

BACKPACKING'S RUN-IN WITH MCDONALDIZATION THEORY

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Abstract

Vacation, unconsciously, has been one of the basic needs in human's life. It provides a break from the usual routine activity which somehow can trap the doer into an autopilot mode; leaving them to encounter a seemingly never ending task. Thus, vacation's purpose is to experience a different setup that is not usually found in everyday lives. This study focuses on how vacation has been set up in such a way that violates its initial purpose. Using the theory of McDonaldization proposed by George Ritzer, the discussion will flow into breaking down four concepts of the theory to be matched with the premise of backpacking; in which suggests a possibility of deconstructing vacation concept that is familiar in modern setting. However, with the development of era, backpacking slowly transforms into following the concept of McDonaldization in tourism, giving a glimpse on how modernity has touched every aspect of human's life and making what was once a breakthrough in tourism world a cliché that falls through some anticipated pattern.

Keywords: Backpacking, McDonaldization, Vacation

Introduction

In a world full of tension and work pressure, taking a vacation becomes an essential that is favored by many people to maintain the continuation of their daily routine (Bello & Etzel, 1985, p. 21). Enjoying time off from everyday life is a way to release stress and burden. Many tourism companies realize that and take the opportunity by offering many kinds of tour package. However, in this modern era, the types of tour package offered are almost identical between one another as an effect of McDonaldization. McDonaldization is a theory which proposes an idea that the principle of everything is becoming similar with the

concept of the famous fast food restaurant McDonald's. In McDonald's, customers are being hypnotized with the idea of fastness, that everything which is modern should be fast and convenient. Additionally, customers will experience minimum surprise when ordering meals at the restaurant because of the clear description of the meal and the price in the menu (Smart, 1999, p. 6). This way of thinking slowly seeps in our everyday life, not only in ordering meals but also in behaving generally, including our decision in taking a trip. The trips that we take –or the tourism agency offer– mostly follow the principle of McDonaldization that it no

longer bears the idea of being different from everyday life.

However, the emerging trend of backpacking seems to deconstruct the idea of McDonaldization in tourism. Backpacking offers another way of enjoying vacation by letting the backpackers wandering in the wilderness instead of taking a part in a McDonaldized tour offered by tourism agency. Many agencies realize this trend and see the opportunity to make it commercialized. They begin to take backpacking to another level by offering backpacking tour as one of the options on holiday package they offer. Additionally, many fellow backpackers also build their own tourism agencies by offering backpacking package tours as their product.

In this paper, I will look at backpacking phenomena using McDonaldization theory in tourism as my glasses to analyze it. The focus will be based on the deconstruction of McDonaldization tourism with the trend of backpacking and the deconstruction of the basic principle of backpacking by looking at some institutionalized backpacking. In seeing the relation of institutionalized backpacking, I choose three backpacking agencies to complete my paper; Gapyear, Wildland Trekking, and Green Tortoise

because their only product is backpacking tourism –as they are run by fellow backpackers– and the three of them have different style of packaging their backpacking product.

Seeing the high exposure of McDonaldization theory on everyday life including tourism, this study will analyze how backpacking deconstructs the theory and how a modern way of backpacking deconstructs the very notion of backpacking itself. Both research questions will be studied using McDonaldization theory proposed by Ritzer.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to find out how backpacking deconstructs McDonaldization theory and how the touch of modernity has changed the way backpacking is shaped in relation to the said theory. In doing so, a deep analysis on selected modern day backpacking companies is needed in order to see how institutionalized backpacking is offered to the future backpackers. Thus, the main data that are used in this research are taken from three tourism agencies, Gapyear, Wildland Trekking, and Green Tortoise. The three companies are chosen because of their premise in offering a backpacking

tour in their vacation setup. The information of the three tourism companies is taken from their official websites, as they provide most of their information there and prefer to do an online booking if anyone interested in their program. Given the way the data is collected, a library research using qualitative method is the most suitable method of analysis to complete the discussion. By using qualitative method, interpretation plays quite an important role in the flow of analysis. Moreover, Creswell argues that “interpretive inquiry” takes an important role in studying the main data but cannot take the researcher’s “own backgrounds, history, contexts, and prior understanding” (1994, p. 212). Therefore, to complete a study on modern day tourism by examining the three aforementioned tourism agencies, a thorough explanation on the origin of backpacking concept and the theory that is going to accompany it is essential to be explored.

Discussion

McDonaldization Theory in Tourism

McDonaldization thesis is a theory proposed by George Ritzer based on the characterization of McDonald’s fast food. According to Ritzer, the means of

consumption in globalization era undergoes the same characteristics that are possessed by McDonald’s franchise. The principles of McDonald’s such as efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control, dominate many sectors of society around the world, including tourism. The basic foundation of the increasing growth of McDonaldized tourism can be seen from the paradigm of Disney theme parks (Jiajia, 2015, p. 2). Disney parks offer a kind of holiday which is convenient since almost everything is included in the visit to Disney Park, so that visitors do not have to leave the park in order for their need to be fulfilled. Moreover, since McDonald’s came in the same era as Disney’s theme park, the concept and principles of both McDonald’s and Disney Parks underwent a similar manifestation which put forward the efficiency for the customer. According to Ritzer (1998), efficiency in tourism means that the tourists want to see how the money they spend will be used maximally in such a limited time (p. 244). The exact amount of money and time the tourists will spend is also elements of McDonaldization under the category of calculability. It means that the proposed holiday program has to be defined clearly and plainly for the tourists to choose and see. Following these two concepts is a notion of

predictability which will be the first priority in choosing holiday package offered by any tourism agency. “As our everyday life grows more and more predictable, we have less and less tolerance for, and ability to handle, unpredictable events” (Ritzer, 1998, p. 138). By projecting everyday life as something that can be predicted, holiday becomes somehow in line with the concept of no surprises. In addition to the “no surprises” concept, many tourists request a holiday with things they are familiar with, thus the concept of highly predictable vacations becomes the magnet of enjoyable tourism activity. The last concept of McDonaldization in tourism is control which is defined by Ritzer as the use of technology as well as schedule to minimize the error that may be caused in the vacation (p. 140). Advance technologies are preferred because of their ability in controlling the exercise both tourists and employees.

Following all concepts that are mentioned, the way people experienced vacation becomes highly predictable and many tourism agencies work hard to make sure that the visitors experience no surprise at all. Agencies predict and publicize all features they offer to the public in a great detail; from the estimation

price until the schedule of vacation down to every minute. Technology takes over the existence of human interaction, thus making the experience of human vacation turns into a non-human or even a dehumanizing experience (Ritzer, 1998). This makes the supposedly inexpensive vacation to be a high cost one. However, even though the cost for vacation becomes pricier, the experience that is embraced by the tourists somehow becomes more and more like the rest of their lives. This goes in line with the idea that a modern kind of tourism contains little to no surprises at all. With this concept to mind, the tourist industry in general becomes highly McDonaldized, at least, to some extent. The main reason for tourism which underlines the new and different experience is somehow undermined by the existence of McDonaldization of tourism (Ritzer, 1998, p. 136).

Backpacking

Backpacking is a growing trend in modern tourism society. The history of backpacking dates back since the sixteenth century when tourism was mostly done by young adults even though the term “backpacking” at that time had not been introduced to label those young adult travelers (Nieoczym, 2003, p. 42). The

concept of tourism itself was actually a simple activity of leaving the place of living and everyday activity in search for leisure and new experience. Until the beginning of nineteenth century, the term “tourists” and “travelers” has similar meaning as people who went into unfamiliar place to escape from their everyday life. However, in the mid of nineteenth century, the term “tourists” was used for a label of high class individual. People began to steer away from being a traveler because of the different meaning that it carries. The idea of tourism began to change and people started to classify themselves in the midst of being a tourist or being a traveler. Those who considered themselves as travelers started a movement since the 1960s by having thousands of American and European youth to have a “Hippie Trail” which message was to bring peace and love (Edwards, 2013, p. 2). This movement is followed by the conceptualization of “backpacking” in the early of 1990s and since then the term came to be extensively used on a worldwide basis.

Initially, the concept of backpacking was widely associated with wilderness hiking and camping. The naming of this new movement itself came from the characterization of the travelers in which

they have to bring a large backpack containing tent, sleeping bag, clothes, and all survival survive that they need without having to rely on the tourist convenience (Styles, 1976, p. 8). Since the main purpose of backpacking is to go to the wilderness and sleep in the open nature, the backpackers have to carry everything they need in one backpack and go into the adventures mostly by walking. Mostly, the style that the backpackers use in their way of journey is to travel independently which sometimes require them to stop at some route to take a rest. Sometimes, when needed, many backpackers will find temporary employment in the place that they visit in order to “replenish travel funds” (Nieoczym, 2003, p. 1).

The most noticeable pattern of backpacking is that the backpacker will go on a small group of people (more often than not, they will have an individual trip) and undergoes on a long self-directed journeys. The behavioral traits often found in backpackers are cheap lodging, flexibility, personal arranged itineraries, significant contact with fellow travelers, and longer period of time than the mainstream tourism (Wallstam, 2011, p. 5). Because of its flexibility, backpackers mostly do not associate themselves with agency and the trip can last according to

their preference. They make their own decisions about where to go, what to do, how to spend their money which all based in their culturally shaped imagination. According to Nieoczym (2003), the majority of people who want to go on a vacation will have an imagination of what kind of holiday they want to encounter which is different from one another, and that imagination will be based on one's culture (p. 4). Backpackers will follow their imagination and translate it into their own wishes since backpacking is an activity which emphasizes on its individuality. The nature of backpacking itself will bring out a new experience which will bring transformation in young people's imagination into their non-traveling lives as well.

Backpacking exists and is living well in the society because it is a kind of tourism which tries to emerge from the mainstream and differentiate themselves from mass tourist. The backpackers insist that they are different from the majority of tourists because of their independence to pick the kind of vacation they want. They also believe that they "live" in the destination rather than merely visit and leave for the next day. This kind of thinking comes from the typical encounter of backpacker with nature and local people

of the place they are visiting. Backpackers are more likely to engage in local culture and enrich themselves with new customs and experiences. They generally wish to obtain highly unique and authentic experiences by having integration with local people and live close to nature in remote locations (Wallstam, 2011, p. 11). In a more contemporary backpacking, the core of independent travelling still exists yet it is combined with the more engaging choice of accommodation. If previously backpackers sleep in tent and open space, backpackers nowadays usually will choose a youth hostel as a place to stay. Youth hostel is an alternative place to stay and is usually picked by backpackers for its inexpensiveness. Since backpackers highlight the concept of minimal budget, youth hostel becomes a new growing trend among backpackers. Most youth hostels offer not only affordable accommodations, but also physical space to socialize between guests and also information about travel and local attractions (Nieoczym, 2003, p. 4). Youth hostel is a crucial place for backpackers as a gathering place among other travelers. Contemporary backpackers do not only engage with nature and local people, but they also participate in the communal live among other backpackers.

Backpacking and McDonaldization Thesis

The concept of backpacking seems to be far away from the modernization of tourism which is summed up in McDonaldization thesis of tourism proposed by Ritzer in 1998. Backpacking offers an inexpensive way of travelling meanwhile McDonaldization idea suggests a kind of luxurious vacation. The principle of backpacking appears to deconstruct McDonaldization concept of efficiency, calculability, control, and predictability.

Highly Efficient Vacation

Efficiency becomes one of the crucial things in McDonaldization since people are used to efficiency in their everyday life that they have little tolerance in inefficiencies when it comes to vacation (Ritzer, 1998, p. 138). According to this notion, people are willing to pay more money as long as they can have the most efficient package tours. Package tours and highly detailed schedule become inevitable in arranging vacation in order to maximize the efficiency of travelling. Backpacking does not follow the concept of efficiency since most backpackers do not book package vacations (Edwards, 2013, p. 23), since they tend to create their own vacation based on their imagination that

they possess based on cultural experience (Nieoczym, 2003).

It is believed that every individual is a core of themselves, and as a core, they are shaped based on cultural information and experience that they receive. This cultural experience shapes every organism differently that they are able to produce wish, hope, and imagination, hence every one carries different cultural imagination compared to other people. This notion is then followed by a research done by Nieoczym resulting in the decision of individual to choose their destination of travelling as well as the way they want to travel and what activities will suit them the best. Having an arranged tour like what most tourists do in a package tourism will violate the spirit of different cultural imagination of people. That is why, the solution of this condition is to have a backpacking tour since backpacking is an individual vacation arranged independently by the backpackers. Moreover, the ability to take a temporary employment while backpacking is also a way to deconstruct McDonaldization which focuses more on the efficiency of leisure itself rather than the experience of growing self.

Highly Calculable Vacation

Calculability becomes important in vacation since “many people want to know in advance how much a vacation is going to cost, and they abhor cost overruns” (Ritzer, 1998, p. 138). Future tourists also want to have a clear estimation on the trip they are about to take, including the description of activities that are proposed by tourism agencies. Before taking any trip, future tourists mostly wish that they will be able to calculate not only the amount of money they are going to spend but also the activity they are going to do. This idea is in opposition with what backpackers do. The highlight of backpacking lays in its informal holiday activities, making the backpackers free to roam on their own. When connecting the concept of calculability with budget, backpacking often has uncalculated expenditure due to its “unfixed” schedule.

The main concept of backpacking is the minimal budget, however, there is no fixed amount at how minimal is the appropriate budget for backpacking. Backpackers may find the cheapest accommodation or choice of culinary activity but since there is no clear schedule, they may have to be ready for unexpected expenditure that they have to make. Additionally, the possibility to take

a part time employment in the destination of their journey will add to the concept of incalculability of budget. Backpackers may actually come home with more money than they spend because of their endless possibilities when travelling.

Highly Controlled Vacation

In McDonaldization concept, Disney Parks are well known for their strict control over the employees and visitors. A much wider vision can be applied in terms of tourism when the behavior of people is tightly controlled by script instead of being free to behave as they wish (Ritzer, 1998, p. 138). Moreover, the use of technology is also widely practiced in controlling the vacation. In the spirit of minimizing the element of surprise, tourists will book ahead the kind of vacation they want by using technology. Usually, activities that are offered are also full of technology that makes it minimize human encounter during vacation. The most obvious example can be taken from the use of technology in Disney Parks. The kind of entertainment that Disney Park offers is highly technologized amusement park and human interactions. The employees at Disney Park have to follow several “script” requiring them to behave in the

directed manner, thus reducing the “real” interaction between humans.

The concept of highly controlled vacation will not be found in backpacking since this kind of tourism needs minimum exposure to technology and controlling behavior. The purpose of backpacking is to search new experience and leisure which mostly will be acquired by backpackers when they get in touch with local culture and people. The pride that backpackers mostly hold is that the ability to penetrate in host culture is much easier for them compared to mass tourism (Edwards, 2013, p. 2). When engaging with local culture, there will be more things go unnoticed and uncontrolled that they have to deal with.

Highly Predictable Vacation

In the world of well-planned activity, the element of surprise becomes an alien concept that is usually avoided by people. Unpredictable events develop into something that is less tolerable than we may have a whole century ago. This notion also enters in tourism world where “the last thing most of today's tourists want to experience is an unpalatable meal, a wild animal or a rat-infested hotel room” (Ritzer, 1998, p. 138). Many tourists want to have a service that they are already

familiar with and wish to encounter minimal exposure of surprise or unpredictable events. When given the brochure or read travel description on the internet, future tourists will hope to see the kind of accommodation that they will have, the possible leisure activity they may enjoy, and even the description of menu they will eat during vacation. Since future tourists demand such detail illustrations, tourism agencies are forced to make their tour as clear as possible so that the tourists can predict what kind of vacation that they want.

This concept is in opposition with backpacking. In backpacking, there are many things that will come at the moment and make it becomes unpredictable. One example can be taken by enrolling in the local custom. In several traditional cultures, local people may have different preferences for eating and this may cause unpredictability in one's vacation. Engaging in local culture can also mean having to be accustomed to different norms and behavior that perhaps will not be found in everyday life. Another example of the unpredictability that can happen in backpacking is through youth hostels. Youth hostels provide a cheap lodging for backpackers by setting them in a large room containing several beds.

Youth hostels also have enough space to socialize between guests so that the experience of interacting with humans will not be absent during vacation. However, the risk of having unpredicted encounter will be higher since not all backpackers are alike. In other words, the exposure of surprises will be even more possible between the backpackers and the nature and the backpackers among other fellow backpackers.

Seeing four elements of McDonaldization in relation to backpacking gives the conclusion that the idea of backpacking actually tries to deconstruct the concept of McDonaldization. Backpacking is a symbol of people who shun the stereotype of what it means to be tourists by not following every concept of McDonaldization of tourism (calculability, controlled, efficiency, predictability) even though the idea that lies in backpacking is still closely related to tourism. By having more surprises, backpacking is there to challenge the idea of simulacra of everyday life proposed by McDonaldization.

Backpacking Nowadays

The ever growing trend in backpacking has brought its charm to

attract many people to join the euphoria of travelling independently by backpacking. By any definition, backpacking nowadays has undergone an increasing growth particularly among youth. Historically, backpackers were seen as low budget tourism and undesirable by many people, however the popularity of backpacking has made a tremendous change in local economy in a more direct fashion than the capital spent by the average mainstream tourism (Wallstam, 2011, p. 5). It means that the popularity of backpacking has made local economy grows increasingly compared to mass tourism. With the growth of local economy, the image of backpacking is also uplifted and welcomed well by society. This condition seems to deconstruct the stereotype of backpacking as the less desirable means of tourism and that backpacking is only directed to lower class society. More people choose backpacking as the way they enjoy their vacation and this leads to another classification of backpacking. If previously there is only one category of travelling independently to connect to nature –which is backpacking–, nowadays there is another term to describe a higher class of backpacking; flashpacking.

Flashpacking is a new trend in younger generation where the adventurer

relies completely on the World Wide Web and its technological process (Vaals, 2012, p. 12). The flashpackers are usually identified as a more wealthy and modern backpacker. They bring expensive backpack or trolley-like case, typically bring along their laptops with them, USB flash drive, high resolution camera, and a smartphone (ibid.). The phenomenon of flashpacking actually expresses the changing demographics in society where society nowadays is exposed to the modernity and development in technology. However, the naming of flashpackers is usually very exclusive and avoided by people, thus making those identified as flashpackers are still being called as backpackers. As a result of this, services and facilities concerning backpacking begin to show up and compete with each other, making the idea of backpacking to be commercialized or –as tourism study called it – institutionalized. The institutionalization of backpacking means that there is a “standardization and complex regulation of backpacker products and services to include whole destinations, transit regions between these destinations as well as the consumers themselves” (Wallstam, 2011, p. 9). By having institutionalized backpacking, there will be little to no distinction between

independent wandering and mass tourism organized by tourism agency.

The institutionalized backpacking has begun to be applied by many tourism agencies in America. Initially, they only offer a conventional way of vacation (i.e. booking trips, staying at hotels, scheduled activities) but in the response of backpacking, they start to enhance additional option in enjoying vacation. This trend leads several tourism agencies to take care on backpacking tours and cater the need of backpackers. Mostly, the founders of backpacking tours are a long-time backpacker. The three institutionalized backpacking that I will explore more in this paper are Gapyear, Wildland Trekking, and Green Tortoise.

Gapyear

Gapyear is a website-based company which focuses on backpacking around the world. They are proud of their program which helps anyone to arrange their holiday in a meaningful content because the tourists at Gapyear will not only able to enjoy their vacation, but they also may volunteer or take a temporary job while they have their holiday. This principle is actually in line with the traditional notion of backpacking, where backpackers may take a temporary job while travelling to

help their financial being. However, the difference lies in the essentiality of taking the job because to book a trip at Gapyear, a customer needs to have certain amount of money depends on the country they are going to. “We were created by backpackers, for backpackers, and offer expert advice on travelling, volunteering and working abroad, all tied together with inspirational ideas, opportunities and products” (gapyear.com) is the motto of Gapyear to instill the spirit of backpacking among youth. Not only offering trips, Gapyear also provides several options of hostels to stay in. They provide all kinds of information related to hostels ranging from the “start from” price until the pictures and conditions of the hostel around the world.

Gapyear also offers some kind of “arranged” backpacking where they have selected backpacking destination complete with price estimation and duration of staying. For instance, for a trip to Kenya, they label the trip as “Gorillas, Chimps, and Game Parks” and put £1,795 as the minimum price and 16 days as the duration of the tourists staying. They put a reasoning on why people should choose backpacking with guided tour, “Backpacker tours are brilliant for two main reasons. Firstly, you can be guaranteed to experience the absolute

highlights of any given destination. Secondly, tours are a perfect way to meet and interact with other travellers, and indeed locals” (gapyear.com). Gapyear’s highlight on guiding the backpacker is based on the expertise on the team that they have without removing the original culture of backpacking itself.

Wildland Trekking

Wildland Trekking focuses on guided backpacking tours. They focus their destinations in two areas: USA and global, but mostly their main concern is in the area of hiking. Thus, the destinations that they offer mostly will be a place with mountains or hills to climb on. The guided backpacking trip will include the backpacker to be able to enjoy the wilderness and experience the beauty of nature while being guided so that they will not be stranded or lost. Wildland Trekking provides a backpack (between 25 and 45 pounds) that will be suited with the area, the duration of the trip, the time of year, and the height and weight of the customer. Not only that, the tour company will also provide tents, sleeping pads, sleeping bags, trekking poles, cooking gear, and a guide as long as the trip goes on (wildlandtrekking.com). The customer will only need to bring their personal belonging

and not to worry on meals since the guide on Wildland Trekking will provide all meals from the very first day. Additionally, Wildland Trekking also offers porter services for those who like to do a standard backpacking trip but prefer not to carry the gear. The porters can carry up to 30 lbs of guest gear and will hike with the groups for an additional \$235 per porter per day (wildlandtrekking.com).

For the arranged tours, Wildland Trekking provides all details in their website, ranging from the estimated price to the level of solitude one will get. For example, a backpacking trip to Grand Canyon will cost \$910 / \$1125 per person, spend 3-4 days to hike and enjoy the beauty, have level 3 on difficulty and level 2 on solitude. The more detailed explanation on difficulty and solitude level can be found in their website, wildlandtrekking.com

Green Tortoise

Another American backpacking tourism company is called Green Tortoise. This tourism agency is unique because they offer a backpacking bus trip instead of hiking like a conventional backpacking do. Green Tortoise offers bookings on bus backpacking trip as well as hostels information that may be useful for

travelers. The bus trip that is offered by Green Tortoise will collect several independent backpackers to go on adventure together. Their tour includes wilderness adventures, camping, and trekking in America's best National Parks (greentortoise.com). Green Tortoise has many options in arranging the tour. For example, a customer can choose between a three-day or two-day trip to Yosemite National Park. Of course, the estimation cost will be different from one arrangement to another. Compared to other two mentioned tour agencies, Green Tortoise provides a more detail time estimation because they also post the date of departure and arrival.

Institutionalized Backpacking and McDonaldization Theory

The existence of institutionalized backpacking makes the theory of McDonaldization that once was deconstructed becomes somehow fits again with the notion of modern backpacking.

Highly Efficient Vacation

The idea that backpacking once deconstructs the first principle of McDonaldization has to be clarified again since the coming of institutionalized

backpacking. The idea of efficiency in vacation comes from the notion that people will pay several amount of money as long as they can have the most of their vacation. From this concept of efficiency, tour companies begin to provide package tours so that the future customer can choose which one is the most suitable for them. In the case of three backpacking tour agencies that I propose (Gapyear, Wildland Trekking, and Green Tortoise), all three of them follow this concept of efficiency by giving package on every tour they offer, complete with the duration of staying and the total amount that will cost them.

Highly Calculable Vacation

The calculability factor that is proposed in McDonaldization offers a clear estimation of the trip, including the kind of activities that will be scheduled for them. When the theory of backpacking counter-attack that by letting the travelers wanders on their own, the institutionalized backpacking seems to bring back the theory of calculability. The three backpacking tour companies label their trips and offer a detailed schedule of each destination. Gapyear, for instance, mark their trip to Kenya for 16 days with a complete arrangement per day. For day 1,

they arrange a trip to Nairobi with museums and cultural attractions waiting to be explored. In the second day, the backpackers move to Lake Naruku and this arrangement goes on until the last day. Even though in each day the customers have any right to roam on their own, but the basic idea is somewhat in opposition with what backpackers are supposed to travel.

Highly Controlled Vacation

The exposure of technology has been spread to the non-technological way of travelling that is held by backpackers. For starters, the way customers book the trip that they desire is done through website. Moreover, the idea of guided backpacking tour will follow the concept of highly controlled vacation proposed in McDonaldization. Initially, there will be many things that will go uncontrollable by the backpackers since they will go to the wilderness and try to engage with the local culture and local people. In a guided backpacking, the backpackers will still have the ability to engage in local custom and people, but they will have things under control since the guide will tell them what to do and what not to do. The role of the guide will also be helpful since they will

most likely to tell the backpackers which road to take.

Highly Predictable Vacation

Thus, with an efficient, calculable, and controlled vacation, the backpacking activity will be very much predicted by the backpackers. The conventional backpacking which requires the backpackers to be ready at any unpredictable event, such as different preference for eating found in host culture, will not be found in contemporary backpacking in which everything is organized. One of the backpacking tour agencies that I mentioned, Wildland Trekking, even provides meals for every day so that the backpackers do not have any difficulties in finding something to eat that is not on their diet preference.

In short, all notions in McDonaldization that are deconstructed by the idea of backpacking are being deconstructed (again) by the institutionalized backpacking.

Conclusion

The concepts of efficiency, predictability, calculability, and control in McDonaldization come from the idea of McDonald's fast food restaurant that makes people are used to the idea of it.

These notions are so highly familiar in the society that it applies well to almost every aspect in daily lives, including in the way we plan our vacation. The vacation schemes that are proposed by mainstream tourism agency have shaped the way society idealize their way of taking time off from their daily routine. The movement of backpacking deconstructs those ideas by going against the four concepts proposed in McDonaldization. However, the touch of modernity makes backpacking institutionalized, therefore the concept of it begins to follow the theory that it once deconstructs. Backpacking nowadays relies on the comfort of the backpackers, so that they will experience little to no surprise along the way. This modern concept of backpacking is in opposition with the original concept of backpacking and follow along the concept of McDonaldization in tourism.

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