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MADDE YAYIMLANDIKTAN  
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## The Foundations of Bundu and Kombo Sultanates in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries Gambia

Ensa Touray\*

### Introduction

The penetration of the famous Arab tribes such as Banu Ma'qil, Banu Hassan, Kunta and Zawiya as scholars from North Africa, marked an important stage in the spread and development of Islam into West Africa, particularly in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Senegambia region. This development was a milestone on the socio-political transformation that affected West Africa and Senegambia in particular. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, the founder of Zawiya movement was a cleric of the *zwaya* who took the name Nasir al-Din, (the helper of the religion) who was a member of the Banu Dayman, which in turn belong to the five major *zwaya* tribes known collectively as the Tashumsha. These scholarly communities made significant contributions to the development of Islam in the Senegambia region, which culminated in the foundation of the Bundu Sultanate, under the leadership of a prominent Islamic scholar, popularly known as the Malick Dauda Sy. The Sultanate was a by-product of the Kajoor learning centers, which permeated the region of Pir and Kokki in the lower Senegal. This created the conditions for Islamic revivalist movements in the Senegambia. The reform movement is similar to the Sokoto Caliphate established by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio; Ahmad Labbo who established the Masina; and the Umar al-Futi who created the Segou Imamate from the ruins of the Masina.

Therefore, this article is an attempt to examine the historical processes that led to the emergence of the Sultanate of Bundu in the 17<sup>th</sup>

\* History Lecturer, University of The Gambia, Faculty of Art, Obafemi Awolowo University