Spain's Influence on the World In the late15th century, the Spanish Empire began to expand their sphere of influence, mostly through the use of their world- powerful navy (the Spanish Armada). Utilizing this elite force on the high seas, the Spanish Crown was able to explore and conquer far- away lands. From the moment that Columbus sailed to America in 1492 until the last Spanish-owned nation claimed their independence in the late 19th century, their imprint was left around the world, most notably in the spread of the Spanish language. **Spanish Speakers per Square Mile** Less than 1 Spanish trade route (16th century) 2-5 6-30 Territory once owned by Spain World Winkel Tripel NGS Projection 31-180 Central meridian: 0° 181-1090 Standard parallel: 51° N Data: http://en.wikipedia.org/ 1091-6600 wiki/Spanish_language by Ari Malman