At the interface between comparison and coordination

In order to account for the coordination-like ellipsis in clausal comparatives (compare (1) with the coordinated sentence in (2); cf. Lechner to appear), several authors have proposed a *comparative coordination analysis* for comparative sentences in which the standard marker (*than*) behaves as a coordinating conjunction (similar proposals in Nespor & Napoli 1983 for Italian, Sáez 1992 for Spanish and Lechner 2014 for English and German).

1. More women achieved [than men did] achieve that.  
   (Clausal comparison)
2. Many women achieved that and men did achieve that, too.  
   (Clausal coordination & Gapping)

Building on data from two typologically very different languages, Basque (head-final language) and English (head-initial), in this paper I propose to extend the *comparative coordination analysis* of clausal comparatives to DP-internal nominal and adjectival comparatives with a phrasal standard like (3)-(5). I thus develop a fully compositional syntactic and semantic analysis in terms of the *comparative coordination* proposal and the *functional analysis* of comparatives (Abney 1987, Kennedy 1999) simplified in (6) that accounts for the distinctive properties [A]-[D] that the comparatives in (3)-(5) show. This analysis correctly predicts the relative ordering of the comparative marker (*-er* in English, or *-ago* in Basque), the standard cluster ([*than XP*] or [*XP baino*]) and the gradable predicate with respect to the nominal for both English and Basque.

3. a. [DP More women [than men]] consider the discriminatory situation a serious matter.
   b. ([*Gizon baino*] emakume gehi-ago-k DP] jotzen dute bereizkeria-egoera larriztat man than woman many-er-ERG consider AUX discrimination serious

4. Forgive me for having come here [DP with [DP more questions [than answers]]].

5. a. We have seen [DP a [smaller than small] snowflake].
   b. [*Elur maluta ([*txiki baino*] txiki-ago) bat DP*] ikusi dugu.  
   snow flake small than small-ER one seen have

6. Crucially, the nominal and adjectival comparatives in (3)-(5) and clausal comparatives show completely different properties (the Basque data provides vital evidence for properties [B] and [C]):

   [A] *Distribution*. As suggested with the bracketing, the [*than XP*] remains DP-internal in (3)-(5).

   [B] *Extraction*. In contrasts with the Basque clausal comparative in (7), the [*XP baino*] cannot be dislocated in (3b) or (5b). This is not due to a ban on extraction from a DP, since PP complements of DP internal adjectives can be extraposed in this language. I explain the ban on extraction in (3)-(5) in terms of the *comparative coordination analysis* as a violation of the Coordinate Structure Constraint.

   7. [...] *emakume gehi-ago-k lortu dute [lortu-duten gizon-ek baino*]  
   woman many-er-ERG achieved have achieve have.COMP man-ERG than

   [C] *Phrasal nature*. Basque clearly evidences the phrasal status of the complement of *baino* in (3b) and (5b). Bare nominals like *gizon* in (3b) are banned from argumental positions; thus, the absence of case-marking on the nominal in (3b) signals the presence of a phrasal standard. Similarly, a reduced clausal analysis in (5b) is untenable because clausal elements like relative clauses are prenominal in Basque, in contrast with the postnominal standard cluster in (5b).

   [D] *The standard marker is a coordinating conjunction*. The standard markers *than* and *baino* have been categorized as adpositions (Chomsky 1977; Goenaga 2012). Nevertheless, the [*than XP*] or [*XP baino*] can be found in attributive position (cf. (5)), where PPs are generally not allowed.