



**moderation**

**courage**

**wisdom**

**justice**

## **Virtues across 14 nations**

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*1<sup>st</sup> Czech Positive Psychology Conference, Brno, May 23-24, 2012*

**Reference:** J.P. van Oudenhoven, et al. (2012). Are virtues shaped by national cultures or religions? *Swiss Journal of Psychology*, 71, 29-34.

## Authors

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# Participating countries

- Czechia
- Poland
- Austria
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Norway
- France
- Great Britain
- USA
- Spain
- Mexico
- India
- Hong Kong
- Malaysia

# Why virtues?

- **Virtues are *morally good personal characteristics* (e.g. honesty, modesty).**
- **They apply to individuals. They tell the individual how to behave and how (s)he ought to be.**
- **Virtues can be learnt or acquired by everybody. Anybody can become wise, but not everybody can become intelligent.**

# Why virtues?

- **Consequently the individual is accountable for whether or not possessing virtues.**
- **Many virtues refer to how people should socially interact.**
- **Because of that they may become guiding principles for constructive interaction or integration.**
- **However, for that purpose it is necessary that they are shared by the interaction partners.**

# **Study 1: What are contemporary virtues?**

- **Moral leaders**
  - **Religious leaders, in particular, explicitly mention virtues.**
  - **Teachers have an explicit task to contribute to the personal education of students.**
- **Opinion leaders**
  - **Local politicians often implicitly indicate what are important personal characteristics to them.**
  - **So do pop artists via their songs**

**“Which personal characteristics do you try to promote in your community, (classroom, to your children)?”**

- **Interviews among 36 muslim, catholic, protestant, buddhist and hindu religious leaders**
- **Survey among 83 teachers**
- **Survey among over 200 local politicians**
- **Analysis of 82 pop songs; interviews among 7 pop artists**
- **Survey among 283 students of secondary schools**
- **Survey among 242 adults**

# Which virtues are mentioned by religious leaders, teachers and local politicians?

- Reliability
- Helpfulness
- Openness
- Respect
- Resolution
- **Belief**
- Mercy
- Joy
- **Love**
- **Moderation**
- **Justice**
- **Courage**
- **Hope**
- **Wisdom**
- Modesty



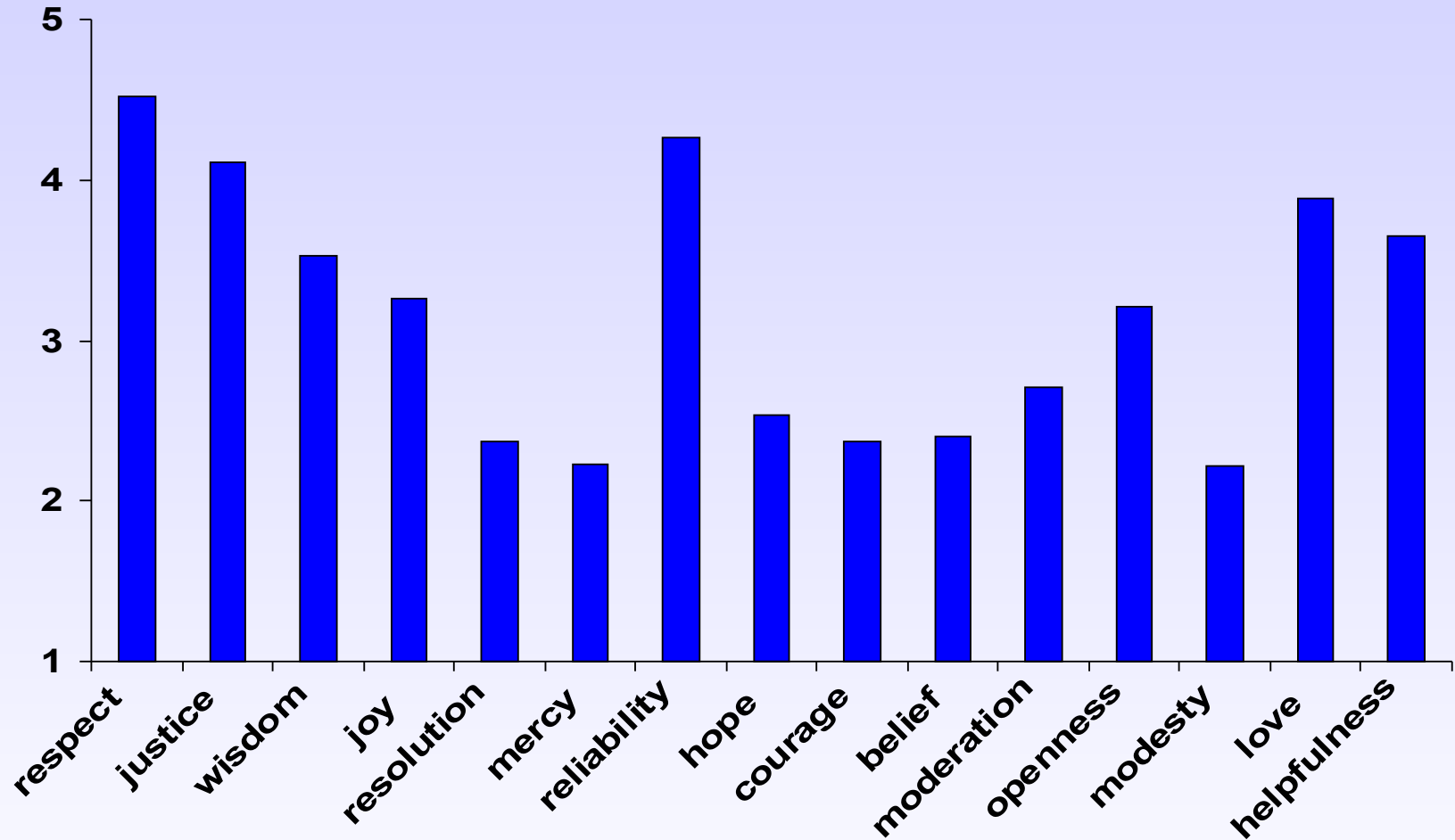
# Virtues in 82 pop songs

(from most to least frequent)

- **Love**
- *Responsibility*
- **Courage**
- **Assertiveness**
- *Fidelity*
- **Openness**
- *Optimism*
- *Independence*
- *Authenticity*
- *Trust*
- **Hope**
- *Patience*
- *Solidarity*
- **Helpfulness**
- **Respect**

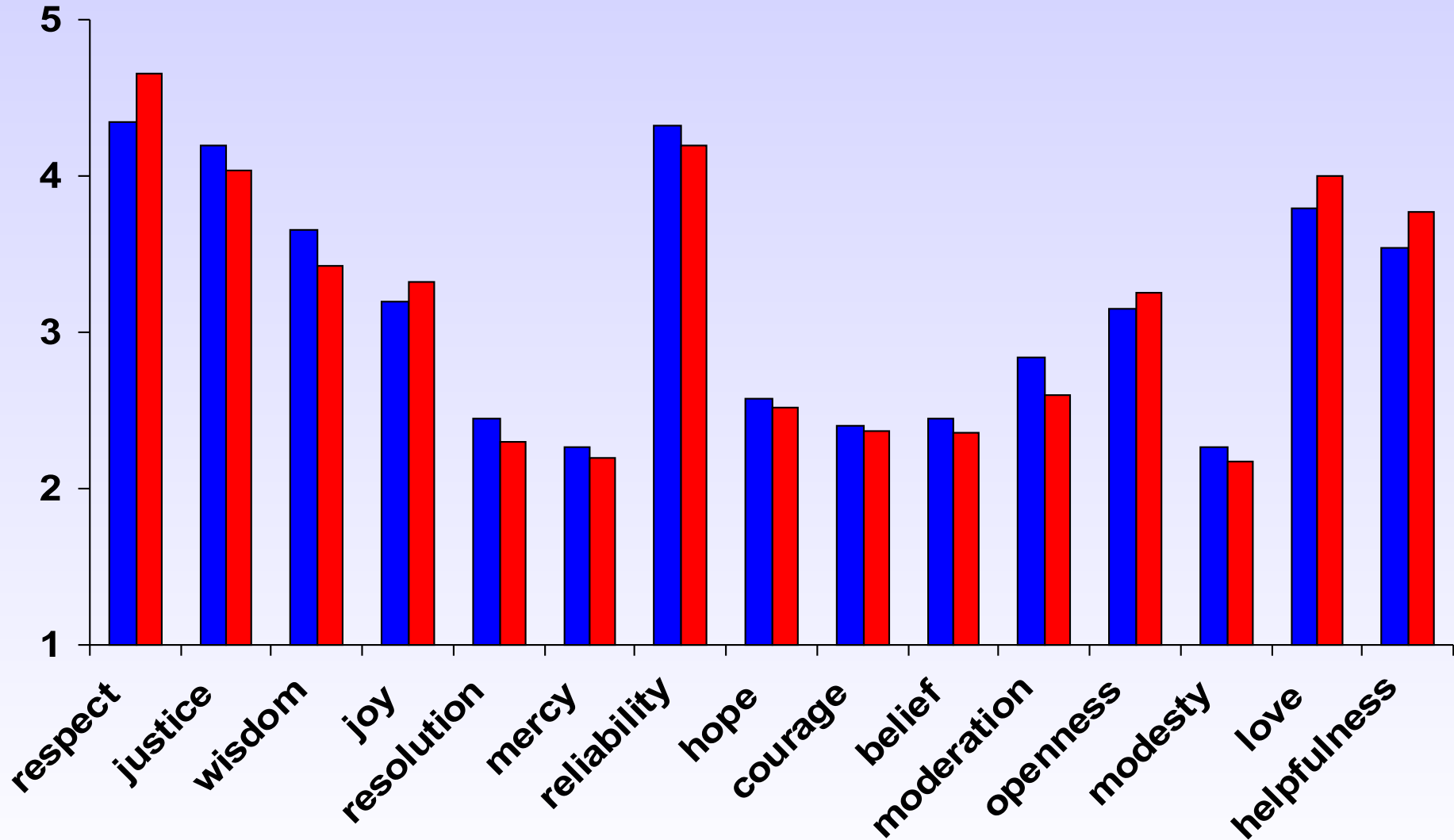
# Rank order of importance of virtues (all groups, N=822)

(1=not important; 5=very important)



# Men and women about virtues

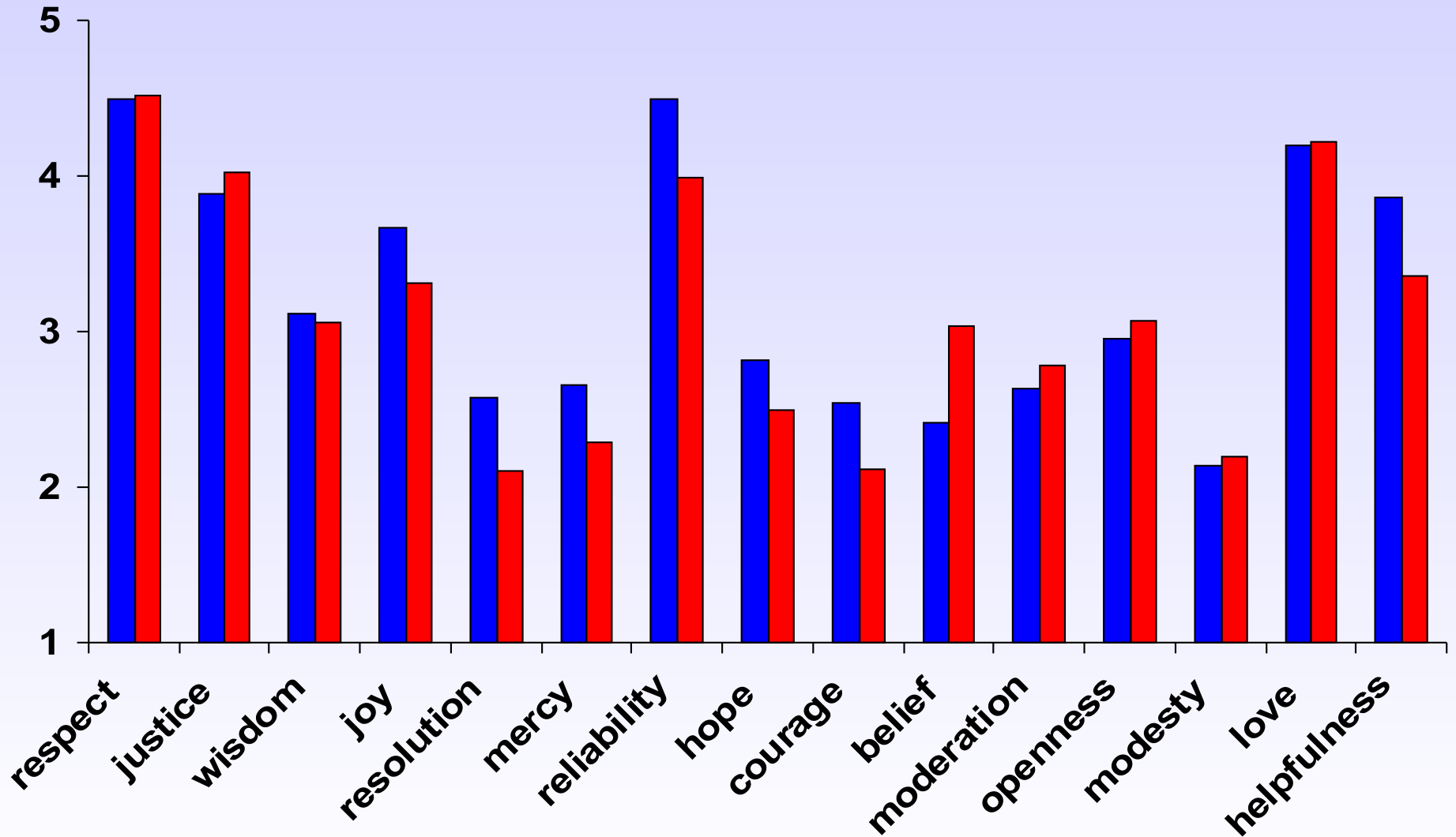
Men Women



# Importance of virtues

(1=not important; 5=very important)

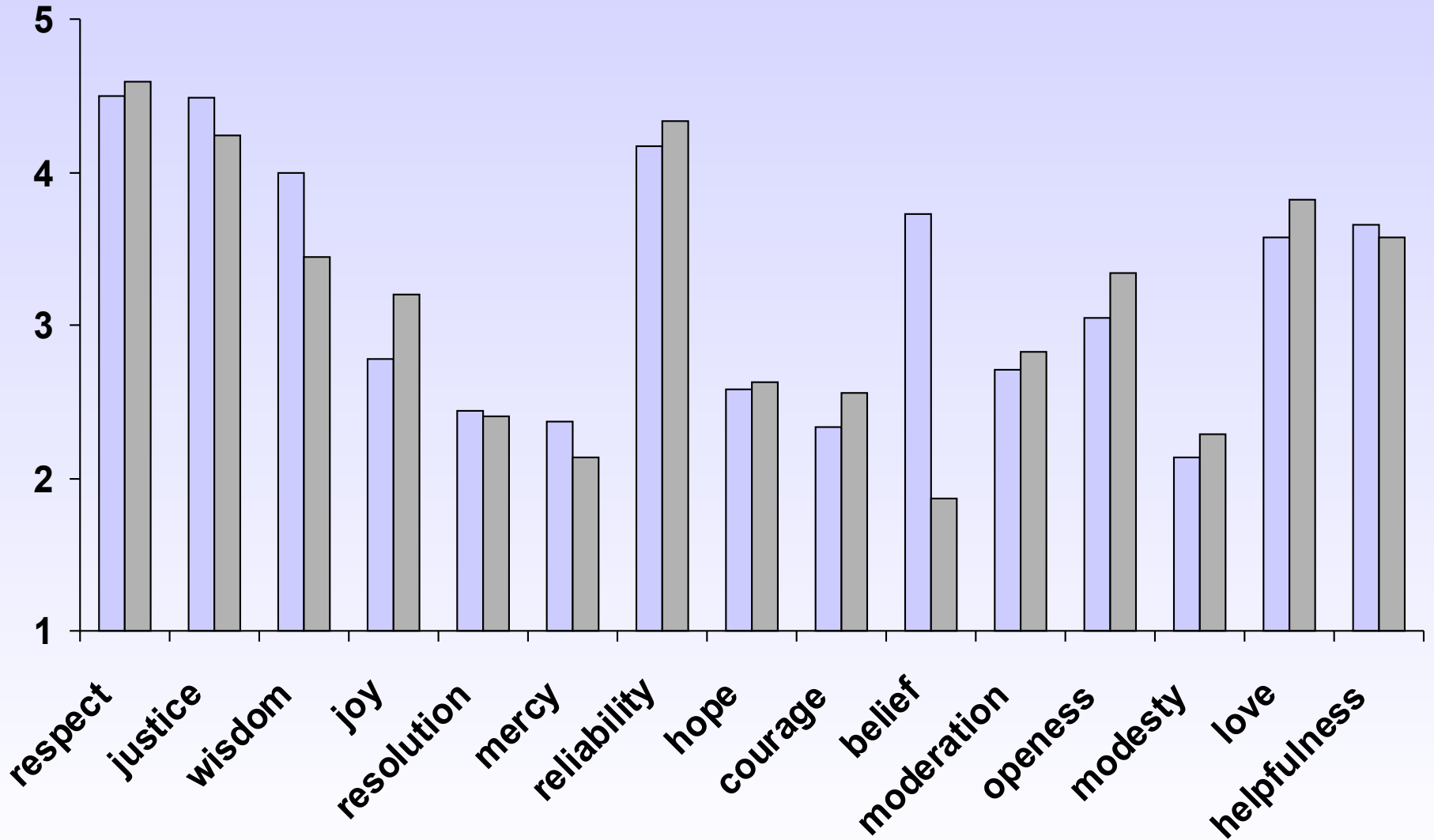
■ Students ■ Teachers



# Importance of virtues and religion

(1=not important; 5=very important)

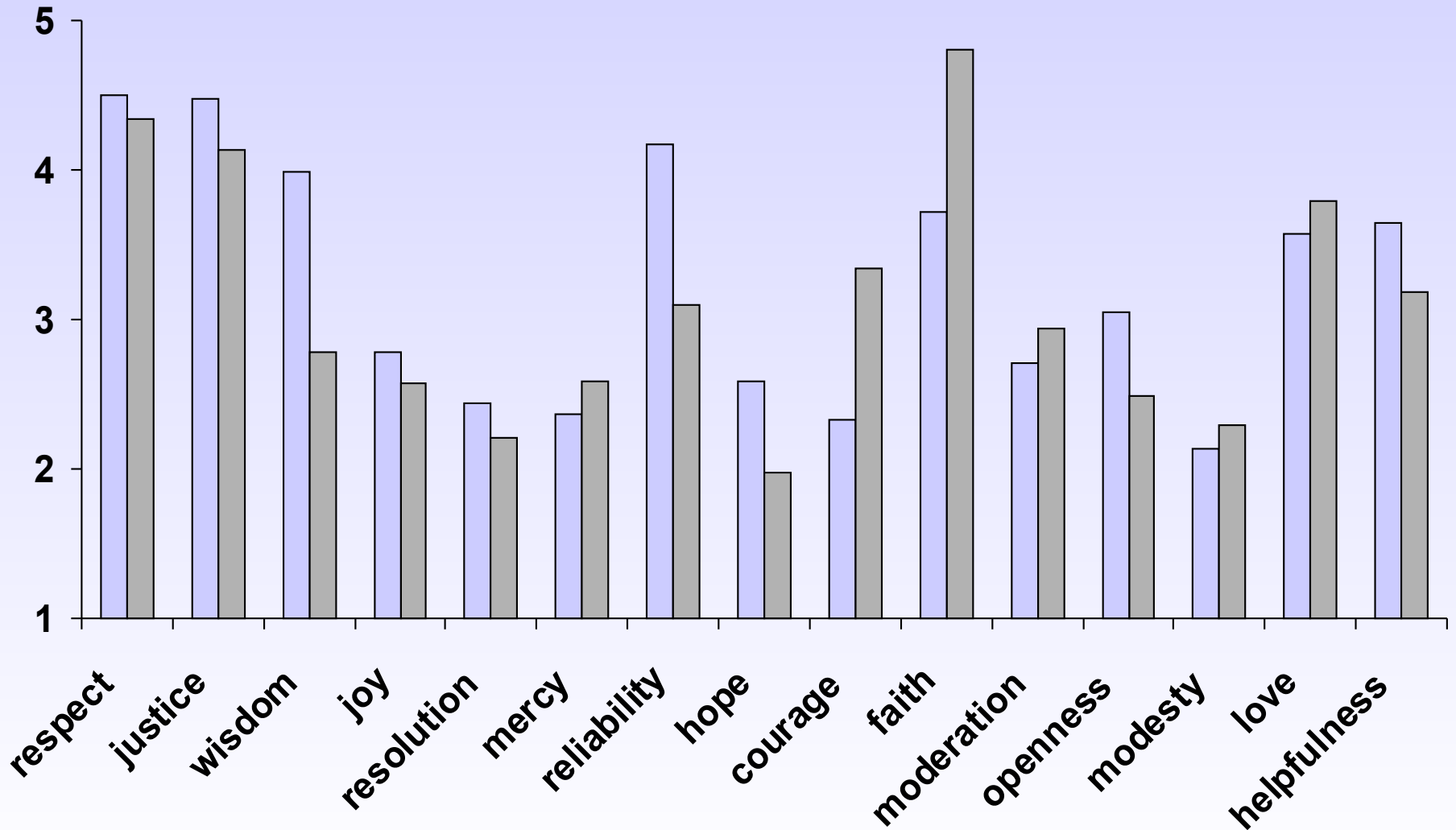
muslim no religion



# Importance of virtues and religion

(1=not important; 5=very important)

■ Muslim NL ■ Muslim Malaysia



## Study 2: Virtues and intercultural contact (242 adults (average age 42 years; 50% women))

• <b>Virtue</b>	Intention intercultural contact	Interc.contact
• Respect	<b>.26</b>	.11
• Mercy	<b>.25</b>	.09
• Helpfulness	<b>.21</b>	.03
• Hope	<b>.20</b>	<b>.23</b>
• Moderation	<b>.19</b>	.08
• Openness	<b>.19</b>	<b>.15</b>
• Belief	.07	.10
• Resolution	<b>.16</b>	<b>.19</b>

# Follow up research

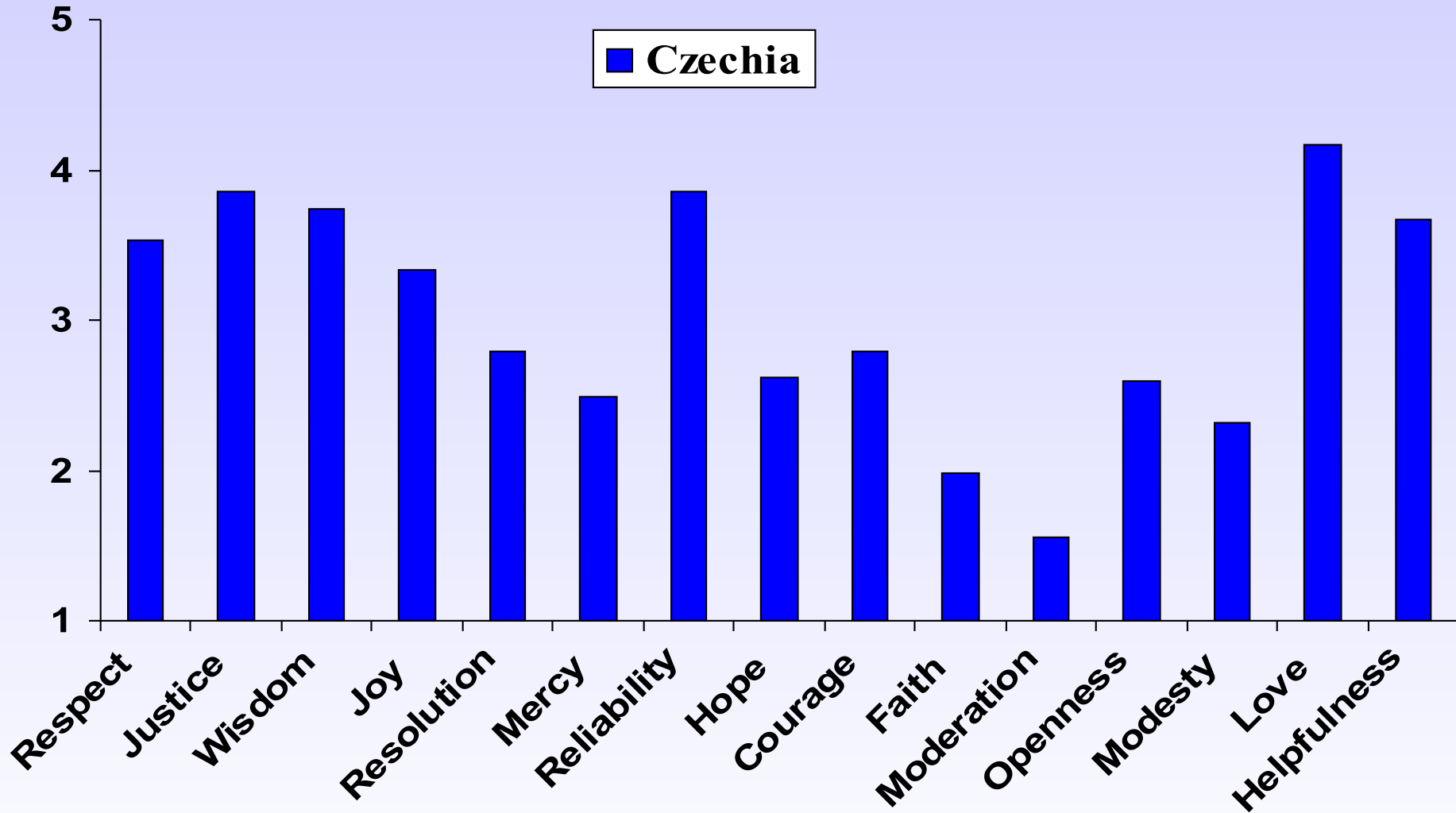
- 1. Are there national virtues? Which virtues are universal?**
- 2. Do rankordering and spontaneous mentioning lead to the same core virtues within nations?**



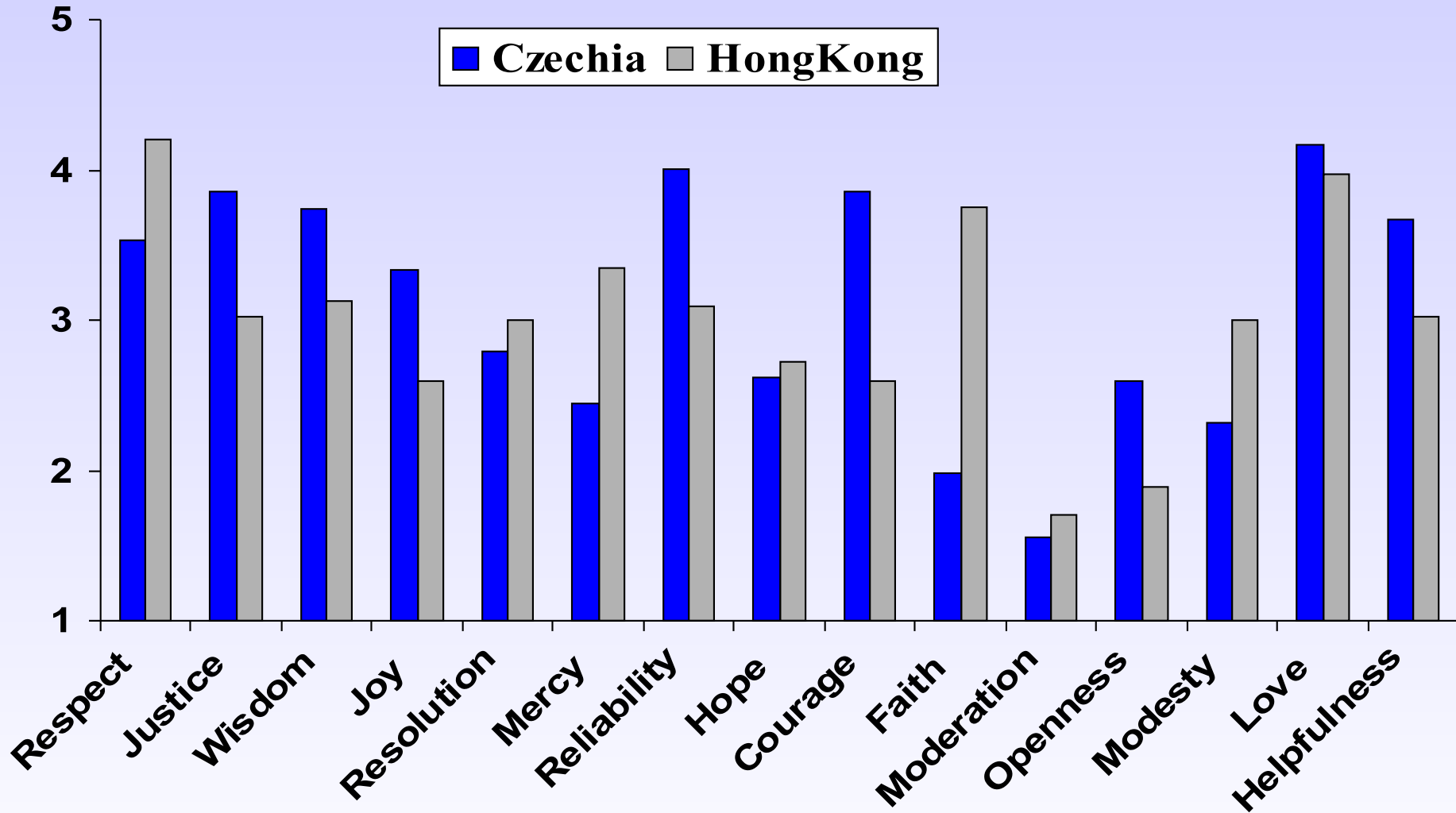
# Rank order of spontaneously mentioned Czech virtues (N=231)

1.	Resolution	58
2.	Reliability	43
3.	Courage	42
4.	Wisdom	30
5.	Openness	27
6.	Helpfulness	23
7.	Tolerance	22
8.	Honesty	20
9.	Respect	19
10.	Working hard	15

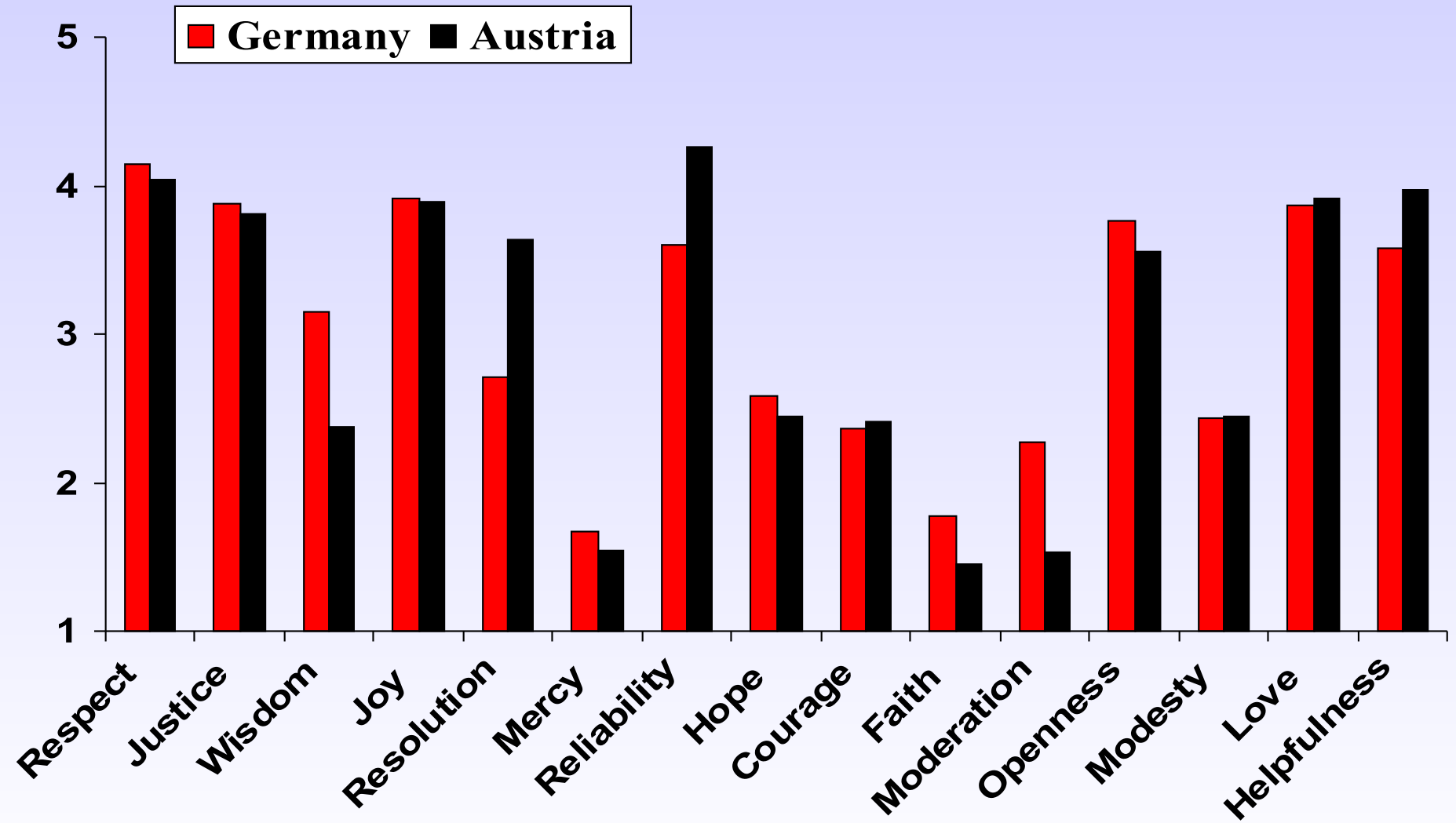
# Czechs and Malaysians about virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)



# Czechs and Malaysians about virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)

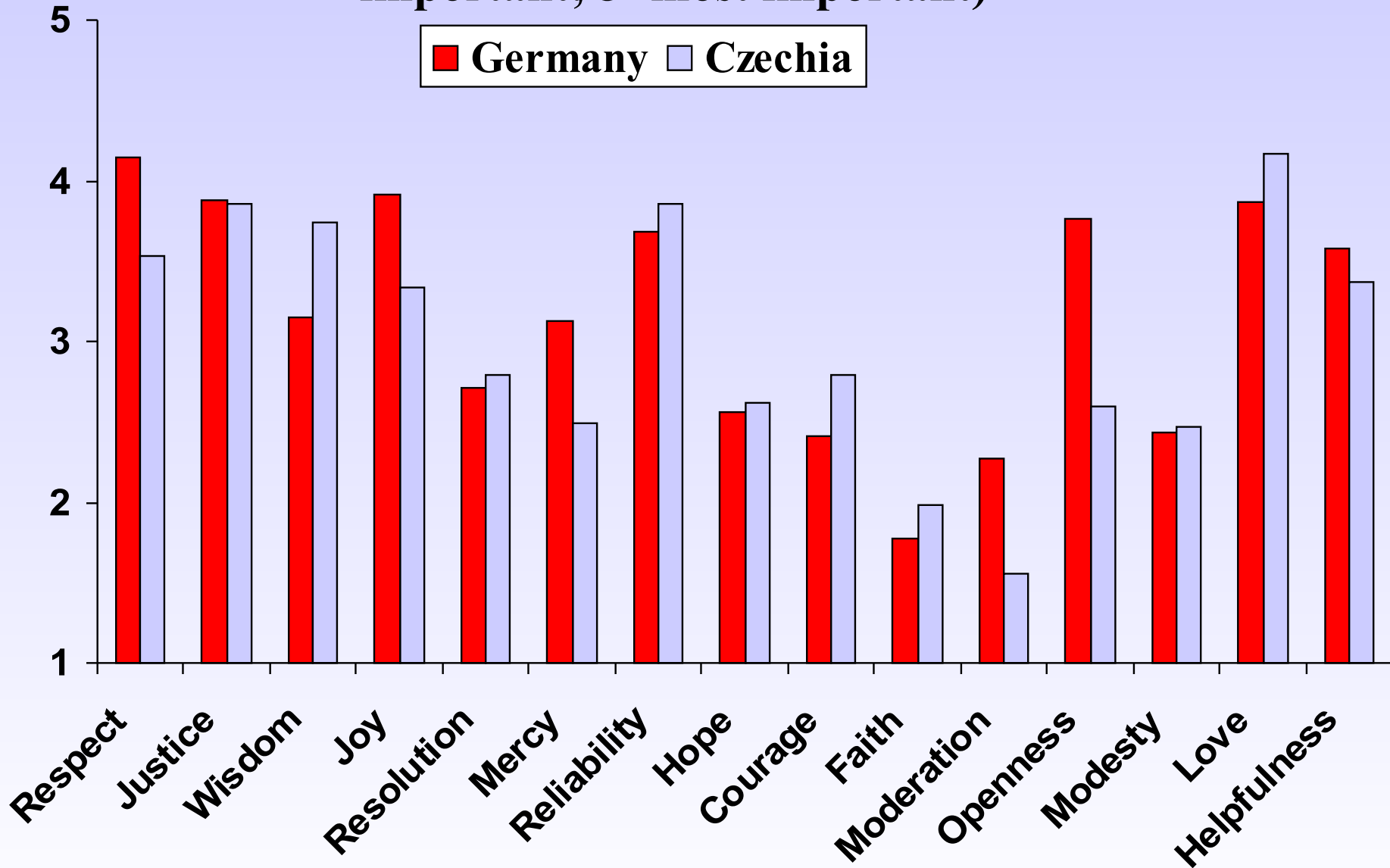


# Three nations' scores on virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)

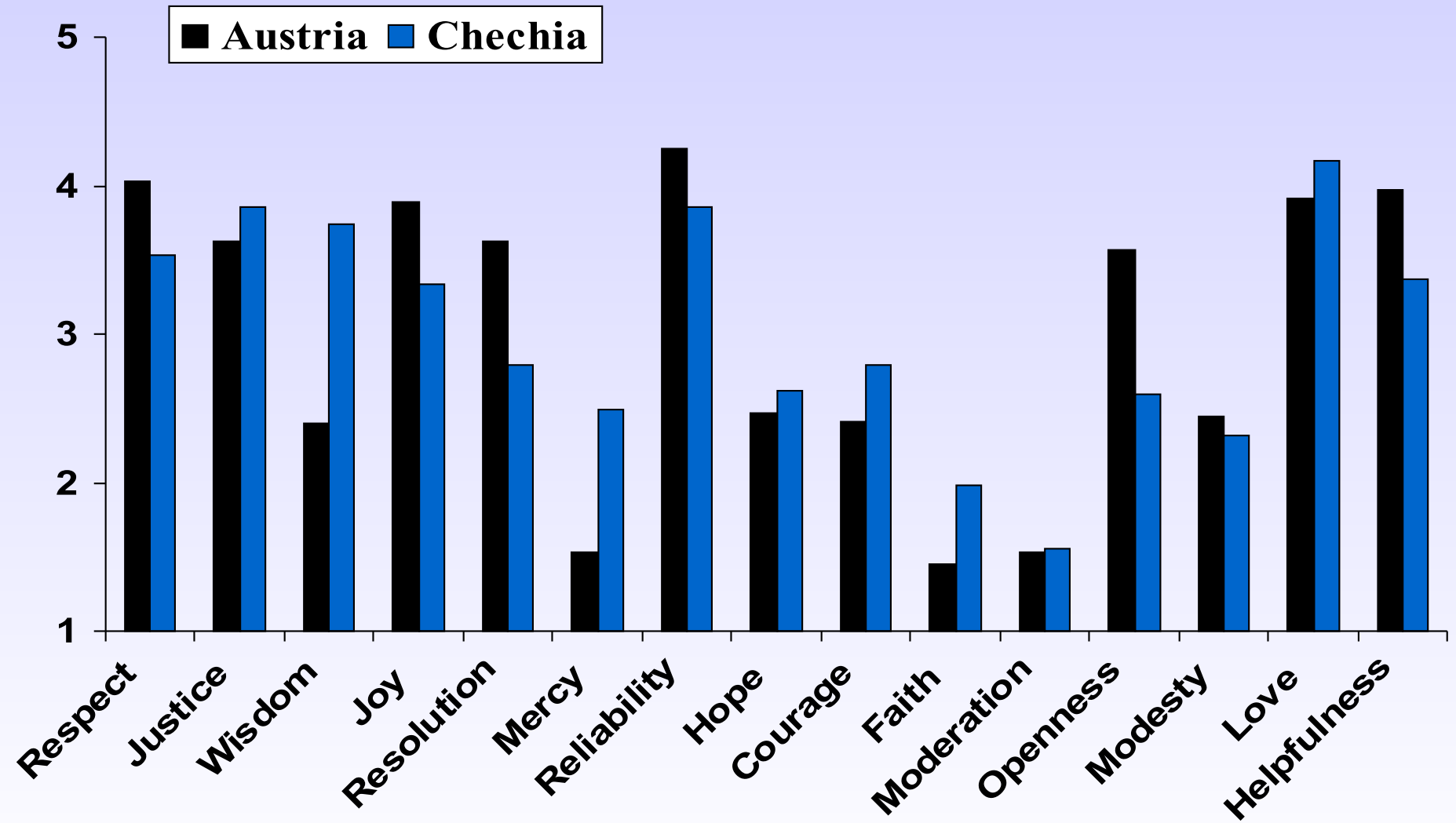


# Czechs and Germans about virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)

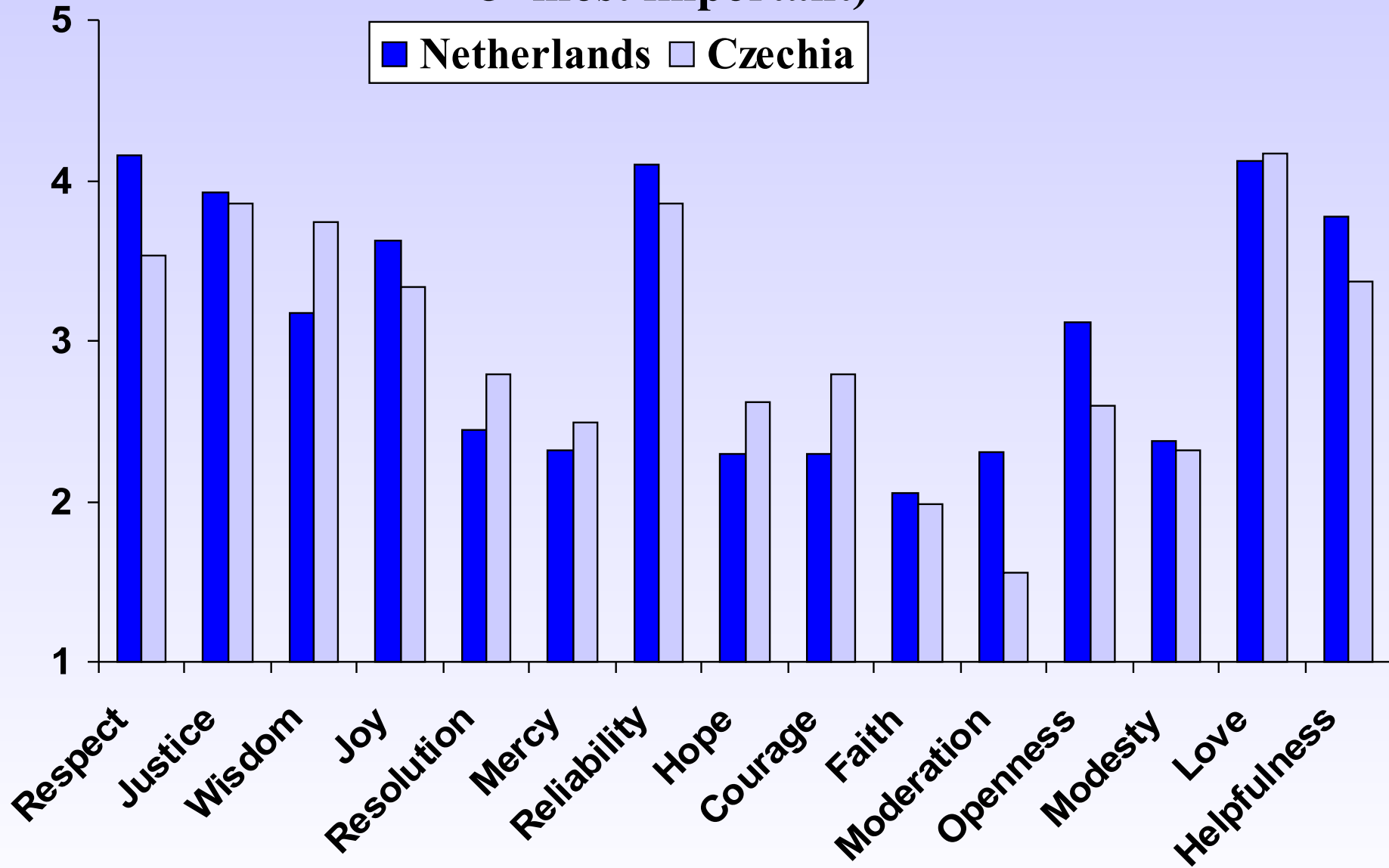
Germany Czechia



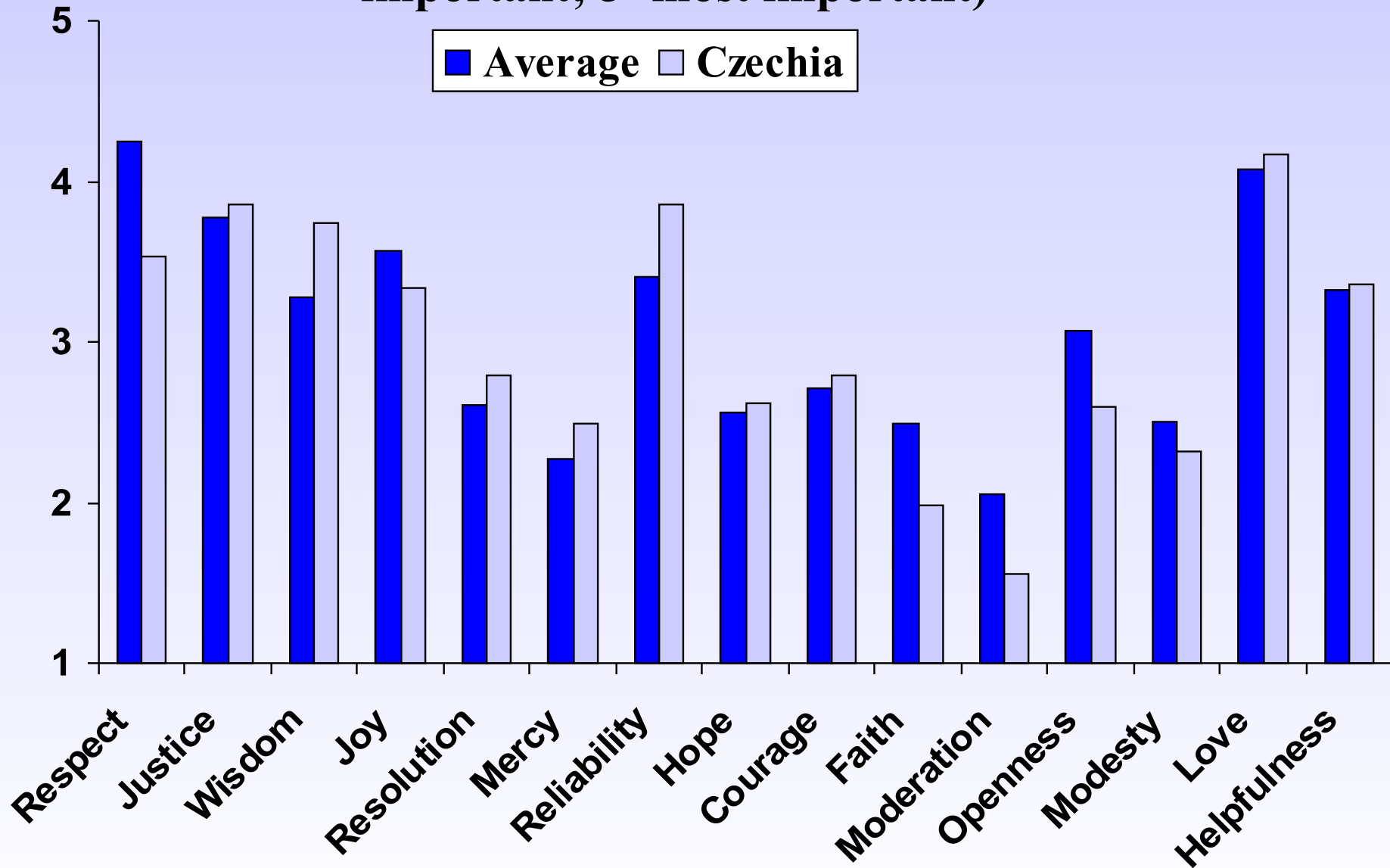
# Two nations' scores on virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)



# Dutch and Czechs about virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)

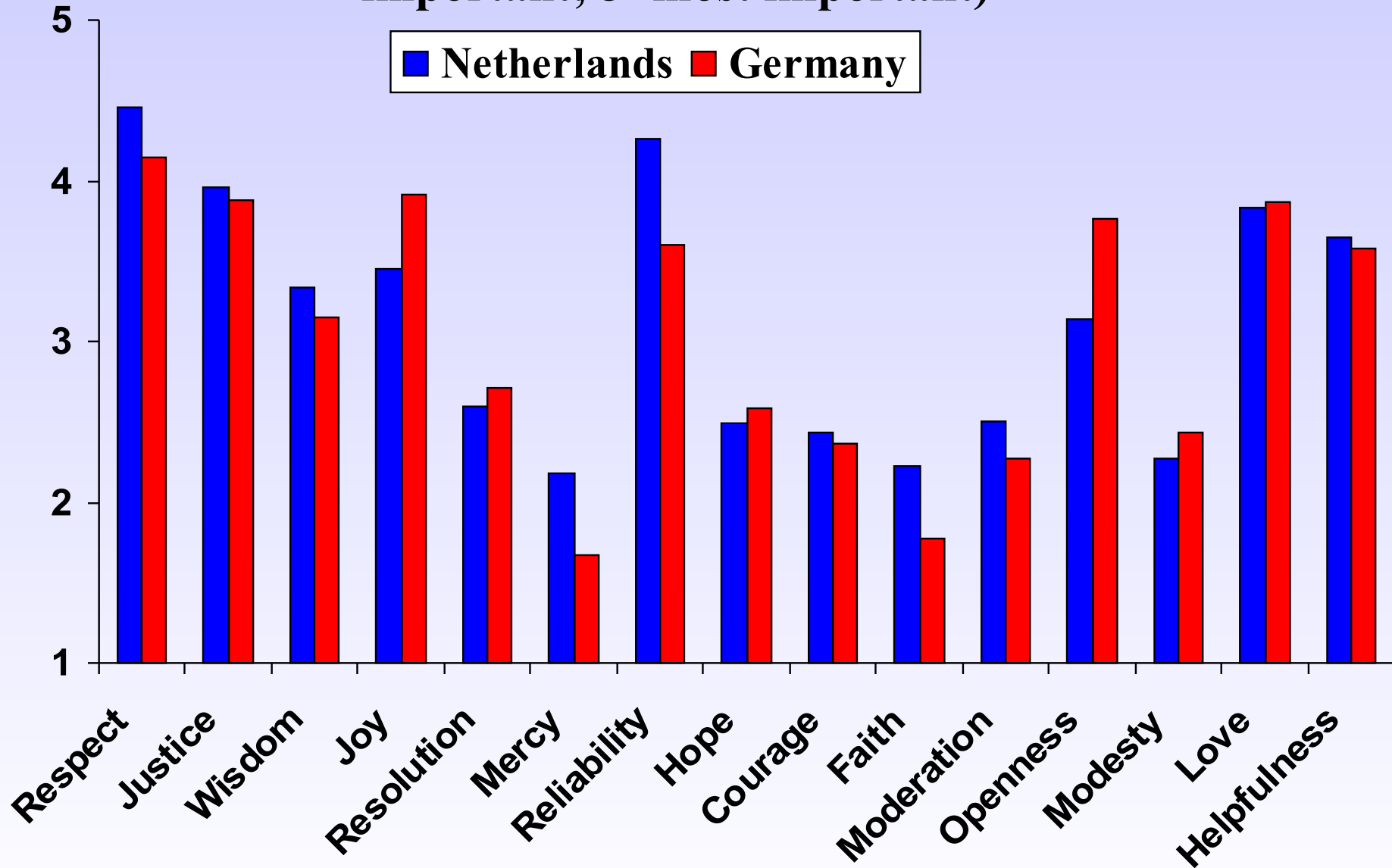


# Average and Czechs about virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)

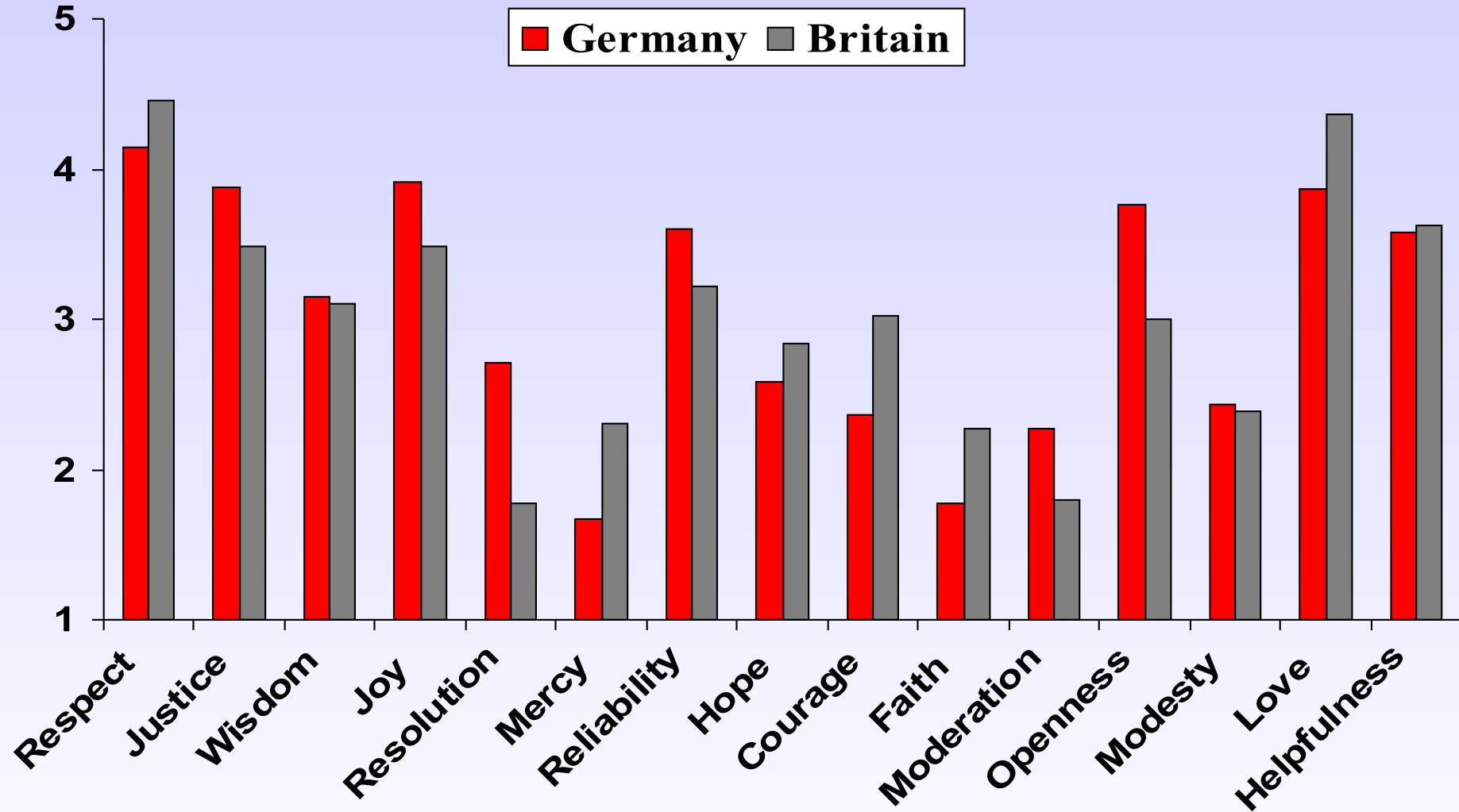




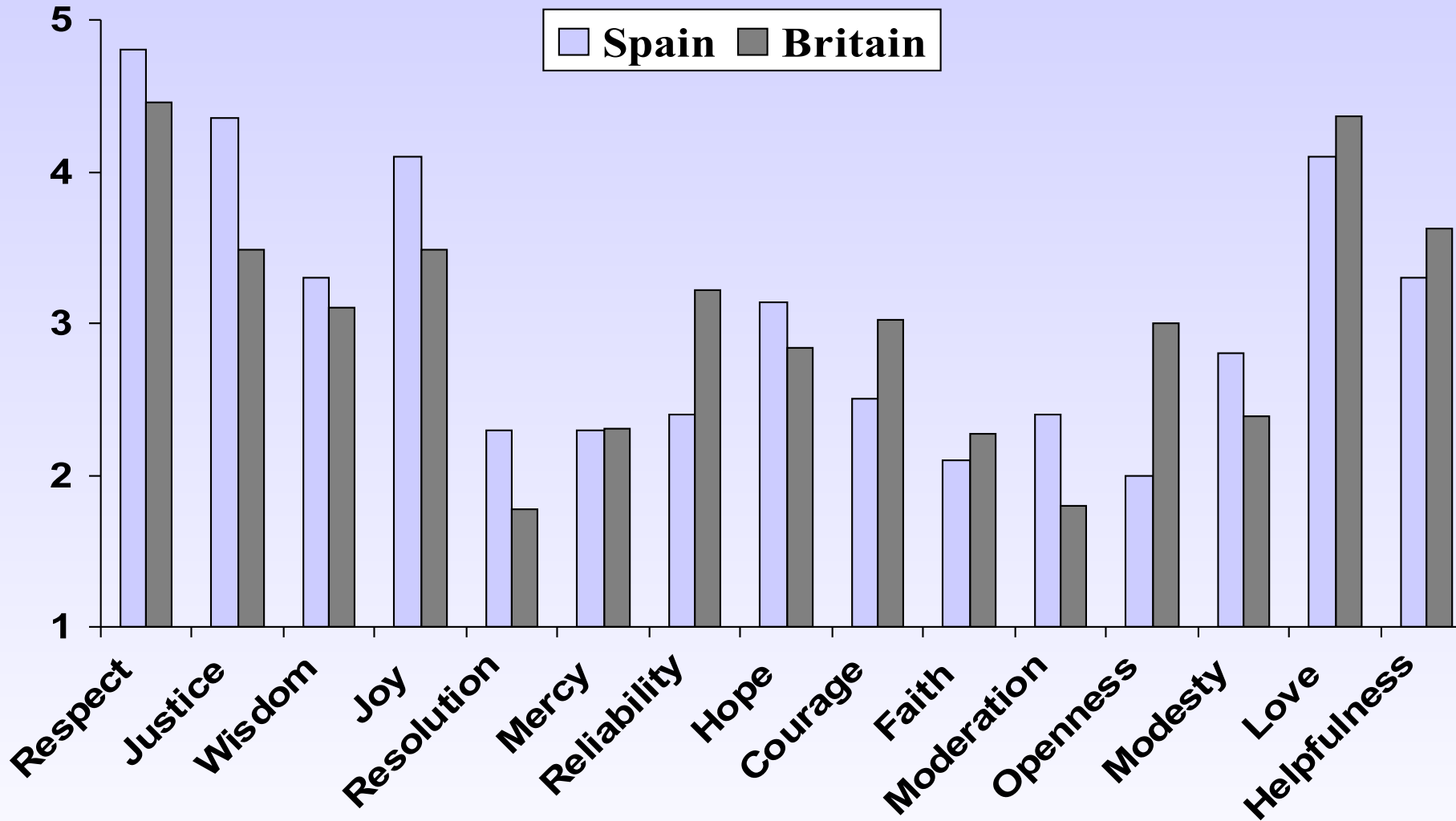
# Dutch and Germans about virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)



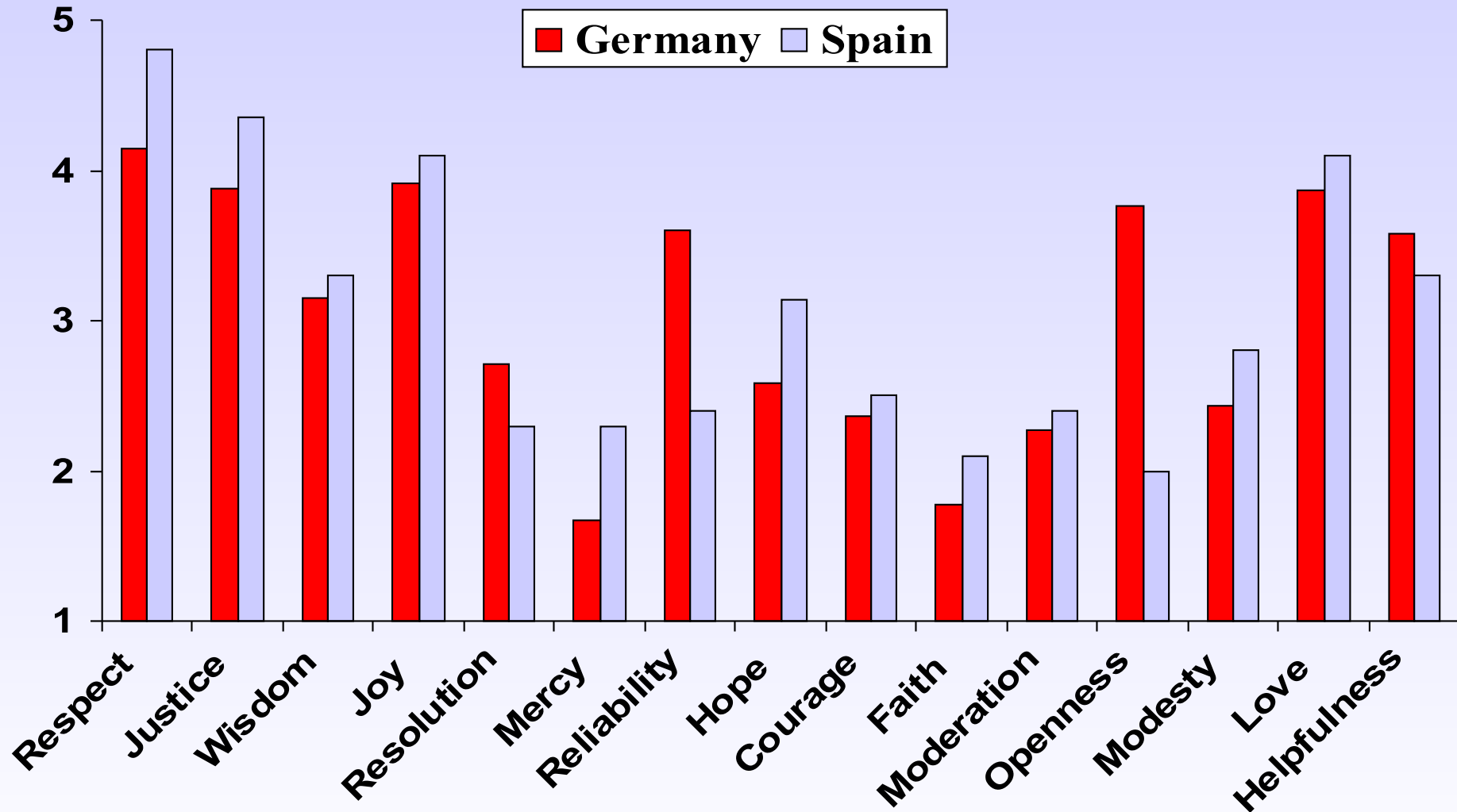
# Two nations' scores on virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)



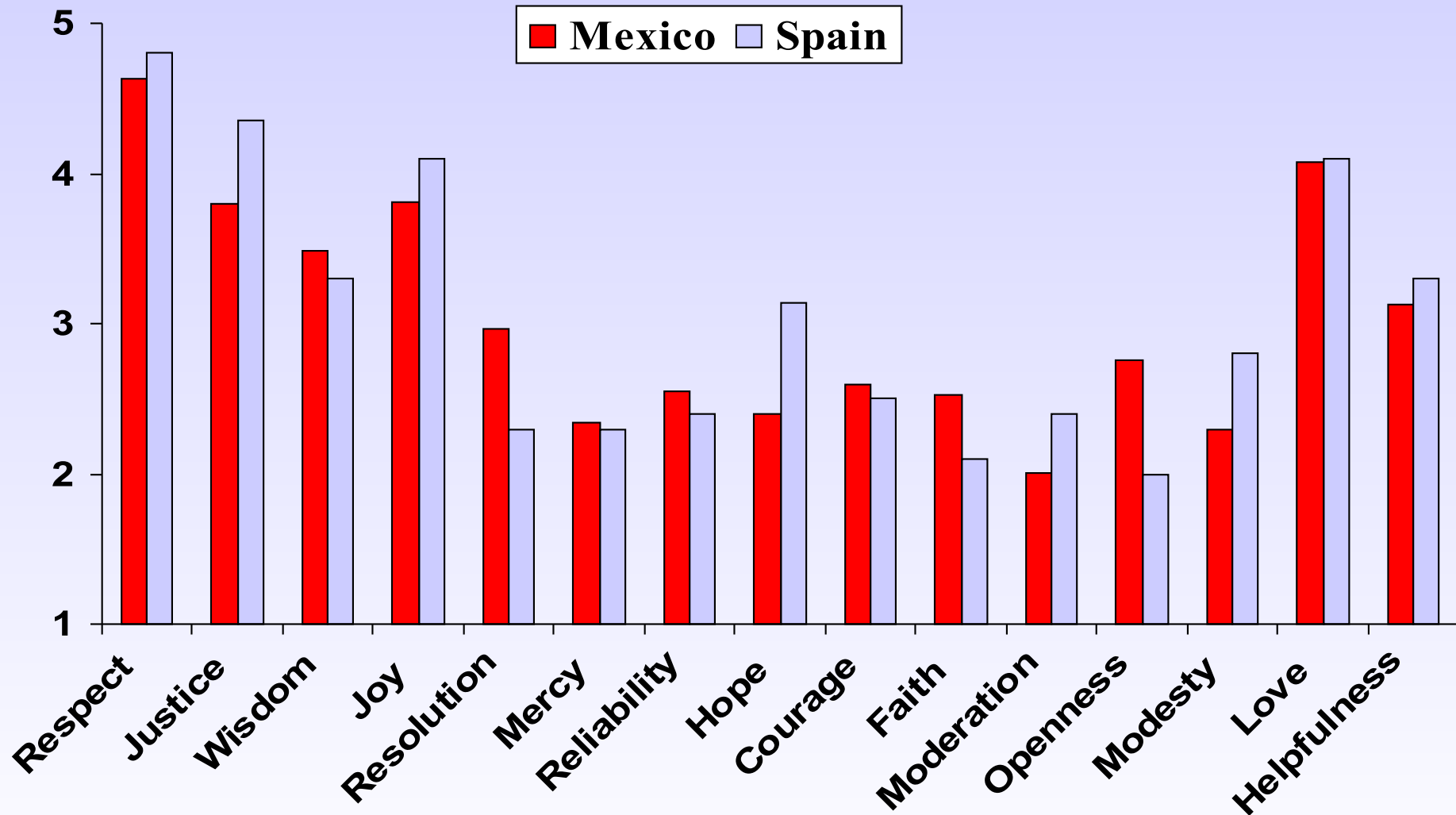
# Spain and Britain on virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)



# Germany and Spain on virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)



# Mexico and Spain on virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)



# Smallest and largest differences

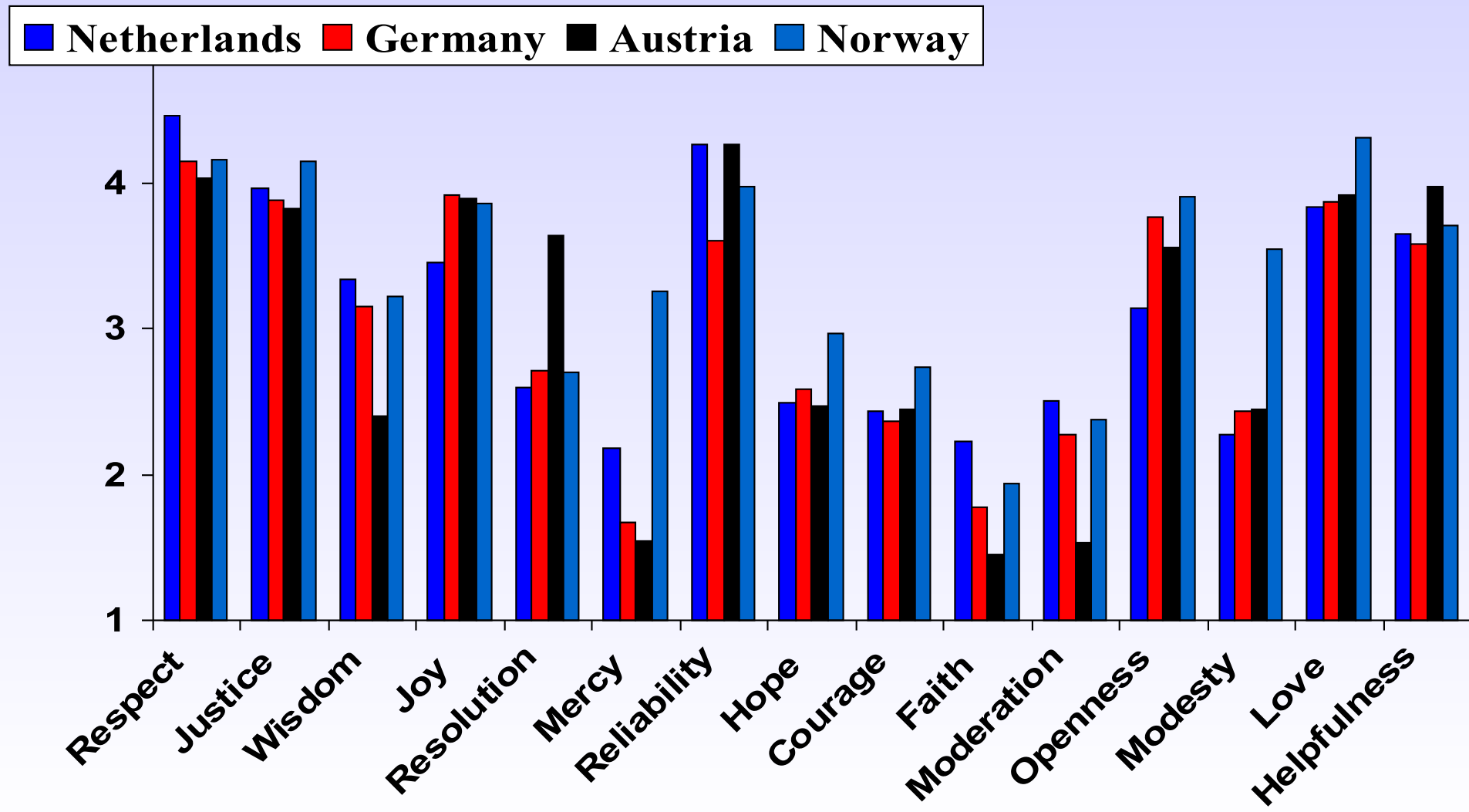
## Smallest:

- Love
- Respect
- Wisdom
- Helpfulness
- Justice

## Largest:

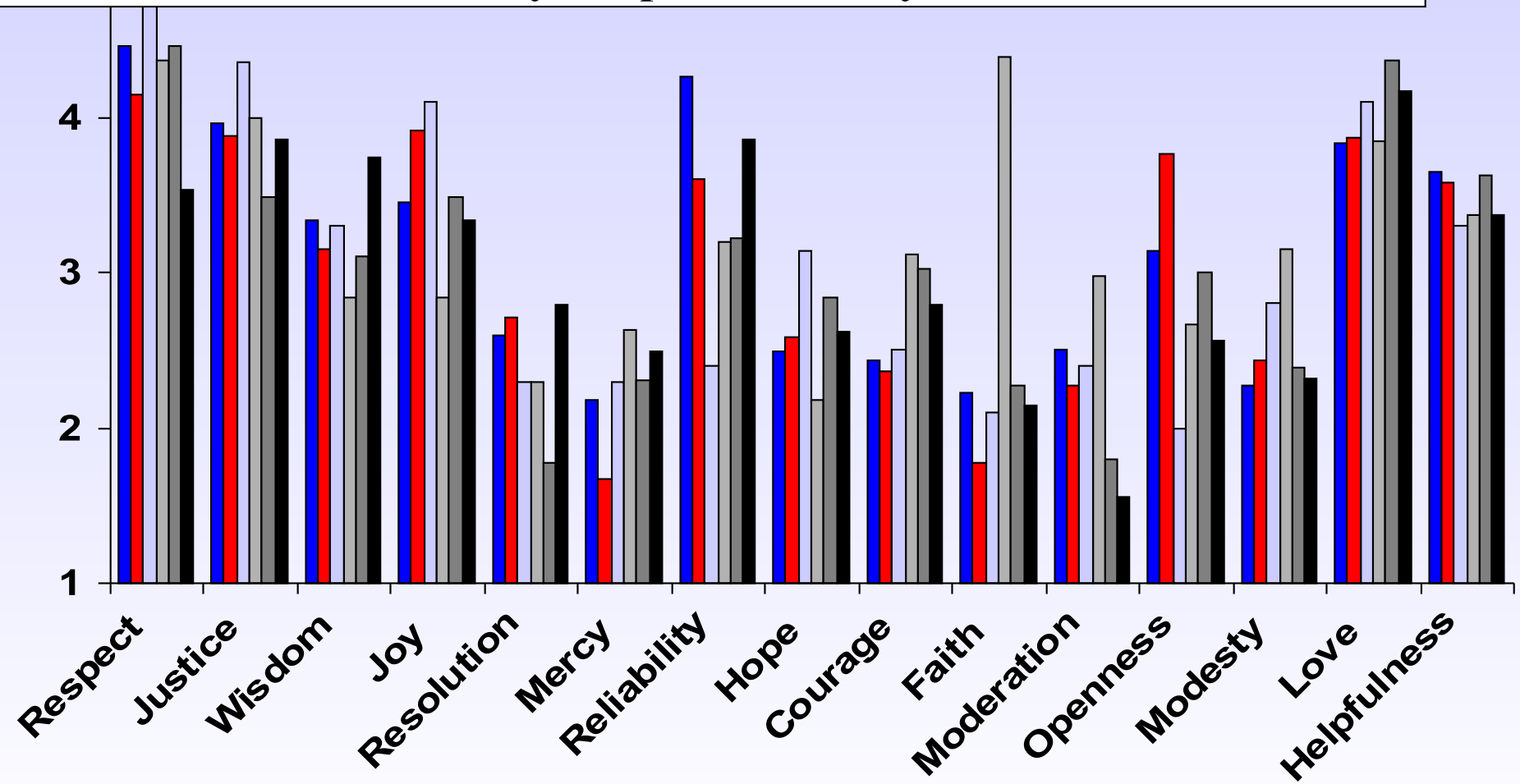
- Faith
- Openness
- Mercy
- Reliability
- Modesty

# Four nations' scores on virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)



# Six nations' scores on virtues (1=least important; 5=most important)

■ Netherlands 
 ■ Germany 
 ■ Spain 
 ■ Malaysia 
 ■ Britain 
 ■ Czechia





<b>Hong K.</b>	honest	polite	tolerance	responsible	optimism
<b>India</b>	hard work	joy	dynamic	humour	love
<b>Malaysia</b>	honest	respect	happy	love	kind
<b>USA</b>	honest	kind	respect	patience	openness
<b>UK</b>	kind	honest	happy	respect	humour
<b>Norway</b>	openness	empathy	kind	honest	positive
<b>Neth.</b>	respect	kind	honest	helpful	social
<b>Germany</b>	honesty	openness	reliable	respect	tolerance
<b>Austria</b>	honesty	helpful	kind	reliable	openness
<b>Czechia</b>	<b>resolution</b>	<b>reliable</b>	<b>courage</b>	<b>wisdom</b>	<b>openness</b>
<b>Poland</b>	openness	honest	respect	tolerance	communic.
<b>France</b>	generosity	courage	honest	kind	respect
<b>Spain</b>	respect	love	honest	friendship	happy
<b>Mexico</b>	respect	honest	happy	responsible	love

<b>Hong K.</b>	self-confid.	considerate	respect	modest	sociable
<b>India</b>	intelligent	caring	honest	reliable	courage
<b>Malaysia</b>	helpful	politeness	hardwork	responsible	faithful
<b>USA</b>	humility	love	humour	hardwork	compassion
<b>UK</b>	helpful	empathy	openness	patience	politeness
<b>Norway</b>	humour	considerate	patience	helpful	caring
<b>Neth.</b>	openness	tolerant	responsible	joy	love
<b>Germany</b>	kind	helpful	humour	punctual	justice
<b>Austria</b>	punctual	tolerant	resolution	humour	politeness
<b>Czechia</b>	<b>helpful</b>	<b>tolerance</b>	<b>honesty</b>	<b>respect</b>	<b>hardwork</b>
<b>Poland</b>	assertive	kind	humour	empathy	optimism
<b>France</b>	patience	listening	altruism	intelligent	openness
<b>Spain</b>	joy	justice	solidarity	trust	tolerance
<b>Mexico</b>	calmness	friendship	security	tolerance	loyalty

# Importance of virtues worldwide

Mentioned at least twice in top 10 in 14 countries!

• <b>Honesty</b>	<b>14</b>	• <b>Patience</b>	<b>4</b>
• <i>Respect</i>	<i>11</i>	• <b>Responsibility</b>	<b>4</b>
• <b>Kindness</b>	<b>9</b>	• <b>Happiness</b>	<b>4</b>
• <b>Tolerance</b>	<b>8</b>	• <b>Empathy</b>	<b>3</b>
• <i>Openness</i>	<i>9</i>	• <i>Courage</i>	<i>3</i>
• <b>Humour</b>	<i>7</i>	• <i>Joy</i>	<i>3</i>
• <i>Helpfulness</i>	<i>7</i>	• <i>Justice</i>	<i>2</i>
• <i>Love</i>	<i>6</i>	• <i>Resolution</i>	<i>2</i>
• <b>Working hard</b>	<b>4</b>	• <i>Wisdom</i>	<i>2</i>
• <i>Reliability</i>	<i>4</i>	• <b>Caring</b>	<b>2</b>
• <b>Politeness</b>	<b>4</b>		

# Importance (rank order) of virtues worldwide

## Only mentioned in one country

- **Compassion**      **USA**      **9**
- **Self-confidence**      **Hong Kong**      **6**
- **Assertiveness**      **Poland**      **6**
- **Communicative**      **Poland**      **5**
- **Positive**      **Norway**      **5**
  
- **Calmness**      **Mexico**      **6**
- **Security**      **Mexico**      **8**
- **Dynamic**      **India**      **3**
- **Generosity**      **France**      **1**