

# 1 Equivalent Multiplicative Submonoids of $\mathbb{Z}^+$

Consider the set of positive integers  $\mathbb{Z}^+$  as a monoid equipped with multiplication. Let  $Y$  be a submonoid of  $\mathbb{Z}^+$ . Define  $F(Y) := \{\frac{m}{n} \mid m, n \in Y\}$  and  $\overline{Y} := F(Y) \cap \mathbb{Z}^+$ . We call  $\overline{Y}$  the completion of  $Y$ . Note that  $F(Y)$  is a multiplicative subgroup of  $\mathbb{Q}^+$ , so it is free. Now, for two submonoids  $Y, Z$  of  $\mathbb{Z}^+$ , we define  $Y \sim Z$  if  $\overline{Y} = \overline{Z}$ . It is easy to check that  $\sim$  is an equivalent relation. We then raise the following question.

**Question 1.** *Is it true that any submonoid  $Y$  of  $\mathbb{Z}^+$  is equivalent to some freely generated submonoid  $Z$  of  $\mathbb{Z}^+$ ? In particular, if  $Y$  is finitely generated, then  $Z$  should have the same rank as  $F(Y)$ .*

One should be wary that the completion of a monoid is not necessarily free, even if the original one is free. For example, let  $Y$  be the free monoid generated by  $\{4, 6\}$ . We then have  $9 \notin Y$  but  $9 = 4^{-1} \cdot 6^2 \in \overline{Y}$ . One can check that if  $\overline{Y}$  is free, then its generating set must contain  $2^2$  and  $3^2$ , so there will be nontrivial relations when we write  $2 \cdot 3$  in terms of the remaining generators. Hence,  $\overline{Y}$  is not free as a monoid.