

The Status of Registration Inquiries in the Legal Systems of Iran and England: From Identifying Property Violations to Guaranteeing Legal Ownership

1. Narges Rahgozar[✉]: Department of Law, Ka.C., Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran

2. Abbas Pahlavanzadeh^{*}: Department of Law, Ka.C., Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran

3. Hamid Bazrpach[✉]: Department of Law, Ka.C., Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran

*Correspondence: a.pahlavanzadeh@kiaui.ac.ir

Abstract

Registration inquiries constitute one of the fundamental pillars in the process of regulating and registering transactions involving immovable property, and they play a direct role in guaranteeing legal ownership and preventing property-related violations and crimes. In the Iranian legal system, following the enactment of the Law on Mandatory Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions (2024), the significance of obtaining inquiries from competent authorities, including the State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties, municipalities, natural resources authorities, and tax administrations, has substantially increased. The present study aims to comparatively examine the status, types, and legal effects of registration inquiries in Iran and England and to analyze their role in achieving transactional transparency and safeguarding proprietary rights. The principal research question is as follows: What role do registration inquiries play in identifying property violations and guaranteeing ownership in the legal systems of Iran and England, and what differences exist in their structure and enforcement mechanisms? The findings indicate that in England, the land registration system administered by HM Land Registry, through comprehensive electronic systems, enables purchasers and legal offices to obtain immediate access to accurate information concerning the legal status, restrictions, and liabilities attached to property, thereby reducing property fraud and enhancing legal certainty. In contrast, in Iran, the fragmentation of systems and the lack of integration among registration databases impede the full realization of the objectives of the new law with respect to transparency and the prevention of property-related crimes. This research adopts a descriptive-analytical and comparative methodology and has been conducted through the examination of legal sources, registration regulations, and field studies concerning the English land registration system.

Keywords: Registration inquiries, immovable property transactions, guarantee of ownership, transactional transparency, Land Registration Act 2002 of England, official registration.

Received: 01 January 2026

Revised: 18 May 2026

Accepted: 26 May 2026

Published: 01 September 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Published under the terms and conditions of Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

Citation: Rahgozar, N., Pahlavanzadeh, A., & Bazrpach, H. (2026). The Status of Registration Inquiries in the Legal Systems of Iran and England: From Identifying Property Violations to Guaranteeing Legal Ownership. *Legal Studies in Digital Age*, 5(5), 1-11.

1. Introduction

The registration system of each country, as one of the main pillars of its economic and legal order, guarantees transactional security, legitimate ownership, and transparency in legal relations among individuals. In Iran, the system of registration of deeds and properties, with more than a century of history, has constantly moved toward transformation and adaptation to social and economic needs. However, challenges arising from the validity of informal documents, the absence of integrated systems, and the lack of sufficient legal obligation for the official registration of immovable property transactions have led to the emergence of extensive litigation before courts, including claims for compulsory execution of official deeds, annulment of conflicting documents, and the sale of another person's property. In this regard, the enactment of the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions in 2024 was a fundamental response to one of the most chronic problems of Iran's legal system, aiming to create transactional transparency, prevent economic corruption, and enhance public trust in the registration system. In light of this law, any transaction, transfer, settlement, or lease of immovable property is deemed permissible only through notary offices and after inquiries from legally competent authorities. Registration inquiries play a central role in this context because they constitute a prerequisite for issuing official deeds and guaranteeing ownership. Accurate inquiry into the status of property in terms of ownership, land use, debts, easements, seizures, and even geographical location prevents conflicting transactions and crimes such as land grabbing and document forgery. Nevertheless, practical experience in Iran has shown that the multiplicity of authorities issuing inquiry responses and the absence of a unified electronic system cause delay, informational conflicts, and sometimes administrative corruption in the process of registering transactions. By contrast, in the legal system of England, the structure of land registration is directly supervised by the state and administered through His Majesty's Land Registry. Under the Land Registration Act 2002, all information related to ownership, subsidiary rights, and legal restrictions of a property is registered in the form of a single electronic title, and the purchaser or their solicitor can access this information through online systems. The inquiry process in England is not only mandatory but also entirely digital, and by virtue of the Mirror Principle, all entries in the title deed reflect the actual status of the property. Alongside this, the Guarantee Principle also ensures that, in the event of a registration error, the injured party's loss is compensated by the state. This level of transparency and governmental accountability has created broad trust in immovable property transactions and has significantly reduced legal disputes before courts. A comparative analysis of the two systems shows that although Iran's new law is an important step toward transparency and combating economic corruption, it still faces structural challenges in the implementation of smart systems, electronic inquiries, and state guarantees of proprietary rights. Furthermore, the absence of a unified procedure for how registration authorities respond, and the lack of clear separation among the duties of institutions such as the State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties, municipalities, natural resources authorities, and tax administrations, weaken the efficiency of the inquiry process. In view of these considerations, the present study adopts a descriptive-analytical and comparative method to examine the status of registration inquiries in the legal systems of Iran and England and seeks to answer the question of what role registration inquiries play in identifying property violations and guaranteeing legal ownership in these two systems. The present study also seeks to explain how, by drawing on England's successful experience and using data-driven technologies, the inquiry and registration process in Iran can be organized in such a way that, on the one hand, the rights of the purchaser, seller, and third parties are protected, and, on the other hand, public economic order and trust in the registration system are strengthened. Undoubtedly, registration inquiries are not merely administrative tools but legal and preventive mechanisms for realizing economic justice, transactional security, and the efficiency of the registration system in any society.

2. Research Background and Literature Review

Several books and articles have been written on the subject of the present study, and a number of related studies are mentioned here. Mohammad Naderi (2025), in the article "Analysis and Study of the Registration Law Framework in Iranian Laws with Emphasis on the Legal and Economic Functions of the Real Estate Registration System," analyzes the framework of registration law in Iranian legislation and, through a law-and-economics approach, examines the role of the real estate registration system in guaranteeing ownership security and increasing the efficiency of the land market. Drawing on the theories of Posner and North, the author proposes challenges and institutional and technological reform solutions for improving the legal and economic functions of the registration system (Naderi, 2025). Also, Ali Parvini (2025), in an article examining the

“Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions,” scrutinizes the obligation to officially register immovable property transactions and, while analyzing the roots of disorder in Iran’s registration system, explains the negative effects of informal transactions on the security of property rights, economic order, and the reduction of property litigation. With a critical approach, the author examines the implementation challenges of this law and offers solutions for reforming, facilitating, and realizing the objectives of the law in line with ownership stabilization and economic transparency (Parvini, 2025). Nasrin Tabatabaei Hessari and Sahar Ayinparast (2023), in the article “The Position of the Registration Institution in Ensuring Stability of the Legal Status of Movable Property and Transactional Security with Emphasis on Secured Transactions,” examine the role of the registration institution in guaranteeing the transparency and legal stability of secured transactions involving movable property. Through a comparative analysis of different legal systems, the authors show that the registration of movable securities is necessary for the realization of principles such as public notice, avoidance of the appearance of false wealth, and the creation of an impersonal security market. The article concludes that the fragmentation of registration institutions in Iran prevents the realization of the expected legal functions, and that establishing a comprehensive institution for registering movable securities can increase the security and efficiency of the transactional system (Tabatabaei Hessari & Ayinparast, 2023). In foreign studies, Penny Carruthers (2015), in the article “A Tangled Web Indeed: The English Land Registration Act and Comparisons with the Australian Torrens System,” comparatively examines the land registration system in England and Wales and the Torrens system in Australia. The author addresses the problem of “dualism,” meaning the conflict between the formal registration system and traditional rules of property law. She discusses how this inconsistency can be resolved so that both the authority of formal registration and traditional principles of ownership are preserved (Carruthers, 2015).

Unlike the existing literature, which has mainly focused on internal analysis of Iran’s registration law, the implementation challenges of inquiries, or merely the role of the registration institution in movable and immovable property transactions, this study examines the status of registration inquiries in the legal systems of Iran and England through a comparative and applied approach and analyzes their role in identifying property violations, guaranteeing legal ownership, and achieving transactional transparency. The main innovation of the study lies in explaining the importance of integrating registration data, digitizing inquiries, and drawing on the fundamental principles of English registration, namely the Mirror Principle and state guarantee, in order to show that, without these mechanisms, Iran’s new law will fail to achieve full legal and economic security. Moreover, this study introduces registration inquiries not only as administrative tools but also as preventive legal mechanisms for economic justice and public trust.

3. Concepts and Theoretical Foundations of Registration Inquiries

Registration inquiries in the legal systems of Iran and England are key instruments for ensuring the validity of ownership, preventing conflicting transactions, and guaranteeing legal security. In Iran, a registration inquiry means obtaining information from relevant authorities, including the State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties, municipalities, natural resources authorities, and the tax administration, so that before an official deed is prepared, the status of ownership, debts, easements, and legal restrictions affecting the property can be clarified. This mechanism has a legal nature and preventive function and is regarded as a statutory prerequisite for issuing official deeds. In England, registration inquiries are conducted under the framework of the Land Registration Act 2002 and managed by HM Land Registry, with all information relating to ownership, restrictions, and subsidiary rights made available digitally and in an integrated manner. These inquiries are consistent with the fundamental principles of registration, including the Mirror Principle and the Guarantee Principle, and directly contribute to increasing transactional transparency and reducing legal risks, such that purchasers and solicitors can make their economic and legal decisions with full confidence in the accuracy of the information.

3.1. *The Concept, Nature, and Function of Registration Inquiry in the Iranian Legal System*

The nature and function of registration inquiry in the Iranian legal system are grounded in the fundamental principles of transactional public order, legal security, and transparency in the transfer of immovable property. In its legal meaning, registration inquiry is an administrative–legal process through which a notary office or competent authority inquires from the

registration office about the legal status of the property, ownership, boundaries, subsidiary rights, and legal restrictions affecting the property, so that the authenticity and accuracy of the information are verified before an official deed is prepared. This concept was first addressed in a scattered manner in the Registration of Deeds and Properties Act of 1931, but with the enactment of the Notary Offices Act of 1975 and provisions such as Articles 22, 46, 92, and 93 of the Registration Act, its status was consolidated and the obligation of notary offices to conduct inquiries before preparing official deeds was established. According to Article 22 of the Registration Act, “the state recognizes as owner only the person whose name has been registered in the real estate register.” Therefore, registration inquiry is a prerequisite for determining legal ownership and preventing conflicting transactions. For this reason, it has a declaratory–investigative nature, the purpose of which is to verify the validity of the parties’ claims before the conclusion of the contract.

The main function of registration inquiry should be sought in preventing the violation of individuals’ rights and ensuring judicial health. In fact, inquiry is a tool for discovering obligations and restrictions that the seller may have in relation to the property, and failure to include them in the deed may give rise to conflicts, annulment claims, claims for compulsory execution of deeds, and even conflicting transactions. Registration information, as one of the most important sources of data in the system of legal governance, has a special status in ensuring economic security, preventing ownership conflicts, and guaranteeing the validity of transactions. As Rajabi and Haghi (2018) have noted in their article, in today’s world, where “information” itself has become a productive form of capital, access to registration data, including the owner’s identity information, the legal status of the property, restrictions, seizures, previous transactions, and easements, strengthens individuals’ position in economic decision-making (Rajabi & Haghi, 2018). However, this value simultaneously requires legal regulation, because free and unlimited access to such data conflicts with the right to privacy, information security, and principles of confidentiality. For this reason, the Iranian legal system must establish a balance between “the transparency necessary to guarantee the integrity of transactions” and “the confidentiality necessary to protect personal rights.” In this area, as noted above, Article 22 of the Registration of Deeds and Properties Act is one of the most fundamental provisions of Iran’s registration law system, determining the concept of “official ownership” and the legal effects of registration (Riahi, 2020). This article provides that once a property is registered in the real estate register, the state, and consequently all official authorities, recognize only the person whose name is entered in the real estate register as the owner, whether the initial registration was made in their name, or the property was officially transferred to them and that transfer was also registered in the real estate register, or their ownership was entered in the real estate register through inheritance and in compliance with legal requirements, including proof of succession, issuance of a certificate of inheritance, and determination of inheritance shares. Therefore, Article 22 considers “registration in the real estate register” to be the sole legal criterion of ownership and gives it priority over any other evidence, including possession, testimony, informal documents, or private claims. This rule, in fact, forms the foundation of the “principle of absolute validity of registration,” and its main purpose is to eliminate ownership disputes, prevent conflicting documents, and create stability in transactions and the economic circulation of real estate. This article establishes the foundation of Iran’s registration system on the axis of “official ownership” and “the absolute validity of the real estate register,” and such a status makes registration inquiry, access to real estate information, and transparency in the legal status of property necessary. The legislature has also strengthened this logic in subsequent legislation, including the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions (2024). Stability of ownership, transactional security, prevention of land grabbing and conflicting transactions, and increased public trust in the registration system are directly based on this article, and any development of electronic registration systems, improvement of real estate data transparency, and facilitation of controlled access to information are ultimately necessary for the full realization of Article 22. In this context, the main challenge is that registration information has a dual nature: on the one hand, it includes “ownership” and “real right” information, which naturally has external effect and must be publicly knowable; on the other hand, some data, such as individuals’ identity information, address, national identification number, or financial information, are subject to privacy rules and cannot be publicly disclosed. Inspired by this distinction, Iranian law differentiates between “publicly accessible information,” such as the real estate register, registration plate number, and seizure status, and “private information,” such as identity card number or financial information. For example, the deed registration system makes only non-personal information relating to the legal status of real estate publicly searchable, while identity information is accessible only to interested persons or judicial authorities. This distinction is, in a sense, consistent with the legal principles of European countries and rules relating to personal data protection.

3.2. *The Concept and Scope of Registration Inquiries in the English Legal System*

In the legal system of England, registration inquiries are among the main pillars of the process of transferring ownership of land and real estate and play an essential role in guaranteeing transparency, predictability, and transactional security. In this system, unlike in some traditional systems, the concept of registration inquiry is not merely an “administrative act”; rather, it is a mandatory, legally constitutive, and determinative stage in the process of conveyancing, and without it no transaction in the English land registration system is regarded as valid and reliable (Nield, 2021). The legal basis of these inquiries is set out in the Land Registration Act 2002, the Law of Property Act 1925, the Environmental Information Regulations 1995, and the set of regulations issued by HM Land Registry Practice Guides (Dobbs et al., 2023). This legal framework defines the scope of registration inquiries more broadly than merely the “legal status of the property” and extends it to a set of mandatory, specialized, and verified searches.

In England, registration inquiry is a multidimensional concept that includes searches in the Title Register, the Title Plan, the Charges Register, and other legal data related to the property (Hämäläinen & Krigsholm, 2022). For example, before formal transfer, every person or institution must use the standard OS1 form to conduct an official search of the whole of the registered property in order to identify any mortgage, seizure, easement, restriction, covenant, or subsidiary right related to the property. If the property is part of a larger registered title, form OS2 is used. These inquiries create a “freeze” effect; that is, after the inquiry is registered, no new right can be created or registered against the property unless the transferee is notified. Such an effect directly guarantees the purchaser’s security and prevents conflicting transactions. The scope of registration inquiries in England also extends to non-legal matters. For example, a Local Authority Search includes examination of the status of roads, urban development plans, environmental requirements, land contamination, listed heritage assets, and even access to public infrastructure. These inquiries are carried out under the Local Land Charges Act 1975 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. A practical example is the CON29 search (Dunning et al., 2021), which shows whether the property is located in a flood-prone area or whether a demolition order has been issued for unauthorized construction on it. These data not only affect the purchaser’s decision but also determine the property’s price and prevent transactional losses.

One of the most advanced areas of inquiry in the English system is the Environmental Search, which is conducted under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Contaminated Land Regulations 2000. For example, specialized companies such as Landmark or Groundsure prepare reports showing whether the land previously had a hazardous industrial use or whether there is a likelihood of petroleum, chemical, radiological, or heavy-metal contamination (Selvam & Al-Humairi, 2025). Such information is not usually considered in registration processes in Iran, but in England banks and financial institutions are unwilling to grant mortgage loans without these data. In a real example, in Manchester, the purchase of a residential property was cancelled due to the discovery of soil contamination related to an old abandoned factory; this contamination was identifiable only through an Environmental Search. Accordingly, registration inquiries in the English system play a role beyond identifying ownership and in practice constitute the foundation of transactional transparency and real estate risk management. HM Land Registry emphasizes in Practice Guide 10 and Practice Guide 40 that every person or institution must not only conduct an ownership inquiry but also investigate supplementary searches relating to development plans, the environment, public routes, historical restrictions, and any potential disputes. This broad scope has made the English registration system one of the most transparent and efficient systems in the world and has minimized transactional errors. By comparison, the limited scope of registration inquiries in Iran, which focuses mostly on the legal status of property, shows that the development of supplementary search tools can play an important role in enhancing economic security and preventing property conflicts.

4. **The Structure and Process of Registration Inquiries in the Legal Systems of Iran and England**

In Iran, the process of registration inquiries involves referring to different authorities and collecting information separately, which results in fragmentation, lengthy response times, and sometimes informational conflicts. Digital systems have not yet been fully integrated, and the state’s responsibility for guaranteeing the accuracy of information has not been systematically defined. By contrast, in England, the electronic inquiry system operates under the supervision of HM Land Registry, and all information relating to the legal status of real estate is recorded in a comprehensive system. This process not only has high speed and accuracy but also, through state guarantees for compensating errors, provides full assurance to purchasers and

investors. Digital access to ownership information and restrictions, as well as the possibility of examining subsidiary rights and property liabilities, guarantees a high level of transparency and economic security and provides a preventive mechanism for reducing litigation and property violations.

4.1. The Inquiry Process and Authorities in the Iranian Legal System

With the enactment of the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions (2024), the importance and necessity of inquiries from relevant authorities, especially the State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties, municipalities, natural resources authorities, and the tax administration, have increased more than ever. This law, with the aim of enhancing transactional transparency, preventing conflicting transactions, land grabbing, and document forgery, and guaranteeing economic security, requires all immovable property transactions to be officially registered (Safizadeh, 2025). Consequently, before any transfer, examining the legal status of the property through official inquiries has become necessary so that the purchaser can be assured of the seller's official ownership, legal restrictions, possible debts, and the property's conformity with land-use and urban development regulations.

Inquiry from the State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties provides complete information on official ownership, transfer history, mortgage status, and other registered rights and restrictions, and under Articles 22 and 92 of the Registration of Deeds and Properties Act, the validity of this information is binding for transactions. Since Article 92 was discussed extensively above, it should be noted here that this article also provides that official documents, especially with respect to debts and movable property, are automatically enforceable without the need for a court judgment. This means that the holder of an official document can exercise their rights without referring to a court and can enforce their claim or ownership. This increases the speed and security of transactions and prevents delay in financial and commercial proceedings. On the other hand, inquiry from the municipality is of particular importance for examining development plans, construction restrictions, and possible debts owed to the municipality, and it is conducted in line with protecting public rights and ensuring conformity with urban planning regulations.

In relation to agricultural land and natural resources, inquiry from the natural resources organization and the general office of land affairs is necessary to examine ownership status, minimum parcel size, and conformity with laws protecting agricultural lands, in order to prevent illegal transfer and the violation of the rights of the state or third parties. In addition, inquiry from the tax administration to examine the tax status of the property, debts, or exemptions is a prerequisite for official transactions and the issuance of title deeds. Thus, the new law has not only determined the requirements for official registration but has also turned the multi-authority inquiry process into an inseparable part of immovable property transactions. These inquiries increase informational transparency, reduce legal and economic risks, and guarantee the validity and security of transactions, playing a key role in rebuilding public trust in the registration and real estate transaction system.

4.2. The Electronic Inquiry System in English Law and the Role of the State in Guaranteeing Ownership

In the legal system of England, electronic inquiries are an inseparable part of the conveyancing and land registration process and play a key role in guaranteeing the legal security of real estate transactions (Wahanze, 2023). These inquiries enable the purchaser and their solicitor to obtain comprehensive and up-to-date information about the property, restrictions, third-party rights, and its environmental and legal status. Through HM Land Registry Online Services and related digital systems, quick access to ownership records, mortgages, restrictions, and legal covenants is provided, and the purchaser can complete the transaction with greater confidence (Wainwright, 2023).

One of the most important types of electronic inquiries in England is the Local Authority Search, which provides information relating to urban planning restrictions, possible debts, development plans, and other legal requirements (Devlin & Coaffee, 2023). This inquiry is usually conducted electronically through council websites or through CON29 forms and ensures that the owner or purchaser of the property is aware of all legal conditions and restrictions imposed on the property. The use of electronic systems increases transparency, reduces human errors, and accelerates the process of examining the property.

In addition, the Environmental Search is also conducted electronically and provides information about natural hazards, flooding, land contamination, and environmental restrictions. These inquiries are approved and provided by the state or state-

supervised institutions and play an important role in guaranteeing legal ownership and preventing economic risks (Kitsakis et al., 2022). For example, if a property is located in a flood-prone area, the Environmental Search provides the relevant information to the purchaser before the transaction so that an informed decision can be made.

The role of the state in this system is vital, because by guaranteeing the accuracy of registered information and providing reliable online services, it enhances transactional security. The Land Registration Act 2002 and its subsequent reforms have established the fundamental principles of land registration, including the Mirror Principle, meaning transparency of ownership information; the Curtain Principle, meaning limitation of unnecessary information; and the state Guarantee Principle (Garcia-Teruel & Simón-Moreno, 2021). Under the Guarantee Principle, the state is required to compensate losses suffered by the purchaser or a third party in the event of a registration error or lack of ownership, a feature less commonly found in non-electronic and traditional systems. A practical example of the application of this system is the purchase of an urban property subject to multiple restrictions and covenants. Through HM Land Registry and Local Authority Search and Environmental Search inquiries, the purchaser can view all restrictions and legal conditions and complete the transaction with confidence. Without these electronic inquiries, the risk of facing legal disputes, statutory restrictions, and economic losses would be high, and ownership security would not be guaranteed. This example shows that electronic inquiries and the state's role in providing and guaranteeing the accuracy of data constitute the backbone of transparency and economic security in the English registration system.

5. Comparative Analysis, Challenges, and Solutions for Improving the Registration Inquiry System in Iran

The comparative analysis shows that Iran's registration inquiry system, despite the Law Requiring Official Registration of Transactions, faces challenges such as the fragmentation of authorities, the absence of integrated digital systems, delays in responses, lack of state guarantee, and procedural complexity, all of which prevent the full realization of transparency and legal security. By contrast, England's experience, through the establishment of comprehensive electronic systems, the Mirror Principle, and state guarantee, has brought about a high level of public trust and a reduction in property violations. Accordingly, reforming Iran's registration inquiry system requires drawing on the English structure, including the creation of integrated digital systems, defining the state's guarantee-based responsibility for compensating registration errors, training and empowering employees of registration authorities, and establishing coordinated procedures among different organizations so that, in addition to protecting proprietary rights, economic security and transactional transparency are strengthened.

5.1. Challenges and Shortcomings of Iran's Registration Inquiry System in Comparison with England

The challenges and shortcomings of Iran's registration inquiry system in comparison with England, in view of the requirements and provisions of the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions enacted in 2024, reveal a set of structural, legal, and operational problems that affect the efficiency of the registration system and public trust (Tafaghodi Zare, 2023). The first major challenge concerns the fragmentation and overlap of information. Despite the establishment of the electronic deed registration system, much ownership information and previous documentation are still preserved in traditional registers and informal documents, and the transfer of this information to the digital system has not been fully completed. This issue means that registration inquiries always face the risk of data inconsistency or incompleteness, and even after the launch of the system, the registration and verification of ownership claims are accompanied by delay and complexity. In this regard, Articles 1 and 10 of the aforementioned law explicitly emphasize the necessity of registering all legal acts relating to immovable property in the system and preparing official deeds, but this obligation faces technical and implementation limitations in practice.

The second challenge relates to the lack of integration among institutions responsible for registration and supervision. Under Article 6 and its notes, executive bodies are required to respond to inquiries immediately through the system, but coordination between ministries and the registration organization is still incomplete, and in some cases, failure to respond to an inquiry creates an implicit authorization for conducting transactions or registering incomplete information. Compared with England, where the land ownership inquiry system operates through standardized, accessible, integrated, and fast online protocols, this is a significant weakness. In addition, legal complexities and numerous notes, such as Notes 5 and 10 of Article 10, make the

registration and inquiry process lengthy and non-transparent, and as a result, system users, including contracting parties and notary offices, face confusion and practical errors.

The third challenge concerns legal limitations and incomplete enforcement guarantees. The law provides limitations and non-admissibility of claims before judicial authorities for unregistered legal acts, under Article 1 and its relevant notes, but in practice there is no possibility of precise supervision over all transactions and documents. Consequently, informal transactions continue to occur, and full protection of ownership rights is not guaranteed. A comparison with England shows that, in the English registration system, any informal transfer of land is almost devoid of legal validity, and all inquiries are based on official and reliable records. In Iran, the absence of such absolute validity has reduced public trust and increased reciprocal litigation. The fourth challenge arises from the technical complexities of the system and the limited capacity of notary offices to respond to inquiries. Articles 2, 3, and 10 emphasize the role of notary offices in registering and transferring legal acts, and the possibility of inquiry and registration of draft contracts by brokers and real estate agencies has also been provided. However, in practice, the high volume of files and the complexity of electronic registration processes cause delays and interruptions in service delivery and responses to inquiries. In England, the use of digital systems and online standards has reduced the time and cost of inquiries, whereas in Iran, the lack of full standardization and insufficient training of staff are serious weaknesses.

The fifth challenge relates to problems arising from common ownership, cadastral demarcation, and lawful and unlawful possession. Article 10 and its notes explicitly address time limits, the necessity of entering the registration plate number and geographical coordinates, and the identification of possessors. However, in many cases, prior information is incomplete or inconsistent with reality, and the process of examining and verifying documents becomes lengthy and complex. In England, all land and real estate, even in cases of common ownership, are covered by an integrated official record, and the inquiry process is simple and precise. In Iran, by contrast, this challenge increases litigation, delays the issuance of deeds, and creates legal confusion. The sixth challenge relates to limited public access to information and transparency. According to Note 2 of Article 3 and the numerous notes of Article 10, access to the system for brokers, contracting parties, and notary offices is limited and is possible only through model drafts. This restriction limits the possibility of precise examination of ownership and the accuracy of information for the general public, investors, and economic actors. In England, public access and the possibility of online inquiries increase transparency, trust, and reduce transaction risks. In Iran, however, incomplete transparency and restrictions on inquiries are among the main weaknesses and challenges of the registration inquiry system. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the area of registration inquiries, one of the prerequisites for the real realization of transparency and transactional security is the establishment of an integrated and online inquiry system, a matter also emphasized by the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions. At present, the process of preparing an official deed in Iran requires obtaining multiple inquiries from different authorities, some of which are conducted through systems such as the KATEB system, as the electronic gateway of notary offices for registering and exchanging transactional information, and the SHAMIM system, for determining location, fixing boundaries, and matching registration and mapping information of properties. For example, before the official transfer of a property, the notary is required through the KATEB system to inquire into the status of ownership, seizure or mortgage, and the history of transfers, while simultaneously using SHAMIM system data to verify the conformity of the registration plate with the actual location of the property. If these systems are fully connected to the databases of municipalities, judicial authorities, and the State Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties, this mechanism can effectively prevent conflicting transactions, sale of another person's property, and document forgery. Thus, completing and integrating inquiry systems within the framework of the 2024 law will play a key role in the transition from a fragmented and time-consuming inquiry system to a transparent, precise, and reliable system. Nevertheless, despite legal and digital progress, Iran's registration inquiry system faces serious challenges in terms of data integration, transparency, the legal validity of informal transactions, the executive capacity of notary offices, and limitations on public access. Comparison with England shows that successful digital registration and inquiry systems require standardization, full data integration, transparent public access, and continuous staff training; these are matters that have not yet been fully implemented in Iran and require practical and structural reforms in order to realize statutory objectives and enhance economic justice in immovable property transactions.

5.2. *Reform Proposals and Drawing on the English Registration System*

In recent years, Iran's registration system, through the enactment of the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions in 2022 and its implementation in 2024, has taken important steps toward clarifying ownership and organizing transactions. However, it still faces challenges and shortcomings (Amini & Haj Najafi, 2025), and structural reforms and drawing on successful international experiences, especially the English registration system, can play an effective role in improving its efficiency. One of the most important existing problems is the complexity and fragmentation of registration inquiry processes, which, even after the launch of the electronic deed registration system, still face delays in responses from executive bodies and relevant institutions. Drawing on the English system, which is based on integrated and reliable land registration, can reduce this problem, because in that system, real estate ownership registration is digital and updated in real time, and ownership information and restrictions can be easily searched without the need to refer to multiple institutions.

Another reform solution is to strengthen the capabilities of Iran's electronic registration system with a focus on online and real-time access to registered data. In the English system, HM Land Registry enables users to obtain complete information on ownership, mortgages, and legal restrictions affecting real estate online and even to register certain related legal documents through the digital system. Iran can create a similar system and apply international standards in the field of data security, integrity, and accuracy, thereby guaranteeing the consistency and reliability of information and, while reducing in-person visits, enabling notary offices, supervisory institutions, and judicial authorities to monitor and track transactions and changes in ownership in real time. Moreover, increasing transparency and traceability in the registration system is another reform requirement that can be realized by drawing on England's experience. In England, all registered information concerning real estate, including the owner, type of ownership, amount of mortgage, and easements, is stored transparently and traceably in digital form, and any transfer of ownership or exercise of a right requires official registration in the system. Iran can prevent conflicting transactions and possible abuses by developing a comprehensive registration system and connecting it to other financial and executive systems, including the tax organization, social security organization, and municipalities, thereby strengthening public trust in the registration system.

Another solution is to facilitate the legal process and reduce administrative barriers. In the English system, the process of registering and transferring ownership is designed so that the least possible time and cost are spent, and objections or document reviews take place within specific and limited legal stages. Iran can prevent the prolongation of files and the creation of additional burdens on notary offices and judicial authorities by setting precise timelines for inquiries, responses by executive bodies, and official deed registration, as well as by revising deadlines and conditions for objections, while preserving the rights of owners and relevant authorities. This would also reduce the need for intermediaries and real estate brokers and thereby decrease the likelihood of violations and financial abuses.

6. Conclusion

The registration system of each country reflects the level of legal, economic, and administrative maturity of that society, and the degree of transparency and precision in ownership registration is an indicator of transactional integrity and public trust. The present study, with the aim of comparatively examining the status of registration inquiries in the legal systems of Iran and England, showed that this mechanism, as the central axis of guaranteeing ownership and preventing property crimes and violations, has a fundamental status in the process of officially registering immovable property transactions. In Iran, the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions (2024) is a serious effort to address long-standing problems such as the validity of informal documents, land grabbing, sale of another person's property, and lack of transparency in transactions. By requiring the registration of transactions through notary offices and inquiries from relevant institutions, this law seeks to strengthen informational transparency and economic security. However, the reality is that achieving these objectives is impossible without a comprehensive inquiry system and data integration. At present, registration inquiries in Iran are fragmented, time-consuming, and lack direct connection among the registration organization, municipalities, natural resources authorities, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, and tax administrations. This situation not only reduces the efficiency of the registration system but also creates the conditions for corruption and conflicts in ownership.

By contrast, the English registration system is based on three key principles: the Mirror Principle, the Curtain Principle, and the Guarantee Principle. Under the Land Registration Act 2002, all immovable property transactions are conducted only

through official registration and electronic inquiries at HM Land Registry. Inquiry in this system is not merely an administrative process but a legal mechanism that reflects the actual and real-time status of the property, enabling the purchaser to finalize the transaction with confidence in the accuracy of the data. The English state, under the Guarantee Principle, is also responsible for registration errors and compensates possible losses arising from error or fraud in registration. This level of governmental accountability has strengthened public trust, reduced judicial costs, and created a transparent and predictable real estate market.

From a comparative perspective, it can be said that Iran has taken the right path in terms of legislation and, by enacting the new law, has institutionalized the principle of mandatory official registration and prior inquiries. Nevertheless, its effective implementation requires several key prerequisites: first, the creation of an integrated national registration inquiry system that provides all data relating to ownership, debt, land use, easements, and legal restrictions to notary offices in real time; second, state guarantee against registration errors and the establishment of a compensation fund similar to the English system to protect good-faith persons; third, clarification of the scope of duties of different authorities and elimination of administrative duplication among related organizations; fourth, development of data-driven and artificial intelligence infrastructure for monitoring the legal and physical status of real estate in order to prevent errors and document forgery; and finally, training and empowering notary offices and registration experts in the use of modern technologies and familiarity with global comparative models.

The present study shows that registration inquiries are not merely prerequisites for registering transactions; rather, they are instruments for realizing economic justice and guaranteeing proprietary rights. If properly implemented, this mechanism can significantly reduce property litigation, prevent economic crimes, and increase the confidence of domestic and foreign investors. In fact, achieving the “transactional transparency” and “economic security” sought by the new law will not be possible except through reforming the inquiry structure, realizing smart registration, and institutionally guaranteeing ownership.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the English model, with its emphasis on the three principles of mirror, curtain, and guarantee, is an example of an efficient and transparent registration system from which Iran can draw inspiration to improve the efficiency of its own registration system. Full establishment of electronic systems, state accountability for registration errors, and strengthening institutional connection among organizations will provide the basis for realizing the objectives of the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions. Thus, registration inquiries can be transformed from a formal administrative process into an effective institution for realizing the rule of law, economic integrity, and social trust.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

Acknowledgments

Authors thank all who helped us through this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding/Financial Support

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

References

- Amini, M., & Haj Najafi, H. (2025). Rethinking the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions in Light of the Concept of Path Dependence: Lessons for Successful Legal Reform. *Journal of Registration Law Research*, 3(1), 45-64.
- Carruthers, P. (2015). A Tangled Web Indeed: The English Land Registration Act and Comparisons with the Australian Torrens System. *University of New South Wales Law Journal*, 38(4), 1261-1299.
- Devlin, C., & Coaffee, J. (2023). Planning and Technological Innovation: The Governance Challenges Faced by English Local Authorities in Adopting Planning Technologies. *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, 27(sup1), 149-163.
- Dobbs, M., Hamill, S. E., & Hickey, R. (2023). Land Law and Land Use. *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 34(2), 149-185.

- Dunning, R. J., Moore, T., & Watkins, C. (2021). The Use of Public Land for House Building in England: Understanding the Challenges and Policy Implications. *Land Use Policy*, 105, 105434.
- Garcia-Teruel, R. M., & Simón-Moreno, H. (2021). The Digital Tokenization of Property Rights: A Comparative Perspective. *Computer Law & Security Review*, 41, 105543.
- Hämäläinen, E., & Krigsholm, P. (2022). Exploring the Strategy Goals and Strategy Drivers of National Mapping, Cadastral, and Land Registry Authorities. *Isprs International Journal of Geo-Information*, 11(3).
- Kitsakis, D., Kalogianni, E., & Dimopoulou, E. (2022). Public Law Restrictions in the Context of 3D Land Administration: Review on Legal and Technical Approaches. *Land*, 11(1), 88.
- Naderi, M. (2025). Analysis and Study of the Registration Law Framework in Iranian Laws with Emphasis on the Legal and Economic Functions of the Real Estate Registration System. *Legal Studies*(48), 369-378.
- Nield, S. (2021). (In)flexibility of Enduring Property Relations: The Easement Story. *Conveyancer and Property Lawyer*, 209-304.
- Parvini, A. (2025). Study of the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions. *Research and Development in Public Law*(3), 14-45.
- Rajabi, A., & Haghi, H. (2018). Registration Information and Rules Governing Individuals' Access to It. *State and Law*, 1(1), 137-162.
- Riahi, N. (2020). Principles of the Legal System of Official Documents and the Obstacles Ahead. *Modern Jurisprudence and Law Quarterly*, 1(4), 59-85.
- Safizadeh, S. (2025). A Critical View of the Role of Brokers in the Real Estate Transactions Market: With Reference to the Regulation of Article 3 of the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Property Transactions. *Journal of Registration Law Research*, 3(1), 145-173.
- Selvam, A. P., & Al-Humairi, S. N. S. (2025). Environmental Impact Evaluation Using Smart Real-Time Weather Monitoring Systems: A Systematic Review. *Innovative Infrastructure Solutions*, 10(1), 1-24.
- Tabatabaei Hessari, N., & Ayinparast, S. (2023). The Position of the Registration Institution in Ensuring Stability of the Legal Status of Movable Property and Transactional Security with Emphasis on Secured Transactions. *Private Law Studies*, 53(4), 581-601.
- Tafaghodi Zare, S. (2023). Study of the Law Requiring Official Registration of Immovable Transactions. *Comparative Research in Jurisprudence, Law, and Politics*, 5(4), 161-171.
- Wahanze, R. (2023). *The Legal Relevance of a Physical Search as an Extra Obligation to a Register Search in Combatting Fraud: An Analysis of the Conveyancing Practice in Uganda*.
- Wainwright, T. (2023). Rental Proptech Platforms: Changing Landlord and Tenant Power Relations in the UK Private Rental Sector? *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 55(2), 339-358.