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Dear Editor,

We wish to resubmit for your kind consideration for publication in Geophysical Research Letters the enclosed manuscript entitled “Spring persistence, transition and resurgence of El Niño” by Sang-Ki Lee, Pedro DiNezio, Eui-Seok Chung, Sang-Wook Yeh, Andrew Wittenberg and Chunzai Wang.

We would like to thank you and the two anonymous reviewers for thoughtful suggestions. The manuscript is now revised following the suggestions from the two reviewers. As suggested by reviewer #1, we present and discuss 90º-rotated EOFs in the revised manuscript (see Figure 1, 3 and 4, and section 6). Following suggestions from reviewer #2, we have removed all discussions about ENSO dynamics. We only mention and briefly discuss the slow SST mode because the fast ocean Kelvin waves cannot be used to explain the slow eastward propagation of the air-sea coupled anomalies in Figure 2 and 4. Finally, as suggested by reviewer #2, we applied the same methodology to look at inter-La Niña variability. We used 22 La Niña events during the period of 1949-2013 to identify two leading modes of inter-La Niña variability. The two EOFs are now added in Figure S5, and briefly discussed in section 7.

As far as we know, this is the first attempt to objectively identify and explain the spatio-temporal evolution of inter-event El Niño variability in the tropical Pacific for the entire lifespan of El Niño from onset to decay.

Sincerely yours,

S.-K. Lee, P. DiNezio, E.-S. Chung, S.-W. Yeh, A. Wittenberg and C. Wang