

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FILED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

JUN 8 2020

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

MOLLY C. DWYER, CLERK
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

FRANCISCO VALASQUEZ, AKA
Francisco Velasquez,

Petitioner,

v.

WILLIAM P. BARR, Attorney General,

Respondent.

No. 18-70746

Agency No. A205-316-744

MEMORANDUM*

On Petition for Review of an Order of the
Board of Immigration Appeals

Submitted June 2, 2020**

Before: LEAVY, PAEZ, and BENNETT, Circuit Judges.

Francisco Valasquez, a native and citizen of Guatemala, petitions pro se for review of the Board of Immigration Appeals' ("BIA") order dismissing his appeal from an immigration judge's decision denying his applications for withholding of removal and relief under the Convention Against Torture ("CAT"). We have

* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

** The panel unanimously concludes this case is suitable for decision without oral argument. *See* Fed. R. App. P. 34(a)(2).

jurisdiction under 8 U.S.C. § 1252. We review de novo questions of law, *Cerezo v. Mukasey*, 512 F.3d 1163, 1166 (9th Cir. 2008), except to the extent that deference is owed to the BIA’s interpretation of the governing statutes and regulations, *Simeonov v. Ashcroft*, 371 F.3d 532, 535 (9th Cir. 2004). We review for substantial evidence the agency’s factual findings. *Garcia-Milian v. Holder*, 755 F.3d 1026, 1031 (9th Cir. 2014). We deny the petition for review.

The BIA did not err in finding that Valasquez’s returnee-based social group was not cognizable. *See Reyes v. Lynch*, 842 F.3d 1125, 1131 (9th Cir. 2016) (in order to demonstrate membership in a particular social group, “[t]he applicant must ‘establish that the group is (1) composed of members who share a common immutable characteristic, (2) defined with particularity, and (3) socially distinct within the society in question’” (quoting *Matter of M-E-V-G-*, 26 I. & N. Dec. 227, 237 (BIA 2014))). Substantial evidence supports the agency’s determination that Valasquez failed to demonstrate a nexus between the harm he experienced or fears in Guatemala and a protected ground, including his family social group. *See Ayala v. Holder*, 640 F.3d 1095, 1097 (9th Cir. 2011) (even if membership in a particular social group is established, an applicant must still show that “persecution was or will be *on account of* his membership in such group”); *see also Zetino v. Holder*,

622 F.3d 1007, 1016 (9th Cir. 2010) (an applicant’s “desire to be free from harassment by criminals motivated by theft or random violence by gang members bears no nexus to a protected ground”). Thus, Valasquez’s withholding of removal claim fails.

The record does not support Valasquez’s contentions that the BIA failed to consider evidence or otherwise erred in its analysis of his claims. *See Najmabadi v. Holder*, 597 F.3d 983, 990 (9th Cir. 2010) (agency need not write an exegesis on every contention); *Fernandez v. Gonzales*, 439 F.3d 592, 603 (9th Cir. 2006) (petitioner did not overcome the presumption that the BIA reviewed the record).

Substantial evidence also supports the agency’s denial of CAT relief because Valasquez failed to show it is more likely than not he would be tortured by or with the consent or acquiescence of the government if returned to Guatemala. *See Wakkary v. Holder*, 558 F.3d 1049, 1067-68 (9th Cir. 2009) (no likelihood of torture).

PETITION FOR REVIEW DENIED.