$ . By Lemma 4.16, there exists a vertex  $w$  of  $\pi_{v_3, v_2}$  visited by  $\gamma^{**}$  such that  $\gamma_{0, w}^{**}$  does not visit any other vertex of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3, v_2}$ . The aim of the proof is to show that

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0, w}^{\pi}) < T^{**}(\gamma_{0, w}^{**}),$$

which is impossible since  $\gamma^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$ . We start with

$$\begin{aligned} T^*(\gamma_{0, w}^{**}) &\geq t^*(0, w) \\ &\geq t^*(0, v_1) - t^*(v_1, w) \\ &= t^*(0, u_1) + t^*(u_1, v_1) - t^*(v_1, w), \end{aligned}$$

since, by Lemma 4.8,  $\gamma$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^*$ . By Lemma 4.9, there is no edge of  $\gamma_{u_1, v_1}$  whose time has been changed at the first modification, thus  $t^*(u_1, v_1) = t(u_1, v_1)$ . Furthermore, since there is no edge whose time has been increased at the first modification,  $t^*(v_1, w) \leq t(v_1, w)$ , so

$$T^*(\gamma_{0, w}^{**}) \geq t^*(0, u_1) + t(u_1, v_1) - t(v_1, w).$$

We now want to bound from below  $T^{**}(\gamma_{0, w}^{**})$ . The only edges whose time has been reduced at the second modification are among those of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3, v_2}$  and of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . So, since  $\gamma_{0, w}^{**}$  does not take any edge of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3, v_2}$ , it can only save time taking edges of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . So,

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0, w}^{**}) \geq t^*(0, u_1) + t(u_1, v_1) - t(v_1, w) - T^\Lambda.$$

Then, using the definition of a typical box, Lemma 4.19 and the inequality  $t^*(0, u_1) \geq t^*(0, u_2)$  leads to

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{0, w}^{**}) \geq t^*(0, u_2) + \mu(u_1 - w) - \varepsilon(\mu(u_1 - v_1) + \mu(v_1 - w)) - 2N - 2C_\mu L_1 - T^\Lambda.$$

On the other hand, note that,  $\pi$  being an oriented path,  $\|u_1 - w\|_1 \geq \|u_2 - w\|_1$ , so, using the knowledge of  $T^{**}$  on edges of  $\pi$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} T^{**}(\gamma_{0, w}^{\pi}) &= T^{**}(\gamma_{0, u_2}^{\pi}) + T^{**}(\gamma_{u_2, w}^{\pi}) \\ &\leq t^*(0, u_2) + 2t_{\max} + 2t_{\max}\ell^\Lambda + (t_{\min} + \delta')\|u_1 - w\|_1. \end{aligned}$$

To conclude, let us show that we have the inequality

$$\begin{aligned} t^*(0, u_2) + 2t_{\max} + 2t_{\max}\ell^\Lambda + (t_{\min} + \delta')\|u_1 - w\|_1 \\ < t^*(0, u_2) + \mu(u_1 - w) - \varepsilon(\mu(u_1 - v_1) + \mu(v_1 - w)) - 2N - 2C_\mu L_1 - T^\Lambda. \end{aligned} \quad (4.24)$$

First, combining Lemma 4.9 and Lemma 4.15 leads to

$$\|u_1 - w\|_1 \geq \frac{N\nabla}{3C_\mu}. \quad (4.25)$$

Since  $\varepsilon \leq \frac{\delta}{4t_{\min} + 2\delta}$ ,  $\nabla \geq 3\Delta C_\mu$  and  $\nabla \geq \frac{3}{\varepsilon} = 3K''C_\mu$  (by (4.3)), by Lemma 4.7 and the definition of a typical box,

$$\mu(u_1 - w) \geq \left(t_{\min} + \frac{\delta}{2}\right)\|u_1 - w\|_1.$$

Recall that  $K' = T^\Lambda + 2(C_\mu L_1 + t_{\max} + t_{\max}\ell^\Lambda)$ , it is sufficient to have

$$\delta' < \frac{\delta}{2} - \varepsilon C_\mu \frac{\|u_1 - v_1\|_1 + \|v_1 - w\|_1}{\|u_1 - w\|_1} - \frac{2N}{\|u_1 - w\|_1} - \frac{K'}{\|u_1 - w\|_1}.$$



Then, by Lemma 4.15,  $\frac{\|u_1 - v_1\|_1 + \|v_1 - w\|_1}{\|u_1 - w\|_1} \leq 6$ . So, since  $\varepsilon < \frac{\delta}{48C_\mu}$ , we have

$$\varepsilon C_\mu \frac{\|u_1 - v_1\|_1 + \|v_1 - w\|_1}{\|u_1 - w\|_1} < \frac{\delta}{8}.$$

By (4.25) and since  $1 < \frac{\delta \nabla}{48C_\mu}$  (by (4.3)) and  $N > \frac{24C_\mu K'}{\delta \nabla}$  (by (4.6)), the condition  $\delta' < \frac{\delta}{8}$  gives us (4.24). Hence  $T^{**}(\gamma_{0,w}^\pi) < T^{**}(\gamma_{0,w}^{**})$ .  $\square$

Finally, let us prove the following lemma which completes the proof of Lemma 4.5.

**Lemma 4.21.** *Any geodesic from 0 to  $x$  takes the pattern at the pattern-location  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $\gamma^{**}$  be a geodesic from 0 to  $x$  in the environment  $T^{**}$ . By Lemma 4.20,  $\gamma^{**}$  visits a vertex of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}$  and one of  $\pi_{v_3, v_2}$ . As a consequence, there exist a vertex  $u_4$  of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3}$  and a vertex  $v_4$  of  $\pi_{v_3, v_2}$  such that  $\gamma^{**}$  goes from  $u_4$  to  $v_4$  without taking edges of  $\pi_{u_2, u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3, v_2}$ . Let us remember that for all edge  $e$  of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ , we have  $T^{**}(e) \leq \nu$ . We prove successive properties.

- *The edges of  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  which are not in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  have a passage time greater than or equal to  $\nu$ .*

Since there is no edge of  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  in  $B^{**}(0, T^*(\gamma_{0, u_1}))$ ,  $B^{**}(x, T^*(\gamma_{v_1, x}))$  or  $\pi_{u_2, u_3} \cup \pi_{v_3, v_2}$ , it is sufficient to prove that  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  is entirely contained in  $B_{2, s, N}$ . By convexity, we have that all points of  $[u_1, v_1]$  are contained in  $B_\mu(c_0, N\nabla)$ , so by Lemma 4.12,  $\|u_4 - c_0\|_1 \leq \frac{N\nabla}{c_\mu} + L_1$ , and thus,

$$\|u_4 - sN\|_1 \leq N \left( \frac{\nabla}{c_\mu} + r_1 \right) + L_1.$$

So, if  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  is not entirely contained in  $B_{2, s, N}$ , the number of edges whose time is greater than or equal to  $\nu$  that  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  has to travel to leave  $B_{2, s, N}$  is bounded from below by  $\left( r_2 - \frac{\nabla}{c_\mu} - r_1 \right) N - 2d\ell^\Lambda - L_1$ , and we get

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}) \geq \left( \left( r_2 - \frac{\nabla}{c_\mu} - r_1 \right) N - 2d\ell^\Lambda - L_1 \right) \nu.$$

But

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^\pi) \leq \frac{2N\nabla}{c_\mu} (t_{\min} + \delta') + 2t_{\max}(1 + \ell^\Lambda),$$

and since  $N \geq 1$ ,  $\frac{t_{\max}}{\nu} \geq 1$ ,  $\frac{t_{\min} + \delta}{\nu} \leq 1$  and by (4.4),

$$r_2 > r_1 + L_1 + \frac{3\nabla}{c_\mu} + \frac{2t_{\max}}{\nu} (1 + (1+d)\ell^\Lambda),$$

we have  $T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^\pi) < T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**})$ , which is impossible since  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$ .

- *We have that  $\|u_4 - u_3\|_1 \leq 4\ell^\Lambda$  and  $\|v_4 - v_3\|_1 \leq 4\ell^\Lambda$ .*

Assume that it is not the case. Let us show that  $T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}) - T^{**}(\pi_{u_4, v_4}) > 0$ , which is a contradiction since  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$ . To this aim, let us compare the time that can save each path compared with the other in any direction. Recall the notation introduced in the proof of Lemma 2.1: for  $i \in \{1, \dots, d\}$  and a path  $\tilde{\pi}$ ,  $T_i^{**}(\tilde{\pi})$  denotes the sum of the passage times of the edges of  $\tilde{\pi}$  which are in the direction  $\varepsilon_i$ . In the direction  $\mathcal{O}(T, T')$ , since  $\|u_4 - u_3\|_1 > 4\ell^\Lambda$  or  $\|v_4 - v_3\|_1 > 4\ell^\Lambda$ , and by the construction, we have that

$$T_{\mathcal{O}(T, T')}^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}) - T_{\mathcal{O}(T, T')}^{**}(\pi_{u_4, v_4}) \geq 4\ell^\Lambda \nu - 4\ell^\Lambda (t_{\min} + \delta') + 2\ell^\Lambda t_{\min} - 2\ell^\Lambda \nu,$$

where the term  $2\ell^\Lambda t_{\min} - 2\ell^\Lambda \nu$  comes from the time potentially saved by  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  by taking edges of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . Then, in any other direction,  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  can save a time lower than or equal to  $2\ell^\Lambda \delta'$  compared with  $\pi_{u_4, v_4}$  thanks to the edges in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . Hence,

$$\begin{aligned} T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}) - T^{**}(\pi_{u_4, v_4}) &\geq 2\ell^\Lambda \nu + 2\ell^\Lambda t_{\min} - 4\ell^\Lambda (t_{\min} + \delta') - 2(d-1)\ell^\Lambda \delta' \\ &\geq 2\ell^\Lambda \nu - 2\ell^\Lambda t_{\min} - (4\ell^\Lambda + 2(d-1)\ell^\Lambda)\delta' > 0 \end{aligned}$$

since  $t_{\min} + (1+d)\delta' < t_{\min} + \delta \leq \nu$ .

- We have that  $u_4 = u_3$  and  $v_4 = v_3$ .

Assume that it is not the case. First, assume that  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  does not take any edge of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . According to the first property,  $T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}) \geq \|u_4 - v_4\|_1 \nu$ . Then, since  $\pi$  is an oriented path,

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^\pi) \leq (\|u_4 - v_4\|_1 - 2\ell^\Lambda)(t_{\min} + \delta') + 2\ell^\Lambda \nu.$$

Since  $u_4 \neq u_3$  or  $v_4 \neq v_3$ , we have that  $\|u_4 - v_4\|_1 > 2\ell^\Lambda$  and we obtain

$$T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^\pi) < T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}),$$

which is a contradiction since  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$ . So  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  takes an edge of  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . Let  $u_0^{**}$  be the first entry point of  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  and consider the path  $\pi^{**}$  following  $\pi_{u_4, u_3}$ , then going from  $u_3$  to  $u_0^{**}$  in one of the shortest way for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  and then following  $\gamma_{u_0^{**}, v_4}^{**}$ . Then the number of edges of  $\pi^{**}$  is lower than or equal to the number of edges of  $\gamma_{u_4, u_0^{**}}^{**}$ , for all  $e \in \pi_{u_4, u_0^{**}}^{**}$ ,  $T^{**}(e) \leq \nu$ , there exists  $e' \in \pi_{u_4, u_0^{**}}^{**}$  such that  $T^{**}(e') \leq t_{\min} + \delta'$  and for all  $e \in \gamma_{u_4, u_0^{**}}^{**}$ ,  $T^{**}(e) \geq \nu$ . So we have  $T^{**}(\pi^{**}) < T^{**}(\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**})$ , which is impossible since  $\gamma^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$ . The same proof gives  $v_4 = v_3$ .

- $\gamma^{**}$  takes the pattern at the pattern-location  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ .

Assume that  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  is not entirely contained in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ . Let  $v_0^{**}$  be the first exit point from  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$  of  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  and  $u_1^{**}$  the first entry point after  $v_0^{**}$ . Let us consider the shortcut  $\pi^{**}$  going from  $v_0^{**}$  to  $u_1^{**}$  in one of the shortest way for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$ . Then let  $v_{0,+}^{**}$  denote the first vertex visited by  $\gamma^{**}$  after  $v_0^{**}$ , then

$$\|u_1^{**} - v_{0,+}^{**}\|_1 = \|u_1^{**} - v_0^{**}\|_1 + 1.$$

Indeed, we have that  $\|u_1^{**} - v_{0,+}^{**}\|_1 - \|u_1^{**} - v_0^{**}\|_1$  is equal to 1 or  $-1$ , and if it is equal to  $-1$ , it implies that  $v_{0,+}^{**}$  is in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ , which is impossible. So,  $\gamma_{v_0^{**}, u_1^{**}}^{**}$  has strictly more edges than  $\pi^{**}$ . Furthermore, all edges of  $\gamma_{v_0^{**}, u_1^{**}}^{**}$  have a time greater than or equal to  $\nu$  although all edges of  $\pi^{**}$  have a time lower than or equal to  $\nu$ . So,  $T^{**}(\pi^{**}) < T^{**}(\gamma_{v_0^{**}, u_1^{**}}^{**})$ , which is a contradiction since  $\gamma_{v_0^{**}, u_1^{**}}^{**}$  is a geodesic in the environment  $T^{**}$ .

Thus  $\gamma_{u_4, v_4}^{**}$  is a path entirely contained in  $E_P^{**}(T, T')$ , going from  $u_3$  to  $v_3$  and with an optimal time. So, we have the result. □

## A Lower bound for the weight of an animal

The aim of this appendix is to prove Theorem A.1, which allows us to consider not necessarily self-avoiding geodesics in the proof of Lemma 3.2. Such geodesics exist when 0 is an atom. Recall that a lattice animal is a finite connected sub-graph of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  that contains 0. Let  $(W(e))_{e \in \mathcal{E}}$  be a family of i.i.d. nonnegative random variables, where  $\mathcal{E}$  is the set of edges of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ . Let  $W$  be one of these random variables. For all animal  $\xi$ , we associate a weight

$$W(\xi) = \sum_{e \in \xi} W(e),$$

where the sum is over all edges of  $\xi$ . Let us denote by  $|\xi|_e$  the number of edges of  $\xi$  and by  $|\xi|_v$  its number of vertices. Then, for  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , we say that  $\xi$  is an optimal animal that contains  $x$  if it contains  $x$  and if

$$W(\xi) = \inf\{W(\xi') : \xi' \text{ is an animal that contains } x\}.$$

Recall that, by definition, every animal contains 0. Furthermore, note that every optimal animal that contains  $x$  is composed by an edges-self-avoiding geodesic from 0 to  $x$  to which edges whose weight is equal to 0 may be added. Recall that  $p_c$  denotes the critical probability for the Bernoulli bond percolation model on  $\mathbb{Z}^d$

**Theorem A.1.** *Assume  $\mathbb{P}(W = 0) < p_c$ . Then there exist positive constants  $M$  and  $C$  such that*

$$\mathbb{P}(m(x) \geq M\|x\|_1) \leq e^{-C\|x\|_1^{\frac{1}{d}}} \text{ for all } x \in \mathbb{Z}^d,$$

where  $m(x) = \max\{|\xi|_e : \xi \text{ an optimal lattice animal that contains } x\}$ .

This theorem generalizes Theorem 4.6 in [2]. The proof is the same up to some straightforward modifications and to the replacement of the use of Proposition 5.8 of [5] by the use of the following proposition. Proposition A.2 is the analogous of Theorem 5 in [7].

**Proposition A.2.** *Assume  $\mathbb{P}(W = 0) < p_c$ . Then there exist constants  $\alpha, A, B > 0$  such that, for all  $n \geq 0$ ,*

$$\mathbb{P}(\text{there exists an animal } \xi : |\xi|_e = n \text{ and } W(\xi) \leq \alpha n) \leq Ae^{-Bn}.$$

*Proof.* Let us begin by a result in a slightly different context. Let  $(Y(x))_{x \in \mathbb{Z}^d}$  be a family of i.i.d. random variables with a Bernoulli distribution of parameter  $1 - \varepsilon$ . If  $\varepsilon$  is small enough, then for all  $n \geq 1$ ,

$$P(n) := \mathbb{P}\left(\text{there exists an animal } \xi^* \text{ such that } |\xi^*|_v = n \text{ and } \sum_{x \in \xi^*} Y(x) \leq \frac{n}{2}\right) \leq 2^{-n}. \quad (\text{A.1})$$

Contrary to the result stated in Proposition A.2, the sum is over the vertices of the animal. Let us prove this result. Using the fact that there are at most  $7^{dn}$  animals with  $n$  vertices (by (4.24) in [4]) and a Chernov bound for the binomial distribution (see Section 2.2 in [3]), we get, for all  $\varepsilon \in \left(0, \frac{1}{2}\right)$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} P(n) &\leq 7^{dn} \mathbb{P}\left(\text{binomial}(n, 1 - \varepsilon) \leq \frac{n}{2}\right) \\ &\leq 7^{dn} \exp\left(-nh_{1-\varepsilon}\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)\right), \end{aligned}$$

where

$$h_{1-\varepsilon}\left(\frac{1}{2}\right) = 2^{-1} \ln\left(\frac{2^{-1}}{1-\varepsilon}\right) + 2^{-1} \ln\left(\frac{2^{-1}}{\varepsilon}\right).$$

For  $\varepsilon > 0$  small enough, we have  $7^d \exp\left(-h_{1-\varepsilon}\left(\frac{1}{2}\right)\right) \leq \frac{1}{2}$  and thus  $P(n) \leq 2^{-n}$ . Fix such an  $\varepsilon$  for the following.

Let us go back to the setting of Proposition A.2. First, note that we can restrict to the case where the weights are Bernoulli random variables. Indeed, for all  $\eta > 0$ , we have:

$$W \geq \eta W' \text{ where } W' = \mathbf{1}_{W \geq \eta}.$$

Moreover, for all  $\eta > 0$  small enough, we have

$$\mathbb{P}(W' = 0) < p_c.$$

Hence, if the result is set when weights are Bernoulli random variables of parameter  $p$  such that  $1-p < p_c$ , this leads to the theorem.

We thus assume in the following that  $W$  is a Bernoulli random variable of parameter  $p$  such that  $1 - p < p_c$ . Now, we use a re-normalization in order to bring us back to the result given at the beginning of the proof. For all even integer  $L \geq 2$  and all  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ , we introduce the boxes

$$B_x^L = \prod_{i=1}^d \left\{ Lx_i - \frac{L}{2}, \dots, Lx_i + \frac{L}{2} - 1 \right\} \text{ and } \bar{B}_x^L = \prod_{i=1}^d \{ Lx_i - L, \dots, Lx_i + L \}.$$

The first family of boxes is a partition of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$ . Let us denote by  $\partial \bar{B}_x^L$  the boundary of the box  $\bar{B}_x^L$ , that is the set of points of  $\bar{B}_x^L$  which are connected by an edge with a vertex outside  $\bar{B}_x^L$ . We say that a box  $B_x^L$  is good if there is no path from a vertex of  $B_x^L$  to a vertex of  $\partial \bar{B}_x^L$  which only takes edges whose weight is equal to 0. Since  $1 - p < p_c$  and by the exponential tail decay of the distribution of the size of the cluster containing a vertex in subcritical Bernoulli percolation on  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  (Theorem 5.4 in [4]), we have

$$P(B_0^L \text{ is good}) \rightarrow 1 \text{ when } L \rightarrow \infty. \quad (\text{A.2})$$

Recall that  $\varepsilon$  has been fixed in the first part of the proof. Since the event  $\{B_x^L \text{ is good}\}$  only depends on edges of  $\bar{B}_x^L$ , using Corollary 1.4 in [8] and (A.2), we get the existence of  $L$  and of a family of i.i.d random variables  $(Y(x))_{x \in \mathbb{Z}^d}$  with a Bernoulli distribution of parameter  $1 - \varepsilon$  such that, for all  $x \in \mathbb{Z}^d$ ,  $B_x^L$  is good as soon as  $Y(x) = 1$ . We fix  $L$  and  $(Y(x))_{x \in \mathbb{Z}^d}$  for the remaining of the proof.

For each animal  $\xi$  we associate the re-normalized animal  $\bar{\xi}$  defined by

$$\bar{\xi} = \{x \in \mathbb{Z}^d : \text{a vertex of } \xi \text{ belongs to } B_x^L\}.$$

More precisely, the set above is the set of the vertices of  $\bar{\xi}$ . The set of its edges is the set of edges of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  linking two vertices of the set above. We have

$$W(\xi) \geq \frac{1}{3^d} \sum_{x \in \mathbb{Z}^d} W(\xi \cap \bar{B}_x^L)$$

where  $W(\xi \cap \bar{B}_x^L)$  denotes the sum of the weights of the edges of  $\xi$  linking two vertices which belong to  $\bar{B}_x^L$ . Indeed, every edge belongs to at most  $3^d$  boxes  $\bar{B}_x^L$ . Therefore (see below for the proof of (A.3)),

$$\begin{aligned} W(\xi) &\geq \frac{1}{3^d} \sum_{x \in \mathbb{Z}^d \setminus \{-1,0,1\}^d} W(\xi \cap \bar{B}_x^L) \\ &\geq \frac{1}{3^d} \sum_{x \in \bar{\xi} \setminus \{-1,0,1\}^d} \mathbb{1}_{B_x^L \text{ is good}} \\ &\geq \frac{1}{3^d} \sum_{x \in \bar{\xi}} \mathbb{1}_{B_x^L \text{ is good}} - 1 \\ &\geq \frac{1}{3^d} \sum_{x \in \bar{\xi}} Y(x) - 1. \end{aligned} \quad (\text{A.3})$$

The proof of (A.3) is the following. If  $x \in \bar{\xi}$ , then there is one vertex of  $\xi$  that belongs to  $B_x^L$ . Furthermore, if  $x \notin \{-1,0,1\}^d$ , then  $\xi$  contains a path from a vertex of  $B_x^L$  to  $\partial \bar{B}_x^L$  (because there exists a path from a vertex of  $B_x^L$  to 0 and 0 does not belong to  $\bar{B}_x^L$ ). Finally, if  $B_x^L$  is good, then this path necessarily contains an edge whose weight is equal to 1, so  $W(\xi \cap \bar{B}_x^L) \geq 1$ .

We are thus brought back to the framework studied at the beginning of the proof. Note that  $|\xi|_e \leq$

$d|\xi|_s \leq dL^d|\bar{\xi}|_s$ . Fix  $\alpha > 0$  such that  $2\alpha dL^d 3^d = \frac{1}{2}$ . Thus, for  $n \geq \frac{1}{\alpha}$ ,

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{P}(\exists \xi : |\xi|_e = n \text{ and } W(\xi) \leq \alpha n) &\leq \sum_{m \geq \frac{n}{(dL^d)}} \mathbb{P}\left(\exists \bar{\xi} : |\bar{\xi}|_s = m \text{ and } \sum_{x \in \bar{\xi}} Y(x) \leq 3^d(\alpha n + 1)\right) \\
&\leq \sum_{m \geq \frac{n}{(dL^d)}} \mathbb{P}\left(\exists \bar{\xi} : |\bar{\xi}|_s = m \text{ and } \sum_{x \in \bar{\xi}} Y(x) \leq 2\alpha 3^d n\right) \left(\text{as } n \geq \frac{1}{\alpha}\right) \\
&\leq \sum_{m \geq \frac{n}{(dL^d)}} \mathbb{P}\left(\exists \bar{\xi} : |\bar{\xi}|_s = m \text{ and } \sum_{x \in \bar{\xi}} Y(x) \leq \frac{m}{2}\right) \text{ (using } n \leq dL^d m) \\
&\leq \sum_{m \geq \frac{n}{(dL^d)}} 2^{-m} \text{ (by (A.1))} \\
&\leq 2.2^{-\frac{n}{dL^d}}.
\end{aligned}$$

So we deduce the result.  $\square$

## B Construction of the path $\pi$ for the modification in the unbounded case

Recall that, here,  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  are the vertices defined at the beginning of Section 3.3. The aim is to prove that we can construct a path  $\pi$  in a deterministic way such that :

- (i)  $\pi$  goes from  $u$  to  $u^\Lambda$  without visiting a vertex of  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ , then going from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$  in a shortest way for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  (and thus being contained in  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ ) and then goes from  $v^\Lambda$  to  $v$  without visiting a vertex of  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$ ,
- (ii)  $\pi$  is entirely contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$  and does not have vertices on the boundary of  $B_{2,s,N}$  except  $u$  and  $v$ ,
- (iii)  $\pi$  is self-avoiding,
- (iv) the length of  $\pi_{u,u^\Lambda} \cup \pi_{v^\Lambda,v}$  is bounded from above by  $2(r_2N - (\ell^\Lambda + 2)) + K$ , where  $K$  is the number of edges in  $B_\infty(0, \ell^\Lambda + 2)$ .

As it is said in Section 3.3, we want to construct a path from  $u$  to  $sN$  and a path from  $sN$  to  $v$  which have no vertex in common except  $sN$  and such that their lengths are bounded from above by  $r_2N$ . To get them, we use the following lemma whose proof is left to the reader.

**Lemma B.1.** *Let  $m \in \mathbb{N}^*$  and  $x, y$  two vertices of  $\mathbb{Z}^d$  such that  $\|x\|_1 = \|y\|_1 = m$  and  $x \neq y$ . Then we can build in a deterministic way two paths  $\pi_x$  and  $\pi_y$  linking respectively  $x$  and  $y$  to 0 and such that their length is equal to  $m$ , they have only 0 as a common vertex and they have respectively only  $x$  and  $y$  as vertices whose norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$  is greater than or equal to  $m$ .*

Using this lemma and replacing 0 by  $sN$  using a translation, we get two paths linking  $u$  to  $sN$  and  $v$  to  $sN$  with the stated properties. Recall that  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda + 2) \subset B_{2,s,N}$  and let  $u_0$  (resp.  $v_0$ ) denote the first vertex in  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda + 2)$  visited by the path linking  $u$  to  $sN$  (resp. the one linking  $v$  to  $sN$ ). Then we get two paths  $\pi_{u,u_0}$  and  $\pi_{v_0,v}$  respectively from  $u$  to  $u_0$  and from  $v_0$  to  $v$  both constructed in a deterministic way such that  $\pi_{u,u_0}$  and  $\pi_{v_0,v}$  do not have any vertex in common, are entirely contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$ , have only  $u$  or  $v$  as points on the boundary of  $B_{2,s,N}$ , and their lengths are bounded from above by  $r_2N - (\ell^\Lambda + 2)$ .

Then we build two paths  $\pi_{u_0,u^\Lambda}$  and  $\pi_{v^\Lambda,v_0}$  respectively from  $u_0$  to  $u^\Lambda$  and from  $v^\Lambda$  to  $v_0$  contained in  $B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda + 2) \setminus B_\infty(sN, \ell^\Lambda)$  except for  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$ , such that they do not have any vertex in common. By the definition of  $K$ , this implies that the sum of their lengths is bounded from above by  $K$  (recall that  $K$  is the number of edges in  $B_\infty(0, \ell^\Lambda + 2)$ ).

Finally,  $\pi$  is the path obtained by concatenating  $\pi_{u,u_0}$ ,  $\pi_{u_0,u^\Lambda}$ , a path going from  $u^\Lambda$  to  $v^\Lambda$  in a shortest way for the norm  $\|\cdot\|_1$ ,  $\pi_{v^\Lambda,v_0}$  and  $\pi_{v_0,v}$  in this order. We have that  $\pi$  is a self-avoiding path contained in  $B_{2,s,N}$  and has only  $u$  and  $v$  on the boundary of  $B_{2,s,N}$ .

## C Overlapping pattern

*Proof of Lemma 4.1.* Recall that  $\nu$  is fixed at the beginning of Section 4 and that  $\delta' = \min\left(\frac{\delta}{8}, \frac{\delta}{1+d}\right)$ .

Then, we fix a positive real  $\nu_0$  such that:

- $t_{\min} + \delta \leq \nu_0 \leq \nu \leq t_{\max}$ ,
- the event  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda \cap \{\forall e \in \Lambda, t_e \leq \nu_0\}$  has a positive probability,
- $F([\nu_0, \nu]) > 0$ .

Notice that, if  $F$  has an atom, one could have  $\nu_0 = \nu$ , or even  $\nu_0 = \nu = t_{\max}$ . Then, fix

$$\ell_1 > \frac{2\ell^\Lambda(1+d)(\nu_0 - t_{\min})}{\nu_0 - t_{\min} - \delta'}, \quad (\text{C.1})$$

$$\text{and } \ell_0 > \frac{(\ell^\Lambda + 1)(\nu_0 - t_{\min}) + 2(2\ell_1 + \ell^\Lambda)(t_{\min} + \delta') + 2\ell^\Lambda\nu_0}{\nu_0 - t_{\min} - 2\delta'}. \quad (\text{C.2})$$

Let  $j \in \{1, \dots, d\}$ . Let us construct the overlapping pattern in  $\Lambda_0 = \{-\ell_0, \dots, \ell_0\}^d$  with endpoints  $\ell_0\varepsilon_j$  and  $-\ell_0\varepsilon_j$ . We denote  $u_3$  and  $v_3$  the endpoints of the original pattern, which are respectively  $\ell^\Lambda\varepsilon_1$  and  $-\ell^\Lambda\varepsilon_1$ .

The first step is the construction of a path  $\tilde{\pi}$  between  $\ell_0\varepsilon_j$  and  $-\ell_0\varepsilon_j$ . From  $\ell_0\varepsilon_j$ , the path goes to  $(\ell_0 - 1)\varepsilon_j$  by one step in the  $j$ -th direction, then goes to  $u_1 = (\ell^\Lambda + \ell_1)\varepsilon_1 + (\ell_0 - 1)\varepsilon_j$  by  $(\ell^\Lambda + \ell_1)$  steps in the first direction, then to  $u_2 = (\ell^\Lambda + \ell_1)\varepsilon_1$  by  $(\ell_0 - 1)$  steps in the  $j$ -th direction and finally to  $u_3$  by  $\ell_1$  steps in the first direction. Then, it goes from  $u_3$  to  $v_3$  by  $2\ell^\Lambda$  steps in the direction  $\varepsilon_1$  and we get  $\tilde{\pi}_{v_3, -\ell^\Lambda\varepsilon_j}$  by the same construction as  $\tilde{\pi}_{\ell^\Lambda\varepsilon_j, u_3}$ . Set  $v_1 = -(\ell^\Lambda + \ell_1)\varepsilon_1 - (\ell_0 - 1)\varepsilon_j$  and  $v_2 = -(\ell^\Lambda + \ell_1)\varepsilon_1$ .

The event (whose probability is positive) of the overlapping pattern, denoted by  $\mathcal{A}_j^{\Lambda_0}$  is the following:

- for all  $e \in \tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0\varepsilon_j, u_3}$  and  $e \in \tilde{\pi}_{v_3, -\ell_0\varepsilon_j}$ ,  $T(e) < t_{\min} + \delta'$ ,
- the event  $\mathcal{A}^\Lambda \cap \{\forall e \in \Lambda, T(e) \leq \nu_0\}$  is realized,
- for all  $e$  in  $\Lambda_0 \setminus (\tilde{\pi} \cup \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d)$ ,  $\nu_0 \leq T(e) \leq \nu$ .

On this event, let  $\bar{\gamma}$  be one of the fastest path from  $\ell_0\varepsilon_j$  to  $-\ell_0\varepsilon_j$  among the path entirely contained in  $\Lambda_0$  and let us show that  $\bar{\gamma}$  visits  $u^\Lambda$  and  $v^\Lambda$  and that  $\bar{\gamma}_{u^\Lambda, v^\Lambda}$  is entirely contained in  $\Lambda = \{-\ell^\Lambda, \dots, \ell^\Lambda\}^d$ . We proceed by proving successive properties.

- *There exist one vertex  $a_0$  of  $\tilde{\pi}_{u_1, u_2}$  and one vertex  $b_0$  of  $\tilde{\pi}_{v_2, v_1}$  visited by  $\bar{\gamma}$ . Further,  $\bar{\gamma}_{\ell_0\varepsilon_j, a_0} = \tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0\varepsilon_j, a_0}$  and  $\bar{\gamma}_{b_0, -\ell_0\varepsilon_j} = \tilde{\pi}_{b_0, -\ell_0\varepsilon_j}$ .*

Let us assume that  $\bar{\gamma}$  does not visit any vertex of  $\tilde{\pi}_{u_1, u_2}$ , the other case being the same. The path  $\bar{\gamma}$  has to take at least  $\ell_0 - 1 - \ell^\Lambda$  edges connecting vertices such that at least one of them has its  $j$ -th coordinate strictly between  $\ell^\Lambda$  and  $\ell_0 - 1$ . The only edges in this set whose passage time is smaller than  $\nu_0$  are those of  $\tilde{\pi}_{u_1, u_2}$ . Hence

$$T(\bar{\gamma}) \geq (\ell_0 - 1 - \ell^\Lambda)\nu_0 + (\ell_0 + \ell^\Lambda + 1)t_{\min}.$$

But, thanks to our construction, we have

$$T(\tilde{\pi}) \leq (2\ell_0 + 2(2\ell_1 + \ell^\Lambda))(t_{\min} + \delta') + 2\ell^\Lambda\nu_0.$$

So, (C.2) leads to  $T(\tilde{\pi}) < T(\bar{\gamma})$ , which is impossible.

The fact that  $\bar{\gamma}_{\ell_0\varepsilon_j, a_0} = \tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0\varepsilon_j, a_0}$  follows from the fact that  $\tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0\varepsilon_j, a_0}$  is an oriented path and from the fact that  $t_{\min} + \delta' < \nu_0$ .

- If  $a_1$  (resp.  $b_1$ ) is a vertex of  $\tilde{\pi}_{u_2, u_3}$  (resp.  $\tilde{\pi}_{v_3, v_2}$ ) visited by  $\bar{\gamma}$ , then  $\bar{\gamma}_{\ell_0 \varepsilon_j, a_1} = \tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0 \varepsilon_j, a_1}$  (resp.  $\bar{\gamma}_{b_1, -\ell_0 \varepsilon_j} = \tilde{\pi}_{b_1, -\ell_0 \varepsilon_j}$ ).

Indeed, let  $a_1$  be such a vertex and let  $a_0$  be the vertex of the preceding property. We only have to prove that  $\bar{\gamma}_{a_0, a_1} = \tilde{\pi}_{a_0, a_1}$  and it also follows from the fact that  $\tilde{\pi}_{a_0, a_1}$  is an oriented path.

Among the vertices visited by  $\bar{\gamma}$ , we denote by  $a$  (resp.  $b$ ) the last vertex of  $\tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0 \varepsilon_j, u_3}$  (resp. the first vertex of  $\tilde{\pi}_{v_3, -\ell_0 \varepsilon_j}$ ). Then,  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  does not visit any vertex of  $\tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0 \varepsilon_j, u_3} \cup \tilde{\pi}_{v_3, -\ell_0 \varepsilon_j}$  (except  $a$  and  $b$ ). Indeed, by the two properties above, we have that  $\bar{\gamma}_{\ell_0 \varepsilon_j, a} = \tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0 \varepsilon_j, a}$  and  $\bar{\gamma}_{b, -\ell_0 \varepsilon_j} = \tilde{\pi}_{b, -\ell_0 \varepsilon_j}$ . Even if  $t_{\min} = 0$  and  $\bar{\gamma}$  is not self-avoiding, since  $\nu_0 > 0$  and since the edges going to a vertex of  $\tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0 \varepsilon_j, a} \cup \tilde{\pi}_{b, -\ell_0 \varepsilon_j}$  whose time is smaller than  $t_{\min} + \delta'$  are already visited by  $\bar{\gamma} \setminus \bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$ , it is not possible that  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  visits a vertex of  $\tilde{\pi}_{\ell_0 \varepsilon_j, a} \cup \tilde{\pi}_{b, -\ell_0 \varepsilon_j}$  (except  $a$  and  $b$ ). Then,  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  can not visit a vertex of  $\tilde{\pi}_{a, u_3} \cup \tilde{\pi}_{v_3, b}$  thanks to the definition of  $a$  and  $b$ .

- The vertex  $a$  (resp.  $b$ ) belongs to  $\tilde{\pi}_{u_2, u_3}$  (resp.  $\tilde{\pi}_{v_3, v_2}$ ).

Assume that  $a$  or  $b$  does not satisfy this property. Then  $\|a - u_3\|_1 \geq \ell_1$  or  $\|b - v_3\|_1 \geq \ell_1$ . Since outside the pattern,  $\tilde{\pi}_{a, b}$  is oriented and since  $\|u_3 - v_3\|_1 \leq 2\ell^\Lambda$ ,

$$T(\tilde{\pi}_{a, b}) \leq (\|a - b\|_1 - 2\ell^\Lambda)(t_{\min} + \delta') + 2\ell^\Lambda \nu_0.$$

Then, since the edges whose time is smaller than  $\nu_0$  taken by  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  are those in  $\Lambda$ ,

$$T(\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}) \geq (\|a - b\|_1 - 2\ell^\Lambda)\nu_0 + 2\ell^\Lambda t_{\min}.$$

Using (C.1), we get  $T(\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}) > T(\tilde{\pi}_{a, b})$ , which is impossible.

- We have that  $a = u_3$  and  $b = v_3$ .

We have

$$T(\tilde{\pi}_{a, b}) \leq (\|a - b\|_1 - 2\ell^\Lambda)(t_{\min} + \delta') + 2\ell^\Lambda \nu_0,$$

and thus  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  takes at least one edge of  $\Lambda$  otherwise  $T(\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}) \geq (\|a - b\|_1 + 2\ell^\Lambda)\nu_0 > T(\tilde{\pi}_{a, b})$  since  $\ell^\Lambda > 0$ . Now, assume that  $a \neq u_3$ , the other case being the same. Let  $u_0$  be the first entry point of  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  in  $\Lambda$  and let consider the path  $\pi$  following  $\tilde{\pi}_{a, u_3}$ , then going from  $u_3$  to  $u_0$  in a shortest way and then following  $\bar{\gamma}_{u_0, b}$ . Then, the number of edges of  $\pi_{a, u_0}$  is lower than or equal to the number of edges of  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, u_0}$ , for all  $e \in \pi_{a, u_0}$ ,  $T(e) \leq \nu_0$ , there exists  $e' \in \pi_{a, u_0}$  such that  $T(e') \leq t_{\min} + \delta'$  and for all  $e \in \bar{\gamma}_{a, u_0}$ ,  $T(e) \geq \nu_0$ . So, we have  $T(\pi) < T(\bar{\gamma}_{a, b})$  which is impossible since  $\bar{\gamma}$  is an optimal path among paths entirely contained in  $\Lambda_0$ .

- $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  takes the original pattern.

Assume that  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  is not entirely contained in  $\Lambda$ . Let  $v_0$  be the first exit point from  $\Lambda$  of  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  and  $u_0$  the first entry point after  $v_0$ . Let us consider the shortcut  $\pi$  going from  $v_0$  to  $u_0$  in a shortest way. Then, using the same argument as in the proof of Lemma 4.21, we have that  $\bar{\gamma}_{v_0, u_0}$  has strictly more edges than  $\pi$ . Furthermore, all edges of  $\bar{\gamma}_{v_0, u_0}$  have a time greater than or equal to  $\nu_0$  although all edges of  $\pi$  have a time lower than or equal to  $\nu_0$ . So,  $T(\pi) < T(\bar{\gamma}_{v_0, u_0})$ , which is impossible since  $\bar{\gamma}$  is an optimal path among paths entirely contained in  $\Lambda_0$ . Since  $\bar{\gamma}_{a, b}$  is a path entirely contained in  $\Lambda$ , going from  $u_3$  to  $v_3$  and with an optimal time, so we have the result.  $\square$

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