be in the grip of something

to be experiencing a very unpleasant situation that cannot be controlled or stopped

***Spy games lurk behind China politics struggle*:**

**but the Communist Party is now in the grip of a factional battle the likes of which hasn't been seen for decades, and it's dramatically public.**

***Locals blast fly-in, fly-out mining culture:***

**Australia is in the grip of a mining boom but not everyone here in the Bowen Basin is sharing the spoils.**