Title: Is Psychosis a Matter of Degree? A Predictive Processing Perspective

Abstract: Recent developments in psychopathology increasingly conceptualize mental disorders as spectra rather than discrete categories. While this approach has been widely discussed in the context of neurodiversity and personality disorders, it is now being extended to psychotic disorders (Guloksuz & van Os, 2018). This raises a philosophical question concerning the boundary between normal and pathological cognition.

We argue that the psychosis spectrum can be coherently grounded in the predictive processing (PP) framework. According to PP, the brain is an engine that continuously generates and updates predictions about reality to minimize prediction error (Friston, 2010; Seth, 2021). Psychotic symptoms can thus be understood as disruptions in predictive processing, particularly as a diminished capacity to revise internal models in light of sensory evidence. Such disruptions admit of degrees, thereby supporting a spectrum-based account. This view is compatible with approaches to psychopathology such as the HiTOP model, which similarly rejects discrete diagnostic categories in favor of graded dimensions (Kotov et al., 2017).

Finally, we argue that these processes are environmentally embedded and underpinned by cortico-subcortical loops dynamics (Luu et al., 2024), which provide neurobiological support for graded disturbances in predictive inference.