Growing economic integration coupled with demographic, technological, and environmental changes are rapidly transforming the socioeconomic fabric of countries around the globe. Policy (in)action at all levels is then increasingly salient as governments balance development, economic growth, employment flexibility, and social security in response to these shifts. The policies along with institutions, discourses, cultures, and histories influence the perceptions of individuals and in turn their behaviours and choices. Consequently, as politicians craft their platforms, policymakers seek effectiveness and legitimacy for their policies, and various non-governmental and private organizations set their priorities, having a firm grasp of public attitudes and their formation becomes crucial. This research thus seeks to understand a perception seen as fundamental in the debates and critiques of systems of governance in general, and of equality of opportunity and outcomes in particular. We thus ask: What explains that some people in China feel that forces outside of their personal control determine their success? The focus is on China, a sui generis state with a millennium long Confucian tradition that continues to inform its meritocratic approach to governance. It is a country whose peculiar arrangement of market economy and socialism moved nearly half its population to modernity in a matter of decades, though not without various challenges. And thus here, as we study the outlooks of its citizens, we hope to contribute to the conversation on the road ahead.