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Bad Time Stories: Government-Union Conflicts and the Rhetoric of Legitimation Strategies

Yonatan Reshef, Charles Keim

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The 1990s and 2000s were especially difficult decades for government–public sector union relations in Canada. Rising costs and growing debts meant that governments were on the lookout for savings, and public sector unions and employees were easy targets for government actions. Bitter conflicts between unions and governments erupted and each labour dispute involved numerous rounds of public rhetoric in which both sides attempted to justify their actions and stigmatize their opponents.

In *Bad Time Stories*, Yonatan Reshef and Charles Keim analyse the language of both parties in order to identify the legitimation strategies at work during government-union conflict. The authors use evidence drawn from newspapers, speeches, parliamentary transcripts, and legal statements in presenting a new framework for understanding the discursive strategies employed by governments and unions in labour disputes.

Using a case study and linguistic approach, *Bad Time Stories* offers a unique perspective on industrial relations and will be of interest to scholars in the areas of business, public policy, and communications, as well to those directly involved in union-management negotiations.

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